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**INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF A MENTOR TEXT INQUIRY
APPROACH TO NARRATIVE WRITING INSTRUCTION ON
ATTITUDE, SELF-EFFICACY, AND WRITING PROCESSES OF
FOURTH GRADE STUDENTS IN AN URBAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

by

Christine Marie Kealoha Kane

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of
San Diego State University and the University of San Diego
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirement for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Dissertation Committee

Barbara Moss, Ph.D., San Diego State University
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May 2012

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by

Christine Marie Kealoha Kane

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to our students, who deserve teachers so intrinsically driven that they will walk through fire to help children blossom, and to noble educators around the world who begin with the nonnegotiable belief that all students are capable of brilliance.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Investigating the Impact of a Mentor Text Inquiry Approach to Narrative
Writing Instruction on Attitude, Self-Efficacy, and Writing Processes
of Fourth Grade Students in an Urban Elementary School

by

Christine Marie Kealoha Kane

Ed.D. Candidate in Literacy Education

San Diego State University and University of San Diego, 2012

Writing in its many forms, is the signature means of communication in the 21st century. Writing is also arguably the most complex and difficult challenge facing all students in school. The purpose of this study was to monitor the narrative writing performance of urban students who received explicit writing instruction using a mentor text inquiry approach. A *mentor text* is a published piece of writing whose *ideas*, *structure*, or *written craft* can be used to inspire a student to write something original. It is a piece of quality literature text that students can use as an exemplar text to model their own attempts for writing.

This study explored the development of writing skills of an intact class of fourth grade students ($n = 35$) in order to assess the impact of using a mentor text inquiry approach on the acquisition of narrative writing abilities. A multiple case study design was used to examine individual student writing attitudes, self-efficacy beliefs, and writing abilities for six students over a 6-week period in an urban public charter school in southern California serving a population comprised of 50.5% African American, 25% Hispanic, 22.3% White, 2.2% Asian, and 0.5% American Indian/Alaska Native students, with 76% qualifying for free/reduced lunch as defined by the National School Lunch Program.

The students' pre- and postassessments for writing attitude surveys, self-efficacy beliefs, and formative and summative essays were compared, and a detailed narrative of the mentor text approach reported. An analysis of the impact of a mentor text inquiry approach to narrative writing instruction on writers below, at, and above grade level, was provided. Findings indicated that on the surveys for both writing attitude and self-efficacy, all six participants improved from pre- to postassessments. Fluency, as measured by word count, increased for all six participants. Most students improved in the areas of language conventions and organization. The quality of content, including measures of figurative language, description, and dialogue, did not improve during the 6-week treatment period.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
ABSTRACT.....	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	xvi
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xix
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	xxi
 CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Literacy Practices in Education.....	4
The Role of Writing in Education.....	5
Shifting From a Prescriptive to Descriptive Writing Pedagogy.....	6
Theoretical Framework.....	8
Purpose of the Study.....	11
Research Questions.....	11
Key Constructs and Terminology.....	11
Mentor Text.....	12
Academic English or Academic Language (United States).....	13
Scaffolding.....	13
Self-Efficacy.....	14

	vii
Writing Self-Efficacy.....	15
Significance of the Study.....	17
Limitations of the Study.....	19
2 LITERATURE REVIEW.....	20
History of Writing.	20
Introduction of Formal Writing Instruction.....	21
Paradigm Shifts in Composition Theory.	23
Catalyst for Research on Writing Instruction.....	27
Theories of Writing Process.....	29
Social Construction of Knowledge.	32
Scaffolding: Moving Toward Independence.	34
Purpose of Language Education.....	35
The Role of Responsive Teaching.....	36
Factors for Developing Self.....	37
Factors of Instructional Orientation.....	38
Task-Engagement Resources.....	40
Modes of Writing Instruction.....	41
How Reading Influences Writing.....	44
A Mentor Text Inquiry Approach to Writing Instruction.	46
A Framework for a Mentor Text Inquiry Approach to Writing Instruction.....	52
Phases of a Mentor Text Inquiry Approach to Writing Instruction.	54

3	METHODOLOGY.....	59
	Research Questions.	59
	Research Method.	59
	Study Design.	60
	Setting.	61
	Gaining Entry.....	62
	The Teacher.	63
	Educator A.	63
	Educator B.	64
	The Students..	64
	Recruitment Process..	65
	Instruments..	65
	Writing Attitude Survey.....	65
	Writing Self-Efficacy Scales.	67
	Narrative Writing Prompts.....	68
	Narrative Writing Framework.	69
	Mentor Text Inquiry Approach Phases.	69
	Narrative Mentor Text Rubric.	69
	Narrative Criteria Checklist and Anecdotal Notes.....	70
	Student Interview Questions.	70
	Data Collection.	70
	Phase I.	73
	Phase II..	75

	ix
Phase III.	75
Data Analysis.	77
Verification Procedures.	78
Triangulation.	79
Human Subjects.	80
Limitations.	80
Summary.	80
4 RESULTS.	82
Research Questions.	82
Overview of Case Studies.	82
Student Interviews.	83
Surveys.	83
Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs.	83
The Writing Attitude Survey.	84
Formative Writing Narrative Assessments.	84
Summative Narrative Writing Assessments.	86
Case Studies of Student-Participants.	86
Kylee.	86
Purpose of Writing: Pre- and Postinterview.	87
Learning to Write: Pre- and Postinterview.	88
Impact of Writing: Pre- and Postinterview.	88
Perception of Themselves as Writers: Pre- and Postinterview.	89
Qualities of Good Writing: Pre- and Postinterview.	89

	x
Analysis of Kylee’s Pre- and Postinterview Transcripts.	90
Writing Attitude.	91
Analysis of Kylee’s Writing Attitude Survey Results.	91
Writing Self-Efficacy.	92
Analysis of Kylee’s Writing Self-Efficacy Results.	93
Kylee’s Formative and Summative Essay Results.	94
Analysis of Kylee’s Formative Essay Results.	98
Analysis of Kylee’s Summative Pre- and Posttest Essay Results.	99
Overall Summary of Kylee’s Progress.	99
Jo’Quon.	101
Purpose of Writing: Pre- and Postinterview.	102
Learning to Write: Pre- and Postinterview.	102
Impact of Writing: Pre- and Postinterview.	103
Perception of Themselves as Writers: Pre- and Postinterview.	104
Qualities of Good Writing: Pre- and Postinterview.	104
Analysis of Jo’Quon’s Pre- and Postinterview Transcripts.	104
Writing Attitude.	106
Analysis of Jo’Quon’s Writing Attitude Survey Results.	106
Writing Self-Efficacy.	107
Analysis of Jo’Quon’s Writing Self-Efficacy Results.	108
Jo’Quon’s Formative and Summative Essay Results.	110
Formative Writing Samples.	110

Analysis of Jo'Quon's Formative Essay Results.	113
Analysis of Jo'Quon's Summative Pre- and Posttest Essay Results.	114
Overall Summary of Jo'Quon's Progress.	115
Brooklyn.	116
Purpose of Writing: Pre- and Postinterview.	117
Learning to Write: Pre- and Postinterview.	117
Impact of Writing: Pre- and Postinterview.	118
Perception of Themselves as Writers: Pre- and Postinterview.	118
Qualities of Good Writing: Pre- and Postinterview.	119
Analysis of Brooklyn's Pre- and Postinterview Transcripts.	119
Writing Attitude.	120
Analysis of Brooklyn's Writing Attitude Survey Results.	120
Writing Self-Efficacy.	122
Analysis of Brooklyn's Writing Self-Efficacy Results.	122
Brooklyn's Formative and Summative Essay Results.	124
Brooklyn's Formative Essay 3.	124
Analysis of Brooklyn's Formative Essay Results.	124
Analysis of Brooklyn's Summative Pre- and Posttest Essay Results.	128
Overall Summary of Brooklyn's Progress.	128
Treyshawn.	129
Purpose of Writing: Pre- and Postinterview.	130
Learning to Write: Pre- and Postinterview.	130

Impact of Writing: Pre- and Postinterview.	131
Perception of Themselves as Writers: Pre- and Postinterview.	131
Qualities of Good Writing: Pre- and Postinterview.	132
Analysis of Treyshawn's Pre- and Postinterview Transcripts.	133
Writing Attitude.	134
Analysis of Treyshawn's Writing Attitude Survey Results.	134
Writing Self-Efficacy.	135
Analysis of Treyshawn's Writing Self-Efficacy Results.	135
Treyshawn's Formative and Summative Essay Results.	137
Analysis of Treyshawn's Formative Essay Results.	137
Analysis of Treyshawn's Pre- and Postsummative Essay Results.	141
Overall Summary of Treyshawn's Progress.	142
Ajai.	143
Purpose of Writing: Pre- and Postinterview.	143
Learning to Write: Pre- and Postinterview.	144
Impact of Writing: Pre- and Postinterview.	144
Perception of Themselves as Writers: Pre- and Postinterview.	144
Qualities of Good Writing: Pre- and Postinterview.	145
Analysis of Ajai's Pre- and Postinterview Transcripts.	145
Writing Attitude.	146
Analysis of Ajai's Writing Attitude Survey Results.	146
Writing Self-Efficacy.	148

	xiii
Analysis of Ajai's Writing Self-Efficacy Results.	148
Ajai's Formative and Summative Essay Results.	150
Ajai's Formative Essay 3.	150
Analysis of Ajai's Formative Essay Results.	153
Analysis of Ajai's Summative Pre- and Posttest Essay Results.	154
Overall Summary of Ajai's Progress.	154
Samuel.	156
Purpose of Writing: Pre- and Postinterview.	156
Learning to Write: Pre- and Postinterview.	156
Impact of Writing: Pre- and Postinterview.	157
Perception of Themselves as Writers: Pre- and Postinterview.	157
Qualities of Good Writing: Pre- and Postinterview.	158
Analysis of Samuel's Pre- and Postinterview Transcripts.	158
Writing Attitude.	159
Analysis of Samuel's Writing Attitude Survey Results.	159
Writing Self-Efficacy.	161
Analysis of Samuel's Writing Self-Efficacy Results.	162
Samuel's Formative and Summative Essay Results.	163
Description of Samuel's Formative Essays Results.	163
Analysis of Samuel's Summative Pre- and Postsummative Essays Results.	168
Overall Summary of Samuel's Progress.	168
Trends.	170

	xiv
Interviews.....	171
Purpose of Writing.....	171
Learning to Write.....	172
Impact of Writing.....	173
Perceptions of Themselves as Writers.....	174
Qualities of Good Writing.....	174
Writing Attitude Survey.....	176
Writing Self-Efficacy Survey.....	177
Formative Essays 1-3.....	178
Summative Essays (Pre/Post).....	179
Overview of Cross-Case Trends Analysis.....	180
Summary.....	181
5 DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	182
The Problem.....	182
Purpose and Rationale.....	182
Methodology.....	183
Research Questions.....	184
Key Findings.....	185
The Mentor Text Inquiry Approach Positively Impacted Writing Attitude and Self-Efficacy.....	185
The Mentor Text Inquiry Approach Increased Writing Fluency.....	188
The Mentor Text Inquiry Approach Improved Attention to Language Conventions.....	189

The Mentor Text Inquiry Approach Increased Quantity But Not Quality of Content..	191
The Mentor Text Inquiry Approach Improved Organization and Structure.	193
Limitations of the Study..	195
Recommendations for Future Research..	196
Recommendations for Future Practice..	197
REFERENCES.	199
APPENDICES	
A NARRATIVE MENTOR TEXT WRITING FRAMEWORK.	210
B NARRATIVE MENTOR TEXT RUBRIC.	214
C NARRATIVE MENTOR TEXT CRITERIA CHECKLIST AND ANECDOTAL NOTES..	217
D STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS..	224
E PARENTAL CONSENT LETTER.	226
F STUDENT-PARTICIPANT ESSAYS: FIGURES 3-29..	229

LIST OF TABLES

	PAGE
Table 1. Data Sources.	72
Table 2. Kylee’s Trends for <i>Writing Attitude Survey</i>	91
Table 3. Kylee’s Writing Self-Efficacy Gains.	93
Table 4. Kylee’s Writing Self-Efficacy Neutral or Declining Score..	93
Table 5. Kylee’s Formative Essays Summary Table.	94
Table 6. Kylee’s Rubric for Formative Essay 1.	95
Table 7. Kylee’s Rubric for Formative Essay 2.	96
Table 8. Kylee’s Rubric for Formative Essay 3.	97
Table 9. Kylee’s Summative Essays Summary..	98
Table 10. Jo’Quon’s Trends for <i>Writing Attitude Survey</i>	106
Table 11. Jo’Quon’s Writing Self-Efficacy Declining Scores.	108
Table 12. Jo’Quon’s Writing Self-Efficacy Neutral Scores.	108
Table 13. Jo’Quon’s Formative Essays Summary.	110
Table 14. Jo’Quon’s Rubric for Formative Essay 2.	111
Table 15. Jo’Quon’s Rubric for Formative Essay 3.	112
Table 16. Jo’Quon’s Summative Essays Summary.	113
Table 17. Brooklyn’s Trends for <i>Writing Attitude Survey</i>	121
Table 18. Brooklyn’s Writing Self-Efficacy Neutral Scores.	122
Table 19. Brooklyn’s Writing Self-Efficacy Neutral Gains.	122

Table 20. Brooklyn's Writing Self-Efficacy Declining Scores.....	123
Table 21. Brooklyn's Formative Essays Summary.....	124
Table 22. Brooklyn's Rubric for Formative Essay 1.	125
Table 23. Brooklyn's Rubric for Formative Essay 2.	126
Table 24. Brooklyn's Summative Essays Summary.....	127
Table 25. Treyshawn's Trends for <i>Writing Attitude Survey</i>	134
Table 26. Treyshawn's Writing Self-Efficacy Neutral Scores.	136
Table 27. Treyshawn's Writing Self-Efficacy Neutral Gains.....	136
Table 28. Treyshawn's Writing Self-Efficacy Declining Scores.	136
Table 29. Treyshawn's Formative Essays Summary.	137
Table 30. Treyshawn's Rubric for Formative Essays 1.	138
Table 31. Treyshawn's Rubric for Formative Essay 2.	139
Table 32. Treyshawn's Rubric for Essay 3.....	140
Table 33. Treyshawn's Summative Essays Summary.....	141
Table 34. Ajai's Trends for <i>Writing Attitude Survey</i>	147
Table 35. Ajai's Writing Self-Efficacy Neutral Scores.....	148
Table 36. Ajai's Writing Self-Efficacy Gains.....	149
Table 37. Ajai's Writing Self-Efficacy Declining Scores.....	149
Table 38. Ajai's Formative Essays Summary.....	150
Table 39. Ajai's Rubric for Formative Essay 1.....	151
Table 40. Ajai's Rubric for Formative Essay 2.....	152
Table 41. Ajai's Summative Essays Summary.....	153
Table 42. Samuel's Trends for <i>Writing Attitude Survey</i>	160

Table 43. Samuel's Writing Self-Efficacy Neutral Scores.	161
Table 44. Samuel's Writing Self-Efficacy Declining Scores.	161
Table 45. Samuel's Formative Essays Summary.	163
Table 46. Samuel's Rubric for Formative Essay 1.	164
Table 47. Samuel's Rubric for Formative Essay 2.	165
Table 48. Samuel's Rubric for Formative Essay 3.	166
Table 49. Samuel's Summative Essays Summary.	167

LIST OF FIGURES

	PAGE
Figure 1. Mentor text inquiry approach.	56
Figure 2. Protocol for mentor text inquiry approach..	57
Figure 3. Kylee’s formative essay 1.	230
Figure 4. Kylee’s formative essay 2	231
Figure 5. Kylee’s formative essay 3.	234
Figure 6. Kylee’s summative pretest essay.....	237
Figure 7. Kylee’s summative posttest essay.	238
Figure 8. Jo’Quon’s formative essay 2.....	241
Figure 9. Jo’Quon’s formative essay 3.....	243
Figure 10. Jo’Quon’s summative pretest.	246
Figure 11. Jo’Quon’s summative posttest.....	247
Figure 12. Brooklyn’s formative essay 1.	249
Figure 13. Brooklyn’s formative essay 2.	250
Figure 14. Brooklyn’s summative pretest.....	253
Figure 15. Brooklyn’s summative posttest.	254
Figure 16. Treyshawn’s formative essay 1.....	257
Figure 17. Treyshawn’s formative essay 2.	259
Figure 18. Treyshawn’s formative essay 3.	262
Figure 19. Treyshawn’s summative pretest.	265

Figure 20. Treyshawn's summative posttest.....	267
Figure 21. Ajai's formative essay 1.	270
Figure 22. Ajai's formative essay 2.	272
Figure 23. Ajai's summative pretest.....	274
Figure 24. Ajai's summative posttest.	276
Figure 25. Samuel's formative essay 1.....	279
Figure 26. Samuel's formative essay 2.....	281
Figure 27. Samuel's formative essay 3.....	283
Figure 28. Samuel's summative pretest.	285
Figure 29. Samuel's summative posttest.	286

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Students in the 21st century live in a golden age of communication. Their access to an abundance of information is unparalleled to that of former generations. As rapid changes in technology have increased the literacy demands required in today's workplace, the demand for students to demonstrate critical thinking skills related to information, media, and technology has grown exponentially.

These technological innovations, the onset of globalization and changes in the workplace have increased the need for young people to obtain some form of higher education, whether it is in a 2- or 4-year college or involves technical or career coursework. Up to two-thirds of new jobs in the future will require a college education and higher-level literacy skills (Carnevale & Desrochers, 2004; Kirsch, Braun, Yamamoto, & Sum, 2007). Reading and writing are no longer luxury skills required for social and civic participation in America but essential for securing white and even blue-collar jobs required to survive economically in today's world.

Education in the 21st century must prepare all students to master the knowledge, skills, and expertise they will need to be successful in work and life. Students must be able to address increasingly complex global issues, work collaboratively with individuals representing diverse cultures, religions, and lifestyles. They must also be flexible and

responsive to new and diverse perspectives. As communication demands increase in an ever growing interconnected world, all graduates from high school must possess the skills required in informational literacy including effectively analyzing and evaluating evidence, arguments, claims, and beliefs. All 21st century students must be prepared to ask significant questions that clarify various points of view, lead to better solutions, reflect critically on learning experiences, and write effectively in order to participate fully in civic life.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Writing, in its many forms, is the signature means of communication in the 21st century. Writing is also arguably the most complex and difficult challenge facing all students in school (Bereiter, 1980; Hillocks, 1987; Scardamalia, 1981). The needs of a democratic society and requirements of the workforce bring with them a demand for effective writing. An informed citizenry must understand the ways language works in order to read critically and communicate effectively. Beyond being able to read and comprehend documents such as legal contracts, advertising messages, and political materials, citizens must also have knowledge of the ways documents are composed and the expectations and requirements for those particular documents if they are to read them critically and understand the subtleties they contain (Douillard, 2006). This kind of knowledge comes from opportunities to explore and wrestle with language so that it can be utilized not only by an elite few, but also by the society as a whole.

Although some progress has been made in improving the literacy achievement of students in American schools during the last 20 years, a vast majority of students, especially from culturally and linguistically diverse student populations, still do not read or write well

enough to meet grade-level demands. Applebee and Langer (2009) found that in 2007 only 10% to 20% of middle school and high school students on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) had achieved a proficient score in writing skills appropriate to their grade level. Only 31% achieved proficiency in 8th grade and a mere 23% reached proficiency in 12th grade. Results also indicated a strong correlation between writing scores and family income, as measured by access to free and reduced-price lunch programs. Out of NAEP's 300-point scale, the average score for students eligible for free lunch was 139; those eligible for reduced-price lunch averaged 150; and students not eligible for the program averaged 164.

Taking into account an even broader look at the NAEP data over the past two decades indicates that although there have been moderate gains in all subgroups of students regarding writing instruction, deeply ingrained patterns of inequities still exist between Blacks and Hispanics in comparison to their White counterpart peers. These persistent gaps in achievement are illuminated in data released for 2007 that indicate 29% of 12th-grade White students rated proficient in writing, as compared to 11% of their Hispanic counterpart peers and a dismal 8% of Black 12th-grade students. In other words, over 70% of our culturally and linguistically diverse students are unable to read and write proficiently by the time they reach 12th grade.

The NAEP results highlight two critical conditions in the state of education today:

- (a) The vast majority of our student population, regardless of racial, ethnic, or linguistic backgrounds, are not prepared to meet the growing literacy demands required to be successful socially and economically in the 21st century, and
- (b) a persistent and historical disparity for success in academia for our culturally and linguistically diverse student populations continues

to threaten the fabric of our American society. We must use the persistence of these ineffective conditions to work tirelessly to identify the most effective instructional practices to move students towards the highest levels of writing achievement.

Literacy Practices in Education

According to Jacobs (2002), both reading-to-learn and writing-to-learn are meaning-making activities that result in understanding a central goal of content-based instruction. They both help students proceed from understanding goals to demonstrating understanding. For learning, the act of writing provides a chronology of our thoughts which we can then label, objectify, modify, or build on; and it engages us in becoming invested in our ideas and learning (Jacobs, 2002). This investment exposes the writer to a meaning-making process that extends thinking and deepens understanding. In this process, a writer uses knowledge to generate from when composing text, crafting it, packaging it with cues—some subtle, some very explicit—in anticipation of the constructive processes a reader will use (Spivey, 1991).

Rosenblatt (1994) illustrates the relationship between reading and writing as encompassing a network of parallelisms and differences that share a necessary involvement with text. Rosenblatt explains that the interdependent network between reading and writing occur when a writer “composes” a presumably meaningful text and a reader “composes,” hence “writes,” an interpreted meaning. Both the reader and the writer follow a similar pattern of thinking to develop a framework, principle, or purpose (however nebulous or explicit) that guides the selective attention and the synthesizing, organizing activities that constitute meaning, which result in the form of reading and/or writing (Rosenblatt, 1994).

Rosenblatt concludes that although reading and writing are sufficiently different enough to defeat the assumption that teaching of one will automatically improve the student's competence in the other; the parallelisms, and, in many instances, intermingling of the reading and writing process make it reasonable to expect that the teaching of one can affect the student's operations in the other.

The Role of Writing in Education

Writing is a process essential to graduating college and future employment opportunities. The act of writing is made up of a set of thinking and composing processes used selectively by a writer. Students must learn that writing consists of several iterative phases (i.e., prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and postwriting) that vary depending on the purpose and audience for writing, and students must understand that they are not limited to using the various phases all the time or in any fixed order.

Writing instruction must serve as a component of literacy instruction and not be isolated for the purposes of state assessment and accountability. Writing instruction must promote, support, or demonstrate learning in the content area and enhance a student's content knowledge. Writing tasks must link assignments and instructional practices to authentic situations with genuine opportunities for student choice in writing and for publication to real audiences in order to enable a student to develop as an independent writer and thinker.

Writing offers opportunities not available through reading. Writers must manipulate language, understand structures and their demands, as well as anticipate the needs of the reader in order to communicate clearly and effectively (Douillard, 2006). Writing, beyond its communicative purposes, also serves as a vehicle for abstract and analytical thinking,

allowing the writer to clarify and organize thoughts and generate ideas (Britton, 1982; Gere, 1985; Vygotsky, 1978). The difficulties inherent in writing are challenging for students, especially culturally and linguistically diverse students, who have been identified as the lower performing student population (Isaacson, 1989).

Educators should allow time for instruction and use of the writing process (focusing, prewriting, drafting, conferencing, revising, editing, publishing, reflecting) in the classroom as part of instruction. Educators must provide multiple opportunities for students to learn progressively about a variety of organizational structures at the sentence and craft level, grammar, spelling, conventions such as punctuation and capitalization, and handwriting. With an emphasis on planning and revising for clarity, experiences provided in the classroom regarding the writing process should help students understand that writing is not the same as speech written down. Finally, students must fine-tune their skills for purposes and situations they will encounter in their lives by utilizing appropriate forms, conventions, and styles of writing to communicate ideas and information to different audiences for different purposes.

Shifting From a Prescriptive to Descriptive Writing Pedagogy

Educators who take a prescriptive approach to writing instruction believe that quality writing can be taught by adhering to a list of grammar and convention rules, often taught in isolation from the craft of writing using formulaic structures that require students to insert their own ideas into prescribed formatting designed to mirror the type of text that students are exposed to in traditional textbooks. Prescriptive writing instruction ignores the complicated process that published writers undergo to develop a repertoire of strategies for dealing effectively with various writing tasks presented to them in different situation. Wiley (2000)

states that teaching writing as a formula reduces a complex, messy process to a step-by-step, follow-the-recipe procedure. When we teach this reductive process, we are telling students that each writing task, each writing problem is essentially the same. No matter what the task, if students follow the recipe, the final product will satisfy all appetites, regardless of variation in the situation.

A prescriptivist approach to writing eliminates students' opportunities to look at authentic writing texts as exemplars, determine what they will compose based on their own intentions, or develop an awareness of audience and the effects that their intended writing will have upon readers. It does not encourage exploration and is an attractive approach to educators who want a simple format to use with students who struggle with writing.

However, these are exactly the students who need to be challenged the most and who are put at a distinct disadvantage when offered remedial tasks such as completing graphic organizers to fit in the five paragraph structures, fill-in-the-blank grammar exercises, and workbook drills that often leave them with writing that sounds contrived, mechanical, and simpleminded. The popular, well-intended prescriptivist approach to writing instruction predominantly found in urban schools continues to produce low levels of success with culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Educators who take a descriptive approach to writing instruction allow students to be immersed in a wide variety of exemplars and guide them through the process of making independent choices about genre, content, structure, organization, and style; students learn to hone their judgments about the effects of the choices they make as writers. Such educators understand that exploring writing in authentic, meaningful ways will require time and can often be a complicated and messy process. Katie Wood Ray (2006) found that through

looking at many different texts in an inquiry approach to writing with children in the classroom, there was a difference between *describing* good writing and *prescribing* good writing:

When we really engaged in *describing* good writing, we found ourselves talking about how it all works quite differently than when we only prescribed good writing, far away from the beautiful texts those prescriptions were meant to help create. And of course we had to face the fact that many of the things (grammar rules and conventions) that we had been taught about good writing were not true. As we looked and described what we saw, we were rewriting our own understandings about how good writing happens. (p. 87)

One of the toughest challenges in teaching writing is to find helpful strategies that individual students can fit into their current frameworks, strategies that they can then use to build upon current knowledge and extend their abilities (Wiley, 2000). A descriptive approach to writing instruction supports student writers in the choices they make by providing quality exemplars from professional writers who also had to struggle in the same decision making process. The ultimate goal of a descriptivist approach to writing is to provide the time, resources, and framework for student inquiry into the kind of writing that will produce versatile, thoughtful, and resourceful writers.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Flower and Hayes (1981) proposed a model of writing processes that has three main components: the task environment, the writer's long-term memory, and the writing processes. Elements in the task environment include the writing topic, the intended audience, motivating factors, and elements of text already produced (e.g., notes, outlines, or drafts) that provide external storage of ideas. The long-term memory component includes knowledge of the topic, audience, and types of writing plans (expository, narrative, etc.). Together, the task

environment and the long-term memory influence the interactive and iterative writing processes of planning, translating, and reviewing. Planning involves three subprocesses: generating, organizing, and goal setting.

Writers generate ideas by accessing relevant information about the writing topic from long-term memory and from the task environment. Writers organize ideas by imposing a meaningful structure that fits well with readers' expectations. In goal setting, writers plan how to convey their ideas in a meaningful way to the intended audience. In translating, writers transform ideas into written text, which requires (a) Knowledge of Vocabulary and (b) Knowledge of Rules of Standard Written Academic Language (English). Reviewing is a continual process that involves the writer's evaluation and revision of text according to internal standards and perceived audience expectations.

Discourse knowledge concerns what one knows about how to write. More specifically, discourse knowledge "consists of schemata for various discourse forms, procedures and strategies involved in instantiation of those schemata, and local sentence-generation procedures (including grammatical knowledge)" (McCutchen, 1986, p. 432). Such knowledge is important to writers for writing grammatically correct prose, for generating sentences that are cohesively linked, and for writing coherently.

Kellogg (1987) found the relationship between discourse knowledge and writing ability has the most to do with the translating process. Translating requires transforming ideas (semantics) into written symbols that satisfy the constraints of standard rules of the language (e.g., syntax). Discourse knowledge makes writing (i.e., translating) automatic. Writers who have easier access to knowledge of discourse (e.g., grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, and text structure) translate their ideas more rapidly and accurately, and,

consequently, they produce more syntactically correct prose. Therefore, measures of discourse knowledge should be correlated with indicants of the translating process.

Benton, Corkill, Sharp, Downey, and Khramtsova (1995) found that for writers, young or old, discourse knowledge is positively related to syntactic maturity, an indicant of the translating process. That is, students whose discourse knowledge is relatively vast and well organized, and therefore easily accessible, have to exert less effort in translating their ideas into syntactically correct prose. Knowledge about language structure frees younger writers from devoting a great deal of effort toward concerns about grammar, syntax, and text structure.

Consequently, the writing of students with more knowledge of the language system is more syntactically mature than those students who are limited in their knowledge of the language system to be replicated (i.e., Academic English). Therefore, in order for students to replicate exemplar writing (i.e., Academic English) they must be exposed to exemplar writing in the first place. This may require multiple opportunities to experience quality exemplar texts of the language system, such as Academic English, that they are attempting to mimic in order to gain a greater working knowledge of the language system itself. Quality exemplar texts of the language system are currently being explored in today's classrooms in the form of mentor text(s). Although practical texts for teachers describing this pedagogical approach exist (J. Anderson, 2007; J. Anderson & Spandel, 2005; Culham, Blasingame, & Coutou, 2010; Culham & Coutu, 2008; Dorfman & Cappelli, 2007, 2009; Ehmann & Gayer, 2009; Ehrenworth, 2003; Ray, 1999, 2002, 2006; Ray & Cleaveland, 2004; Ray & Laminack, 2001; Walther & Phillips, 2009), research studies on this approach are scarce. The usefulness of these *mentor texts* on actual writing abilities, writing attitudes, and self-efficacy scores of

fourth grade students in an inquiry approach to writing instruction will be explored in this research study.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to monitor the narrative writing performance of urban students who receive explicit writing instruction using mentor texts to support their discourse knowledge at the planning and translating process stages in writing. Improving the discourse knowledge of student participants' writing performance is important for selecting grammatically correct prose, generating sentences that are cohesively linked, and for writing an overall cohesive text.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the effect, if any, of using a mentor text inquiry approach to narrative writing instruction on the writing attitudes and writing self-efficacy of fourth grade urban elementary student-participants?
2. What is the effect of using a mentor text inquiry approach to narrative writing instruction on the writing abilities of fourth grade urban elementary student-participants specifically on content, structure, fluency, and conventions?

KEY CONSTRUCTS AND TERMINOLOGY

Below are definitions to concepts relevant to writing instruction as defined in this study.

Mentor Text

Hoyt (2007) states that the concept of a *mentor text* is important. A mentor is one who models, coaches, and lifts another to higher levels. With that in mind, a mentor text must be chosen carefully to ensure that it can establish a model of quality writing that is worthy of guiding our learners. A *mentor text* is a published piece of writing whose *idea*, whose *structure*, or whose *written craft* can be used to inspire a student to write something original. The wonderful thing about well-crafted prose is that we can learn endless lessons, from the craft of writing to the craft of editing. And we can do it all at once, see how the author uses grammar and sensory detail to reveal character or setting (J. Anderson & Spandel, 2005). A mentor text can be one sentence or more, a paragraph, a section of newspaper, a magazine article, or any published piece of work written by a professional writer. It is a piece of quality literature text that students can use as an exemplar text to model their own attempts for writing.

Purposes for mentor text in writing instruction include generating ideas, understanding a genre, understanding structure, imitating style or learning a new target skill (grammar/conventions/punctuation), taking an in-depth look at a writing standard, a literary element, or a rhetorical device in action. Mentor texts are pieces of literature that you can return to and reread for many different purposes. Mentor texts are to be studied and then imitated. Mentor texts help students make powerful connections to their own lives. Mentor texts help students take risks and try out new strategies. Mentor texts should draw from books that students can relate to and can read independently or with some support.

Academic English or Academic Language (United States)

Jeff Zwiers (2008) notes that *academic language* is one of the key differences that exist between high- and low-performing groups of students in our schools. This is especially visible in our upper-elementary and secondary classes. Students who underperform often have backgrounds that have not primed them for “doing school” or the mainstream schooling’s ways of learning, speaking, reading, and thinking required for academic success. Such students are immigrants, great-grandchildren of immigrants, speakers of nonmainstream dialects, special education students, and others who have not been immersed in the academic thought and talk that is valued in school. These students need rich classroom experiences that accelerate the acquisition of language that supports their content knowledge, thinking skills, and literacy skills. Students need curricula and teaching that connect to their cultural and cognitive roots, and they need accelerated learning, because their high-performing peers do not just linger around, waiting for them to catch up.

Scaffolding

The sociocultural approach to learning recognizes that, with assistance, learners can reach beyond what they can learn unaided, participate in new situations, and take on new roles. This assisted performance is encapsulated in Vygotsky’s notion of the zone of proximal development, or ZPD, which describes the “gap” between what learners can do alone and what they can do with help from someone more skilled. This situated help is often known as “scaffolding” (Gibbons, 2002).

Scaffolding, in the way it is used in this research study, has three major characteristics: (a) it is *temporary* help that assists a learner to move toward new concepts,

levels of understanding, and new language; (b) it enables a learner to know *how to do something* (not just what to do), so that they will be better able to complete similar tasks alone; and (c) it is *future oriented*. In Vygotsky's (1978) words, what a learner can do with support today, he or she will be able to do alone tomorrow. Scaffolding is therefore teacher support in action and is the core learning and teaching for autonomy (Mariani, 1997).

Self-Efficacy

With the publication of *Social Foundations of Thought and Action*, Bandura (1986) proposed a view of human functioning that emphasized the role of self-referent beliefs. In this sociocognitive perspective, individuals are viewed as proactive and self-regulating, rather than as reactive and controlled by biological or environmental forces. Individuals are understood to possess self-beliefs that enable them to exercise a measure of control over their thoughts, feelings, and actions. In all, Bandura painted a portrait of human behavior and motivation in which the beliefs that people have about their capabilities are critical elements. In fact, according to Bandura, how people behave can often be better predicted by the beliefs they hold about their capabilities, which he called *self-efficacy* beliefs, than by what they are actually capable of accomplishing, for these self-perceptions help determine what individuals do with the knowledge and skills they have (Pajares, 2003).

According to Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, self-efficacy beliefs influence the choices people make and the courses of action they pursue. Individuals tend to engage in tasks about which they feel competent and confident and avoid those in which they do not. Efficacy beliefs also help determine how much effort people will expend on an activity, how long they will persevere when confronting obstacles, and how resilient they will be in the

face of adverse situations (Schunk, 1981; Schunk & Hanson, 1985; Schunk, Hanson, & Cox, 1987). The higher the sense of efficacy, the greater the effort, persistence, and resilience. Efficacy beliefs also influence the amount of stress and anxiety individuals experience as they engage in an activity (Pajares & Miller, 1994). As a consequence, self-efficacy beliefs exercise a powerful influence on the level of accomplishment that individuals ultimately realize.

Writing Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy appears to depend on four sources (Bandura, 1997). The first is enactive mastery experiences, which are understood as experience gained from performing similar tasks; thus, the success achieved builds a robust belief in one's personal efficacy, whereas failure undermines it. The second source of self-efficacy is vicarious experience, in that modeling serves as another effective tool for promoting a sense of personal efficacy as people appraise their capabilities in relation to the achievements of others. The third source, verbal persuasion, refers to the faith others have in a person's capabilities and their expression of it. Finally, the last source of self-efficacy is found in a positive physiological and affective state, which means that people are more inclined to expect success when they are not tense and ill at ease. Luszczynska, Gutierrez-Doña, and Schwarzer (2005) differentiated general self-efficacy (i.e., belief in one's competence to tackle novel tasks and cope with adversity in a broad range of stressful or challenging situations) from specific self-efficacy (defined as being constrained to a particular task). They proved how general self-efficacy is related to self-esteem and academic performance, as well as other constructs, and how this relationship

remains stable across cultures and samples, which in turn makes self-efficacy a universal construct.

Pajares and Cheong (2003) showed that students with higher self-efficacy beliefs in writing had higher task goals across the elementary, middle, and high school years; this type of achievement goal is positively related to motivation indexes. In a sample of 1,266 students ranging in age from 9 to 17, the authors demonstrated how task goals decreased from elementary to middle school and then increased in high school. Collins and Bissell (2004) found a correlation between self-efficacy and grammar ability in two surveys of students in an introductory writing course. The surveys included five sentences containing grammatical mistakes. Students were required to make the necessary corrections, and were also asked to indicate how confident they were about the corrections they had made.

Based on the relationship between mathematics and self-efficacy, some researchers have developed specific training programs showing that it is possible to improve mathematical performance by enhancing self-efficacy. For example, Linares (2005) confirmed that after training in a prevention program to promote cognitive-social-emotional skills, including student self-efficacy, participants showed gains in self-efficacy and problem solving, and also obtained higher grades in math. Furthermore, Kerr and Robinson Kurpius (2004) developed a program for talented at-risk girls focused on enhancing career identity and exploration, as well as building science self-efficacy and self-esteem. The authors concluded that self-esteem, academic self-efficacy, and future self-efficacy increased between pretest and the 3- to 4-month follow-up. It would be interesting to confirm the relationship between writing and self-efficacy through programs such as those devised for math and/or science in order to determine how an increase in students' self-efficacy beliefs about their

writing could improve their writing texts, especially those written by culturally and linguistically diverse students.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

According to Wiley (2000), in schools, particularly those in urban settings, resources are scarce, buildings are in disrepair, classrooms are overcrowded, and scores of new teachers are needed; yet, too many of these teachers are poorly prepared to teach writing. These desperate situations are ripe for teaching writing as a formula-easy to teach, easy for students to grasp and apply, easy to produce, and effective for grading efficiency. However, the formulaic approach fails to develop real, authentic, 21st century writers.

Successful 21st century writers have a repertoire of strategies for dealing effectively with a variety of writing tasks presented to them in different situations. Unlike formulaic writers, real writers must decide what they will compose based upon their intentions, who will read their texts, and what effects they want their texts to have on these real and projected readers. Prescriptivist writing instruction renders content a mere afterthought and attempts to provide a generic definition of the kind of writing students are to do, such as *persuasive* writing: “trying to convince a reader of your point of view on an issue.” This generic definition is often followed by activities where students fill in a graphic organizer, a teacher leads the class in writing together an exemplar model for the class before asking students to write their own (Ray, 2006). It is not surprising to find strong commonalities between the teacher generated model and the ones that students are required to do “independently.” This sort of writing reinforces the notion that literary knowledge does not so much involve skill in interpreting ambiguity and struggling with the nuances of language but instead becomes a

fixed body of literary skill sets disconnected to the products and processes that versatile, thoughtful, independent writers are capable of producing. Unfortunately, the practice of formulaic writing instruction from a prescriptivist approach remains the dominant practice in today's classrooms—especially in those serving culturally and linguistically diverse students.

An alternative approach to a prescriptivist approach to writing instruction will be the focus of this research study. According to Ray (2006), when teachers immerse students in reading and studying the kind of writing they want them to do, they are actually teaching at two levels. They teach students about the particular genre or writing issue that is the focus of the study, but they also teach students to use a habit of mind that experienced writers engage in all the time. They teach them to *read like writers* (F. Smith, 1983). This paradigm shift requires a different kind of teaching, a kind of teaching to help us make the leap from traditional teaching to providing inquiry-based, authentic experiences for our students. Our culturally and linguistically diverse students have highly developed, powerful voices that they must learn to harness in writing so that they can document these experiences and observations down in ways that the world can recognize as academically relevant and successful. A descriptivist approach to writing instruction utilizing *mentor texts* allows students to prepare realistically to meet literacy demands of the 21st century, such as writing in a world with constantly evolving conventions and expectations, critical reading skills, using writing as a tool for learning in content areas, as well as the strategies for engaging in the process of writing, in terms of techniques, genre, form and style.

According to the most recent Carnegie report *Writing To Read: Evidence How Writing Can Improve Reading* (Graham & Hebert, 2010), (a) 40% of high school graduates lack the literacy skills employers seek, (b) poor writing skills cost businesses \$3.1 billion

annually, (c) only one out of four 12th graders is a proficient writer, and (d) nearly one-third of high school graduates are not ready for college-level English composition courses. This research study proposes to explore the effect of using a descriptivist mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction in an urban classroom has upon the writing abilities and writing self-efficacy of student-participants in fourth grade. The results of this study will contribute towards the body of research dedicated to finding effective literacy practices to help prepare our culturally and linguistically diverse students to become academically successful writers for the 21st century.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Limitations of this study include a relatively small number of student and teacher-participants, exclusive use of an urban elementary school site setting, short treatment time, and the researchers own bias and understanding(s) as a teacher of mentor text(s) in an inquiry approach to writing instruction. A recommendation is that future researchers extend the length of time when students engage in a mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction and include more balanced and diverse samples. To effectively deal with issues of generalizability, future researchers should use larger samples that might better treat the shared variances within classrooms, schools, and grade levels.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

HISTORY OF WRITING

Humans created two major systems of visual symbols to express themselves and communicate with others: art and writing. These two fundamentally different communicative systems are fully independent from each other and play significantly different roles in society. Writing utilizes a system of graphic marks that represent units of a specific language structure, while simultaneously representing the needs and traditions of the society that utilizes that language system and the capabilities of the human brain.

The appearance of writing transformed existing social systems by increasing the ease of communication across space and time, by supporting an enduring and stable record, by allowing relative uniformity in multiple copies aligning multiple audiences, by making communications visible and inspectable, and perhaps by other processes we only dimly understand (Bazerman, 2007). Writing has played a major role in the development and expansion of all social systems in our society including the economy, government, religion, entertainment, and academia. Writing has not only helped form these systems that serve to function in human society, but it helps carry out fundamental processes that cut across social spheres as well. Writing can be an avenue for individual expression, and, at the same time, it can serve to construct or proclaim the individual author's membership in a social group (Dyson, 2003).

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 1995), one's ability to receive an education is a universal human right. In a society that values education, it is widely assumed that if one is successful in our education system then he/she will more than likely function successfully as a literate adult in society.

INTRODUCTION OF FORMAL WRITING INSTRUCTION

As the role of literacy in our society has developed over the past century, so has the role of literacy in our school system. As literate institutions, schools have a virtual monopoly over the teaching of the skills of reading and writing. Prior to the Industrial Age, schooling was only available to a small percentage of the population, and teaching relied primarily on apprenticeships and individualized tutorial sessions. The shift toward a mass industrial society after the onset of the Industrial Age had a significant long-term impact upon public education that shifted the focus away from the individual as a target audience for pedagogy and onto the mass concept of the class. The class, not the individual, became the primary unit of instruction.

Chartier and Hebrand (2001) point out that the group method of instruction was introduced in the 18th century by De la Sale, not only as a means to cope with increasing enrollments, but because individual methods caused a lack of discipline and an intolerable level of background noise in the classroom. With the movement toward group methods of teaching came more didactic methods where teachers relied increasingly on written assignments to ascertain a student's competency in an academic subject area.

However, writing is not merely an aid to record one's memory. The written word, once recorded, may be revisited, consulted, revised, and criticized. Writing is conceived of

as a skill, and yet, at the same time, that skill is itself a process dependent on a range of other skills and, moreover, a process that is kaleidoscopic, shaped by the author's changing purposes for writing (Dyson, 2003). The acquisition of writing, in particular, develops through different phases, whose sequence has been found relatively similar across different countries and languages. Writing acquisition is a continuous experience children encounter, where three dimensions—continuity, complexity and sociality—interact interdependently.

Continuity is the recognition that children's transition from drawing and scribbling to correctly spelled words and sentences does not represent only the development of the ability to produce written language, but should be seen as interwoven development of various symbolic systems—drawing, oral speech, sound—through which the child learns to express him or herself and communicate with others (Dyson, 1995, 2002).

Complexity, the second dimension of writing, refers to the cognitive and linguistic demands that may exceed the processing capacity of a young or novice writer. Other factors that play a significant role in the development of emerging writing are motivational aspects such as interest in topic, or the act itself of writing and self-efficacy in writing, or one's belief in one's ability to write.

The evaluation of complexity may vary according to the evaluator's approach to writing. Complexity, in a traditional product-based view of writing, only evaluates in terms of the quality of the written text as a product and does not take into consideration the process by which the text was produced by the writer. Whereas complexity, in a process-based approach to writing, emphasizes the development of writing competence in terms of a child's acquisition of cognitive and self-regulation strategies.

Social activity, the third and final dimension, regards writing as a social activity. Writing is related to children's classroom, family, and life social experiences. Writing is viewed as a tool for making members of a classroom community and challenges the notion that writing is a solitary ability. Viewing learning to write as a continuous experience beginning before schooling recognizes the various social experiences that add to children's understanding of written language, as well as the processes in which they are involved (Bazerman, 2007).

PARADIGM SHIFTS IN COMPOSITION THEORY

Thomas Kuhn (1996), author of *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, suggests that revolutions in science come about as the result of breakdowns that occur when old methods will not solve new problems. When several people working in a field begin to encounter anomalies or phenomena that cannot be explained by the established model, these are the first signs of instability. Many scientists who subscribe to the existing model will continue to make it work, even if a new model theoretically proposes to solve more problems than the traditional model. If enough scientists reach a tipping point to believe in its effectiveness, it has the potential to convince the majority to move their intellectual and emotional investment away from the traditional model toward the new model. Those who continue to harbor resentment toward the new model that works for the majority will lose any influential power in the transition, and their work thereby becomes obsolete. Kuhn calls a change in theory that underlies this kind of revolution in science a *paradigm shift*.

The traditional paradigm of composition theory was derived from the classical rhetorical model that organizes the production of discourse into invention, arrangement, and

style, but mostly it seems to be based on some idealized and orderly vision of what literature scholars, whose professional focus is on the written product, seem to imagine is an efficient method of writing. It is a prescriptive and orderly view of the creative act, a view that defines the successful writer as one who can systematically produce a 500-word theme of five paragraphs, each with a topic sentence (Hairston, 1982). Richard Young (1978), author of “Paradigms and Problems,” describes the traditional paradigm as the “vitalist” attitude toward composing: that is, the assumption that no one can really teach anyone else how to write because writing is a mysterious creative activity that cannot be categorized or analyzed.

Between 1900 and about 1970, discourse about writing pedagogy in the United States subscribed to this traditional paradigm of composition theory and was an instructional affair focused predominantly on prescriptive text features of model prose written by exemplary writers. Five-paragraph themes, stipulating three main points regardless of topic or argument, constituted the focus of expository writing instruction in most secondary schools (McArthur, Graham, & Fitzgerald, 2006). The character of this instructional discourse was largely captured in formalist rules and maxims of the sort offered by Lucas (1955), Strunk and White (1959), and Warriner (1950).

Changes in composition theory started in the mid 1950s and were derived from intellectual inquiry into language and learning in several fields, most notably in linguistics with the publication of Noam Chomsky’s, *Syntactic Structures*, in 1957. His theory of transformational grammar, with its insistent look at the rules by which language is generated, caused a new focus on the process by which language comes into being (Hairston, 1982).

By 1966, another solid vocal opposition to the traditional paradigm of composition theory and writing instruction was presented at the Anglo-American Conference on the

Teaching of English, or more commonly referred to as The Dartmouth Seminar (Dixon, 1967). Members of the seminars such as Britton, Moffett, and other esteemed linguists, psychologists, and educational researchers argued that the traditional approach consisted of formulaic “dummy runs.” Instead, they proposed a new model that viewed language—both writing and talking—as a cognitive and expressive process shaping and extending everyday experiences by bringing it into new relationships with old elements.

The new model of English education sought to move the focus of curriculum and instruction away from traditional models of cultural heritage and skills. Traditional instructional strategies previously rested on the belief that writing is a discipline itself, whose rules and skills are to be learned by students and taught by teachers separated distinctly from other academic subject areas. The Dartmouth reformers promoted a fundamental shift in the nature of English language education that downplayed the importance of writing products and rather put a greater value on the generative and active meaning-making process in which students engage in the act of writing.

In 1968, a journalist and professor named Donald Murray published a book called *A Writer Teaches Writing*, in which he suggested that if educators want to teach students to write they have to initiate them into the process that writers go through, not give them a set of rules. He is cited with originating the admonition, “Teach Writing as Process, Not Product” in a 1972 article by that same title. Murray insisted that writers find their real topics only through the act of writing—not prior to act itself.

Another source for the paradigm shift away from traditional compositional theory at this time was the Cambridge Cognitive Revolution (CCR) at MIT and at Harvard University. Noam Chomsky’s (as cited in MacArthur et al., 2006) seminal ideas on language as a

rule-governed cognitive process revolutionized linguistics, arguing that language performance transformed manifestations of underlying language competence. One of the greatest collective human resources to emerge from the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) was a group of graduate students who undertook research that would leave lasting impressions upon the field of writing research and related fields. These students included Janet Emig, John Mellon, Courtney Cazden, Charles Read, Frank Smith, and James Moffett, who was not a student but an associate colleague who worked closely with those enrolled in HGSE.

Janet Emig's seminal study published in 1971 investigated composing processes of both Harvard professors and a few middle-class Chicago north-suburban 12th graders. This study further solidified the profession's attention away from the written product produced by writers and shined the spotlight on how children learn how to write.

Mina Shaughnessy (1977) expanded upon this shift to the process of writing by being the first to claim that writing is a social act. Shaughnessy studied the logic and history of errors in the writing of 4,000 New York City College basic writers, many of whom were first generation college students. Outcomes of Shaughnessy's study helped teachers to clarify their thinking about the writing process by illustrating effective instruction required understanding the patterns embedded within their own speech. Shaughnessy's insight was utterly simple and vitally important toward the current paradigm of composition theory:

We cannot teach students to write by looking only at what they have written. We must also understand how that product came into being, and why it assumed the form that it did. We have to try to understand what goes on during the internal act of writing and we have to intervene during the act of writing if we want to affect its outcome. We have to do the hard thing, examine the intangible process, rather than the easy thing, evaluate the tangible product. (p. 5)

Donald Graves (1978) is credited with popularizing Shaughnessy's insights into composition theory with elementary educators.

In 1974, James Gray (as cited in Flood, Lapp, Squire, & Jensen, 2003) initiated a writing project at the University of California, Berkeley that stressed the re-education of teachers in composition. He implemented a professional development institute for 25 teachers that focused on teachers writing for other teachers. Gray's model emphasized that these institutes would be instruments for teachers ranging from elementary to university level to communicate with each other regarding concerns about the composing process, the teaching of writing, and writing research. What began in the summer of 1974 as single professional development institute has evolved throughout the past three decades into a network of 189 university-based sites in 50 states; Washington, DC; Puerto Rico; six foreign countries; and the Department of Defense Schools around the world, known as the National Writing Project (NWP). The NWP currently serves more than 100,000 educators a year in all disciplines in grades K-16 and is the only national program that continues to focus on writing as a means to improve learning in America's schools (NWP & Nagin, 2006).

CATALYST FOR RESEARCH ON WRITING INSTRUCTION

It was during the mid-1970s that two influential articles appeared in popular press, *Newsweek's* "Why Johnny Can't Write" (1975) and *Time's* "Bonehead English" (1974). These two authors placed blame on the sharp increase in remedial freshman composition classes squarely on the shoulders of the public school systems sharp increase in the lack of students writing abilities. The authors of these two articles cited the failure of the public schools to address "basic" writing skills. They proposed that the popularity of creative

methods and permissive standards regarding writing instruction was permeating too many classrooms. Although this was not the first literacy crisis in America, as such claims were common during periods of demographic and class economic shifts, the public outcry to return to the “basics” brought about the first substantial federal programs that funded educational research agendas in the field of composition.

The first writing research sponsored by the National Institute of Education in the field of composition was the cognitive work of Linda Flower and John R. Hayes at Carnegie Mellon University. Flower and Hayes (1980a, 1980b, 1981, 1984) developed a cognitive model of writing processes, identifying the components and organization of long-term memory, planning, reviewing, and translating thought into text (MacArthur et al., 2006). They derived their methodology of think-aloud protocols from Newell and Simon (1972). The research from both Flower and Hayes (1980a, 1980b) and Emig (1971) focused on cognitive writing/composing processes and the use of think-aloud protocols to support student composition.

In recent decades, writing researchers have shifted their attention away from studying pieces of writing, or simply the written products, to studies focused more on the “how you do it,” of writers composing process (Flood et al., 2003). Writing researchers and instructors in the 21st century may whole-heartedly agree that writing as a process overrides viewing writing as a product alone. However, the conceptions of writing as a process continue to vary from theorist to theorist.

THEORIES OF WRITING PROCESS

The writing process is a flexible, iterative and recursive process that has a multitude of meanings attached to its concept from both a researcher's and a practitioner's point of view. Those who view the writer as the originator of written text, and place the greatest value upon the *process* by which a writer identifies a purpose for writing and determines the type of writing being composed for a perceived audience fall within the process camp. There are two distinct groups that fall within the process camp, the expressivists and the cognitivists. Although there is not a singular universal definition that can be prescribed for the term "writing process" regarding classroom practice, it can offer us a common vocabulary for talking about the nature of writing—planning, revising, editing—and insight in to how these processes work for particular writers in particular situations (Flood et al., 2003).

Pioneers of the expressivist movement—Donald Murray, Ken Macrorie, William Coles, Peter Elbow and others—have published widely, advocating classroom techniques that encourage students to take power in their own prose (Kroll, 1990). Expressivists define writing by the essential qualities of Romantic expressivism—integrity, spontaneity, and originality. Teachers who advocate expressivism in their own writing instruction are nondirective; they facilitate classroom activities designed to promote writing fluency and self-expression in writing. Students in expressivists' classrooms are encouraged to write freely and uncritically and place great value on quantity.

Cognitivists promote planning and problem solving in the writing process. Pioneers of this cognitive view include Janet Emig, James Britton, and the work of Linda Flower and John R. Hayes. The Flower and Hayes model of composing (1980a, 1980b, and 1981 versions) makes strong theoretical claims in assuming relatively simple cognitive operations

produce enormously complex actions and, like Emig's (1971) research, the Flower and Hayes model helped promote a "science consciousness" among writing teachers.

Even though cognitive researchers have warned that "novice writers cannot be turned into experts simply by tutoring them in the knowledge expert writers have" (Scardamalia, 1981, p. 174), many writing teachers believed cognitive research could provide a "deep structure" theory of the composing process, which could in turn specify how writing should be taught (Faigley, 1986).

According to the cognivist view of writing, planning begins with identifying a rhetorical problem and then students continue the writing process by translating their plans and thoughts into words, and by reviewing their work through revising and editing (Kroll, 1990). Although it was never intended to be a linear process, unfortunately in pedagogical practice, many classroom teachers interpreted this planning stage to be a set of rigid activities that are to be dictated by days of the week such that the classroom schedule dictates Monday is planning day, Tuesday is drafting day, Wednesday is peer response, Thursday is revision and so forth. In this sense, students wrongly come to view writing as a static response to the teacher's demands for classroom unity and conformity rather than a complex individualized problem-solving process that demands flexibility and values recycling through various subprocesses of composition without time constraints. The work of cognitive researchers such as Emig (1971) and Hayes and Flower (1983) attempted to dispel the need for rigid whole group writing instruction by revealing that complex writing processes are not linear or formulaic but rather individual and recursive. However, many researchers still find fault with pursuing a cognitive view of composing because they accuse cognivists of neglecting the content of writing and downplaying conflicts inherent in acts of writing. As a consequence,

pedagogies assuming a cognitive view tend to overlook differences in language use among students of different social classes, genders, and ethnic background (Faigley, 1986).

The lesser well known of the approaches, the interactive approach, sees the writer as a person involved in a dialogue with his or her audience. The text itself is the documentation between the writer and the reader, who both share responsibility for its coherency. According to schema theory, the coherence of a text is established through the fit between the schemata of the reader (or audience) and the organization, content, and argument of the text constructed by the writer. Both the writer and the reader are bound by language limitations. The writer must either concede to the language of the reader or provide enough schemata for the reader to assist with comprehension, allowing for gradual revision of the reader's previously held schemata. In this version of interactivity between writer and text, the writer attempts to appeal to the reader through a reality upon which the writer and the reader can agree, and to convince the reader of a particular argument within this reality (Kroll, 1990). If the writer is unable to appeal to the reader, then the reader may reject the text itself.

Social constructivists believe that knowledge, language, and the nature of discourse are determined for the writer by the discourse community for whom the writer writes and that human language (including writing) can be understood only from the perspective of a society rather than a single individual. It rejects the assumption that writing is the act of a private consciousness and that everything else—readers, subjects and texts—is “out there” in the world. The focus of a social view of writing, therefore, is not on how the social situation influences the individual, but on how the individual is a constituent of a culture (Faigley, 1986). Pioneers in the field of this social view of composition theory include Patricia Bizzell, David Bartholomae, Charles Bazerman, Greg Myers, and Shirley Brice Heath.

In a social constructivist classroom, the emphasis is placed on the learner rather than the teacher, so students can develop the skills required of effective problem solvers. The writing produced by a writer is a social act that can only take place within and for a specific context and audience (Coe, 1987). From a social perspective, a major shortcoming in studies that contrast expert and novice writers (such as those highlighted by cognitivist researchers in composition theory) lies not so much in the artificiality of the experimental situation, but in the assumption that expertise can be defined outside of a specific community of writers. Since individual expertise varies across communities, there can be no one definition of an expert writer. These researchers have observed that for many children and adult writers, the ways literacy is used at home and in the world around them match poorly with the literacy expectations of the school.

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE

The foundation of social constructivism is rooted in Lev Vygotsky's work from the 1930s, who stressed the importance of dialogue in the development of learning where social interactions help construct knowledge. Correctly and scientifically understood, the concept of education does not at all mean artificially inculcating children with ideals, feelings, and moods that are totally alien to them. The right kind of education involves awakening in the child what already exists within him, helping him to develop it and directing this development in a particular direction.

The revolutionary approach to education pioneered by Vygotsky has linked two processes together in a way that was never before considered. According to Vygotsky, some of the developmental outcomes and processes that were typically thought of as occurring

naturally or spontaneously were, in fact, substantially influenced by children's own learning (Bodrova & Leong, 1996). Learning, in turn, was shaped by the social-historical context in which it took place. This dual emphasis-on children's active engagement in their own mental development and on the role of the social context-determined the name used to describe the Vygotskian approach in the West—"social constructivism" (Bodrova & Leong, 1996).

The kind of learning (and, consequently, teaching) that leads to changes in development was described by Vygotsky (1978) as the situation in which children acquire specific cultural tools handed to them by more experienced members of society. These cultural tools facilitate the acquisition of *higher mental functions*—deliberate, symbol-mediated behaviors that may take different forms dependent on the specific cultural context. Higher mental functions exist for some time in a distributed or shared form, when learners and their mentors use new cultural tools jointly in the context of solving some task. After acquiring a variety of cultural tools, children become capable of using higher mental functions independently.

Tools for higher mental functions have two faces: external and internal (Luria, 1979; Vygotsky, 1978). On the external plane, the tool is one that learners can use to solve problems that require engaging mental processes at levels not yet available to children (e.g., when a task calls for deliberate memorization or focused attention). At the same time, on the internal plane, the tool plays a role in the child's construction of his/her own mind, influencing the development of new categories and processes. These new categories and processes eventually lead to the formation of higher mental functions such as focused attention, deliberate memory, and logical thought.

The concept of the *zone of proximal development* (ZPD) is by now quite familiar even to educators working outside the Vygotskian framework. However, the applications of this concept to instructional practice are not numerous, and in many cases the ZPD is used as a metaphor rather than as a theory (Bodrova & Leong, 1996). The ZPD is defined as a distance between two levels of a child's performance: the lower level that reflect the tasks the child can perform independently and the higher level reflective of the tasks the same child can do with assistance.

To successfully apply the concept to instruction, it is important to remember that what develops next (proximally) is what is affected by learning (through formal or informal instruction). Consequently, the concept of the ZPD is applicable to development only to the degree in which development might be influenced by learning (Vygotsky, 1978). For any concept in education to be learned by students, there must be a mechanism that supports the progression of a newly learned/developed process from assisted to individual. If this mechanism is absent, learning may never occur.

SCAFFOLDING: MOVING TOWARD INDEPENDENCE

Introduced almost 40 years after Vygotsky's death by Jerome Bruner (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976), scaffolding describes the process of transition from teacher assistance to independence. It answers the frequently asked question about the ZPD: if a child can function at a high level only with assistance, how can this child eventually be able to function at the same level independently?

Scaffolding answers this question by focusing on the gradual "release of responsibility" from the expert to the learner, resulting in a child eventually becoming fully

responsible for his/her own performance. This gradual release of responsibility is accomplished by continuously decreasing the degree of assistance provided by the teacher without altering the learning task itself. Emphasizing the fact that the learning task remains unchanged makes *scaffolding* different from other instructional methods that simplify the learner's job by breaking a complex task into several simple ones. While breaking the task into simple subtasks may work for some areas (demonstrated by some successes of programmed instruction), in other areas, breaking a task into several component tasks actually changes the target skill or concept being learned. This alteration leads to learner difficulty when trying to master complex skills. Scaffolding makes the student's job easier by providing the maximum amount of assistance at the beginning stages of learning and then, as the student's mastery grows, withdrawing this assistance. If the concept of scaffolding is applied to writing instruction then educators must choose the right kind of initial assistance and then withdrawing it in such a way that the student's independent performance stays at the same high level as it was when the assistance was provided.

PURPOSE OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION

According to Fairclough (2001), the point of language education is not awareness for its own sake, but awareness as a necessary accompaniment to the development of the capabilities of children as producers and interpreters of discourse; not in reference to students as individuals but rather to the *collective* capabilities of children from oppressed social groupings. The primary emancipatory task of language education is to use critical language awareness as a facilitator for emancipatory discourse which challenges, breaks through, and

may ultimately transform the dominant orders of discourse, as a part of the struggle for oppressed social groups against dominant ones.

Fairclough (2001) provides a schematic model of language learning which corresponds to this conception including (a) marrying awareness of purposeful discourse and critical language awareness in order to develop children's potential language capabilities, and (b) using the children's existing language capabilities and experiences in order to build this critical language awareness. The principle of building on experience claims that language awareness, like social consciousness more generally, can be most effectively developed if children are helped to put such understanding and experience into words, and if these wordings become the basis for building awareness.

Fairclough's (2001) four-part cycle for language instruction includes (a) asking students to reflect upon their own discourse, (b) explicit modeling from the teacher to show children how to express these same reflections in a systematic, academic form, (c) using this type of knowledge as the basis for analysis by the class, and (d) providing opportunities to practice the newly formed awareness of language patterns to help build the child's capacity for purposeful discourse. This cycle can be repeated indefinitely: as awareness grows, past experience and developing practice can be subject to increasingly systematic and probing reflection, the teacher's contribution can become more substantial, and so on.

THE ROLE OF RESPONSIVE TEACHING

A model constructed by Ruddell and Unrau (1997) on responsive, reflective teaching of literacy provides insight into responsive teachers and ways they promote literacy engagement. Their research investigates and describes the psychological and instructional

factors that are critical to the development of both student and teacher intention and motivation. Their model for developing potential readers to sharpen their focus of intention on reading and meaning construction may have practical applications for also designing writing-enhancing instruction to develop writing intention and motivation.

Both reader and teacher have a *developing self* (an identity and self-schema, a sense of self-efficacy and self-worth, expectations, an experiential self, and self-knowledge), an *instructional orientation* (achievement goals, task values, sociocultural values and beliefs, and stances) and *task-engagement resources* (reader text-processing resources or teacher instructional design resources).

At the center of this model is the *focus of intention*. This focus is the central point of the mind's intent—of its direction, purpose, and intensity when interacting with a learning environment. The term *intention* implies not only purpose and goal, but also a self becoming and emerging from a cognitive-affective background. Mathewson (1994) refers to these background factors as cornerstone concepts—including values, goals, and self-concepts that are influenced by home and school environments. In describing the factors that influence motivation or the focus of intention, Ruddell and Unrau (2004) aspire to the ideal of optimally self-regulated reader or teacher. Self-regulation is essential for self-actualization, the pinnacle of Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs that drive motivation.

Factors for Developing Self

The constructs of the developing self-system, including identity and self-schema, self-efficacy and self-worth, expectations, the experiential self, and self-knowledge, are not isolated—they interact as they contribute to teacher or student focus of intention. Schunk

(1991) and Schunk and Zimmerman (1994) have shown that teaching students to be more efficacious and persuading them that they are efficacious improves their performance.

Self-worth may be viewed as a reflection of self-efficacy. According to self-worth theorists, students' highest concern is to protect a sense of ability (Covington, 1992). Accordingly, learners' motivation to engage in school settings frequently depends on their perception of the impact of a learning event on self-esteem.

The concept of self-worth also applies to teachers. Teachers who have low self-esteem are less likely to rise to teaching challenges and often find it more assuring to continue past practices without making efforts and risking failure in planning for future changes in their teaching. What teachers judge themselves capable of accomplishing in their classrooms has a determining effect on their motivation and the learning environments they construct.

Factors of Instructional Orientation

Instructional orientation, or the alignment of teacher or student with a teaching or learning task, affects intention and motivation. Achievement-goal theory stresses the engagement of the learner in selecting, structuring, and making sense of achievement experience. Meece (1994) points out that research has focused on two kinds of achievement goals: mastery or task-orientated goals and performance or ego-orientated goals. Those seeking mastery goals are intrinsically motivated to acquire knowledge and skills that lead to their becoming more competent. The word mastery used to describe these goals does not reference "mastery learning," "mastery teaching," or a behaviorist perspective of instruction. Individuals who are pursuing performance goals are eager to seek opportunities to

demonstrate their skills or knowledge in a competitive, public arena. Those students who are eager to read their writing aloud to a class because they are motivated to show off their skills as a writer exemplify the manifestation of performance or ego-orientated goals.

Perceptions of personal ability have been shown to be one critical factor that influences patterns of achievement (Meece, 1994). If individuals believe they can become better writers by making an effort, they are more likely to embrace a mastery-goal orientation. They see themselves as able to improve over time by making an effort to master challenging tasks. By making the effort to acquire knowledge and skills, the teacher's or student's feelings of self-worth and competence are likely to increase.

Learners who adopt an ego or performance orientation view their abilities as unchangeable and judge them in comparison to the abilities of others, such as their colleagues, peers, or classmates. If a student must exert more effort to learn a concept, a performance-orientated learner would judge that classmate as having less ability even if both students eventually learn the concept. Performance-oriented learners become preoccupied with ability and see it as basic to success in school performance.

School learning environments have been found to shape students' goal orientations. Students can be influenced to adopt mastery goals if teachers create environments that accentuate self-improvement, discovery, engagement in meaningful tasks, and practicality, while diminishing the importance of competition, demonstration of intellectual skills, and public comparisons of schoolwork (Ames, 1992; Hagen & Weinstein, 1995). A teacher's expectations influence students, especially in relation to the teacher's degree of emphasis on mastery goals. Teachers can promote literacy engagement by emphasizing a mastery orientation that stresses conceptual understanding, provides for collaborative learning, and

minimizes social competition. Meece (1991) found significant differences among teachers' expectations for students. Teachers in high-mastery classes expected students to understand, apply, and make sense of their learning, whereas in low-mastery classes students spent more time memorizing information and had few opportunities to construct meaning or apply their learning in new situations.

Task-Engagement Resources

Task-engagement resources refer to information structures that enable a teacher or a reader to undertake a learning task. A reader's text-processing resources include knowledge of language, word analysis, text-processing strategies, metacognitive strategies, knowledge of classroom and social interaction, and world knowledge. Each of these resources are applicable to students as writers and not only focus their intention to read and write but also interact with texts to construct meanings that can be negotiated through classroom discussion.

The teacher's instructional design resources include knowledge of students and their meaning-construction process, knowledge of literature and content areas, teaching strategies, world knowledge, and metacognitive knowledge. With these resources, teachers can create learning environments that nourish the developing self and activate students' instructional orientation.

Meanings are open—not closed or fixed—though they need to be grounded in the text. Students and teachers may share common understandings in the interpretive community; however, those understandings or interpretations are not forever fixed, meaning construction is viewed as a circular and changing process of forming hypotheses and then testing, negotiating, and validating interpretations. Although a text may be fixed, its meaning

for the students are always evolving. The understanding of this process of meaning negotiation is a hallmark of the responsive teacher and enables readers (and writers) to focus intention and increase motivation. The responsive, reflective teacher contributes to the development of focused literacy intention and heightened motivation through active literacy engagement.

MODES OF WRITING INSTRUCTION

Mode of instruction refers to the configuration of variable characteristics of certain teacher/classroom relationships and activities, particularly the role played by the teacher and the kinds of activities in which students engage (Hillocks, 1984). Through extensive classroom observation, Hillocks (1984) identified four modes of instruction, classified instructors, and compared attitudes of the students on several attitude factors that differed by the modes of instruction identified.

In the individualized mode of instruction, students receive instruction through tutorials, programmed materials of some kind, or a combination. The focus of instruction may vary widely, from mechanics to researching, planning, and writing papers. The chief distinction is that this mode of instruction seeks to help students on an individual basis. This type of individualized form of instruction is not typically found in the public classroom where the ratio of attention per pupil ranges between 20 or 30 students per teacher in an elementary setting and over 120 students at the secondary level.

The presentational mode is characterized by (a) relatively clear and specific objectives, such as the use of particular rhetorical techniques; (b) lecture and teacher-led discussion dealing with concepts to be learned and applied; (c) the study of models and other

materials that explain and illustrate the concept; (d) specific assignments or exercises that generally involve imitating a pattern or following rules that have been previously discussed; and (e) feedback coming primarily from teachers. Applebee (1981) also confirmed that this was the most common mode of instruction found in the American school system.

The natural process mode is characterized by (a) generalized objectives, such as increased fluency and skill in writing; (b) free writing about whatever interests the students in a journal or as a way of “exploring a subject”; (c) writing for audiences of peers; (d) generally positive feedback from peers; (e) opportunities to revise and rework writing; and (f) high levels of interaction among students. The teacher is often the facilitator whose role is to free the student’s imagination and promote growth by sustaining a positive classroom atmosphere. They avoid the study of model pieces of writing, the presentation of criteria, structuring the treatment around sets of skills or concepts and using the teacher as the primary source of feedback. Writing is learned by doing it and sharing it with real audiences, not by studying and applying abstract rhetorical principles in exercises that the teacher alone will read and judge.

The environmental mode is characterized by (a) clear and specific objectives, such as increased use of specific detail and figurative language; (b) materials and problems selected to engage students with each other in specifiable processes important to some particular aspect of writing; and (c) activities, such as small group problem-centered discussions, conducive to high levels of peer interaction concerning specific tasks. Teachers in this mode are likely to minimize lecture and teacher-led discussions, structuring activities so that, while teachers may provide brief introductory lectures, students work on particular tasks in small groups before proceeding to similar tasks independently. In contrast to the natural process,

the environmental mode appears to place teacher and student more nearly in balance, with the teacher planning activities and selecting materials through which the students interact with each other to generate ideas, and learn identifiable writing skills; feedback comes from peers, the teachers or both.

According to Hillocks (1984), among the four modes of instruction, the most effective was the environmental mode. In this mode, the instructor plans and uses activities that result in high levels of student interaction concerning particular problems parallel to those they encounter in certain kinds of writing. In contrast to the presentational mode, this mode places a priority on high levels of student involvement. In contrast to the natural process mode, the environmental mode places priority on structured problem-solving activities, with clear objectives, planned to enable students to deal with similar problems in composing. On pretest to posttest measures in Hillocks meta-analysis, the environmental mode is over four times more effective than the traditional presentational mode and three times more effective than that natural process mode.

One significant finding from Hillocks' (1987) meta-analysis was using exemplar texts as writing models with students was more useful than studying grammar (defining parts of speech, the parsing of sentences, etc.) in isolation, which often has a deleterious effect on student writing. Hillocks proposed future research should be conducted on the use of exemplar texts in an inquiry approach to writing instruction. During this inquiry into writing, disagreements would be examined and could prompt further explorations and analysis by the students, with the teacher acting as a moderator. This foresight would prove to be pivotal in a current trend that utilizes models, often referred to as exemplar texts or mentor texts, with students in an inquiry based approach to writing instruction in today's classroom.

HOW READING INFLUENCES WRITING

The idea of using exemplar texts in writing instruction is not new. According to William Winston (1987), Francis Christensen's dissatisfaction with educators who expected students to write better without explicit instruction on how to accomplish this goal, led to his use of exemplar texts as writing models in the classroom. Christensen's (1967) book, *Note Towards A New Rhetoric*, studied the work of professional writers by analyzing sentences, paragraphs, structure, and style to uncover essential elements of craft that they are able to control in composition. He believed that if educators were able to increase their own awareness of the stylistic choices available to writers, then they could teach those choices to students. In this way, teaching writing becomes a matter of research first and then instruction (Winston, 1987). With careful guidance, even younger students are able to observe and understand the beauty, clarity, and effectiveness of a good model. Once students are exposed to professionally crafted texts and understand the possibilities, educators can help them bring a level of simplicity or complexity, depth, control, and sophistication to their own work (Winston, 1987).

In *Texts and Pretexts* (1932), Aldous Huxley wrote about what the writer does:

Like all makers, he requires a stock of raw materials—in this case experience. Now experience is not a matter of having actually swum the Hellespont, or danced with the dervishes, or slept in an opium den. It is a matter of sensibility and intuition, of seeing and hearing the significant things, of paying attention at the right moments, of understanding and coordinating. (p. 5)

Huxley saw the writer as a maker of writing not simply a “doer.” Making is not just a function of skill, but equally a function of perception, imagination, and coordination.

Teaching writing within Christensen's (1967) framework of a mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction is to teach making. An inquiry approach exposes students to a wide

variety of models, thereby involving reading, listening, and imitating. It promotes students to analyze, discuss and experiment with and manipulate language to achieve meaningful and satisfying rhetorical effect, sound and rhythm, intellectual and emotional impact. If students are exposed to exemplar models of professional writing they can make better choices about what they intend to write on their own.

Reaffirming Christensen's (1967) framework, F. Smith (1983) found that when students "read like a writer" they notice the way words are spelled, the way authors use a phrase or sentence to create an image, how a certain word conveys the right connotation, and how a writer leads readers through a clear explanation of a complex process (Farnan & Dahl, 2003). Unfortunately, novice readers are unable to experience the phenomenon of reading like a writer due to laborious efforts consumed with understanding and deconstructing meaning from a text, efforts which limit their ability to focus on how the text was constructed by the author in the first place.

In 1983, Eckhoff examined the effect of second-graders' reading on their writing. She designed her research study around the hypothesis that what students read will have a powerful effect on their writing (Farnan & Dahl, 2003). Eckhoff conducted a comparison between two classrooms with two distinct basal reading programs. One classroom used a basal reader where the text included longer sentences and complex structures. The other classroom used a basal reader with shorter, simpler sentences and repetition of vocabulary. The results indicate that children exposed to the "literary prose" with more complex structure wrote more complex sentence structures, including complex verb forms, and infinitive and participial phrases. On the other hand, the children who were only exposed to short, simple

structures used less elaboration in their writing attempts, wrote one sentence per line, as was modeled in the basal stories and followed repetitive patterns.

In 1990, Dressel conducted similar research with fifth graders (Farnan & Dahl, 2003). Dressel read aloud three short detective novels to two groups of students. One set of books had been deemed as “high-quality” literature, whereas the other texts were considered of lesser quality. During the actual read-aloud, the teacher-researcher explicitly acknowledged to the class what each author did to create the story and its genre features. All students were given opportunities to write after they were exposed to three detective stories. The group who was only exposed to “high quality” stories wrote stories themselves that were judged to have better control of literary elements such as plot, setting, character development, literary style, and mood. The writing attempts of students who were exposed to lower quality stories were deemed to be inferior to those of the “high quality” subgroup.

Studies such as these suggest a correlation between reading exemplar texts from published authors and the qualities of students’ writing following the use of these texts in instruction. The concept of teaching the *writer*, requires educators to consider approaches to writing instruction not based upon a formulaic system of skills and subskills but rather the process of *writing* itself.

A MENTOR TEXT INQUIRY APPROACH TO WRITING INSTRUCTION

According to Carol Lee (2007), Cultural Modeling (CM) takes the position that one cannot imagine points of leverage between everyday experience and subject matter learning without understanding the structure of disciplines in terms of both breadth and depth. Content knowledge involves knowledge of the structure of the discipline, the modes of

argumentation privileged, as well as habits of mind or dispositions entailed in doing the work of the discipline. The structure of a discipline includes both breadth and depth. Breadth includes a declarative knowledge of the range of topics, the range of strategies available for solving problems, and the range of debates in the discipline, as well as knowledge of the history of the evolution of knowledge within the discipline. Applebee and Purvis (1992) cite content knowledge about authors, a limited range of literary works and literary movements that drives English teachers and the high school literature curriculum to see coverage of these topics and exposure as the primary aim of instruction rather than the process of becoming a strategic reader of any literary text.

Lee (2007) promotes engagement in literary reasoning with an emphasis on narratives that students encounter across many media (television, film, music, as well as print literature). Cultural Modeling draws on in the design and selection of cultural data sets used to elicit students' prior knowledge and the promotion of habits of mind or dispositions required to engage in fundamental aspects of content knowledge of a discipline over a single focus on authors, particular texts and literary movements.

From the perspective of CM, conceptualizing resources that students already bring with them from their experiences outside of school is a fundamental element in the teachers Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) toolkit. Lee's (2007) research has consistently found in CM classrooms that students who would be designated as seriously challenged readers, effortful processors, knowledge reliant readers, nonstrategic processors, and resistant readers show astounding progress in engaging in literary reasoning with very complex texts when they (a) work with cultural data sets that make domain-specific reading strategies public, (b) use cultural data sets that demonstrate the relevance of the cognitive work entailed in the

literary reasoning in the everyday lives of youth, (c) sequence texts in ways that build on the knowledge of the text and makes the new use of existing strategies a safer enterprise because students' existing prior knowledge is privileged, and (d) design instruction in ways that privilege contextualization cues regarding language use that students already value that provides incentives to be effortful and actively participate.

The literature on first-and second-language acquisition documents what novices learn through patterned errors, that is, using a rule in a context that does not apply. In CM, the act of drawing on students' knowledge, dispositions, and competencies outside of school does not imply a simple one-to-one correspondence between the everyday and the academic. Rather it is about helping students understand how their everyday knowledge is related and different from the academic. The literature on language socialization documents that learning a new language, language variety, or social register entails understanding the epistemological assumptions behind genres, the rules for participating, the rules for what counts as good questions, good claims, and good evidence; in other words, learning how to engage the world through language in new ways.

When teachers immerse students in reading and studying the kind of writing they want them to do, they are actually teaching at two levels (Ray, 2006). They teach students about the particular genre or writing issue that is the focus of the study, but they also teach students to use a habit of mind experienced writers use all the time. They teach them how to *read like writers* (Ray, 1999; F. Smith, 1983), noticing as an insider how things are written. Given enough time, they will learn to notice things about writing that other novices who do not write do not notice and this will help them develop a vision for the writing they will do in the future. They adopt a stance that professional writers take and read the kind of texts that

they are getting ready to write themselves. This discipline-based stance is an inquiry approach to writing instruction that teaches students to *read like writers*.

In order to authentically address this inquiry approach to writing instruction, the students must be exposed to real-world texts that ensure that the writing they study and notice are for the most part *true to form*. When teachers approach writing instruction without real-world writing attached to it, using preconceived graphic organizers or static grammar rule fixations, they end up teaching things about writing that are not true 100% of the time and therefore inauthentic in their very nature.

An inquiry approach to writing instruction focuses on the writing process and the writing product simultaneously. It does not provide students a linear, neat, or simple way to write something, and it does not promise that writing itself can be compartmentalized into a lock-step process either. In an inquiry stance, teachers help students explore different alternatives for how to write something, and then they let them do what writers really have to do; make decisions about how their pieces will go (Ray, 2006).

A fundamental distinction in an inquiry approach to writing instruction lies within the term *model*. Sometimes when teachers write they are trying to create a *model* more in the noun sense of the word than in the verb sense. They want their writing, or one text, to serve as a *model* for what the students will write. But when teachers work from an inquiry stance, they have decided that the *model* for writing will come from a variety of quality published texts that anchor the writing instruction for a particular genre. These exemplar published texts are often referred to in pedagogical textbooks as either “touchstone” or “mentor” texts. For the purpose of this study, the term “mentor text” has been adopted for future reference to any published text used to model exemplar writing with students during writing instruction.

Kelly Gallagher (as cited in J. Anderson & Spandel, 2005) describes his own process coming to terms as a high school teacher with the understanding that placing quality mentor texts in the hands of students and asking them to read is not enough to make them better writers. Although he admits that reading widely often does enable students to get a feel for crafting more sophisticated sentences and a deeper understanding of how authors approach different genres, alone it does not necessarily guarantee quality writing.

It is the pedagogical combination of extensive reading paired with explicit writing instruction that generates effective writing and writers. His reference to published author, Stephen King's (2000) quote: "If you want to be a writer, you must do two things above all else: read a lot and write a lot. There's no way around these two things that I'm aware, no shortcut" (p. 145) solidifies his stance that educators must put a number of exemplary mentor texts in front of students for both reading and writing purposes. These models are not meant exclusively for novice or reluctant writers but allow all students on the continuum of writing development from novice to expert the same access to learning how to write from professional writers. Allowing students the time and opportunity to internalize what good writers do is critical, and for students to have any chance to do this, they need modeling, modeling, and more modeling (Anderson & Spandel, 2005).

Zwiers (2008) found that academic language is developed by (a) intricately linking higher-order thinking processes, (b) extensive modeling and scaffolding of classroom talk, and (c) accelerated by weaving direct teaching of its features, while teaching content concepts. Results of his research align with the findings of other scholars who argue that teachers need more practical awareness of language, language acquisition, and language development (Fillmore & Snow, 2002; Valdés, Bunch, Snow, Lee, & Matos, 2005). Zwiers

calls upon educators to become practical educational linguists who know the basic inner workings of language in our discipline and put this knowledge into practice in our classrooms.

In writing instruction, it is imperative that we begin with a foundation of social and cultural perspective of language used in and out of school. We must be able to clarify the function and features of academic language that we expect our students to use in their own writing. This includes academic grammar, which is the set of rules and conventions that organize words and phrases commonly used in school writing and conversations about content in classrooms. When students learn these conventions, they gain access to the “codes” or “blueprints” that accelerate their comprehension and writing abilities. Educators must routinely model and scaffold academic language with their students.

Classroom talk is a tool for working with information such that it becomes knowledge and understanding (Mercer, 2000). However, classroom talk as an instructional tool is ineffective if it is only viewed as linear and static in nature. Nystrand, Gamoran, Kachur, and Prendergast (1997) found that 85% of all instructional time in a sample of eighth- and ninth-grade English classrooms was a combination of lecture, recitation, and seatwork. This type of transactional discourse between teacher and students does not explore the type of authentic discourse that students will meet in the real world that is often exploratory rather than didactic by nature.

Ideally, classroom discussions allow for the repetition of linguistic terms and thinking processes that lead to language acquisition, internalization, and appropriation by students (Bakhtin, 1981; Vygotsky, 1978). Zwiers (2008) promotes classroom discussion as a way to push learners to think quickly, respond, organize their thoughts into sentences, negotiate

meaning, back claims with evidence, ask for clarification, and construct meaning in real time as the dialog develops. It also provides a format to make hidden thought processes more public and shared. This allows skilled thinkers and language users to pass on skills and ideas to others, therefore providing a natural scaffolding for using language as a *tool* to acquire a deeper understanding of the very nature of language use itself.

Since Vygotsky's works were translated into other languages over more than 30 years ago, the association between Vygotsky's theories and the idea of shared or collaborative activities has been firmly established. However, this association has mainly led to an interest in expert-novice interactions or interactions between peers. In reality, pedagogical applications of this idea go far beyond the issue of optimal instructional interactions. Partners in shared activity share more than a common task; they also share the very mental processes and categories involved in performing this task. From an instructional perspective, this means that the mental processes employed by a teacher or by a more experienced peer tutor should be the same as those eventually appropriated by the learner.

A FRAMEWORK FOR A MENTOR TEXT INQUIRY APPROACH TO WRITING INSTRUCTION

Alesandrini and Larson (2002) propose a framework that advocates for contemporary constructivist approaches in the classroom. In this framework, they have identified five basic phases of constructivism that play a key role in scaffolding students from their current understanding of concept to new learnings. This constructivist framework can provide a basis for using a mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction in a fourth grade classroom.

The first construct includes *learning results from exploration and discovery*.

Learning is viewed as an active process of exploring new information and constructing meaning from new information by bridging it to previous knowledge and experience.

Learning is an iterative process that moves between construction and reconstruction as new information is consumed. Educators in this phase function not as transmitters of information but rather as facilitators who coach learners as they blaze their own paths toward personally meaningful goals (Alesandrini & Larson, 2002).

The second construct finds *learning is a community activity facilitated by shared inquiry*. Collaboration and cooperative inquiry have proved to be effective educational strategies that require group members to “negotiate meaning.” Any product may evolve and change as a result of the interaction between group members and each member’s ability to see problems from multiple perspectives or different points of view (Alesandrini & Larson, 2002).

Thirdly, *learning occurs during the constructivist process*. Instead of requiring an understanding *before* applying new understandings to the construction of something, students working in a constructivist environment are actually learning concepts *while* they are exploring their application. A variety of solutions are applied throughout the exploration phase, and learners play an active, ongoing, critical role in assessing their own work. Educators are still responsible for making a traditional assessment of the end product of their exploration, but students are responsible for verbally expressing and reflecting upon what they have learned and how it relates to their prior knowledge. In this sense, assessment is not applied as a summative end result to evaluate an end product but rather is seen as formative and ongoing throughout the entire process. Formative assessments are applied by learners

during a constructivist activity and viewed as a key component in helping these learners as they conduct their learning experiments (Alesandrini & Larson, 2002).

The fourth tenant proposes that *learning results from participation in authentic activities*. Constructivists believe that learning should be based on activities and problems that students might encounter in the “real world.” There is no validity to decontextualized or inauthentic activities that often occur in traditional classrooms (Alesandrini & Larson, 2002).

The fifth and final principle states that *outcomes of constructivist activities are unique and varied*. All learners bring a distinct and unique background of experiences to the constructivist activity and exploration. Therefore, no two products can authentically occur from a constructivist approach to inquiry and look identical in all aspects (Alesandrini & Larson, 2002).

PHASES OF A MENTOR TEXT INQUIRY APPROACH TO WRITING INSTRUCTION

A proliferation of practical texts describing a mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction has been published in the past decade (J. Anderson, 2007; J. Anderson & Spandel, 2005; Culham & Coutu, 2008; Culham et al., 2010; Dorfman & Cappelli, 2007, 2009; Ehmann & Gayer, 2009; Ehrenworth, 2003; Ray, 1999, 2002, 2006; Ray & Cleaveland, 2004; Ray & Laminack, 2001; Walther & Phillips, 2009). Although research on this inquiry approach to writing instruction is scarce, the authors of these practical texts are grounded by some common constructivist tenants that correspond to the framework proposed by Alesandrini and Larson (2002), including (a) adopting a descriptivist versus prescriptivist stance to writing instruction; (b) using exemplar published texts as models for the type of writing they want their students to emulate; (c) an environment dedicated to the inquiry

process; (d) purposeful scaffolding that allows students to move from their current understanding toward new understandings about writing; and (e) time to engage in the habits of professional writers including multiple opportunities for exploring texts, noticing language use and construction of language by authors, drafting, revising, editing and sharing writing with others.

In order to study the impact that applying a mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction has upon student writers and their writing abilities, the researcher has designed phases for instruction (see Figure 1) that are not intended to be flexible rather than static in nature. The phases of this mentor text inquiry approach include an (a) *introduction phase* where the teacher introduces a mentor text and deconstructs the meaning of the text for comprehension purposes, (b) a *descriptive phase* in which the teacher provides students opportunities to notice the language pattern(s) that the author used to construct the mentor text, (c) a *target phase* where the teacher identifies the target skill or language pattern for students to work toward mastery from the mentor text, (d) a *gradual release phase* where the teacher conducts a researcher-designed mentor text protocol (see Figure 2) with the students that includes purposeful scaffolding to move students toward independent mastery of the target skill, (e) an *exploration phase* where the students are provided the time and opportunity to identify the variations of the target skill in other published mentor texts, (f) an *application phase* where the students are given time to envision and apply the target skill in the context of their own writing, and finally (g) an *assessment phase* in which the students are able to self-identify and highlight the use of the target skill in their own writing for the teacher to observe.

<p>Introduction Phase Deconstructing the meaning of a text with students for understanding.</p>
<p>Descriptive Phase Noticing the language pattern(s) the author used to construct the text itself.</p>
<p>Target Phase The teacher identifies the target skill (language pattern) for students to work toward mastery from the text.</p>
<p>Gradual Release Phase Teacher conducts the mentor text protocol with students: Author Does, Teacher Does, Collaboration & Independency.</p>
<p>Exploration Phase Students locate the target skill (language pattern) in other texts.</p>
<p>Application Phase Students envision and apply the target skill (language pattern) to their own writing.</p>
<p>Assessment Phase Students highlight for the teacher the target skill (language pattern) in their own writing.</p>

Figure 1. Mentor text inquiry approach.

Teacher presents mentor text to whole class on either a document camera, transparency or chart paper.
Teacher reads the mentor text aloud to the whole class.
The whole class choral reads the mentor text.
The teacher asks students “What do you notice about this mentor text?”
Teacher records their observations, adding academic language as appropriate and highlights text features discussed.
The teacher will explicitly state the target skill of mentor text if the students do not notice it during the previous step.
The teacher chooses another topic and using the target skill writes a model from the mentor text.
The teacher asks students to evaluate the new model generated by the teacher for the target skill.
The teacher calls on student volunteers to conduct a shared writing of a model from the mentor text together as a class. Students must choose another new topic that differs from that of the author and the teacher and apply the target skill.
The teacher calls upon student volunteers to evaluate the model generated by the class for the target skill.
The teacher provides a set amount of time for students to attempt a fourth model collaboratively on a topic of their choice that includes the target skill.
The teacher provides a set amount of time for students to attempt a fourth model collaboratively on a topic of their choice that includes the target skill.
The teacher provides a set amount of time for students to attempt a fifth model independently on a topic of their choice that includes the target skill. The teacher provides on-going feedback to students as they work independently.
The student highlights the target skill in their new writing attempt and teacher evaluates for the target skill.

Figure 2. Protocol for mentor text inquiry approach.

This research study proposes to explore the effect of using a descriptivist mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction in an urban classroom has upon the writing abilities, writing self-efficacy, and attitudes of student-participants in fourth grade. The results of this study will contribute to the body of research dedicated to finding effective literacy practices to help prepare our culturally and linguistically diverse students to become academically successful writers in the 21st century.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Applebee and Langer (2009) state that time and attention to writing instruction are not all that is necessary to improve the teaching of writing. What students are taught matters. A key objective of this study will be to provide a better understanding of the impact that using a mentor text(s) inquiry approach to writing instruction impacts the self-efficacy and writing abilities of fourth grade urban student writers. In keeping with this objective, I approached this study with the intent of answering the following questions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the effect, if any, of using a mentor text inquiry approach to narrative writing instruction on the writing attitudes and writing self-efficacy of fourth grade urban elementary student-participants?
2. What is the effect of using a mentor text inquiry approach to narrative writing instruction on the writing abilities of fourth grade urban elementary student-participants specifically on content, structure, fluency, and conventions?

RESEARCH METHOD

In the present study, I examined the influences of an urban elementary teacher who utilizes a mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction on fourth grade student writers. Using a mentor text inquiry approach requires the teacher to maintain a descriptivist

pedagogical stance to writing instruction rather than a prescriptivist stance. A descriptivist pedagogical stance allows teachers an opportunity to engage in conversations concerning both the meaning of a published piece of text and the manner in which the text itself was constructed for the reader to derive meaning from it. Katie Wood Ray (2006) defines the use of mentor text(s) inquiry approach to writing as students learning to *read like writers* (Ray, 1999; N. B. Smith, 1986), noticing as an insider how things are written and to help them develop a vision for the type of writing they will do.

I examined the development of an intact class of fourth grade students ($n = 35$) to generate general understanding(s) of the impact of using a mentor text inquiry approach on the development of narrative writing. I also examined six fourth grade students' beliefs regarding their abilities to learn or perform writing (self-efficacy) and their own writing abilities. In the study, I described each of the six students' beliefs about themselves as writers and their own motivations for writing over a 6-week period. I examined each student's development as a writer, focusing specifically on his/her decisions as a writer regarding content, structure, fluency, and conventions over a 6-week period. Finally, I examined whether students were consciously aware of their use of mentor text(s) in their own writing and if they found the use of mentor text(s) as an effective and desirable instructional tool for learning how to write.

STUDY DESIGN

Multiple case study design was used to examine individual student writing beliefs and self-regulation of writing over a period of 6 weeks. A case study provides a detailed examination of one setting or subject (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Multiple case studies are

useful for both researchers and educators, providing educators with opportunities to compare settings or subjects to their own situation and use their interpretations for informing their educational decisions; whereas, researchers may use them to test the generalizability of themes and patterns, which may be interpreted as relational or causal (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996). Using the case study approach is particularly useful in writing studies, because children write for unique reasons, coping with and viewing writing individualistically; which allows researchers to make visible variables contributing to a child's writing and to identify areas in writing needing additional investigation (Graves, 1973).

The writing development of six urban fourth grade writers was examined within their natural classroom context for this multiple case study. A fourth grade self-contained classroom located in Normal Heights, San Diego was used for this study. The teacher-researcher solicited the support of two educators who have backgrounds in writing instruction through collaborative work in the San Diego Area Writing Project to assess student writing for interrater reliability purposes and to interview student-participants, in an attempt to limit teacher-researcher bias.

Setting

The setting for the study was a public charter school in an urban area of Normal Heights, San Diego. The public charter school operated under the auspices of the San Diego Unified School District. The school was comprised of a 65% African American, 25% Latino, and 10% Caucasian and Asian student population and met requirements for Title I funding, with 76% of the student population receiving free and reduced lunch. The average pupil-teacher ratio in the fourth grade of this elementary school was 35 to 1. All writing

instruction for this study occurred during normal school operating hours in one fourth grade classroom attended by all six student-participants. The writing instruction was provided to all students in the class during the language arts block. General data kept on the entire class for pre/post summative writing scores and case study specific data for all six student-participants who qualified for this study were maintained in a secure manner.

Gaining Entry

The teacher-researcher was able to gain entry to the school site based upon employment status as a credentialed teacher assigned to teach fourth grade. Prior to the onset of the study, the teacher-researcher gained permission from the school principal and met with student participants and their parents/guardians to address the intent of the research being conducted and the implementation procedures. Permission from the school district was not required for this study, as the school site was a public charter school and assumed all rights and responsibilities for research conducted on site. The teacher-researcher was the only person in this study responsible for limiting the personal information recorded, which was essential to the research; storing personally identifiable data securely, coding data early in the research and disposing of the codes linking any data to individual subjects when data had been processed and to prevent disclosure of personally identifiable data to anyone other than the principal investigator. Participants were given numeric codes that were not associated with any demographic information provided in the school system, such as student identification numbers, social security numbers, phone numbers, or any other numeric code reported in the student's profile. The teacher-researcher verified that the consent forms were signed from both the parent/guardian and the student-participants prior to the onset of the

study. The teacher-researcher will retain the signed copies of the consent forms received from the parent/guardian and the student-participants for a minimum of 3 years after the completion of the study.

The Teacher

The teacher implementing the writing instruction in the classroom had a dual role as the primary researcher. The teacher-research brought a wide range of pedagogical experiences to the classroom including 14 years of prior experience as an elementary teacher on site. The teacher-researcher continued to maintain an on-going working relationship with a local site of the National Writing Project located at University of California, San Diego (UCSD), San Diego Area Writing Project (SDAWP). The teacher-researcher held a multiple-subject credential with a Crosscultural, Language, and Academic Development (CLAD) emphasis, a masters in Literacy, a reading specialist credential, and had completed 2 years of a joint-doctoral program at San Diego State University (SDSU) and University of San Diego (USD).

Educator A

Educator A assisted the teacher-researcher with the completion of this study by conducting the pre- and postinterviews with all six student-participants in order to limit teacher-researcher bias. Educator A had 20 years of experience as a primary classroom teacher, a doctoral degree in writing instruction from UCSD, and extensive leadership experience with the San Diego Area Writing Project, including the title of director for the past 5 years. Educator A was not a classroom teacher on site for this study and did not have previous experiences with the student-participants prior to the onset of the study. Permission

for student-participants to be interviewed by Educator A was obtained prior to the preinterviews being conducted from parents/guardians.

Educator B

Educator B assisted the teacher-researcher with the completion of this study to increase interrater reliability rates for pre- and postwriting assessments and reduce teacher-researcher bias. Educator B rated each student-participants' pre/post samples blindly and then hosted a discussion with the teacher-researcher to compare scores. Educator B had extensive experience as a primary classroom teacher and leadership experience with the San Diego Area Writing Project. Educator B was not a classroom teacher on site for this study and did not have previous experiences with the student-participants or their writing abilities. Permission from parents/guardian for student-participants to have their work evaluated for the sole purposes of this study was obtained prior to the onset of this study.

The Students

The student-participants of this study were identified as six typically developing boys and girls in fourth grade between low- ($n = 5$) and middle-SES ($n = 1$) homes. Two students ($n = 2$) were identified by a writing pretest as below-grade level expectation writers, two students ($n = 2$) were identified as at-grade level expectation writers, and two students ($n = 2$) were identified as above-grade level expectation writers for a total of six student-participants. All six student-participants resided in an urban community in the San Diego area. All participants were selected based upon enrollment on the class roster, parent/guardian permission, and their own willingness to participant in the study.

The typically developing fourth grade students met two of three similar criterion cited in Craig and Washington (2004): (a) teacher and parent judgment as typically developing, and (b) no history of referral for speech and language services or special education services. Social Economic Status (SES) was determined by students' participation or nonparticipation in the federally funded free or reduced-price lunch program.

Recruitment Process

The recruitment process involved the distribution of consent forms to all fourth grade students enrolled in the teacher-researcher's class. Consent forms included release for students to be interviewed via audiotape and videotape independently without a parent/guardian present, access to formal and informal reading and writing diagnostic assessment data on each student-participant.

INSTRUMENTS

Instruments used in this research study are described in the following sections.

Writing Attitude Survey

The Writing Attitude Survey (Kear, Coffman, McKenna, & Ambrosio, 2000) provides a quick indication of student attitudes toward writing. It consists of 28 items and can be administered to an entire classroom in about 10 minutes. Each item presents a brief, simply worded statement about reading or writing followed by two pictures of Garfield. Each pose is designed to depict a different emotional state ranging from very positive to very negative. The possibility that students would select a neutral response was avoided with an even number of choices. The decision to use a 4-point scale was based on research that

found that young children can discriminate no more than five pieces of information simultaneously.

The instrument was administered in 1997 to a sample of 1,503 U.S. students in Grades 1-12. Reliability and evidence of validity were based on this national sample. Cronbach's alpha, a measure of item relatedness (internal consistency), was calculated at each grade level for both genders, as well as for the total sample. Reliability coefficients ranged from .85 to .93 and no coefficient fell below .80 level; reliability for the total sample was .88. To allow for confident generalizations, the survey sampling procedures included 19 school districts across three NAEP assessment regions of the United States (east, central, and west). There were comparable numbers of males ($n = 509$) and females ($n = 465$) in the sample. Proportions of African Americans and Hispanics were within 4% of the national proportion for each grade.

The summary results were used to support and confirm other data about students' attitudes toward writing. By calculating a class average raw score and then using the chart provided in the original article to convert this score to a percentile rank, the teacher was able to compare the class with the national norm for that grade level and score. A class average at or above the national norm might indicate that this group of students has relatively positive attitudes toward writing compared with their peers. A class average below the national norm might suggest that the teacher investigate more closely the reasons for this score. The low class average might be related to consistently low performance in writing by the class, poor development of specific writing skills, or perhaps just a lack of experience with writing. The instrument may be used to (a) provide an initial indicator of a student's attitude toward writing, (b) give a pre- and postmeasurement score of attitude toward writing, (c) collect an

attitudinal profile for a class or group of research participants, or (d) serve as a way to monitor the impact of an instructional program in writing.

Writing Self-Efficacy Scales

Writing self-efficacy was measured through the Writing Self-Efficacy Scales by Andrade, Wang, Du, and Akawi (2009). This version was adapted from the Writing Self-Efficacy Scale used by Pajares, Hartley, and Valiante (2001). Pajares et al. (2001) used a variety of criteria to determine the number of common factors to retain and analyze, including Cattell's (1966) scree test, the percentage of common variance explained by each factor using the weighted reduced correlation matrix, and the interpretability of the rotated factors. Because they expected any factors that emerged from the analyses to be intercorrelated, they chose the oblimin method of oblique rotation. All analyses were conducted using the SAS system's FACTOR procedure. Factor structure coefficients from the pattern matrix demonstrated the relationship between an item and a factor when all other items were held constant. Factor structure coefficients of .40 or higher were considered strong enough to demonstrate that the item indicated the common factor. Interfactor correlations were .65 for the 0-100 scale and .62 for the Likert scale. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were also similar for each factor.

For the multiple regression analyses predicting the achievement indexes, Pajares et al. (2001) joined the two factors from each scale to compose one scale reflecting the Likert assessment and another scale reflecting the 0-100 assessment, so as to create the full writing self-efficacy scales that would typically be used in self-efficacy studies. These analyses were supplemented by a regression commonality analysis to determine the proportion of the

explained variance of the dependent variable associated uniquely with each independent variable and with the common effects of each and by obtaining regression structure coefficients. Because the efficacy scales were highly correlated (.81), interpreting regression structure coefficients was critical. Structure coefficients were not suppressed or inflated by collinearity.

The final 11-item writing self-efficacy scale measures individuals' confidence in their writing abilities, including their skill in handling commonly assessed qualities of writing: ideas and content, organization, paragraph formatting, voice and tone, word choice, sentence fluency and conventions (e.g., the 6+1 Trait Writing Method; see Culham, 2003; Spandel & Stiggins, 1997). Students are instructed to rate their confidence levels on a scale of 0-100. The 0-100 format was selected over the traditional Likert-type scale because Pajares et al. (2001) documented that a scale with a 0-100 format was psychometrically stronger than a 1-10 scale in regard to factor structure and internal consistency. They also found that, compared with the traditional Likert-type scale, the 0-100 scale has better discrimination and stronger relations with various achievement indexes.

Narrative Writing Prompts

The narrative writing prompts used for pre- and postassessment purposes were derived from the California Department of Education (2002) writing prompts. Narrative writing relates a series of events of an actual occurrence or a proposed occurrence at a particular time and in a particular place. It requires writers to closely observe, explore, and reflect upon a wide range of experiences. At all grade levels, the functions of this mode of

writing are to narrate or reminisce. The following prompt was given to all students in the teacher-researcher's class for both pre- and postassessment purposes:

Most people can remember a day or event in their lives that they would like to relive. Think about a particular time that you would like to relive. What happened? Why would you like to relive it? Write a narrative about a day or event you would like to relive.

Narrative Writing Framework

In adopting a mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction the teacher-researcher created a 6-week narrative writing framework that meets the California state standards in English Language Arts (ELA), utilizing selected passages from the fourth grade state-adopted ELA anthology, as well as various mentor text resources by published authors not included in the site-mandated anthology. See Appendix A for a detailed description of the 6-week narrative writing curriculum.

Mentor Text Inquiry Approach Phases

The teacher-researcher utilized a researcher designed protocol for each selected mentor text selection listed in the *Narrative Writing Framework* (see Figure 2, p. 57).

Narrative Mentor Text Rubric

The teacher-researcher and Educator B utilized a researcher designed narrative rubric to determine the student-participants' narrative writing abilities. Student-participants took a pre- and postwriting assessment based upon the *Narrative Writing Prompt* listed above (see Appendix B).

Narrative Criteria Checklist and Anecdotal Notes

The teacher-researcher used a researcher designed *Narrative Criteria Checklist* to assess each final essay (Essay 1, Essay 2, and Essay 3) on the skills and craft elements included in the writing instruction for that time period, as further detailed in the *Narrative Writing Framework* (see Appendix C).

Student Interview Questions

Educator A conducted a pre/postinterview with each student-participant using the Student Interview Questions provided (see Appendix D). The set of questions was modified and revised after a pilot was conducted on fourth grade students the previous year (Spring 2010) to establish validity and reliability.

DATA COLLECTION

Data were collected in three consecutive phases over 6 weeks in the teacher researcher's classroom which commenced at the start of the school year in August 2010, when the teacher-research planned the fourth grade writing curriculum during professional development days on site, and continued through January 2011.

Phase I data collection took place in August and September 2010. The focus of Phase I was to select student-participants for case studies, to characterize the classroom context for writing instruction, and to record baseline information regarding student writing self-efficacy and writing abilities.

Phase II data collection began in October 2010 and continued through November 2010. The purpose of Phase II was to collect additional information regarding classroom writing-contexts, student writing abilities and observations on each case study

student-participant ($n = 12$). Student-participants completed at least three narrative essays with multiple drafts over a 6-week period. Student-participants self-identified or highlighted their intentional use of mentor text (words, phrases, craft elements) in their final drafts. These drafts were considered informal writing samples and were collected on a weekly basis from each student-participant. The final draft for these informal writing samples were analyzed by the teacher-researcher (See Data Analysis) for the purpose of monitoring students' intentionality and use of mentor text to support their final writing drafts. The teacher-researcher scored the final drafts of each final informal essay (essay 1, essay 2, essay 3) using a *Narrative Criteria Checklist* (see Appendix C) to identify current writing abilities regarding purpose/perspective, setting description, character description, organization of text features, dialogue/inner monologue, and language conventions. The teacher-researcher wrote anecdotal notes for each of these categories based upon the final draft submissions. The teacher-researcher also noted for each student-participant: (a) what does the student know how to do (skills)? and (b) what does the student seem on the verge of understanding as a writer?

Phase III data collection occurred during December of 2010 and January 2011. This data collection included postassessments on writing self-efficacy for case study student-participants and conducting of final student-participant interviews regarding the impact of the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction upon writing self-efficacy, self-regulation behavior, and writing abilities of student-participants.

Table 1 presents the three teacher-researcher questions, detailing the purpose, assumptions, and the multiple data sources collected to support findings for this study.

Table 1. Data Sources

Research questions	Purpose	Assumption(s)	Data collection sources/processes (who collected source)
1. What effect, if any, does mentor text inquiry approach to narrative writing instruction have upon the writing attitudes, writing self-efficacy and writing abilities of six fourth grade urban elementary student-participants?	To determine the impact, if any, that mentor text inquiry approach has upon the narrative writing attitudes, writing self-efficacy and writing abilities of student-participants.	Students will identify their true self-efficacy in writing. Students will be able to articulate their perceptions about their writing process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Student writing attitude assessment (Teacher-Researcher) ◆ Student writing self-efficacy assessment (Teacher-Researcher) ◆ Audiotape Interviews (Educator A) ◆ Daily Field Notes (Teacher-Researcher) ◆ Formal Narrative Writing Pre/Post Assessments (Teacher-Researcher & Educator B) ◆ Informal Narrative Writing Samples—Final Draft Submissions (Teacher-Researcher & Educator B)
2. What is the effect of using mentor text(s) in an inquiry approach to narrative writing instruction on the writing abilities of urban elementary student-participants in regards to content, structure, fluency and conventions?	To determine the impact, if any, that mentor text(s) have upon the narrative writing abilities of student-participants in relation to content, structure, fluency and conventions.	Students will demonstrate their ability to write a narrative given a writing prompt.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Formal Narrative Writing Pre/Post Assessments (Teacher-Researcher & Educator B) ◆ Informal Narrative Writing Samples—Final Draft Submission (Teacher-Researcher)

Phase I

The purpose of Phase I was to select six case study student-participants, to characterize the classroom context for writing instruction, to observe students behaviors in the writing process, and record baseline information regarding students' perceptions of their writing self-efficacy and writing abilities. Initial audiotaped interviews were conducted with student-participants regarding their familiarity with the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction and on their own perceptions of their individual abilities as a writer.

A writing self-efficacy assessment was administered whole class, by the teacher-researcher to yield data in the selection process for the case study student-participants for this study. Six typically developing student-participants, two ($n = 2$) below-grade level expectation writers, two ($n = 2$) at-grade level expectation writers, and two ($n = 2$) above-grade level expectation writers were selected to participate in this study.

Educator A recorded the student-participants' perceptions of their own writing processes and writing abilities via audiotaped interviews. These interviews were conducted with student-participants at times that did not conflict with their regular school schedule and lasted no longer than 30 minutes at a time. All audiotaped sessions took place in a designated area that was free from distractions. All case study student-participants were asked the same questions in the same order for continuity purposes.

The teacher-researcher provided the whole class a narrative writing prompt to generate narrative writing samples for the purposes of selecting case-study student-participants based upon writing abilities. Rubrics were used to assess student writing and to report results to students or others. Performance on single administration of the test or on pre- and posttests were compared by looking at individual category ratings and overall scores.

Scores were also used to compare test performance among students. A holistic rubric provided a single score based on an overall impression of a student's performance on a task for an independent, overall, summary judgment. An advantage of analytic scoring is that individual learner test performance from each of the categories in the rubric may be discussed to provide diagnostic information about learners' strengths and weaknesses in writing.

The teacher-researcher and Educator B assessed the writing abilities of only the case study student-participants independently using a *Narrative Mentor Text* (see Appendix B) to identify writing abilities regarding content, organization, style, and language conventions. Given the rating in each of these categories, the teacher-researcher and Educator B derived an overall holistic score designated prior to the onset of the study. Writing samples were evaluated as either on grade level or below grade level. Each rater discussed the following questions for each student-participant: (a) what does the student know how to do (skills)? and (b) what does the student seem on the verge of understanding as a writer?

The teacher-researcher and Educator B came together to verify interrater reliability in their assessment of student writing abilities. Writing samples were scored analytically using a detailed rubric. This information also provided specific assistance to instructors to determine the focus of instruction.

Data sources at the end of Phase I included (a) an initial audiotape interview for each case study student-participant regarding classroom context, familiarity with mentor text, perceptions of writing ability, and (b) preassessment data on self-efficacy and writing abilities of case study student-participants.

Phase II

Phase II data collection began in October-November of 2010. The purpose of Phase II was to collect additional information regarding classroom writing contexts and student writing abilities. Observational field notes were collected by the teacher-researcher on a daily basis regarding the use of a mentor text inquiry approach, including the initial introduction of a mentor text(s), and the final drafts of the students' narrative writing texts.

Data sources at the end of Phase II included (a) field notes on the writing events that occurred in each classroom using a mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction, and (b) final draft submissions from student-participants that were assessed by using a narrative criteria checklist and anecdotal notes.

Phase III

Phase III data collection was conducted during December 2010 and January 2011. The purpose of Phase III was to record post information regarding the impact of a mentor text inquiry approach upon writing self-efficacy and writing abilities of student-participants at the conclusion of the study. The same writing self-efficacy assessment were administered whole class by the teacher-researcher to gain insight into students' perceptions of their writing abilities upon completion of the study.

A postinterview was conducted with each case study student-participant with Educator A regarding student-participants' perceptions of their own writing processes and writing abilities. These interviews were conducted with student-participants at times that did not conflict with their regular school schedule and lasted no longer than 30 minutes at a time. All postinterview sessions took place in a designated area that was free from distractions.

The teacher-researcher provided the whole class a narrative writing prompt to generate postnarrative writing samples to determine areas of growth for case study student-participants. The teacher-researcher and Educator B assessed the writing abilities of only the case study student-participants independently using a *Narrative Mentor Text Rubric* (see Appendix B) to identify writing abilities with regard to content, organization, style, and language conventions. Given the rating in each of these categories, the teacher-researcher and Educator B derived an overall holistic score designated prior to the onset of the study. Writing samples were evaluated as either on grade level or below grade level. Each rater discussed the following questions for each student-participant: (a) what does the student know how to do (skills)? and (b) what does the student seem on the verge of understanding as a writer?

The teacher-researcher and Educator B came together to verify interrater reliability in their assessment of student writing abilities. Writing samples were scored analytically using a detailed rubric. This information also provided specific assistance to instructors to determine the focus of instruction.

Data sources at the end of Phase III included (a) a postaudiotaped interview for each case study student-participant regarding classroom context, familiarity with mentor text(s) and writing abilities, and (b) final postassessment rating of writing abilities for case study student-participant narrative texts.

Data analysis was ongoing throughout the study, beginning with the first data collection in early August 2010 and continuing after the last data collection in January 2011.

DATA ANALYSIS

All observations and transcribed audiotaped interviews were analyzed using grounded theory first introduced by Glaser and Strauss in 1967, using the constant comparative method. As the name implies, the constant comparative method engages the researcher in a process of constantly analyzing data at every and all stages of the data collection and interpretation process, and results in the identification of codes. According to Jones, Hanney, Buxton, and Burns (2004), constant comparison in grounded theory involves the following:

- Comparing different people (such as their views, situations, actions, account and experiences).
- Comparing data from the same individuals with themselves at different points in time.
- Comparing incident with incident.
- Comparing data with category.
- Comparing a category with other categories.

This type of analysis was ongoing throughout the data collection process for this study and thereby employed the constant comparative method.

There are seven steps in the constant comparative method (Hubbard & Power, 1993) used in this study:

1. Each word, phrase, or sentence is categorized and coded as a concept. Concept names were selected to accurately reflect and describe what the data conveyed and were derived from the words participants used themselves rather than created by the researcher. The teacher-researcher analyzed and organized the initial data for emerging concepts.
2. The next step involved grouping these concepts into categories and naming them. The teacher-researcher recorded the categories and listed all the supporting concepts underneath. As categories developed, the teacher-researcher compared them to one another and considered the relationships between each other and between categories and concepts.
3. The teacher-researcher considered how these categories and concepts related back to the original research questions.

4. As new data were collected (observations, audiotape, and videotape transcriptions), the teacher-researcher continued to analyze and organize information into established categories, and when necessary, created new categories, as well. Eventually, the teacher-researcher began to look for larger themes that emerged across the data.
5. With the conclusion of Phase III, most of the data had have been collected and analyzed. The teacher-researcher analyzed the collected data, including writing summaries of the field notes, informal writing samples collected, and transcripts of audio-interviews noting possible trends and patterns.
6. The teacher-researcher used these accumulated patterns to develop assertions regarding a mentor text approach to writing instruction and to develop assertions regarding student-participants writing abilities according to Strauss and Corbin's (1998) procedures for developing grounded theory. The teacher-researcher looked for themes and categories to emerge from the data collected on the impact of using a mentor text inquiry approach with urban elementary student writers continuously throughout the study.
7. A cross-case analysis was conducted to search for patterns and look at the data in many different ways. Cross-case analysis forces the researcher to go beyond the initial impressions using structured and diverse lenses on the data. It divides the data by type across all cases investigated and enables the comparison of different cases against predefined categories. When a pattern from one data type is corroborated by evidence from another, the finding is stronger. When evidence conflicts, deeper probing of the differences is necessary to identify the cause or source of conflict. Three tactics are suggested to conduct an effective cross-case analysis: (a) select categories and look for within-group similarities coupled with intergroup differences, (b) select pairs of cases and list the similarities and differences between each pair, and (c) divide the data by data source to exploit "unique insights possible from different types of data collection" (Eisenhardt, 1991, pp. 540-541).

VERIFICATION PROCEDURES

To ensure validity, the teacher-researcher employed the following techniques:

(a) clarifying and documenting research bias, (b) triangulation, (c) member checking, (d) rich, thick descriptions, and (e) interrater reliability.

In order to ensure the objectivity of the writing samples collected from student-participants regarding content, structure, fluency, and conventions, the teacher-researcher

performed an interrater reliability test. The teacher-researcher solicited the services of two writing experts (as defined in the Key Terminology section) who coded a writing sample taken from a nonstudent-participant. The results were analyzed and discussed. The writing rubric was reviewed and amended until 95% agreement was achieved. In addition, the teacher-researcher had the interview notes transcribed and coded no later than a week after the interview to maximize immediate recollection.

TRIANGULATION

The use of multiple measures of data in qualitative research is referred to as “triangulation.” Investigator triangulation, in which multiple researchers are involved in an investigation, constitutes researcher-participant corroboration, which has also been referred to as cross-examination. Creswell (1998) states that researchers use multiple and different sources, methods, investigators, and theories to provide corroborating evidence and shed light on a theme or perspective. Freebody (2003) cites common forms of data such as observations, interviews, and site documents for the purpose of triangulation as an “enhancement” to a study’s validity—all of which are used in this study. An example of triangulation in this study is the incorporation of data derived from formal writing assessments, informal writing samples, self-efficacy surveys, interview transcripts, and classroom observations. Specifically, the teacher-researcher compared student-participants writing self-efficacy scores to audio-interview transcripts, the teacher-researcher’s field notes on classroom behaviors during lessons using mentor texts for writing instruction, and evidence of mentor text usage in both formal writing assessments and informal writing samples.

HUMAN SUBJECTS

This study qualified for an expedited human subjects review based on the following criteria: (a) main methods of data collection did not interfere with daily classroom activities, qualitative interviews with student- and teacher-participants, and videotape sessions of student's process writing were conducted after-school hours; (b) the confidentiality of participants was maintained; and (c) the questions were considered to be nonsensitive. A consent letter was provided to all subjects included in this study (see Appendix E).

LIMITATIONS

In addition to the aforementioned limitations, some other limitations included: small number of student-participants, an urban elementary school site setting, and the teacher-researcher's own bias and understanding(s) as a teacher of a mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction.

SUMMARY

Chapter 3 outlined the methodology and study design for this qualitative study. The data collection consisted of two phases: (a) preassessments and initial interviews, and (b) postassessments and final interviews/reflections. First the teacher-researcher selected case study student-participants and recorded baseline information regarding student writing self-efficacy, self-regulation, and student's writing abilities. Second, the teacher-researcher collected additional information regarding classroom writing contexts, student writing abilities, and various drafts and the final publication of the writing. Finally, the teacher-researcher collected postassessments on writing self-efficacy for student-participants

and conducted final student- and teacher-interviews regarding the impact of mentor text(s) upon writing self-efficacy and writing abilities for student-participants.

The study participants consisted of six typically developing fourth grade students in an urban elementary setting. Two of the six case study student-participants were below-grade level writers, two were at-grade level writers, and two were above-grade level writers as determined by three independent raters. The teacher-researcher obtained consent forms for all participants in this study.

The data analysis employed the constant comparative method and was ongoing throughout the data collection process for this study. The triangulation of this study consisted of several data sources, including writing self-efficacy assessment data, classroom observation field-notes, transcripts of audiotaped participant interviews, and student writing samples.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The following chapter explores the impact of using a mentor text(s) inquiry approach to writing instruction on the self-efficacy and writing abilities of fourth grade urban student writers. In keeping with this objective, I approached this study with intentions of answering the following questions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the effect, if any, of using a mentor text inquiry approach to narrative writing instruction on the writing attitudes and writing self-efficacy of fourth grade urban elementary student-participants?
2. What is the effect of using a mentor text inquiry approach to narrative writing instruction on the writing abilities of fourth grade urban elementary student-participants specifically on content, structure, fluency, and conventions?

OVERVIEW OF CASE STUDIES

The findings presented in this chapter will add to the evidentiary base begun in Chapter 2: Review of the Literature. The chapter is organized into six case studies of student-participants from an urban elementary public who were engaged in a 6-week mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction and an overall chapter summary. The names of

the student-participants and other uniquely identifying information about student characteristics have been altered for confidentiality purposes.

Each case study includes pertinent background information on the student-participant's school history and relevant standards-based testing data collected within the time frame of the research study. In addition, pre-post data collected for each of the following measures are described and analyzed.

Student Interviews

Pre- and postinterviews of student-participants were conducted by Educator A. The teacher researcher transcribed and coded the pre- and postinterviews to gain an understanding of the student-participants' perceptions of the purpose of writing in school contexts and out-of-school contexts, their personal writing processes, and writing abilities. Interviews were coded for evidence in the following categories: (a) Purpose of Writing, (b) Learning to Write, (c) Impact of Writing, (d) Perception of Themselves as Writers, and (e) Qualities of Good Writing.

Surveys

Pajares and Valiante (2001) cite self-efficacy as a primary factor in predicting student writing-performance. The following surveys were conducted as pretests in April 2011 and posttests in June of 2011.

Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs

The final 11-item writing self-efficacy scale measures individuals' confidence in their writing abilities, including their skill in handling commonly assessed qualities of writing:

ideas and content, organization, paragraph formatting, voice and tone, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions (e.g., the 6+1 Trait Writing Method; see Culham, 2003; Spandel & Stiggins, 1997). Students are instructed to rate their confidence levels on a scale of 0-100. The teacher-researcher coded the pretest and posttest surveys and compared their scores within each category band of below grade level, at grade level, and above grade level writers for trends.

The Writing Attitude Survey

The survey was given as a pretest in early April 2011 and as a posttest in June of 2011. *The Writing Attitude Survey* (Kear et al., 2000) presents items in a brief, simply worded statement about writing followed by four pictures of Garfield. Each pose is designed to depict a different emotional state ranging from very positive to very negative. The possibility that students would select a neutral response was avoided with an even number of choices on a 4-point scale. The teacher-researcher rated each item on student-participant's pre- and posttest as either negative or positive in response.

Formative Writing Narrative Assessments

Student-participants wrote a formative writing assessment once every 2 weeks over 6 weeks of instruction. The writing prompts included:

1. *Essay Prompt-Personal Narrative 1*: We all have memories connected to our experiences. Think about an experience you feel you'll always remember. Try to picture the time, the place, and the people involved. Try to remember everything you can about this experience. Write about the experience you remember. Be sure to include enough details so that your reader can share your experience and understand why it stands out for you.
2. *Essay Prompt-Personal Narrative Essay 2*: Think about an event in your life that seemed bad but turned out to be good. Maybe you got injured and while you were

waiting for your broken leg to heal, you learned how to use a computer. What makes the event change from bad to good may be something that you learned as a result, something that you did differently as a result, or something that happened that wouldn't have occurred otherwise. Tell the story of the event that you experienced and help your readers understand how an event that seemed negative turned out to have valuable consequences.

3. *Essay Prompt-Personal Narrative Essay 3:* Families are an important part of our lives. All families are different, but all are special. Write about a special time that you spent with your family such as birthdays, holidays, or a trip you took together. Choose one family event and write a story about it.

The teacher-researcher utilized a Narrative Criteria Checklist for each essay to record anecdotal notes based upon the following criteria:

1. Purpose/Perspective: The writer writes about an experience that happened to them or someone they know, utilizes first person point of view and shows the reader why the experience was of importance to the writer.
2. Setting Description: The author describes where the story took place and provides sensory details for the reader such as sights, smells, and sounds.
3. Character Description: The writer makes characters come to life by using physical details, describing the character in action and/or describing the character's persona/personality.
4. Figurative Language/Craft Elements: The writer uses a variety of writing elements/crafts such as similes, metaphors, personification, rhyme, and/or repetition.
5. Dialogue: The characters in the narrative speak authentically in the story and quotations are punctuated appropriately.
6. Organization: The writer stays on topic, uses appropriate sequencing for events and an effective lead and/or ending.
7. Conventions: The author utilizes and punctuates dialogue and sentence interrupters such as commas in a series and appositives appropriately.

Student-participant essays were evaluated using an analytic rubric by the teacher-researcher. If a student-participant refused to complete the assignment, but was present in class, the essay was scored using the lowest score of 0, and details of No Evidence

were cited in anecdotal records section. However, if a student-participant was unable to complete an essay due to absences at the time the essay was given in class, then a NS for No Score was assigned to the essay.

Summative Narrative Writing Assessments

Each student-participant was given a summative assessment in the form of a narrative writing prompt as a pretest in early April 2011 and a posttest in June of 2011. Each essay was evaluated using a rubric by the teacher-researcher and Educator B independently and then compared for interrater reliability. The essays were given a holistic score based on a rubric including the following aspects: purpose/perspective, setting description, character description, figurative language, dialogue, organization and conventions from the lowest score of 1 to the highest score of 4.

CASE STUDIES OF STUDENT-PARTICIPANTS

The following case studies investigate the impact of a mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction.

Kylee

Kylee is a 9-year old white female. She is in fourth grade and had previously attended three other schools prior to her first year in attendance at this school site. She moved from a mid-western state after first grade and attended a public district school for second grade and a public charter school for third grade in San Diego Unified School District. This was her first year attending this school site (a public charter school) for fourth grade. Her academic testing history from third grade indicates a Below Basic mastery of California Content

Standards for English Language Arts. After completing a quarterly assessment in early November of 2010, she was considered by her classroom teacher to have attained a classification of Below Basic in English Language Arts based on degree of mastery of the California Content State Standards for fourth grade. For the purposes of this study, she was identified by the teacher-researcher as a below grade level writer.

PURPOSE OF WRITING: PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW

In Kylee's preinterview, she self-identified herself as not being a fan of writing. She admitted:

It is important to be a good writer because lots of things in life have to do with writing, and I think it's very important even though inside I don't really like it. Writing is important, and if we didn't have writing then we wouldn't have a way to communicate with each other.

She admitted that the only recreational writing she participates in currently is to write song lyrics. Even this is conditional as she "only writes songs when I'm upset or when I just feel left out about something."

In Kylee's postinterview, she stated that she believed that she is now more inclined to write romance stories than she used to be when she was first interviewed. When prompted to explain why she is more interested in writing romance, she stated "that now she understands writing is not only about handwriting and spelling but about the ideas that authors want to express to readers to keep them interested in stories."

LEARNING TO WRITE: PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW

In trying to remember when or how she learned to write, Kylee stated: “I feel like I don’t remember when I learned how to write all at once. I think every year a little bit more. I learned the most at this school though.”

In responding to what kind of writing she is doing now in school, she stated: “We are learning sentences about dialogue, comparisons, and similes, and I think I’m pretty good at that but just not with the handwriting and spelling part.” When asked by the interviewer to elaborate on why she believes she is studying this in school, she stated,

I never knew that there was that kind of writing. I thought you just had to write it down without those marks and all, but now I realize I’m better at it, but I have to work on my handwriting so people can actually read it.

When prompted further with “so you don’t have any trouble with ideas or putting together great sentences, but you have a hard time with handwriting and spelling?” Kylee responded with “Yes.”

IMPACT OF WRITING: PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW

When asked how she believed she could work towards becoming a better writer, Kylee stated, “I think I have to learn not to rush my work, because everyone in my class is a good speller and where I see them write they have good handwriting, and I’m the only one who doesn’t.”

In Kylee’s postinterview, she stated she wanted others to know that when it comes to writing now,

sometimes she likes it and sometimes she doesn’t. And that I know I still need help but I’m not the worst. If someone is better with their spelling, I know that its just

because they are better or maybe had better teachers when they were younger or went to a better school.

PERCEPTION OF THEMSELVES AS WRITERS: PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW

Kylee described herself as a writer in her preinterview:

I don't have the best handwriting or spelling. But I think if I can work on that I can be a better writer. I think it's a bit stressful for me because I've never been the best writer. I've never been good at spelling and it just makes me feel left out.

She felt that "I'm a work in progress and that I need to keep on working because I need help on it."

When asked in her postinterview how she felt about herself as a writer, she stated that "I'm still improving on my writing and I still need to work on it like parts that have to do with spelling and handwriting, but I don't hate it as much anymore."

QUALITIES OF GOOD WRITING: PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW

Kylee specified several times throughout her preinterview that handwriting and spelling constitute good writing in her opinion (see excerpts cited from preinterview data.)

In her postinterview, when asked if she would be comfortable saying that she does not have any trouble with ideas or putting together great sentences but still has a hard time with handwriting and spelling, she responded with "Yes." She stated that good writing is when "you can express your feelings and what you're thinking any way that you want it to—it can be comforting, even though we don't like it that much [the act of writing], it can still be comforting."

ANALYSIS OF KYLEE'S PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Kylee attended three schools prior to her current school site in the past 4 years. She had limited recollection of previous experiences learning to write in or out of school and could not recall any writing role models.

Kylee's preinterview responses revealed a deep struggle with identifying herself as a writer, due to her lack of expert penmanship skills or ability to spell words conventionally. She neither enjoyed the act of writing nor gave herself credit for being able to express or generate ideas. Although she practiced these skills recreationally via writing song lyrics, in her mind this ability was not comparable to being able to write legibly or spell conventionally. She constantly compared herself to the rest of her classmates and found herself lacking as a writer, due to her self-reported poor handwriting and spelling skills.

By the postinterview, Kylee considered herself to be improving as a writer. Her postinterview responses revealed that using a mentor text inquiry approach helped make writing easier for Kylee by increasing her awareness and confidence that idea generation and expression were valued skill sets for becoming a better writer in the classroom. By the postinterview, Kylee realized that neat handwriting and conventional spelling were important to assisting the reader to get through a piece easily, but that they were not the only determining factors in evaluating the quality of a written product.

Kylee revealed in her postinterview that she was beginning to transition out of her dislike for writing. She was able to confidently list the type of lessons she had learned from participating in the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction. Although she was

not yet willing to identify herself as loving the act of writing, she was quite certain that she did not loathe it as much as previously stated in her preinterview.

WRITING ATTITUDE

Kylee increased her writing attitude ratings on the posttest for 22 of the 28 statements as shown in Table 2. She did not indicate a decline in writing attitude scores for any questions on the posttest.

Table 2. Kylee's Trends for *Writing Attitude Survey*

Category	Number
Item numbers with gain of +1	
Genres	1, 3, 8, 17, 18, 22, 23, 25
Content	2, 14, 15
Jobs	9, 10, 22
Feedback/Revision	20, 21, 26
Writing as Priority	12, 13, 16
Item numbers with gain of +2	
Genres	5
Writing as Priority	12

ANALYSIS OF KYLEE'S WRITING ATTITUDE SURVEY RESULTS

Kylee gained 22 points from her total pretest score of 48 to her posttest score of 70. Her pretest raw score of 48 corresponded to the 1st percentile and her posttest raw score of 70 corresponded to the 27th percentile for 4th grade students on the national norm (Kear et al., 2000). Compared to the national average (50th percentile), Kylee displayed an extremely

negative attitude towards writing prior to the mentor text inquiry approach ranking in the 1st percentile. Her postsurvey results indicated a tremendous gain of 26 percentile points upon completion of the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction.

Kylee's greatest increases in positive responses to items in this survey fell within the Genre category. She indicated a positive gain of confidence in her ability to write letters to either an author about a book, a store inquiring about a product, an advertisement for a new product, or her opinion about a topic of her choice. She gained new confidence in her ability to produce new school-based genres, such as writing down lecture notes the teacher gives on a new topic, writing a long story or report at school, or even keeping a journal for class. In the Content category Kylee demonstrates an increase in confidence in content-area writing for both science and social studies. She could positively identify herself as an author of a book or writing for a newspaper or magazine in the Jobs category. She confirmed that her attitude has improved if her teacher asks her to revise her work or if her own classmates were to discuss ways in which she could improve her writing in the Feedback/Revision category. Overall, Kylee would now positively consider writing as an option instead of doing homework or watching TV, as reflected by her responses to items in the Writing Significance category.

WRITING SELF-EFFICACY

Kylee increased her self-efficacy rating on the posttest for 7 of the 11 statements, as shown in Table 3. Her self-efficacy ratings on the posttest remained neutral, showing neither a gain nor decline in writing self-efficacy beliefs for one statement, and declined for one statement as shown in Table 4.

Table 3. Kylee's Writing Self-Efficacy Gains

No.	Statement	Pretest	Posttest	Gain
1	Write a clear, focused essay that stays on topic.	70	80	+10
2	Use details to support my ideas.	60	70	+10
3	Write a well-organized essay with an inviting beginning, developed middles, and meaningful ending.	50	60	+10
5	Write with an engaging voice or tone.	10	60	+50
7	Write well-constructed sentences in the essay.	70	90	+20
8	Use correct grammar in the essay.	90	100	+10
9	Correctly spell all words in the essay.	0	10	+10
10	Correctly use punctuation in the essay.	40	80	+40
11	Write an essay good enough to earn a high grade.	10	80	+70

Table 4. Kylee's Writing Self-Efficacy Neutral or Declining Scores

No.	Statement	Pretest	Posttest	Gain
4	Correctly use paragraph format in the essay.	30	30	0
6	Use effective words in the essay.	40	20	-20

ANALYSIS OF KYLEE'S WRITING SELF-EFFICACY RESULTS

Kylee's data indicated the most significant positive gains around her ability to write an essay good enough to earn a high grade (+70), with an engaging voice or tone (+50), with appropriate punctuation (+40), and well-constructed sentences (+20). The other slight gains (+10) include writing a clear, coherent essay on topic with supporting details using

conventional spelling and correct grammar. Kylee's self-efficacy in her belief that she can find effective words for her essay decreased (-20). An explanation for this decline may be found in her increased confidence in writing with an engaging tone or voice. To do so, Kylee may be more aware of the importance of using words intentionally and with increased complexity. This may have caused her to doubt her current abilities to do so effectively and score herself lower on her posttest than when first given the self-efficacy survey.

KYLEE'S FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE ESSAY RESULTS

Tables 5-8 and Figures 3-5 (Appendix F) summarize Kylee's formative essay results.

Table 5. Kylee's Formative Essays Summary Table

Criteria	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 3
Purpose/perspective	3	1	3
Setting description	0	0	0
Character description	1	0	0
Figurative language	1	0	1
Dialogue	0	0	1
Organization of text	1	0	2
Conventions	1	0	1
Total out of 11	7	1	8
Sentence count	7	3	9
Word count	48	98	104

Table 6. Kylee's Rubric for Formative Essay 1

Narrative criteria	Score	Evidence
Purpose/perspective 1. Experience 2. 1st person 3. On topic (3 points)	3	Kylee's first narrative event described a wedding that she attended in her family. It stays on topic and is retold from a first person point of view. She attempted to the importance of the wedding to her and her mom because it was different from other weddings she had attended in the past: <i>The birde was wering a browe dress with lot of deccashon. My mom and I both cride relly hard.</i>
Setting description (1 point)	0	No evidence.
Character description (1 point)	1	Kylee describes her aunt's wedding attire: " <i>The birde was wering a browe dress with lot of deccashon.</i> "
Dialogue/interior monologue (1 point)	0	No evidence.
Figurative language 1. Craft elements (1 point)	1	Kylee made one attempt at using figurative language for comparisons: <i>And as fast as light they were married.</i>
Organization of text 1. Leads 2. Conclusions 3. Sequential order of events (3 points)	1	Kylee does not depend upon the prompt given to begin her first essay, but she does not provide context with her lead sentence. She explains that <i>I remeder my aunt Sue's (I just call her Sue) wedding.</i> She relays the events of the wedding in sequential order. She depends upon the prompt given to help close her essay in <i>It was diffirt then most wedings and thits why I like it.</i>
Conventions 1. Coherent sentence structure 2. Variety (2 points)	1	Kylee writes in coherent complete sentences appropriately. She used parentheses once to provide the reader more information about her Aunt Sue in the example: <i>I remeder my aunt Sue's (I just call her Sue) wedding.</i>

Table 7. Kylee's Rubric for Formative Essay 2

Narrative criteria	Score	Evidence
Purpose/perspective 1. Experience 2. 1st person 3. On topic (3 points)	1	Kylee writes about an experience that happened to her personally, and she uses first person point of view. She stays on topic throughout her essay but does not coherently respond to the prompt given. She does give reasons for why this experience was valuable for her: <i>I learned to be more resosable – patciinggative more ofin – or more happy ether.</i>
Setting description (1 point)	0	No evidence.
Character description (1 point)	0	No evidence.
Dialogue/interior monologue (1 point)	0	No evidence.
Figurative language 1. Craft elements (1 point)	0	Kylee attempts to utilize an appositive twice but does so unsuccessfully in the examples: (a) <i>When I had practiced my gatir – corods note's tlenneck-only one time this week and my gatr one lesson got canaed.</i> (b) <i>I learned to be more resosable – paticing gative more ofin – or more happy ether.</i>
Organization of text 1. Leads 2. Conclusions 3. Sequential order of events (3 points)	0	Kylee's lead sentence for her second essay is still dependent upon words from the writing prompt: <i>Some time that started out bad that was good.</i> She doesn't maintain a sequential order of events that is coherent for the reader to follow and her ending sentence is not an effective way to close an essay: <i>But then it got cancelled and it took time to practice.</i>
Conventions 1. Coherent sentence structure 2. Variety (2 points)	0	Kylee has a difficult time writing clear coherent sentences in her second essay. She attempted a sentence using commas in a series but does so unsuccessfully in the example: <i>I had practice my cords, snotes, stiring, or the neck on the other but then it got canlled and if tat me to practice.</i>

Table 8. Kylee's Rubric for Formative Essay 3

Narrative criteria	Score	Evidence
Purpose/perspective 1. Experience 2. 1st person 3. On topic (3 points)	3	Kylee was able to effectively write about an experience that happened to her grandma using first person point of view and to demonstrate why the experience was important to her personally: <i>But at that moment I could have been more happy – for my family – or more mad either.</i>
Setting description (1 point)	0	No evidence. Kylee uses vague setting descriptions to allude that they are at her grandma's house looking for the lost bird in the example: <i>Some and my dad went there.</i>
Character description (1 point)	0	No evidence. Kylee mentions her characters in her essay but does not provide descriptive details about them for the reader.
Dialogue/interior monologue (1 point)	1	Kylee does attempt to utilize dialogue for first time in her essays: <i>and my dad said "Why is mum calling?"</i>
Figurative language 1. Craft elements (1 point)	1	Kylee includes one correct attempt at figurative language in these examples: <i>I thought the bird was as crazy as an alien.</i>
Organization of text 1. Leads 2. Conclusions 3. Sequential order of events (3 points)	2	Kylee used an introductory sentence that was not dependent upon the prompt: <i>One time my grandma lost her bird.</i> Kylee relayed the events of the day she helped search for the missing bird in sequential order. Kylee stayed on topic throughout the essay.
Conventions 1. Coherent sentence structure 2. Variety (2 points)	1	Kylee has much more control over her run on sentences in her third essay attempt. She uses punctuation for dialogue appropriately in the sentence: <i>"Why is mom calling?"</i> Not all of her sentences are clear and coherent.

ANALYSIS OF KYLEE'S FORMATIVE ESSAY RESULTS

Kylee had a steady growth in her writing fluency from her first essay of 48 words to her second essay of 98 words and ending with a word count of 104 words for her third essay (see Table 9 and Figures 6 & 7, Appendix F). Although she had integrated more words from her first to her second essay, her sentence count dramatically decreased from seven sentences in her first essay to only three sentences by her second essay. Her second essay highlighted a struggle to organize her thoughts in a logical sequential manner with coherent organization. She gained control in her third essay by setting a purpose for the reader, inserting dialogue, and providing an example of figurative language appropriately, while maintaining an organized beginning, middle, and ending. Her third essay included the greatest word and sentence count for writing fluency as well.

Table 9. Kylee's Summative Essays Summary

Narrative criteria	Pretest	Posttest
Purpose/perspective	1	2
Setting description	1	2
Character description	1	2
Dialogue	1	2
Figurative language	1	2
Organization of text	1	3
Conventions	1	3
Overall holistic score	1	2
Fluency: Word count	46	186

ANALYSIS OF KYLEE'S SUMMATIVE PRE- AND POSTTEST ESSAY RESULTS

Kylee's pretest essay received a holistic score of 1 and her posttest essay a score of 3 out of 4 on the *Narrative Mentor Text Rubric* scale. Kylee increased her score by 2 points on the rubric overall. Kylee's postessay showed evidence of increasing her writing fluency from a pretest word count of 46 words and a posttest count of 186 words.

Her pretest was a single paragraph and lacked evidence to support the reason she believed that her ninth birthday party was the greatest day she should relive in her life. However, Kylee's postessay includes four paragraphs that maintain cohesiveness throughout the essay on topic. She shows evidence of mentor text elements covered in the *Narrative Mentor Text Framework* such as descriptive words for setting, similes, and punctuation for sentence interrupters including commas, dashes, and parenthesis.

OVERALL SUMMARY OF KYLEE'S PROGRESS

In her preinterview prior to the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction, Kylee professed to loathe writing and expressed high levels of anxiety when writing lessons or assignments were given in class. She confessed in her preinterview that she was very reluctant to express herself in written form due to her poor understanding of conventional spelling patterns and displeasure with her handwriting abilities: she was very explicit in her reluctance to write for any occasion.

Kylee's postinterview transcripts and her posttest scores on the attitude and self-efficacy surveys indicated that the mentor text inquiry approach had a positive impact upon her perception of herself as a writer. Although she still scored herself low in areas regarding

conventional spelling and handwriting, she expressed an increased confidence in her ability to tell an engaging story in writing and to connect with her reader.

Kylee also gained the skills required to support her confidence as a writer. Her formative and summative postessays stay on topic, while maintaining coherent sentence and paragraph organization in sequential order. Kylee wrote twice as many words in her second formative essay attempt than in her first. She received a score of 1 out of 12 points on the rubric. This essay described a time when she failed to practice her guitar and was afraid of the consequences at her next guitar lesson. The guitar lesson was eventually canceled, so it gave her more time to practice. Kylee's second essay provides evidence of an increase in fluency and her willingness to take more risks as a writer.

She demonstrated a growing understanding of sentence variety by using more figurative language features such as appositives, metaphors, and similes. Kylee received a score of 10 out of 12 points on the rubric for her third formative essay. Her third essay included her first successful attempt to write a lead sentence and a conclusion that is not dependent upon the writing prompt provided to student-participants. This demonstrated a growing independence as a writer, one who is able to *show* the reader what she intends to relay as her message rather than relying upon *telling* the reader her purpose in writing an essay.

The most dramatic impact the mentor text inquiry approach had upon Kylee's writing pertains to fluency. She has increased her word count by 140 words on her summative pre- and posttests and 51 words from her formative essay 1 to formative essay 3. Her second formative essay displays the most evidence of her attempting to extend herself as a writer. Although her second formative essay increases in fluency dramatically, it does not score

better than her formative essay 1 because she is attempting to try on new writing craft strategies such as figurative language using appositives and dialogue. This is a stretch from her formative essay 1 where she wrote coherent sentences but without any attempt to figurative language. She was able to both write more fluently and control a variety of sentence structures by the time she wrote formative essay 3.

The mentor text inquiry approach had a dramatically positive impact upon Kylee as a writer. Kylee has worked beyond misconceptions that improving either handwriting and/or spelling in isolation will automatically improve one's ability as a writer to express ideas in an engaging manner for the reader. She understands now that she is still working on becoming a better writer but has developed a clear understanding of the purpose of writing as a means of communicating ideas as a writer to her readers.

Jo'Quon

Jo'Quon is a 10-year old African-American male. He is in fourth grade and was retained in kindergarten within the San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD). Jo'Quon attended three schools prior to beginning his first year in attendance at this, the charter, school site. He was withdrawn voluntarily prior to expulsion from three previous schools by his parents due to severe behavior misconduct and received home-school instruction from his mother during his second grade year. A record of his academic history indicates he was recommended to begin the process for qualifying for Special Education in second grade, but the parents withdrew him from school prior to completing that process. In fourth grade, he was recommended to begin the process for qualifying for Special Education again due to cognitive processing and memory retention issues identified by his fourth grade teacher. His

academic testing history from third grade indicates a Far Below Basic mastery of California Content Standards for English Language Arts. After completing a quarterly assessment in early November of 2010, he was considered by his classroom teacher to have attained a classification of Far Below Basic in English Language Arts based on degree of mastery of the California Content State Standards for fourth grade. For the purposes of this study, he was identified by the teacher-research as a below grade level writer.

PURPOSE OF WRITING: PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW

In his preinterview, Jo'Quon stated: "I like to write about my life. Like what sports I play and what's happened in my life in the few past years, what's amazing to me I think I should write about it."

Jo'Quon stated in his postinterview:

I like to write sometimes I sit around when I have nothing to do and I read and write. There is a book fair here and I got a LT and Tom Brady book. I like LT, and we went on vacation, and the teacher didn't tell me I had to read and write, so I did my homework, and throughout the trip I would read and write down what I think is exciting—I got a football journal, and all the things that I think LT and Tom Brady is impressive, I would write it all down.

LEARNING TO WRITE: PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW

Jo'Quon offered in his preinterview: "When I went to this school called Valencia Park, they would help me write. They would get this sheet out and make me write essays, and when I got to third grade I got to this school named Porter, and they made me read a lot."

Jo'Quon responded to the prompt in the postinterview with:

Hmm. I went to Valencia Park and Porter—VP didn't really help me with writing, and Porter helped me just a little taught me how to read and then I moved to this school. They [new school] taught me math, division and writing. They taught me how to be a better writer and make better decisions for my life. Every time I spell something, I would spell it wrong, and now my friends here help me and my family, and my teacher is one of the best teachers I have ever had.

He continued: "I like writing a lot more. She [the teacher] makes us write about the authors or like them. She makes us write like James Patterson that we read about. We don't copy him, but we tried to write like him."

IMPACT OF WRITING: PRE-AND POSTINTERVIEW

Jo'Quon connected the impact that writing has upon your life to his relationship with his dad in his preinterview.

When I was just little, my dad was still in college. He was writing, and he was writing a lot, and he said you got to write a lot and read a lot to get out of college. . . . He would tell me that sports aren't as important as school is.

In his postinterview, Jo'Quon cited his love of football as one of his primary sources of writing inspiration. He utilized the following sport analogy for what he perceives the role of writing to be in his future. When asked if he believed that it is important to be a good writer he responded,

Yes. Because if I'm going to own my own company or be a football player, I gotta learn how to write, and if I'm a coach, the plays gotta be smart. So I got to go to college to get those ones into my head.

PERCEPTION OF THEMSELVES AS WRITERS: PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW

When Jo'Quon was asked in his preinterview how he felt about himself as a writer, he stated: "I would say I'm a good writer but I'm not excellent at writing. At least I put in 98% into it every time I try to write."

When asked again in his postinterview how he felt about himself as a writer after being exposed to the mentor text inquiry approach, he responded, "I've improved a lot. My grades have improved a lot, and no one ever tried to help me [before], but here everyone tries to help me and keep me going." When asked what he could do to improve as a writer, he stated: "Keep on writing and writing and writing."

QUALITIES OF GOOD WRITING: PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW

In his preinterview, Jo'Quon stated that he determined whether his writing is good when "I try my best and put a lot of effort into it, and if it's something I really, really like then, I know I can really write better."

Jo'Quon integrated his passion for football to explain in his postinterview how he determined a good piece of writing: "And I know it's a good piece of writing because he [the author] puts quotation marks and commas in a great position, like if you had LT or Mike Turner [reference to NFL athletes] in a great position."

ANALYSIS OF JO'QUON'S PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Jo'Quon's preinterview transcript indicated he would like to be perceived by others as a writer. He was uncertain of his own writing abilities but confirmed that he knew he put in a

lot of effort. He offered two vague examples of how he thought he learned to write at his previous school sites: taking out paper and writing essays or reading a lot. It was not until his postinterview that he recognized that, although his previous two school sites may have assigned writing to him, they did not explicitly teach him how to improve his writing.

In both his pre- and postinterviews, Jo'Quon clearly stated that a core part of his identity was derived from the passion he has for playing football. He indicated in his preinterview that one purpose for writing is that you have to be good at writing to be successful in college. He mentioned that his dad had explained to him when he was younger that succeeding academically would always take precedent over his love for playing sports in college. At the time of the preinterview, Jo'Quon believed that one could either be successful as a writer or as a football player, but not at both simultaneously. However, by the postinterview Jo'Quon stated that he believed writing was an essential skill required for his future success because he intended to become a successful football player and/or coach.

Jo'Quon's postinterview indicated he understood the explicit connection made between reading and writing in the mentor text inquiry approach and was able to provide the following examples as evidence of this new understanding: (a) he could use a mentor text, from authors such as James Patterson, as a model for his own writing; (b) he was aware that the reader determined the quality of a piece of writing and that quality was not dependent upon quantity produced; and (c) he realized that conventional punctuation marks placed appropriately by a writer can aid the reader in comprehending a text.

Overall, Jo'Quon felt he had improved as a writer upon completion of the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction. He stated that he was actually writing more this year than at all of his previous school sites combined. In his postinterview, he even offered an

example of a recent family trip where he voluntarily wrote down facts on football legends in a football journal.

WRITING ATTITUDE

Jo'Quon increased his writing attitude ratings on the posttest for 10 of the 28 statements as shown in Table 10. He declined in writing attitude scores for one question on the posttest.

Table 10. Jo'Quon's Trends for *Writing Attitude Survey*

Category	Number
Item numbers with gain of +1	
Genres	1, 5, 6, 7, 17, 23
Content	2
Jobs	10
Item numbers with gain of +2	
Content	14, 15
Writing Significance	16
Item numbers with gain of +3	
Genres	8
Item numbers that decreased -1	
Feedback/Revision	27

ANALYSIS OF JO'QUON'S WRITING ATTITUDE SURVEY RESULTS

Jo'Quon gained 18 points from his total pretest score of 79 to his posttest score of 97. His pretest raw score of 79 corresponds to the 53rd percentile, and his posttest raw score of

97 corresponds to the 93rd percentile for 4th grade students on the national norm (Kear et al., 2000). Compared to the national average (50th percentile), Jo'Quon displayed a slightly positive attitude toward writing prior to the mentor text inquiry approach ranking in the 53rd percentile. His postsurvey results indicated a significant increase of 40 percentile points upon completion of the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction.

Jo'Quon's greatest increase in positive responses to items in this survey fell within the Genre category. He indicated a positive gain of confidence in his ability to write letters, write to change someone's opinion, keeping a diary, writing poetry, writing down a list, and keeping a journal for class. His most significant gain (+3) in the Genres category was related to his confidence in writing a letter stating his opinion on a topic. He would also feel more positively about having a job as a writer for a newspaper or magazine in the Jobs category. In the Content category Jo'Quon demonstrated an increase in confidence in content-area writing for both science and social studies. Writing in school was perceived more positively in the Writing Significance category as well. Jo'Quon indicated feeling more negatively about only one item in the Feedback/Revision category related to how he would feel if his classmates were to read something he wrote.

WRITING SELF-EFFICACY

Jo'Quon's self-efficacy ratings declined for 9 of 11 statements as shown in Table 11. He remained neutral in his responses showing neither a gain nor decline in writing self-efficacy beliefs for two statements as shown in Table 12.

Table 11. Jo'Quon's Writing Self-Efficacy Declining Scores

No.	Statement	Pretest	Posttest	Gain/loss
1	Write a clear, focused essay that stays on topic.	100	40	-60
2	Use details to support my ideas.	100	20	-80
3	Write a well-organized essay with an inviting beginning, developed middles, and meaningful ending.	100	60	-40
4	Correctly use paragraph format in the essay.	70	30	-40
6	Use effective words in the essay.	70	30	-40
7	Write a well-constructed essay.	60	20	-40
9	Correctly spell all words in the essay.	40	10	-30
10	Correctly use punctuation in the essay.	100	80	-20
11	Write an essay good enough to earn a high grade.	100	90	-10

Table 12. Jo'Quon's Writing Self-Efficacy Neutral Scores

No.	Statement	Pretest	Posttest	Gain/loss
5	Write with an engaging voice or tone.	100	100	0
8	Use correct grammar in the essay.	60	60	0

ANALYSIS OF JO'QUON'S WRITING SELF-EFFICACY RESULTS

Klassen (2002) states that students with specific writing difficulties, in particular, appear to optimistically miscalibrate their self-efficacy with their actual writing task outcomes. (Calibration addresses the accuracy of one's beliefs about potential functioning.) In the measurement of writing self-efficacy for academic functioning, Jo'Quon was asked to rate how confident he was that they he could perform a writing task. Calibration of his

ratings of self-efficacy beliefs and writing task performances were assessed using his pre- and postsummative essays. Jo'Quon's pretest scores compared to his presummative essay results indicated an inflated sense of writing abilities that he did not actually possess. Although his postsurvey scores for self-efficacy declined dramatically, when compared to his posttest summative essay results, these scores, in contrast to his pretest results, are more aligned with his actual writing abilities.

Alvarez and Adelman (1986) investigated the nature of miscalibration of self-efficacy beliefs with the subsequent performance tasks for students with learning disabilities. When students overestimated their self-efficacy scores it was attributed to a "self-protective" function, in which students erected a "façade of competence" to hide their academic difficulties. Jo'Quon's dramatic decline from pre- to postsurvey results in self-efficacy beliefs may indicate that the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction provided him a more realistic perspective on his own writing abilities, and therefore, his postsurvey results indicated a growing awareness and more accurate reflection of his current abilities as a writer. The most significant declines from his pre- to postsurvey test in self-efficacy include his ability to use details to support (-80) a clear focused essay that stays on topic (-60) writing a well-organized essay with an inviting beginning, developed middle, and meaningful ending; using correct paragraph formatting and constructing sentences with effective words (-40), while maintaining conventional spelling (-30) and punctuation (-20) in order to earn a high grade (-10).

Overall, Jo'Quon's data indicated the most significant impact that the mentor text inquiry approach had on his self-efficacy was to provide him a more realistic assessment of his own writing abilities.

JO'QUON'S FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE ESSAY RESULTS

Tables 13-16 and Figures 8-11 (Appendix F) summarize Jo'Quon's formative and summative essay results.

Table 13. Jo'Quon's Formative Essays Summary

Criteria	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 3
Purpose/perspective	0	2	3
Setting description	0	0	1
Character description	0	0	0
Figurative language	0	0	0
Organization of text	0	1	0
Conventions	0	0	0
Total out of 12	0	3	4
Sentence count	0	2	16
Word count	0	162	205

FORMATIVE WRITING SAMPLES

Jo'Quon's Formative Essay 1: Jo'Quon did not have a writing sample for the first essay prompt because he refused to write during the allotted time period. He explained to the teacher-researcher that he did not have anything to write about yet and refused to pick up his pencil to participate in this writing event. Jo'Quon received a score of 0 for being present during the writing event but not producing any writing to evaluate.

Table 14. Jo'Quon's Rubric for Formative Essay 2

Narrative criteria	Score	Evidence
Purpose/perspective 1. Experience 2. 1st person 3. On topic (3 points)	2	Mini-Essay 1: Jo'Quon wrote a first person narrative about a birthday that he spent in the hospital when he ruptured his spleen. Mini-Essay 2: Jo'Quon wrote a first person narrative about an incident where he broke the glass in his mother's room. Jo'Quon did not attend to the directions given for this prompt and wrote two different responses.
Setting description (1 point)	0	Mini-Essay 1: No evidence. Mini-Essay 2: Jo'Quon states that the action took place in his mother's room but does not describe it: <i>Wene I went to go play I whent in my mom's room and I brock the glass in her room and I ran in my room.</i>
Character description (1 point)	0	Mini-Essay 1: No evidence. Mini-Essay 2: No evidence.
Dialogue (1 point)	0	Mini-Essay 1: No evidence. Mini-Essay 2: Jo'Quon makes an unsuccessful attempt to include dialogue: <i>my dad said ej did you brack the glass he said no that was Terrell and he said Terrell! come here right now and I said yes dada and they started to laugh</i>
Figurative language 1. Craft elements (1 point)	0	Mini-Essay 1: No Evidence. Mini-Essay 2: No Evidence.
Organization of text 1. Leads 2. Conclusions 3. Sequential order of events (3 points)	0	Mini-Essay 1: Jo'Quon wrote his response as one run-on sentence without a clearly defined lead or conclusion. The events were not told in sequential order. Mini-Essay 2: Jo'Quon wrote his response as one run-on sentence without a clearly defined lead or conclusion. The events were told in sequential order.
Conventions 1. Coherent sentence structure 2. Variety (2 points)	0	Mini-Essay 1 & 2: Jo'Quon does not use appropriate conventional punctuation, capitalization, or grammar.

Table 15. Jo'Quon's Rubric for Formative Essay 3

Narrative criteria	Score	Evidence
Purpose/perspective 1. Experience 2. 1st person 3. On topic (3 points)	3	Jo'Quon's essay is a complete narrative about his last surprise birthday party. He writes from a first person point of view and remains on topic.
Setting description (1 point)	1	Jo'Quon states that the party took place in Ms. Cobene's garage: <i>We went to Ms. Cobene's house. I told my dad were are we going to he said Ms. Coben's house. But there was a door that lead's you to the garage and 40 people were in there.</i>
Character description (1 point)	0	Jo'Quon describes how his brother, older sister, and younger sister had to clean up the cake that fell on the floor and how they hit him because it was his birthday. He does not add descriptive details to these characters: <i>My mom brought in the cake. She had dropped some cake on the floor. And it was funny because my bother, my older sister and my little sister had to clean it up because I was the birthday boy and I was telling them look you forgot something and I was laughing my but off. They all were about to beat me up because I dropped the frosting on the floor on accident.</i>
Dialogue (1 point)	0	Jo'Quon attempts dialogue in this essay between his dad and himself, but it is not written with attention to conventional punctuation: <i>I told my dad were are we going to he said Ms. Coben's house I said for what he said I left something there so we went.</i>
Figurative language 1. Craft elements (1 point)	1	No evidence.
Organization of text 1. Leads 2. Conclusions 3. Sequential order of events (3 points)	2	Jo'Quon's lead sentence and conclusion are not written in a clear, coherent manner. Lead: <i>One day I wock up it was my berthday and my dad said happy berthday baby boy I said hi dad my mom had a nina and she would send me 20 dollars in the mail eerytime I was my berthday.</i> Conclusion:
Conventions 1. Coherent sentence structure 2. Variety (2 points)	1	Jo'Quon is unable to produce writing in his third essay with appropriate capitalization, punctuation or attend to conventional spelling. Jo'Quon does make an attempt to use commas in a series but not correctly: <i>Ms. Cobene is my older sister's boyfriend's mom so my mom, and, dad ticked me.</i>

Table 16. Jo’Quon’s Summative Essays Summary

Narrative criteria	Pretest	Posttest
Purpose/perspective	1	2
Setting description	1	2
Character description	1	2
Dialogue	1	2
Figurative language	1	2
Organization of text	1	3
Conventions	1	3
Overall holistic score	1	2
Fluency: Word count	49	246

ANALYSIS OF JO’QUON’S FORMATIVE ESSAY RESULTS

Jo’Quon addressed the second essay prompt in two separate paragraphs. Jo’Quon alerted the reader that these were two different attempts to answer the prompt by drawing a line across the paper and numbering the top paragraph with a “1” and the bottom paragraph with a “2.” Jo’Quon’s second essay provided evidence that he was willing to take risks as a writer in comparison to the first essay prompt when he refused to participate altogether. The first paragraph was a narrative retelling about a time that he was rushed to the hospital to have his spleen removed. This first mini-essay was written as one long run-on sentence with only one period used at the end of the paragraph. The second paragraph was a separate retelling of a time in the past when he broke a glass in his mother’s room. Jo’Quon’s second essay included his first attempt at dialogue but did not attend to any punctuation or

capitalization conventions. The total points awarded for both of these mini-essays was 3 out of 12 points on the rubric.

Jo'Quon' third essay attended to the prompt provided and was a page and one half in length on a single topic, an improvement from his second essay, which was broken into two responses. He received a score of 4 out of 12 points on the rubric.

The mentor text inquiry approach had the most dramatic impact upon Jo'Quon's confidence, willingness to engage in the task, and fluency development as a writer. At the outset, he refused to engage in the process due to lack of ideas and willingness to write. Although he refused to write during the time allotted for his first essay, by his second essay he wrote without any complaints or hesitation. By the time he approached his third essay, Jo'Quon was able to write on topic about a previous birthday celebration and retell the events of the day in sequential order with a clear beginning, middle, and end.

ANALYSIS OF JO'QUON'S SUMMATIVE PRE- AND POSTTEST ESSAY RESULTS

Jo'Quon's pretest essay received a holistic score of 1 and his posttest essay a holistic score of 2 out of 4 on the *Narrative Mentor Text Rubric* scale. This was an overall increase of 1 point on the rubric. Jo'Quon's postessay showed evidence of increased writing fluency from a pretest word count of 49 words to a posttest count of 246 words.

Jo'Quon's writing demonstrated a greater understanding of sentence structure, as his pretest was written as one paragraph, with only one period at the end of the essay, while his postessay includes a variety of punctuation endings including exclamation marks and periods for a total of 10 sentences. Jo'Quon's postessay shows evidence of mentor text elements covered in the *Narrative Mentor Text Framework* such as quotations for dialogue, descriptive

words for characters, and conventional use of parenthesis and commas in a series. These mentor text elements were attempted, but it is noted that he was unable to demonstrate appropriate use of these elements in his essay at mastery level.

OVERALL SUMMARY OF JO'QUON'S PROGRESS

In his preinterview prior to the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction, Jo'Quon acknowledged that writing was an important skill set for success in life but admitted that he did not remember ever being explicitly taught how to write in his previous school sites. He equated good writing with someone who put forth a lot of effort in the writing process, although he was not able to provide concrete examples of how that effort translated into better writing products.

Jo'Quon's postinterview transcripts revealed a greater awareness of a reader's role in interpreting a writer's work and evaluating the overall quality of the written product. His self-efficacy survey indicated that the emerging importance of a reader's role in evaluating text had a dramatic impact upon his perception of himself as a writer being able to fulfill the reader's definition of quality writing. His posttest self-efficacy scores reflected more realistic perceptions of his abilities than his pretest, where he did not consider the role of the reader as vital as that as a producer of text. His postinterview transcripts revealed that he is able to articulate the importance of conventional spelling and punctuation to aiding a reader's experience with written text.

Jo'Quon's experience with the mentor text inquiry approach had a positive impact upon his attitude toward writing—especially in a school context. He had the most gains in the Genre category and sees writing as a positive tool in the learning process for poetry,

science, social studies, note-taking and composing letters. His attitude survey and his postinterview transcripts both reveal Jo'Quon's willingness to view writing as an integral component for his future schooling and employment opportunities.

When Jo'Quon refused to write to the prompt provided for his first formative essay experience, it indicated a reluctance to view himself as a writer. By the third formative essay Jo'Quon had gained the confidence to write one clear, coherent essay on the topic during the time frame provided. The confidence in being able to produce writing is evident in the growth made from his first to his third formative essay.

His greatest growth as a writer is evident in comparison of his pre- and posttest summative essays. He increased his fluency from 49 words to 246 words. He improved in his ability to write clear, coherent sentences from one run-on sentence in his pretest to over 12 sentences punctuated appropriately in his posttest. Jo'Quon also demonstrated through his summative posttest that he is more aware of conventional punctuation marks such as commas, hyphens, and especially the use of quotation marks for dialogue purposes. Although Jo'Quon has not mastered any of these conventions yet, his willingness to explore these conventional options indicates he is growing as a writer. The mentor text inquiry approach had a dramatically positive impact upon Jo'Quon's writing ability. Jo'Quon indicated by his responses in his postinterview that the areas of greatest growth for him were in the areas of writing fluency and conventions.

Brooklyn

Brooklyn is a 9-year-old Mexican and African-American female. She is in fourth grade and had previously attended one school prior to this school site. She had received a

consistent public charter education in the SDUSD from Kindergarten to fourth grade. Her academic testing history from second and third grade indicated a Basic mastery of California Content Standards for English Language Arts. After completing a quarterly assessment in early November of 2010, she was considered by her classroom teacher to be Basic in English Language Arts based on degree of mastery of the California Content State Standards for fourth grade. For the purposes of this study she was identified by the teacher-researcher as an at-grade level writer.

PURPOSE OF WRITING:

PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW

Brooklyn stated in her preinterview:

I like to write a lot because I spill out my emotions, and I write because its not only for everybody else, it's for me and it's for my community and to show out what I can do, and it's a part of my education so I can go to college and get degrees.

In her postinterview, Brooklyn offered that writing is used to “express how things are going around, and if there is nothing that I see or think of, I just make something up.

Sometimes I think about my grandfathers that died and basically my emotions—I should say that about writing.”

LEARNING TO WRITE:

PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW

Brooklyn attributed learning to write to her parents prior to school beginning in kindergarten, and she also mentioned that, to help her improve her writing, her parents enrolled her in a writing camp during the summertime of her third grade year.

In her postinterview, Brooklyn revealed more specific details about how her mom helped her learn to write.

I learned how to write from my mom. One time I saw my mom writing, and my mom said you know you're going to have to learn how to write, because if you want to learn how to read, you have to learn how to write, because writing and reading are like the same thing. My mom was a teacher then—well she wasn't a teacher yet—then she was only a substitute but she taught me to do math and how to write the word *I, can* and stuff like that.

IMPACT OF WRITING: PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW

When asked during the preinterview if it was important to be a good writer, Brooklyn responded, “Yes. If you don't know how to write, how will you ever get into college? And you can't do your job unless you know how to write.”

Brooklyn reiterated that it is important to be a good writer in her postinterview: If you don't know how to write how are you going to go to college? And college is all about writing and reading. You don't know how to do something like that it means you didn't go to a good school or you were just lazy to not work. Like my mom always says play later—work now. Because if you play now and work later you aren't going to make it in education.

PERCEPTION OF THEMSELVES AS WRITERS: PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW

In her preinterview, Brooklyn explained:

When I write, sometimes I think of the things that are happening around me and stuff I like or stuff I don't like. When I don't like things, it's hard to write about [them], because its hard to see it or picture it in my mind I think of it as a storybook and I write about what happens in my life and I can go back and think of the times I had fun, and if I have kids then I can go back and show them my writing.

When asked in her postinterview how she feels about herself as a writer, Brooklyn responded that she felt “outstanding and proud.” When further prompted to explain why she feels that way she explained, “I've been through all my grades and I've had lots of help like Ms. Kane, my mom helped me, my dad helped me, my grandma helped me.” Although this

answer did not directly address the question, it gave more insight into the people whom she believed have supported her writing development.

Brooklyn also responded in her postinterview that she views herself not only as a writer but as a teacher of writing in her extended family.

I teach them [younger cousins] how to write what they are feeling and . . . I'll be the first teacher, and Chelsea will come to me and we will write about her feelings and then she has to go to Kyeveni and he will teach her how to draw. Basically mentor text. He will read a book to her and then ask her well, what happened in this book? What happened to the characters?

QUALITIES OF GOOD WRITING: PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW

When asked to define good writing in her preinterview, Brooklyn responded that “you can choose what you write about and if you get to the middle it’s already good, and if you can read it to your family then you can be proud of it.”

Brooklyn’s postinterview explained that as a writer she chose to write about topics that were occurring in her everyday life, because they made interesting stories to read for others. If reality did not inspire her to write, then she would “make something up” to satisfy any writing requirements.

ANALYSIS OF BROOKLYN’S PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Brooklyn’s preinterview revealed that she writes for personal reasons. Her earliest memories of learning to write are of her mom, dad, and grandma as role models and teachers of writing. She never offered any specific details in how these mentors actually taught her to write, only that they were vital in defining the value of school in her life at a very early age.

It was interpreted by her interview transcripts that she associated being a successful student in school as someone who is also able to write. She did not mention in either her pre- or postinterview any memories associated with learning to write in a classroom setting or from an educator in school.

Brooklyn's pre- and postinterview responses demonstrated audience was an important factor in determining what makes writing good. In both her pre- and postinterview transcripts, Brooklyn reiterated that the sole purpose for writing is to record her emotions in a therapeutic manner. It was not until her postinterview that she mentioned writing in different genres that included both "real life" topics and fictional ones.

Overall, Brooklyn's postinterview confirmed she had a positive view of herself as a writer. Although she did not provide any specific evidence as to why she believed her writing was qualitatively considered good, she did share that she viewed herself as highly capable of teaching others how to write, such as her younger cousins, and that she dreamed of saving her writing and showing it to her own kids one day.

WRITING ATTITUDE

Brooklyn increased her writing attitude ratings on the posttest for 6 of the 28 statements, as shown in Table 17. She declined in writing attitude scores for 5 of 28 statements on the posttest.

ANALYSIS OF BROOKLYN'S WRITING ATTITUDE SURVEY RESULTS

Brooklyn gained 3 points from her total pretest raw score of 77 to her posttest score of 80. Her pretest raw score of 77 corresponds to the 47th percentile, and her posttest raw score

Table 17. Brooklyn's Trends for *Writing Attitude Survey*

Category	Number
Item numbers with gain of +1	
Genres	25
Content	14, 15
Feedback/Revision	21
Writing Significance	13
Item numbers with gain of +3	
Genres	3
Item numbers that decreased -1	
Genres	1, 6, 18
Jobs	9, 10

of 80 corresponds to the 50th percentile for 4th grade students on the national norms (Kear et al., 2000). Compared to the national average (50th percentile), Brooklyn displayed a slightly negative attitude toward writing prior to the mentor text inquiry approach ranking in the 47th percentile. Her postsurvey results indicated a positive if small increase of 9 percentile points upon completion of the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction.

Brooklyn's greatest increase in positive responses to items in this survey fell within the Genre category. Her scores indicated a positive gain of confidence in her ability to write letters to a store inquiring about a product and writing about something from another person's point of view. In the Content category, Brooklyn's scores revealed an increased positive attitude toward writing about something she did in either science or social studies. Scores in the Feedback/Revision category confirmed that she felt more positively toward her classmates being allowed to discuss ways in which she could improve her writing. Overall,

Brooklyn would now positively consider writing as an option instead of watching TV, as reflected by her responses to items in the Writing Significance category.

WRITING SELF-EFFICACY

Brooklyn remained neutral with no gain or decline for one statement as shown in Table 18. She increased her self-efficacy rating on the posttest for four statements, as shown in Table 19. Her self-efficacy ratings on the posttest declined for six statements as shown in Table 20.

Table 18. Brooklyn's Writing Self-Efficacy Neutral Scores

No.	Statement	Pretest	Posttest	Gain/loss
10	Correctly use punctuation in the essay.	100	100	0

Table 19. Brooklyn's Writing Self-Efficacy Neutral Gains

No.	Statement	Pretest	Posttest	Gain/loss
1	Write a clear, focused essay that stays on topic.	40	60	+20
4	Correctly use paragraph format in the essay.	90	100	+10
5	Write with an engaging voice or tone.	30	100	+70
6	Use effective words in the essay.	20	70	+50

ANALYSIS OF BROOKLYN'S WRITING SELF-EFFICACY RESULTS

Brooklyn's positive response to one statement related to her ability to punctuate an essay remained unchanged. However, her posttest data indicated a dramatic positive gain for two statements including being able to write with an engaging voice or tone (+70) and using

Table 20. Brooklyn's Writing Self-Efficacy Declining Scores

No.	Statement	Pretest	Posttest	Gain/loss
2	Use details to support my ideas.	70	90	-20
3	Write a well-organized essay with an inviting beginning, developed middles, and meaningful ending.	100	90	-10
7	Write a well-constructed essay.	100	80	-20
8	Use correct grammar in the essay.	100	80	-20
9	Correctly spell all words in the essay.	50	10	-40
11	Write an essay good enough to earn a high grade.	100	90	-10

effective words in an essay (+50). She also had a slight gain in her self-efficacy beliefs in terms of writing a clear, focused essay that stays on topic (+20) and using paragraph formatting correctly (+10). Brooklyn's scores declined slightly for four statements including writing well-constructed sentences (-20), using correct grammar (-20), and writing an essay good enough to earn a high grade (-10) that includes an inviting beginning, developed middle, and meaningful ending (-10). The greatest decline occurred in two writing self-efficacy statements related to using conventional spelling appropriately (-40) and details to support her ideas (-30) throughout her essay. Overall, Brooklyn's self-efficacy decline in six categories may indicate she overestimated her self-efficacy scores in her pretest results as a means to hide her academic difficulties in writing (Alvarez & Adelman, 1986). Upon completion of the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction, she may have gained a more realistic view of her own writing abilities and recorded her postsurvey results accordingly.

BROOKLYN’S FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE ESSAY RESULTS

Tables 21-24 and Figures 12-15 (Appendix F) summarize Brooklyn’s formative and summative essay results.

Table 21. Brooklyn’s Formative Essays Summary

Criteria	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 3
Purpose/perspective	3	3	NS ^a
Setting description	0	0	NS
Character description	0	0	NS
Figurative language	0	0	NS
Dialogue	0	0	NS
Organization of text	0	0	NS
Conventions	1	0	NS
Total out of 11	4	3	NS
Sentence count	9	5	NS
Word count	129	177	NS

^aNo score.

BROOKLYN’S FORMATIVE ESSAY 3

Brooklyn was not available at school during the testing window due to complete the third essay for this research study. Her third formative essay was given a NS for No score.

ANALYSIS OF BROOKLYN’S FORMATIVE ESSAY RESULTS

Brooklyn’s first essay was nine sentences in length. She received a score of 4 out of 12 points on the rubric. She wrote about an experience going to Disneyland with her family,

Table 22. Brooklyn's Rubric for Formative Essay 1

Narrative criteria	Score	Evidence
Purpose/perspective 1. Experience 2. 1st person 3. On topic (3 points)	3	Brooklyn wrote a first person narrative about an experience that happened to her and stayed on topic.
Setting description (1 point)	0	Brooklyn wrote about three settings in her first essay: (a) family car, (b) hotel. and (c) Disneyland. She did not provide any description for any of these settings.
Character description (1 point)	0	No evidence.
Dialogue (1 point)	0	Brooklyn attempted to include two examples of dialogue in the essay but did not punctuate either one appropriately: <i>"My mom said What's the matter!"</i> and <i>"My mom and dad said that it was time to go to the pool"!</i>
Figurative language 1. Craft elements (1 point)	0	No evidence.
Organization of text 1. Leads 2. Conclusions 3. Sequential order of events (3 points)	0	Brooklyn did not begin with an effective lead sentence. She was unable to sequence her events in a logical order for a developed middle. She attempted to use time markers for sequencing ineffectively: <i>10 minutes later we were at the hotel waiting to go to the pool. And 3 hour later we were still in the pool and we saw fire works. And the a hour later we went to eat at califour kitine.</i> Brooklyn did not include an effective conclusion to her essay.
Conventions 1. Coherent sentence structure 2. Variety (2 points)	1	Brooklyn did not consistently include clear, coherent sentences throughout her essay. She did include one sentence using commas in a series for sentence variety. <i>The fire works were tekerbell, mine, mike, indane jones, and Alice.</i>

Table 23. Brooklyn's Rubric for Formative Essay 2

Narrative criteria	Score	Evidence
Purpose/perspective 1. Experience 2. 1st person 3. On topic (3 points)	3	Brooklyn wrote about Disneyland again in her second essay. She maintained first person point of view and stayed on topic.
Setting description (1 point)	0	No evidence.
Character description (1 point)	0	No evidence.
Dialogue (1 point)	0	Brooklyn made one attempt to include dialogue in the essay, but it was punctuated appropriately: <i>"and I saw it and my "Perents said" What ride should we go now.</i>
Figurative language 1. Craft elements (1 point)	0	No evidence.
Organization of text 1. Leads 2. Conclusions 3. Sequential order of events (3 points)	0	Brooklyn stayed on the topic of Disneyland, but the events were not told in coherent sequential order for the reader to understand. There was no evidence of an effective lead sentence or conclusion.
Conventions 1. Coherent sentence structure 2. Variety (2 points)	0	Brooklyn did not use conventions for dialogue appropriately. (See example cited above in table.) She did not attempt to include any other examples of sentence interrupters and includes run-on sentences that are not coherently structured.

Table 24. Brooklyn's Summative Essays Summary

Narrative criteria	Pretest	Posttest
Purpose/perspective	2	2
Setting description	2	2
Character description	1	2
Dialogue	1	2
Figurative language	1	2
Organization of text	2	3
Conventions	1	2
Overall holistic score	1	2
Fluency: Word count	69	140

beginning with falling asleep on the drive up to the amusement park and ending with a description of what she bought at the end of her day. Her lead sentence did not provide a clear purpose. She was unable to organize the sequence of events during her trip in a logical manner. She did not include an effective ending.

Brooklyn's second essay was another rendition of the same topic she utilized in her first essay, a family trip to Disneyland. She received a score of 3 out of 12 points on the rubric. She increased her word count from the first formative essay of 129 words to her second formative essay of 177 words. There was no evidence of any attempt at either character or setting description. She attempted to insert dialogue but punctuated it inappropriately. She struggled throughout her essay to maintain clear, coherent sentences or to logically sequence her events. Her second essay declined one point on the rubric used to analyze formative essays. Brooklyn continued to struggle in her second attempt to write a well-organized essay with an inviting beginning, developed middle, and meaningful ending.

ANALYSIS OF BROOKLYN'S SUMMATIVE PRE- AND POSTTEST ESSAY RESULTS

Brooklyn's pretest essay received a holistic score of 1, and her posttest essay received a score of 2 out of a 4 on the *Narrative Mentor Text Rubric* scale. Brooklyn increased her score by 1 point on the rubric overall. Her pos essay showed evidence of an increase in her writing fluency from a pretest word count of 69 words and a posttest count of 140 words. Brooklyn's postessay showed minimal evidence of mentor text elements covered in the *Narrative Mentor Text Framework*. In terms of conventions, she only used commas in a series. Her postessay indicated that she struggled with an effective lead sentence unlike her presummative essay. She attempted a more developed middle of the essay by expanding on the sequence of events, but her sentences were not always clear and coherently structured. She wrote a more effective ending in her postsummative essay compared to her presummative essay. Overall, her summative postessay was more developed in its organization of sequence of events compared to both of her formative essay attempts and her pretest summative essay.

OVERALL SUMMARY OF BROOKLYN'S PROGRESS

Brooklyn's pre- and postinterview responses were strikingly similar overall. Her expressed purpose for writing was based on a need to record her emotions regarding the events of her daily life on paper. She did not cite teachers or school as pivotal in learning to write and identified her parents and grandma as writing mentors in both interviews. She continued to perceive herself as a good writer in her pre- and postinterviews, although she was unable to identify a specific characteristic in her writing that qualified it as being good.

Brooklyn's pre- and postsurvey results in writing attitude increased slightly from a negative attitude toward a slightly positive one toward writing. This slight increase was an indicator that Brooklyn's attitude toward writing was only moderately impacted by the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction.

Brooklyn's posttest data on the Writing Self-Efficacy survey indicated a positive gain for four statements, including being able to write with an engaging voice or tone, using effective words and paragraph formatting correctly in a clear, focused essay that stayed on topic. Unfortunately, Brooklyn's self-efficacy beliefs were overestimated when compared to actual writing task performances and not evident in any formative essay attempts. She struggled in both of her formative essay attempts to write a well-organized piece with an inviting beginning, developed middle, and meaningful ending. Her summative postessay does reflect a slight improvement upon her ability to retell events in sequential order, as compared to both of her formative essay attempts and her pretest summative essay. It should be concluded that the mentor text inquiry approach had only a minor impact positively upon Brooklyn as a writer overall.

Treyshawn

Treyshawn is a 9-year-old, African-American male. He attended one school prior to beginning his first year in attendance at this school site. Treyshawn received a consistent public charter education in the SDUSD from Kindergarten to fourth grade. His academic testing history from second and third grade indicate a Basic mastery of California Content Standards for English Language Arts. After completing a quarterly assessment in early November of 2010, he was considered by his classroom teacher to be Basic in English

Language Arts based on degree of mastery of the California Content State Standards for fourth grade. For the purposes of this study he was identified by the teacher-researcher as an at-grade level writer.

PURPOSE OF WRITING: PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW

Treyshawn described his purposes for writing since kindergarten including both academic and personal reasons. He offered that his current teacher “inspires him to write a lot and that’s how I can write as good as I can now.” He also cited his mother as a writing mentor. “She really does like writing. She is going to college and is working on trying to become a teacher.”

In his postinterview, Treyshawn gave further evidence that learning to write in school will benefit him in the future. “When you grow up and you are an adult and you want to tell people about yourself, you can always write a book and get it published. Writing helps you be whatever you want to be.”

LEARNING TO WRITE: PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW

Treyshawn stated in his preinterview that his current teacher “gives us time to brainstorm about what we want to write about. We just think about the topic and how we are going to begin it and then just keep going with it.”

Treyshawn described the mentor text inquiry approach in his postinterview:

I have been studying authors and paragraphs and how I can use quotation marks in my own writing, so it can look professional. The authors are like teaching us how to use colons, hyphens, and sentences correctly and how to use the quotation marks and how to do stuff like that.

He also noted that he has become a fan of commas and knowing where to put them appropriately.

IMPACT OF WRITING: PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW

Although he dreams of becoming a chef when he grows up, in his preinterview Treyshawn said he understood that writing will be an important skill that he will need for his future plans.

I thinks it's important if you're trying to get a job and you have to be interviewed, and if you can't think of something to talk about then you should be able to write it down and send it to them.

Overall, Treyshawn believed that he has been progressively improving in writing every year. In his postinterview, he said, "I've become more accomplished every year that I've been trying. I need to write more when I get to fifth grade and I'm going to need to try my hardest." He also stated that it is important to be a good writer because "when you grow up and you are an adult, and you want to tell people about yourself, and you can write a book so you can publish it and be whatever you want to be."

PERCEPTION OF THEMSELVES AS WRITERS: PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW

In his preinterview, Treyshawn only mentioned outside sources of validation as reasons why he believed he is a good writer. "I really like my scores in fourth grade about writing, because my teacher has helped me in writing, because I love writing now and see how fun it can be." He generated inspiration for his own writing from his lived experience

and what books he was reading. “I think for me my best writing comes from what I see and what I read.”

Treyshawn commented in his postinterview: “I think when I was in third grade I used to have basic in reading, and now I’ve gone up to advanced or proficient, so I think this school is better for me.” He concluded his postinterview stating his views about his own abilities as a writer.

I’ve become more accomplished every year that I have been trying. I would like other people to think about me if I were ever to publish, and I hope they like it because I took time out of my life to do that.

He paused in his interview and adds that “I never tried this, but in the summer I might write about what I see using descriptive language.”

QUALITIES OF GOOD WRITING: PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW

Treyshawn stated in his preinterview that the quality of good writing was dependent upon the length of the text itself.

We have these journals and, depending upon the subject, I would write a lot and like, if I couldn’t think about something, I would split up my sentence into more words so that I could write more because I couldn’t think about anything more.

When asked directly in Treyshawn’s postinterview what he believed makes for good writing, he stated, “The person that taught you how, and I think what makes you a good writer is that you practice and you keep trying your hardest.” He believed:

I learned how to write in kindergarten and improved in first and second grade, and in third grade is when I started to write really, really long ones. Now in fourth grade I write at least two to three pages a night.

ANALYSIS OF TREYSHAWN'S PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Treyshawn believed the purpose of writing was to enjoy himself and noted that his mother was a role model because she was in college and enjoyed writing, too. He described himself as an academic writer who understands that writing may be for personal reasons, although he does not choose to write recreationally.

Treyshawn indicated in both his pre- and postinterview transcripts that a defining characteristic of good writing is fluency. He believed that the longer a piece of text, the better its inherent quality, due to increased word and sentence count. He continued to attribute growth in writing abilities to one's own efforts and to assert that good writers have excellent teachers-models. He also clarified in his pre- and postinterview that he utilized outside sources to validate his writing abilities rather than depend upon his own analysis. He mentioned his teacher's view of his writing in both interviews and alluded to standardized test scores as measures for validating his effectiveness as a writer.

Treyshawn stated in his preinterview that he considered the ability to write as an important skill for future employment. His postinterview transcript revealed that he believes writing is a critical skill that opens up opportunities for the future, including possible employment. He connected using mentor text from authors as models of good writing with certain writing elements, such as conventional punctuation marks and sentence variety. He stated that he wanted to continue to improve his own writing abilities, and perhaps one day he will publish a book as an adult and share his life with the world.

WRITING ATTITUDE

Treyshawn increased his writing attitude ratings on the posttest for 9 of the 28 statements, as shown in Table 25. He declined in writing attitude scores for four statements on the posttest.

Table 25. Treyshawn's Trends for *Writing Attitude Survey*

Category	Number
Item numbers with gain of +1	
Genres	5, 17, 19
Content	2, 14, 24
Writing Significance	28
Item numbers with gain of +2	
Genres	3, 7
Item numbers that decreased -1	
Genres	1
Content	4
Jobs	9
Writing Significance	12

ANALYSIS OF TREYSHAWN'S WRITING ATTITUDE SURVEY RESULTS

Treyshawn gained 7 points from his total pretest score of 82 to his posttest score of 89. His pretest raw score of 82 corresponds to the 62nd percentile, and his posttest raw score of 89 corresponds to the 80th percentile for fourth grade students on the national norm (Kear et al., 2000). Compared to the national norm (50th percentile), Treyshawn displayed a slightly positive attitude toward writing prior to the mentor text inquiry approach, ranking in

the 62nd percentile. His postsurvey results indicated an extremely positive gain of 18 percentile points upon completion of the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction.

Treyshawn's greatest increase in positive responses to items in this survey fell within the Genre category. His scores indicated a positive gain (+2) in both his ability to write a letter to a store asking about something he might buy there and writing poetry for fun. In the same category, scores also reflected a gain in his confidence (+1) in writing to change someone's opinion, listing important things his teacher says about a new topic, and writing answers to science or social studies questions. His scores also showed category positive gain (+1) in the Content category related to writing about certain life experiences. He declined (-1) for one item in each of the following four categories: Genres (how would you feel writing a letter to the author of a book you read), Content (how would you feel telling in writing why something happened), Jobs (how would you feel if you were an author of a book), and Writing Significance (how would you feel about writing a story instead of doing homework).

WRITING SELF-EFFICACY

Treyshawn remained neutral in writing self-efficacy beliefs for four statements as shown in Table 26. He increased his self-efficacy rating on the posttest for three statements as shown in Table 27. His self-efficacy ratings on the posttest declined for four statements as shown in Table 28.

ANALYSIS OF TREYSHAWN'S WRITING SELF-EFFICACY RESULTS

Treyshawn's data indicated the most significant positive gains were around his ability to use details to support his ideas (+40). He showed slight gains (+10) in using an engaging

Table 26. Treyshawn's Writing Self-Efficacy Neutral Scores

No.	Statement	Pretest	Posttest
1	Write a clear, focused essay that stays on topic.	90	90
6	Use effective words in the essay	90	90
10	Correctly use punctuation in the essay.	100	100
11	Write an essay good enough to earn a high grade.	20	70

Table 27. Treyshawn's Writing Self-Efficacy Neutral Gains

No.	Statement	Pretest	Posttest
2	Use details to support my ideas.	60	100
3	Write a well-organized essay with an inviting beginning, developed middle, and meaningful ending.	80	90
5	Write with an engaging voice or tone.	60	70

Table 28. Treyshawn's Writing Self-Efficacy Declining Scores

No.	Statement	Pretest	Posttest
4	Correctly use paragraph format in the essay.	90	80
7	Write well-constructed sentences in the essay.	100	90
8	Use correct grammar in the essay.	100	90
9	Correctly spell all the words	100	60

voice or tone to write a well-organized essay with an inviting beginning, developed middle, and meaningful ending. Treyshawn's self-efficacy declined from a positive perspective to a negative one for spelling all words correctly (-40). He had three statements that declined slightly (-10) but remained in the positive range (> 50) for writing well-constructed sentences, using correct grammar and appropriate paragraph formatting. The four statements

that remained neutral from pre- to posttest were all considered positive responses (>50) for writing a clear, well-focused essay with effective words and conventional punctuation good enough to earn a high grade.

TREYSHAWN'S FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE ESSAY RESULTS

Tables 29-33 and Figures 16-20 (Appendix F) summarize Treyshawn's formative and summative essay results.

Table 29. Treyshawn's Formative Essays Summary

Criteria	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 3
Purpose/perspective	3	3	3
Setting description	0	0	1
Character description	0	0	1
Figurative language	1	1	0
Dialogue	0	0	0
Organization of text	1	1	1
Conventions	1	1	1
Total out of 12	6	6	7
Sentence count	9	6	7
Word count	138	163	214

ANALYSIS OF TREYSHAWN'S FORMATIVE ESSAY RESULTS

Treyshawn remained consistent with his ability to provide purpose for the reader and insert dialogue appropriately for each of the formative essays. He demonstrated continuous

Table 30. Treyshawn's Rubric for Formative Essays 1

Narrative criteria	Score	Evidence
Purpose/perspective 1. Experience 2. 1st person 3. On topic (3 points)	3	Treyshawn writes first person narrative about an experience that happened to him (hearing the news of his friend's mom's death) of significance. He remained on topic throughout his essay.
Setting description (1 point)	0	No evidence.
Character description (1 point)	0	No evidence.
Dialogue (1 point)	0	Treyshawn attempts dialogue in these sentences although it is not punctuated correctly or coherent at times: <i>"Rhys' mom died" I said then Ms. Kane said "really what happened?" "She was sick and in the hospital." "Wow" Ms. Kane.</i>
Figurative language 1. Craft elements (1 point)	1	Example of figurative language: <i>The day my mom told me Rhys' mom died it was like time froze.</i>
Organization of text 1. Leads 2. Conclusions 3. Sequential order of events (3 points)	1	Treyshawn's lead sentence attends to the prompt provided but is not clearly articulated. He states that he has one experience that is memorable but offers two different events. <i>One experience I will never forget is the day I went to my friend Rhys's house, and another is the day his mom died.</i> He provides events in sequential order. The ending is not clearly articulated and drops off altogether in: <i>My mom was holding a beautiful card that reminds people of memories and then next day at school Miss Kane said everyone that was in Rhys class stand up.</i>
Conventions 1. Coherent sentence structure 2. Variety (2 points)	1	Treyshawn struggles to maintain clear coherent sentences throughout the entire essay. The sentences that include attempts at dialogue are not conventionally punctuated but do offer a variety of sentence structures. Example: <i>It was a secret. So my classmates wouldn't hear. "Rhys mom died" I said Then Ms. Kane said "really what happened."</i>

Table 31. Treyshawn's Rubric for Formative Essay 2

Narrative criteria	Score	Evidence
Purpose/perspective 1. Experience 2. 1st person 3. On topic (3 points)	3	Treyshawn writes about an experience that happened to him and his family depicted through first person point of view. He stays on topic throughout the essay.
Setting description (1 point)	0	No evidence.
Character description (1 point)	0	No evidence.
Dialogue (1 point)	0	No evidence.
Figurative language 1. Craft elements (1 point)	1	Treyshawn does not include any use of dialogue between characters in this essay. He does attempt to add descriptive language in the example: <i>So I also said no goes because I could not use the black and gray key bordered Toshiba laptop.</i>
Organization of text 1. Leads 2. Conclusions 3. Sequential order of events (3 points)	1	He stays on topic and use appropriate sequence for the reader to understand the story. However, he does not have a clear lead sentence that sets the purpose for the reader that this essay will discuss events for a surprise birthday party. He also does not provide closure with his concluding sentence: <i>So then I when in the garage then I said what are all of these cars doing here (I'm surprised my little sister didn't shout the word out).</i>
Conventions 1. Coherent sentence structure 2. Variety (2 points)	1	Treyshawn does not have a consistent ability to write clear, coherent sentences. He utilized commas in a series and parentheses to punctuate for sentence variety. Example: <i>I was watching Dragonball Z, Fairly Odd Parents, Sponge Boby, and thick Battowski.</i>

Table 32. Treyshawn's Rubric for Essay 3

Narrative criteria	Score	Evidence
Purpose/perspective 1. Experience 2. 1st person 3. On topic (3 points)	3	Treyshawn wrote about an experience he shared with his family on a trip to Disneyland. He used first person point of view and stayed on topic throughout the essay.
Setting description (1 point)	1	He described the ride at Disneyland he rode as: <i>The ride was filled with fake wood and going in the front of the roller coaster was a dragon and on the ride going in beast came out and monster and it went down fast scary turns and everything.</i>
Character description (1 point)	1	Treyshawn described himself finding about the news of going to Disneyland: <i>When my parents told I was as excited as a bunny hopping in a race: fast.</i>
Dialogue (1 point)	0	No evidence.
Figurative language 1. Craft elements (1 point)	0	No evidence.
Organization of text 1. Leads 2. Conclusions 3. Sequential order of events (3 points)	1	Treyshawn wrote a lead sentence that sets the purpose for the reader about his day at Disneyland. He struggled to maintain a sequential order of events in middle portion of essay. He concluded the essay for the reader: . . . <i>and then we looked on the map and we got back on the train car and then we went back home.</i>
Conventions 1. Coherent sentence structure 2. Variety (2 points)	1	Wrote a variety of sentence structures, but not all are clear or coherently written.

Table 33. Treyshawn's Summative Essays Summary

Narrative criteria	Pretest	Posttest
Purpose/perspective	1	2
Setting description	2	2
Character description	2	2
Dialogue	2	2
Figurative language	1	2
Organization of text	1	2
Conventions	2	2
Overall holistic score	2	2
Fluency: Word count	142	144

growth in writing fluency from his first essay's word count of 138 words, second essay at 163 words, and his final essay of 204 words. Treyshawn demonstrated some evidence of using character and setting description for the first time in his final formative essay. This third essay remained on topic, included a sequential order of events, and was arranged with an effective beginning, middle, and end.

ANALYSIS OF TREYSHAWN'S PRE- AND POSTSUMMATIVE ESSAY RESULTS

Both of Treyshawn's pre-and posttest essays received a holistic score of 2 points out of 4 on the *Narrative Mentor Text Rubric* scale. Treyshawn's postessay showed evidence of consistent writing fluency from a pretest word count of 142 words and a posttest count of 144 words. His writing did not indicate a greater understanding of paragraph structure, as both the pre- and posttest essays were written as one paragraph. Treyshawn's postessay shows evidence of mentor text elements covered in the *Narrative Mentor Text Framework*, such as

commas in a series, punctuation for expressive purposes, such as colons and hyphens/dashes, and descriptive words for setting and time purposes.

OVERALL SUMMARY OF TREYSHAWN'S PROGRESS

In his preinterview to the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction, Treyshawn determined the quality of writing by the quantity of words and sentences he was able to produce in one setting. He believed that he could improve his own writing if he applied more effort into producing longer texts than he had previously accomplished. During his postinterview, Treyshawn reiterated writing fluency as a positive indicator of quality writing. However, in order to improve his own writing Treyshawn was able to articulate in his postinterview that he was studying authors and their writing as models for generating more professional texts.

Treyshawn struggled to produce effective leads or conclusions in his first and second formative essays. His third essay indicated he produced an effective lead and concluding sentence but still struggled to write a developed middle portion of the essay that maintained sequential order. His third essay demonstrated detailed descriptions of himself as the main character and of the setting elements that were absent from the first and second essay attempts. Treyshawn's summative pre- and posttest essays did not indicate as much growth as was demonstrated through his formative essays. His pre- and posttest word fluency numbers were nearly identical, as was his overall holistic score of 2 out of 4 total points.

The mentor text inquiry approach had a moderately positive impact upon Treyshawn as a writer. Treyshawn never relinquished his belief that the quality of writing is improved through practice and by increasing the quantity of words or sentences on the page. However,

he was able to add to his repertoire more specific strategies for producing better texts by studying authors and their written work for models of professional writing. He specifically named conventional punctuation marks, such as colons and commas as associated with learning to write using a mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction.

Ajai

Ajai is a 9-year-old African-American female. She is in fourth grade and previously attended one school prior to this school site. She received a consistent public charter education in the SDUSD from Kindergarten to fourth grade. Her academic testing history from second and third grade indicated a level of Proficient on the California Content Standards for English Language Arts. After completing a quarterly assessment in early November of 2010, she was considered by her classroom teacher to be Proficient in English Language Arts based on degree of mastery of the California Content State Standards for fourth grade. For the purposes of this study she was identified by the teacher-researcher as an above-grade level writer.

PURPOSE OF WRITING: PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW

In her preinterview, Ajai stated that she found that “writing allows her to do stuff that I don’t really do in real life like living in a fairytale world where you can pretend you are on adventures in your mind.”

Ajai stated in her postinterview that “I have lots of diaries and composition books that aren’t for school and sometimes I write about what I did that day or new information I learned in school.”

LEARNING TO WRITE: PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW

Ajai's only comment regarding the learning process in her preinterview revealed, "First I learned to read and then I practiced writing the words that I read."

Ajai's postinterview found her able to articulate the use of conventions related to punctuation, as taught through the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction.

We learned hyphens lots of things about commas and colons how colons separate—well, you don't have to use it like this, but you put a word outside of a colon and then the sentence goes on, but it has to go with what that sentences is about like dangerous or scary or happy. I learned that hyphens can put extra information or appositives. We learned about commas in a series, and we learned how to list, and we learned about how to write like an author as she described what she sees right in front of her, and then she has layers and layers.

IMPACT OF WRITING: PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW

Ajai revealed in her preinterview that being a writer is important for future goals because "it has something to do with your education and you can learn more from your writing."

Ajai stated in her postinterview: "I want to be a writer when I grow up, but I want to teach a lot of things right now. I want to write a book when I grow up."

PERCEPTION OF THEMSELVES AS WRITERS: PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW

Ajai revealed in her preinterview she "likes to put a lot of details in my stories and I like to tell fiction things cause its more interesting."

In her postinterview, Ajai confirmed, "Yesterday I knew that I could've done better but I didn't have the time to go back and change it. I knew that I didn't put all the details but

enough to have the reader picture it in their head.” In her remarks, Ajai reiterated the importance of revision in the writing process: “Yesterday our teacher had us write an essay, and we had to use at least two of our mentor text strategies, but I was able to write four of them including a describing sentences.”

QUALITIES OF GOOD WRITING: PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW

When prompted with the question in her preinterview, “How do you know you’ve done a really good job on your writing?” Ajai responded with, “Sometimes I read and I check my punctuation or my teacher tells me.”

Ajai found that after experiencing the mentor text inquiry approach, she had the capacity to revise her writing drafts. In her postinterview, she stated: “When I wrote my first essay I didn’t use those strategies and if I were to go back I could make it so much better now using them.”

ANALYSIS OF AJAI’S PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Ajai’s preinterview transcripts revealed she already considered herself a good writer prior to engaging in the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction. She enjoyed writing for personal reasons outside of school assignments and connected her ability to write well with why she was successful as a learner in school. Her postinterview transcripts confirmed she believed it was possible for her to become an author of her own book in the future.

In her preinterview, Ajai reported learning to read as a means to learn how to write. She cited being able to tell a story with details as a defining characteristic of good writing.

During her postinterview, Ajai described the process of specifically deconstructing a text used for reading to figure out how the author constructed the sentences as a model for generating her own writing, as it is described in the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction.

Upon completion of the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction, Ajai explained that although she still perceived herself to be a good writer, there was always room for improvement. Her postinterview responses indicated both an awareness of the importance of revision in the writing process and her responsibility as a writer to be willing to improve the quality of her drafts if they were deemed to be too boring or in need of more supportive details.

WRITING ATTITUDE

Ajai increased her writing attitude ratings on the posttest for 12 of 28 statements and declined in writing attitude scores for 3 statements on the posttest as shown in Table 34.

ANALYSIS OF AJAI'S WRITING ATTITUDE SURVEY RESULTS

Ajai gained 11 points from her total pretest score of 85 to her posttest score of 96. Her pretest raw score of 85 corresponds to the 71st percentile and her posttest raw score of 96 corresponds to 92nd percentile for 4th grade students on the national norm (Kear et al., 2000). Compared to the national average (50th percentile), Ajai displayed a positive attitude toward writing prior to the mentor text inquiry approach ranking in the 71st percentile. Her postsurvey results indicated a tremendous gain of 20 percentile points upon completion of the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction.

Table 34. Ajai's Trends for *Writing Attitude Survey*

Category	Number
Item numbers with gain of +1	
Genres	1, 7, 8, 17, 19, 22, 25
Content	4
Feedback/Revision	21
Writing Significance	12
Item numbers with gain of +2	
Content	14
Writing Significance	13
Item numbers that decreased -1	
Content	24
Jobs	9
Feedback/Revision	11

Ajai's greatest increase in positive responses to items in this survey fell within the Genre category. Her scores indicated a positive gain (+1) in both her willingness to write letters either to an author of a book she read or to state her opinion about a topic, write poetry for fun, write down a list of important things her teacher says about a new topic, answer questions in science or social studies, writing an advertisement or about something from another person's point of view. In addition, her scores indicated a positive gain in the Content category, including increased positive feelings toward writing about why something happened (+1) and writing about something specifically she did in science (+2). She indicated an increase in positive feelings if she asked to talk to a fellow classmate about revising her writing (+1) in the Feedback/Revision category. She recorded a positive increase

if she was given the option of writing a story instead of doing homework (+1) and an even greater increase if asked to write a story instead of watch TV (+2). Her scores declined (-1) for one item in each of the following three categories: Content (how would you feel writing about things that have happened in your life), Jobs (how would you feel if you were an author of a book), and Feedback/Revision (how would you feel about becoming an even better writer than you already are).

WRITING SELF-EFFICACY

Ajai remained neutral in her responses for three statements as shown in Table 35. Her self-efficacy ratings on the posttest increased for six statements as shown in Table 36. Her self-efficacy ratings on the posttest declined for two statements as shown in Table 37.

Table 35. Ajai's Writing Self-Efficacy Neutral Scores

No.	Statement	Pretest	Posttest	Gain/loss
1	Write a clear, focused essay that stays on topic.	90	90	0
5	Write with an engaging voice or tone.	100	100	0
9	Correctly spell all words in the essay.	90	90	0

ANALYSIS OF AJAI'S WRITING SELF-EFFICACY RESULTS

Ajai's data indicated the most significant positive gains around her self-efficacy beliefs in correctly using paragraph formatting (+50) and effective words (+40) in an essay. She showed moderate gains (+20) in her self-efficacy beliefs about constructing clear, coherent sentences and minor gains (+10) in providing details to support her ideas and using correct grammar within a well-organized essay containing an inviting beginning, developed

Table 36. Ajai's Writing Self-Efficacy Gains

No.	Statement	Pretest	Posttest	Gain/loss
2	Use details to support my ideas.	90	100	+10
3	Write a well-organized essay with an inviting beginning, developed middles, and meaningful ending.	90	100	+10
4	Correctly use paragraph format in the essay.	50	100	+50
6	Use effective words in the essay.	60	100	+40
7	Write a well-constructed essay.	80	100	+20
8	Use correct grammar in the essay.	90	100	+10

Table 37. Ajai's Writing Self-Efficacy Declining Scores

No.	Statement	Pretest	Posttest	Gain/loss
10	Correctly use punctuation in the essay.	100	80	-20
11	Write an essay good enough to earn a high grade.	100	90	-10

middle, and meaningful ending. Ajai's self-efficacy declined slightly (-10) for being able to write an essay good enough to earn a high grade with correct conventional punctuation.

However, the two statements that declined slightly (-10) remained in the positive range (>50) from her pre- to posttest. The three statements that remained neutral from pre- to posttest were also considered positive responses (>50) and involved using conventional spelling to write a clear, well-focused essay with an engaging tone or voice.

Ajai believed in her capacity to organize and execute writing that could qualitatively produce positive results. Overall, she perceived herself as a competent writer in all aspects of this survey from her pre- to postsurvey results.

AJAI'S FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE ESSAY RESULTS

Tables 38-41 and Figures 21-24 (Appendix F) summarize Ajai's formative and summative essay results.

Table 38. Ajai's Formative Essays Summary

Criteria	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 3
Purpose/perspective	2	3	NS ^a
Setting description	0	0	NS
Character description	0	1	NS
Figurative language	1	1	NS
Dialogue	0	0	NS
Organization of text	1	0	NS
Conventions	1	1	NS
Total out of 12	6	6	NS
Sentence count	15	17	NS
Word count	211	227	NS

^aNo score.

AJAI'S FORMATIVE ESSAY 3

Ajai was unable to complete her third essay as she was put on a long-term independent contract due to an emergency death in her extended family during the final weeks of this study. Ajai's third essay was assigned NS for No Score.

Table 39. Ajai's Rubric for Formative Essay 1

Narrative criteria	Score	Evidence
Purpose/perspective 1. Experience 2. 1st person 3. On topic (3 points)	2	Ajai described the first time she went to Las Vegas with her family and stayed in the hotel Circus, Circus. The essay is told from a first person point of view and stays on topic, but her purpose in sharing this experience is not clear to the reader.
Setting description (1 point)	0	Ajai described the setting as, " <i>It was a hotel and a circus.</i> " She described an event where she couldn't get on the rides, but it is unclear to the reader as to whether the rides are located inside the hotel or at another setting not explicitly listed in narrative.
Character description (1 point)	0	No evidence.
Dialogue (1 point)	1	Ajai includes one example of dialogue punctuated appropriately: <i>When we went to one of the shows my mom said, "That is very cool how flexible they are!"</i>
Figurative language 1. Craft elements (1 point)	1	Ajai used figurative language in the example: <i>When I am bored I'm like a girl in a grown ups meeting.</i>
Organization of text 1. Leads 2. Conclusions 3. Sequential order of events (3 points)	1	Ajai's lead sentence was dependent upon the prompt provided: <i>An experience I have had is when I was in Las Vegas and I had a family reunion and we flew on a plane.</i> She provided a concluding sentence: <i>Then after breakfast we packed up and got on a plane and left.</i> The events of this essay were not organized sequentially for a developed middle or effective ending.
Conventions 1. Coherent sentence structure 2. Variety (2 points)	1	Ajai wrote a variety of sentences. Not all of the sentences were clear, coherent, or punctuated appropriately.

Table 40. Ajai's Rubric for Formative Essay 2

Narrative criteria	Score	Evidence
Purpose/perspective 1. Experience 2. 1st person 3. On topic (3 points)	3	Ajai wrote about a hardship she overcame at her first track meet. She used the first person point of view and remained on topic throughout her essay.
Setting description (1 point)	0	No evidence.
Character description (1 point)	1	Ajai showed the character in action physically and emotionally. (a) <i>I had anxiety.</i> (b) <i>When I was about to start my legs started to shake: scared.</i> (c) <i>I never felt more ready—to race and win—or more scared, either.</i> (d) <i>I had a great time because I learned a lesson and a rule. I couldn't believe I won.</i>
Dialogue (1 point)	0	No evidence.
Figurative language 1. Craft elements (1 point)	1	Ajai included comparisons in the examples: <i>When I was about to start my legs started to shake: scared. I never felt more ready—to race and win—or more scared, either.</i>
Organization of text 1. Leads 2. Conclusions 3. Sequential order of events (3 points)	0	Ajai's lead sentence was dependent on the prompt provided: <i>A time that was bad and turned out to be good was when I was at my track meet (it was my first one).</i> She did not present the events in a logical sequential order and did not include an effective ending to her narrative.
Conventions 1. Coherent sentence structure 2. Variety (2 points)	1	Ajai included sentence variety. Not all her sentences were clearly stated or punctuated appropriately.

Table 41. Ajai's Summative Essays Summary

Narrative criteria	Pretest	Posttest
Purpose/perspective	3	3
Setting description	1	3
Character description	2	3
Dialogue	3	3
Figurative language	2	3
Organization of text	3	3
Conventions	3	3
Overall holistic score	3	3
Fluency: Word count	195	190

ANALYSIS OF AJAI'S FORMATIVE ESSAYS RESULTS

Ajai's first essay was 15 sentences in length and scored a 6 out of 12 on the rubric. Her strengths demonstrated an ability to write a variety of sentences but not all of them were clear, coherent, or punctuated appropriately. Ajai's greatest challenge was to relate the events of her trip in an organized manner with an effective lead, developed middle, or coherent ending.

Ajai's second essay described a track meet event where she was eventually disqualified after her first attempt to run in relay team. She scored 6 out of 12 on the rubric for her second essay. Her second essay revealed growth as a writer in sentence variety and utilizing figurative language but still continued to struggle to sequence events in a logical manner that created an effective lead, developed middle, nor a coherent conclusion.

ANALYSIS OF AJAI'S SUMMATIVE PRE- AND POSTTEST ESSAY RESULTS

Both Ajai's pretest essay and her posttest essay received a holistic score of 3 points out of 4 on the *Narrative Mentor Text Rubric* scale. Her postessay showed evidence of a slight decrease in her writing fluency from a pretest word count of 195 words to a posttest count of 190 words. Ajai's postessay showed evidence of mentor text elements covered in the *Narrative Mentor Text Framework* including punctuation used for sentence interrupters such as colons, parentheses, and hyphens/dashes. Her postessay also indicated an increase in descriptive words and specific details that lead to greater understanding for the reader. There was no growth, nor decline from pre- to postessay in the categories of purpose/perspective, dialogue, organization of text, and conventions.

OVERALL SUMMARY OF AJAI'S PROGRESS

In her preinterview, prior to the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction Ajai expressed a positive perception of herself as a writer. She reported writing in diaries or journals at home recreationally and used writing as a means to record both life events and her feelings on a daily basis. She noted that she already generates ideas for her own writing based upon the books she reads and that she still relies upon outside sources to determine the quality of her own writing. When prompted about what she could do to improve her own writing, she responded she would ask her teacher or other people's opinion on the matter.

Ajai's postinterview transcripts revealed she considered books as more than a means to generate ideas for her own writing but also as models that could teach her the craft of writing. She specifically listed craft elements she adopted into her own writing repertoire from authors such as Lauren Kate and James Patterson who featured these elements in their

own books, too. She clarified she was able to transfer what she had learned from these model texts into her own essays. She described craft elements in the way conventional punctuation marks such as hyphens, adjectives, italics, commas, and dialogue markers created sentence variety. Ajai indicated that she would appreciate an opportunity to go back to earlier essays and revise them using the strategies she learned from the mentor text inquiry process.

Ajai was only able to produce two formative essays and demonstrated very minor growth, if any at all from her first to second essay. She slightly increased her writing fluency from her first essay to her second. She continued to struggle with organizing events in a sequential manner to create a coherent beginning, middle, and ending in either essay. However, her summative posttest essay revealed growth in organizing events in a sequential manner. Her summative posttest essay also included character and setting descriptions, as well as indicated more control over figurative language elements used even though her holistic score remained stagnant.

Ajai's strongest increase in self-reported scores for her self-efficacy beliefs were in paragraph organization and effective word choice. These two beliefs support the growth that she made from her first to her second formative essay. She did not utilize paragraphs in her second essay, but she improved her organizational ability to retell events of her narrative in a cohesive manner from beginning to end. In improving her word choice, she intentionally added more character description in her second formative essay and examples of figurative language.

The mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction had a minor impact upon Ajai's writing abilities in terms of text organization. As a self-described good writer, Ajai was only able to clearly articulate the purpose and process of the mentor text inquiry

approach to writing instruction. She revealed plans in her postinterview to continue using the mentor text inquiry approach as a writing strategy in the future, as well.

Samuel

Samuel is a 9-year-old White male. He attended one school prior to this school site. He received a consistent private education from Kindergarten to third grade. His academic history indicated that, from Kindergarten to third grade, he has been Proficient in all subject areas as taught and assessed in the private school setting. After completing a quarterly assessment in early November of 2010 he was considered by his classroom teacher to have attained a classification of Proficient in English Language Arts based on degree of mastery of the California Content State Standards for fourth grade. For the purposes of this study, he was identified by the teacher-researcher as an above grade level writer.

PURPOSE OF WRITING: PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW

Samuel stated in his preinterview that he believed it was important to be a good writer because “if you couldn’t write then you couldn’t read, so its important to write, and if you had a job you’d have to write something down.”

Samuel’s postinterview transcript did not reveal a direct answer for his purpose for writing except “I love writing in general.”

LEARNING TO WRITE: PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW

Samuel explained in his preinterview that he learned to write at “about seven, and my older brother taught me—he’s like 17.” He also stated, “Sometimes my brother and sister

help me and they are really good at writing, and that's how I know. My sister writes a lot. She's 19."

Samuel continued to offer his family as a source for learning to write in his postinterview transcript. "My brother helped me when I was maybe 5, and it was challenging."

IMPACT OF WRITING: PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW

When prompted in his preinterview to add anything else he would want others to know about him as a writer or about his writing, Samuel stated, "That I want to be an author or a poet or something."

When asked in his postinterview if it's important to be a good writer in life, Samuel responded, "Yes. Because it's going to be hard to read if you can't write very well."

PERCEPTION OF THEMSELVES AS WRITERS: PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW

Samuel revealed in his preinterview, "I do really like writing, but I don't like writing long stories or stuff like that—but I love writing."

In his postinterview, Samuel began, "I love writing in general. I sometimes get ideas from other books that I read, and I like writing about adventures, and that's what I usually read. Sometimes I'll write about horror, but not that much." When asked to describe how he feels about himself as a writer, Samuel stated he is "confident. Proud. Because I know my writing is going to turn out good." At the end of the interview, he proposed that he has future goals as a writer, including writing a horror graphic novel one day. When asked if he had

ever written a graphic novel before, he concludes with “Not yet. But that’s because I’m not good at dialogue yet. But I will be one day.”

QUALITIES OF GOOD WRITING: PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW

Samuel offered length as a defining characteristic of what makes for a quality piece of writing in his preinterview. “Writing is good if other people can understand it, and it goes on and on.” He described his final piece in great detail, and when asked why it is the piece he is most proud of, he stated it was “like five pages long.” He believed a good piece of writing is written with “a lot of enthusiasm and like a real writer would.”

When asked in his postinterview what could he do to improve his own writing, he stated “I could read more books. Harder books so that I can get used to the writing and finally be an author.” He described elements that make a quality piece of writing as

something that you look at and can tell how you wrote it. Like when different authors write in different ways. They decide how to use their commas or colons of different types of dialogue that will help the reader understand their writing.

ANALYSIS OF SAMUEL’S PRE- AND POSTINTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Samuel understood early on that writing was an important component of being successful in school. He learned to write from family members who served as his predominant role models in learning about the writing process. He did not mention that he learned to write in any academic setting in either his pre- or postinterviews. He described in detail watching his parents and older siblings write before he went to Kindergarten.

Samuel proposed that being a writer impacts being a reader and vice versa. He revealed that he believed being able to do both of these processes proficiently could enhance one's opportunities for future success in life. He displayed a perception of confidence in his ability to write and even considered becoming an author of a graphic novel, poetry, and an adventure book.

Samuel's preinterview transcript revealed that, prior to engagement in the mentor text inquiry approach, he regarded only length as a determining factor in evaluating the quality of writing he or others produced. Samuel's postinterview revealed a perceived connection between the act of reading professional texts and the quality of his own written production. He evaluated his own writing by comparing it to that of professional authors to determine if he had produced quality text.

WRITING ATTITUDE

Samuel increased his writing attitude ratings on the posttest for 6 of the 28 statements and declined in writing attitude scores for six questions on the posttest as shown in Table 42.

ANALYSIS OF SAMUEL'S WRITING ATTITUDE SURVEY RESULTS

Samuel gained 2 points from his total pretest score of 87 to his posttest score of 89 on the writing attitude measure. His pretest raw score of 87 corresponds to the 75th percentile, and his posttest raw score of 89 corresponds to 80th percentile for 4th grade students on the national norms (Kear et al., 2000). Compared to the national average (50th percentile), Samuel displayed a positive attitude toward writing prior to exposure to the mentor text inquiry approach, ranking in the 75th percentile. His postsurvey results indicated a positive if

Table 42. Samuel's Trends for *Writing Attitude Survey*

Category	Number
Item numbers with gain of +1	
Genres	19
Content	2, 4
Feedback/Revision	26
Item numbers with gain of +2	
Feedback/Revision	21
Writing Significance	28
Item numbers that decreased -1	
Genres	3, 5, 7, 23
Content	15
Writing Significance	16

small increase of 5 percentile points upon completion of the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction.

Samuel's greatest increase in positive responses to items on this survey fell within the Feedback/Revision and Writing Significance categories. His scores indicated a positive gain (+2) related to receiving feedback from his classmates on how to make his writing better, and he viewed writing in school as a positive endeavor. His scores also revealed a positive gain (+1) in willingness to edit his writing, as well as writing about something he has seen or heard. Samuel indicated a consistent decline (-1) in response to items within the Genre category that included having to write letters either to a store, an author, or to change someone's opinion. His scores also declined (-1) in response to items related to keeping a journal or to writing poetry for fun. It is noted that although these reflected a decline in

scores, the latter had moved from the most positive ranking “Very happy Garfield” to the second most positive ranking of “Somewhat happy Garfield,” which is still considered a positive indicator of his attitude toward writing.

WRITING SELF-EFFICACY

Samuel remained neutral in his responses for seven statements as shown in Table 43.

His self-efficacy ratings on the posttest declined for four statements as shown in Table 44.

Table 43. Samuel’s Writing Self-Efficacy Neutral Scores

No.	Statement	Pretest	Posttest	Gain/loss
3	Write a well-organized essay with an inviting beginning, developed middles, and meaningful ending.	100	100	0
5	Write with an engaging voice or tone.	100	100	0
6	Use effective words in the essay.	100	100	0
7	Write well-constructed sentences in the essay.	90	90	0
8	Use correct grammar in the essay.	100	100	0
9	Correctly spell all words in the essay.	90	90	0
10	Correctly use punctuation in the essay.	100	100	0

Table 44. Samuel’s Writing Self-Efficacy Declining Scores

No.	Statement	Pretest	Posttest	Gain/loss
1	Write a clear, focused essay that stays on topic.	100	90	-10
2	Use details to support my ideas.	100	80	-20
4	Correctly use paragraph format in the essay.	100	70	-30
11	Write an essay good enough to earn a high grade.	90	80	-10

ANALYSIS OF SAMUEL'S WRITING SELF-EFFICACY RESULTS

Overall, Samuel's data indicated he remained consistently positive in his self-efficacy beliefs about writing from his pre- to posttest. All of Samuel's responses to statements on pre- to posttests are considered in the positive range (>50). His direct responses to seven statements between the ranges of 90 to 100 on the self-efficacy scale remained unchanged from his pre- to posttest. He remained confident in his ability to use effective words, grammar, spelling, punctuation, well-constructed sentences, and an engaging voice or tone to write a well-organized essay with an inviting beginning, developed middle, and meaningful ending. The data indicated the most significant decline in his self-efficacy beliefs were related to writing a clear, focused essay good enough to earn a high grade (-10) that stayed on topic (-10), with details to support his ideas (-20) and with conventional paragraph formatting (-30). These declines may be attributed to a miscalibration between his self-efficacy beliefs and his actual writing task performances after he was exposed to a wide variety of mentor-text published authors who were experts at producing quality texts. Samuel's postinterview transcript revealed that prior to participating in the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction, he only used length as a determining factor for quality, whereas after completing the process he utilized published texts to assist him in revising his own writing. This newfound awareness that published authors as expert-mentors rated scores of 100 may have caused Samuel to realign his self-efficacy beliefs, leading him to assess his own writing as slightly below that of the experts. This interpretation may help explain the decline in his self-efficacy beliefs from pre- to posttest, beliefs, which nonetheless, remained in the positive range.

SAMUEL'S FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE ESSAY RESULTS

Tables 45-49 and Figures 25-29 (Appendix F) summarize Samuel's formative and summative essay results.

Table 45. Samuel's Formative Essays Summary

Criteria	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 3
Purpose/perspective	3	3	3
Setting description	0	1	1
Character description	0	1	0
Figurative language	0	1	0
Dialogue	0	0	1
Organization of text	0	1	2
Conventions	0	0	1
Total out of 12	3	7	8
Sentence count	0	7	6
Word count	120	167	165

DESCRIPTION OF SAMUEL'S FORMATIVE ESSAYS RESULTS

Samuel's first essay was nine sentences in length and scored 3 out of 12 on the rubric. There was no evidence of character or setting description, dialogue, or figurative language. His essay remained on topic, but it did not have an effective lead sentence that set the purpose for the reader, an organized sequence for a developed middle, or an effective ending that concluded the essay appropriately.

Table 46. Samuel's Rubric for Formative Essay 1

Narrative criteria	Score	Evidence
Purpose/perspective 1. Experience 2. 1st person 3. On topic (3 points)	3	Samuel wrote about winning a district contest for an essay he wrote on a book entitled <i>Holes</i> . He wrote from a first person perspective and stayed on topic throughout his essay.
Setting description (1 point)	0	Samuel stated <i>Then I went to a place were there was a lot of people and I had to read it out loud to all of them</i> . Samuel did not specifically state the setting nor provide any details for the reader.
Character description (1 point)	0	No evidence.
Dialogue (1 point)	0	Samuel wrote dialogue but did not punctuate it appropriately. Example: <i>I said "Wow!" "I got in third"!</i>
Figurative language 1. Craft elements (1 point)	0	No evidence.
Organization of text 1. Leads 2. Conclusions 3. Sequential order of events (3 points)	0	Samuel's lead sentence did not provide a clear purpose and the events are disjointed without appropriate context and lack sequential order. His ending did not provide the reader with closure for his narrative retelling.
Conventions 1. Coherent sentence structure 2. Variety (2 points)	1	Samuel did not write clear, coherent sentences consistently throughout his essay. He also did not provide sentence variety.

Table 47. Samuel's Rubric for Formative Essay 2

Narrative criteria	Score	Evidence
Purpose/perspective 1. Experience 2. 1st person 3. On topic (3 points)	3	Samuel used first person point of view to recall a memory from his past of significance at 8 years old when he fell off a roof of a play structure at a baseball game. He remained on topic in first person throughout essay.
Setting description (1 point)	1	Samuel provided a lot of description about the setting but minimal amount of description for the characters in the story: (a) <i>When I go in the room I see white shelves, a blue wall, a colorful vase, and a big cart;</i> (b) <i>When I got in the ambulance to the children's hospital I first saw buttons and wires for the doctor to help me, the second thing I saw was a big red door for my dad and others get through it and the last thing I saw at the end was the shining clear window.</i>
Character description (1 point)	1	The two examples of the character in action emotionally include: (a) <i>They put me in the cart like injured lion cub: hurting;</i> (b) <i>It turned out I was fine and I never felt more—happy or more—praised, either.</i>
Dialogue (1 point)	0	Samuel made one attempt at dialogue, but it is not punctuated appropriately: <i>I heard my dad say. "You are all right."</i>
Figurative language 1. Craft elements (1 point)	1	One example is punctuated appropriately: <i>They put me in the cart like injured lion cub: hurting.</i>
Organization of text 1. Leads 2. Conclusions 3. Sequential order of events (3 points)	1	Samuel had an effective lead sentence to begin his essay. The events were not organized sequentially for a developed middle. The concluding events were written vaguely and without resolution: <i>I got there and I saw stuff I liked (toys, tvs, beds, and food). It turned out I was fine and I never felt more—happy or more—praised either.</i>
Conventions 1. Coherent sentence structure 2. Variety (2 points)	0	Samuel attempted a variety of sentences. They were not all evaluated as coherent or punctuated appropriately.

Table 48. Samuel's Rubric for Formative Essay 3

Narrative criteria	Score	Evidence
Purpose/perspective 1. Experience 2. 1st person 3. On topic (3 points)	3	Samuel wrote about an experience that happened to him from a first person point of view and demonstrated why the experience was important to him personally.
Setting description (1 point)	1	Samuel described his dad's boss's office: <i>The first thing I saw was lots of papers and tools, the second was his boss with really nice clothes on, the last thing I saw was a big chainsaw with sharp degrees.</i>
Character description (1 point)	0	No evidence.
Dialogue (1 point)	1	Samuel inserted one attempt at dialogue appropriately punctuated: <i>When we got to a office at his work he said, This is my boss's office.</i>
Figurative language 1. Craft elements (1 point)	0	No evidence.
Organization of text 1. Leads 2. Conclusions 3. Sequential order of events (3 points)	1	Samuel stayed on topic and used an effective lead to begin his essay. He struggled to write events in a sequential order within the middle portion of the piece, but was not entirely successful. The ending was vague and did not provide closure for the reader: <i>I did take a nap after we got back and I still got to do all of those things.</i>
Conventions 1. Coherent sentence structure 2. Variety (2 points)	1	Samuel included a variety of sentences. The sentences were not all written in a clear, coherent manner or punctuated appropriately. Samuel attempted to use dialogue, but does not punctuate it appropriately: <i>When we got to a office at his work, he said. "This is my boss's office".</i> Samuel attempted to ascribe emotion to a character: <i>I've never felt more happy—with my dad—or more proud, either.</i> Samuel used parenthesis intended for elaboration purposes but it is misplaced in the essay and does not add sequential order for ending purposes: <i>The things I wanted to do (eat lots of food, play video games, drink slurpees).</i>

Table 49. Samuel's Summative Essays Summary

Narrative criteria	Pretest	Posttest
Purpose/perspective	2	3
Setting description	2	3
Character description	2	3
Dialogue	3	3
Figurative language	2	3
Organization of text	3	3
Conventions	2	3
Overall holistic score	2	3
Fluency: Word count	67	91

Samuel's second essay was seven sentences in length and scored 7 out of 12 on the rubric. He attempted multiple examples of figurative language, character, and setting description in his essay. However, these sentences were not all punctuated appropriately. He continued to struggle with developing appropriate sequence of events or include an effective ending for his second formative essay.

Samuel's third essay was nine sentences in length and scored 8 out of 12 on the rubric. He included dialogue and setting description in his essay and punctuated it appropriately. He was successful in writing an effective lead sentence but struggled to write events in sequential order for a developed middle. He also continued to be challenged writing an effective ending for his third formative essay.

ANALYSIS OF SAMUEL'S PRE- AND POSTSUMMATIVE ESSAYS RESULTS

Samuel's pretest essay received a score of 2 and a posttest essay score of 3 points out of 4 on the *Narrative Mentor Text Rubric* scale. He increased his score by one point overall. Samuel's posttest essay showed an increase in writing fluency from a pretest word count of 67 words to a posttest count of 91 words. His writing did not indicate a greater understanding of paragraph structure as both the pre- and posttest essays contained only one paragraph. Samuel's postessay showed evidence of mentor text elements covered in the *Narrative Mentor Text Framework* including commas in a series, punctuation for expressive purposes, such as colons and hyphens/dashes, and descriptive words for setting and time purposes. The greatest challenge overcome by Samuel in his summative posttest essay was developing a well-organized piece with an inviting beginning, developed middle, and meaningful ending.

OVERALL SUMMARY OF SAMUEL'S PROGRESS

In his preinterview Samuel described himself as being a confident writer who was quite proud of his past accomplishments with writing (winning an essay contest, etc.). He declared an open love for writing and fondly recalled that his parents and siblings were the primary role models who taught him how to write even before he started school. He identified the act of writing as a skill set that one would need to be successful in his/her future.

In his postinterview transcript, Samuel continued to profess a passion for writing, as well as love of the written word. When prompted to describe his current learning process for

writing, he described with more specific details the steps employed in the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction. He looked to selected texts from published authors he liked to read for possible ideas for his own writing. This was the first evidence that Samuel considered published authors as potential role models for his own writing. Prior to the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction, he only cited family members as role models or inspiration for his own writing. He articulated that he considered analyzing a published author's text for ideas on how to revise his own work.

Samuel's first essay demonstrated a clear sense of purpose and the ability to retell events from a first person point of view. This essay did not elaborate on character descriptions nor use any figurative language elements such as similes and/or metaphors. He utilized quotation marks for language conventions as the only evidence of sentence variety in this first essay. Samuel's greatest challenge lay in organizing his sentences to create an effective beginning, middle, and ending.

Samuel's second essay began with a provocative lead sentence that explained the last time he had to go to the emergency room when he was 8 years old. He used specific details to describe the emergency room for the reader. He incorporated multiple figurative language/craft elements and language conventions, including commas in a series, appositives, and colons in a purposeful manner. He struggled with punctuating these sentences appropriately. His second essay indicated growth in organization as he showed evidence of an effective beginning and more developed middle of the essay. He continued to struggle with writing an effective ending.

Samuel's third essay described the day he went with his father to work in Pomona and it turned out to be more exciting than he had initially expected. This essay demonstrated an

ability to include descriptive language features for characters and setting with appropriate punctuation. He wrote an effective beginning, but struggled to coherently relay the events in a logical sequential order for a developed middle. His third essay also demonstrated his continuous struggle to write an effective ending for his narratives.

Samuel's pretest summative essay indicated that, prior to his engagement in the mentor text inquiry approach, he was able to write a variety of clear, coherent sentences in an essay that stayed on topic. Over the course of the study, a comparison of his three formative essays revealed that he grew to write a more effective lead sentence that was less dependent upon the prompt given. Samuel continued to struggle with both the development of his middle portions of essays as it pertained to sequencing events appropriately, as well as writing an effective ending. However, he reconciled this struggle in his final summative posttest when he wrote a well-organized essay with an inviting beginning, developed middle, and meaningful ending.

TRENDS

Student-participants were identified by the teacher-research as either below-grade level writers, at-grade level writers, or above grade level writers according to summative writing pretest. Trends were identified by the teacher-research within each of these student-participants categories (below, at, and above), as well as student-participants as a whole group. Trends in the areas of interviews, writing attitude, writing self-efficacy, and ability to write are reported below.

Interviews

All transcripts were coded for major themes including purpose of writing, learning to write, impact of writing, perceptions of themselves as writers, and quality of good writing.

PURPOSE OF WRITING

Both below grade level writers, Jo'Quon and Kylee, stated they wrote recreationally about topics they were both passionate about in their lives. Jo'Quon related that he wrote about sports as an avid football fan, and Kylee described how she wrote song lyrics during recess about heartache and loss. Their postinterviews indicated they felt more comfortable with writing on the same topics but expanded these to include other genres. Kylee enjoyed writing romance stories more frequently, and Jo'Quon provided a personal experience about a time he wrote a form of nonfiction expository text on football during a vacation without being prompted by his teacher and unrelated to an assignment.

Both at-grade level writers, Treyshawn and Brooklyn, described the act of writing as a tool for social communication in their postinterviews. Treyshawn's mother was enrolled in college and was his primary writing mentor. Upon completion of the mentor text inquiry approach, he revealed that he viewed writing as a primary skill set to ensure future success. Brooklyn agreed that being able to write was a critical skill for her future and expanded the purpose to include recording events from her past to share with a larger audience such as in a memoir.

Both above-grade level writers, Ajai and Samuel, embraced being a writer beyond academic purposes in their postinterviews. Each of their preinterviews described separate purposes for writing: Ajai wrote because it allowed her to be more adventurous than in real

life; Samuel wrote because of his conviction that it was an important skill set for future employment. However, in their postinterviews, Ajai and Samuel both alluded to the possibility of becoming a writer or an author for a larger audience.

LEARNING TO WRITE

Kylee and Jo'Quon had difficulty recalling how they were taught to write at their previous school sites and were hesitant to admit that they may not have received writing instruction at all. In their postinterviews, they both indicated their current fourth grade classroom was a positive learning environment conducive to writing instruction. They both stated that they have received more explicit writing instruction than at all their previous school sites combined.

Brooklyn and Treyshawn remained consistent about their writing role models and mentors from pre- to postinterviews. Brooklyn attributed learning to write to her parents and extended family members, whereas Treyshawn credited his previous and current teachers for early instruction in writing. In their postinterviews, they both continued to credit these role models for shaping their identities as writers.

Ajai and Samuel remained consistent from their pre- to postinterviews about the influences on their writing development from childhood to present day. Ajai described learning to write as a process that developed from the act of learning to read. She provided detailed memories of learning to write the words that she was learning to read as a young child. In her postinterview, Ajai provided specific evidence about how the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction was another method of learning to write from

knowing how to read books. Samuel credited several members of his immediate family including his mom, sister, and older brothers in both his pre- and postinterviews.

IMPACT OF WRITING

Jo'Quon and Kylee described the important impact of writing on their perception of their own academic status in school early on in life. Jo'Quon relayed a story about his dad communicating to him the importance of academics as a priority over athletics when he gets into college. Kylee's preinterview revealed the emphasis she placed on social status as a writer when comparing herself to her classmates. Kylee did not consider herself a good writer because of poor handwriting skills and difficulties with conventional spelling. In their postinterviews, both Jo'Quon and Kylee had a more positive attitude toward writing and of themselves as writers. Jo'Quon's postinterview integrated his identity as an athlete with that of himself as a writer, rather than keeping them as separate entities. In her postinterview, Kylee admitted her writing had improved despite her continued struggles with conventional spelling and handwriting.

Both Brooklyn and Treyshawn considered writing as a critical skill for future success in both their pre- and postinterviews. Brooklyn revealed that being a great writer was imperative for success in college. Treyshawn described the importance of writing as a skill integral to success in future employment opportunities.

Ajai and Samuel's preinterviews indicated a common belief that being able to write was a foundational skill to success in the future. Ajai believed writing was an important skill for being successful in college, and Samuel considered being able to write well a critical asset once you entered the work force. He even warned in his postinterview that not being able to

write was directly linked to not being able to read and would limit one's ability to secure employment in the future for economic prosperity.

PERCEPTION OF THEMSELVES AS WRITERS

Jo'Quon and Kylee were both aware that they struggled as writers in their preinterviews. They both cited increased effort as one means to improve their ability to write more proficiently. In their postinterviews, Jo'Quon and Kylee both revealed that the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction had a positive impact upon them as writers by improving their attitude toward writing, as well as their ability to write.

Brooklyn and Treyshawn's preinterviews revealed they both drew inspiration as writers from their own lived experiences and were proud of their writing overall. They both considered hard work and effort as primary characteristics of what defined them as great writers.

Samuel and Ajai's preinterviews indicated they both enjoyed the act of writing in and of itself. By their postinterviews, Samuel and Ajai both described the role of revision as more iterative than linear in nature and as an integral part of the writing process. Both above grade-level writers indicated that they aspired to revise their current drafts for the sole purpose of improving the quality of work they were capable of producing.

QUALITIES OF GOOD WRITING

In their preinterviews, both Jo'Quon and Kylee determined the quality of writing they produced by the amount of effort expended to create the text, the quality of the handwriting, and their ability to use conventional spelling. Both students referenced the impact that the

mentor text inquiry approach had upon their perception of quality writing in their postinterviews. Jo'Quon indicated in his postinterview he would utilize mentor text to guide him toward quality writing. Kylee mentioned the importance of generating ideas that interest the reader as an additional characteristic to use when evaluating the quality of a text.

Treyshawn's preinterview revealed he determined the quality of a written piece of text only by length—the longer the piece of text written, the better quality overall. Brooklyn believed only the reader was allowed to judge whether a written piece was deemed qualitatively worthy or not. In his postinterview, Treyshawn expanded his belief that only length mattered and stated that a writer could improve the quality of the text through revision techniques—not only by increasing the length. Brooklyn expanded her definition to include more than just the reader's opinion of a text. She concluded that writers could write from their own lived experiences, and this would qualitatively improve a text.

In pre- and postinterviews, Ajai and Samuel believed that the quality of their own written text was determined by decisions they made in the revision process as writers. In their preinterviews, Ajai believed that editing for punctuation errors could improve the quality of a text, and Samuel believed you could add quantitatively more to a written text to improve it. By their postinterviews, Ajai and Samuel referenced the revision strategies they had studied to improve sentence variety and overall cohesiveness embedded in the mentor text inquiry approach.

All writers utilized positive terminology to describe either the impact of the mentor text inquiry approach on their own writing or about the process itself in their postinterviews. There were no negative implications associated with using the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction provided by any writer during their postinterviews.

WRITING ATTITUDE SURVEY

Jo'Quon and Kylee both gained from their total pretest scores to their posttest scores on the writing attitude measure. Their pretest raw scores displayed a negative attitude toward writing prior to exposure to the mentor text inquiry approach and a significantly more positive attitude toward writing afterwards.

Jo'Quon and Kylee both increased in positive responses to items within the Genres and Content categories on this survey. Their scores indicated a positive gain in their willingness to write a letter to the author of a book they had read, to write down important things their teacher said about a new topic, or keep a journal for class. Within the Content category, both below grade level writers responded positively when asked how they would feel if prompted to write about something they have heard or seen. They both would also entertain a positive outlook if they had a job in the future as a writer for newspaper and/or magazine.

Treyshawn and Brooklyn both gained from their total pretest scores to their posttest scores on the writing attitude measure. Their pretest raw scores both displayed a positive attitude toward writing prior to exposure to the mentor text inquiry approach and remained positive upon completion of the study.

Upon completing the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction, Treyshawn and Brooklyn's scores indicated a positive gain in their willingness to write a letter to a store inquiring about an item to purchase and a more negative attitude toward being an author who writes books.

Samuel and Ajai both gained from their total pretest scores to their posttest scores on the writing attitude measure. Their pretest raw scores both displayed a positive attitude

toward writing prior to the mentor text inquiry approach. Their raw scores and percentiles remained positive upon completion of the study.

Samuel's and Ajai's scores both indicated a positive gain in three categories including Genres, Content, and Feedback/Revision. They had a more positive attitude toward writing answers to questions in science or social studies, writing about something they have heard or seen and telling in writing why something happened. They also had a more positive attitude toward talking to their classmates about how to make their own writing better upon completion of the mentor text inquiry approach.

All student writers except Samuel indicated a positive gain in attitude toward writing about something they accomplished in science. There were no common trends found between all writers in their negative attitudes toward writing on this survey.

WRITING SELF-EFFICACY SURVEY

Jo'Quon and Kylee had divergent postsurvey responses to each other. Kylee increased her self-efficacy rating on seven responses, and Jo'Quon decreased his rating for 9 of 11 statements overall. All 7 of the statements that Kylee reported to increase in her writing self-efficacy were included within the 9 statements that Jo'Quon reported a negative rating on the postsurvey results. There were no common trends in any responses between Kylee and Jo'Quon on this survey.

Both Treyshawn and Brooklyn remained consistent in their positive self-efficacy belief that they are able to correctly use punctuation in essays as writers. They both recorded a positive increase in their self-efficacy belief about writing with an engaging voice or tone. They also both declined in their self-efficacy beliefs toward using correct grammar and

appropriate conventional spelling in their essays upon completion of the mentor text inquiry approach.

Samuel and Ajai remained consistently positive about their ability to write with an engaging voice or tone and to use appropriate conventional spelling in their essays.

They both indicated a decrease in self-efficacy for being able to write an essay good enough to earn a high grade after completing the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction.

There were no common trends found between all writers for the Writing Self-Efficacy Scales.

FORMATIVE ESSAYS 1-3

Jo'Quon and Kylee did not indicate any consistent trends for their first or second formative essays. However, they were both able to write a first-person narrative about a personal experience that remained on topic by their third formative essay. Jo'Quon and Kylee demonstrated an increase in writing fluency as measured by word count from their first to third formative essays.

Treyshawn and Brooklyn were consistently able to demonstrate that they could write a first-person narrative about a personal experience that remained on topic. Both writers were unable to demonstrate evidence of figurative language usage in their essays. They both demonstrated an increase in writing fluency as measured by word count from their first to third formative essays.

Samuel and Ajai were consistently able to demonstrate that they could write a first-person narrative about a personal experience that remained on topic. They increased evidence of appropriate conventional usage from their first to their third formative essay.

Samuel and Ajai demonstrated an increase in writing fluency as measured by word count from their first to third formative essays.

All student writers gained writing fluency from their first to final essays as measured by word count. All students struggled to provide adequate evidence of character and setting description, figurative language, and dialogue in all three formative essays.

SUMMATIVE ESSAYS (PRE/POST)

Jo'Quon and Kylee demonstrated an increase in every category assessed on the narrative pre- and postsummative rubrics including purpose/perspective, setting and character description, dialogue, figurative language, organization of text, and conventions. Both of these below grade level writers provided evidence of tremendous growth in writing fluency as measured by their word count from pre- to postsummative essays.

Treyshawn and Brooklyn demonstrated an increase in figurative language on the narrative pre- and postsummative rubrics. Both writers provided evidence of growth in writing fluency as measured by their word count from pre- to postsummative essays.

Samuel and Ajai demonstrated an increase in a few categories assessed on the narrative pre- and postsummative rubrics including setting and character description, as well as figurative language usage. Both writers remained consistent in their ability to write an essay with purpose/perspective and utilize dialogue features that are appropriately punctuated.

All student writers provided evidence they could write a first-person narrative about a personal experience that remained on topic by their postsummative essays.

Overview of Cross-Case Trends Analysis

All student writers interviewed understood the academic purpose of writing was a means to secure a better future, whether it was for employment or a critical component toward success in college. They were all able to define different aspects of the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction that indicated an explicit awareness of the process itself. Language used to describe any aspect of the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction was positive in nature.

All student writers indicated they believed they had improved as writers during the duration of the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction in their classroom. Although their perceived growth may not align with their actual writing abilities, it does indicate that students view the mentor text inquiry approach as a positive asset for writing instruction rather than a deficit experience. The perceived positive self-efficacy for writing they experienced may lead to an increase in their ability to write in the future.

The final postsurvey results indicated a positive attitude from all student-writers to the inquiry about whether they would like to become an author who writes books or even better writers in the future.

A critical aspect of their actual writing abilities that increased positively across all student writers was their writing fluency rate as measured by word count from pretest to posttest on the summative narrative assessments. Writing fluency is one of the most critical foundations to developing expertise in writing and aids in writing maturity with practice over time.

SUMMARY

The presentation of data for six case studies concluded Chapter 4. Each case study provided a brief description of the background for the student-participant and results for student interviews, writing attitude surveys, self-efficacy surveys, formative writing assessments, and narrative pre/post summative writing assessments.

The findings within and across each individual case moved this teacher-researcher toward a discussion of key findings, which incorporated significant data from the review of literature found in Chapter 2. Throughout the discussion in Chapter 5, implications will emerge and lead the researcher toward the final proposed recommendations for practice and future research.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The chapter begins with an introduction about the study overall which includes a review of the research problem, a description of the purpose and rationale, methodology, and research questions. A discussion of key findings and their implications then follows. Finally, the chapter ends with recommendations for practice and additional research.

THE PROBLEM

Students in the 21st century live in a golden age of communication. Writing in its many forms is the signature means of communication and is arguably the most complex and difficult challenge facing all students in school (Bereiter, 1980; Hillocks, 1987; Scardamalia, 1981). Although some progress has been made in improving the literacy achievement of students in American schools during the last 20 years, a vast majority of students, especially from culturally and linguistically diverse student populations, still do not read or write well enough to meet grade-level demands. We must work tirelessly to identify the most effective instructional practices to move students toward the highest levels of writing achievement.

PURPOSE AND RATIONALE

The primary purpose of this study was to monitor the writing self-efficacy, attitude, and narrative writing performance of urban students who received explicit writing instruction

using mentor texts to support their discourse knowledge at the planning and translating process stages of writing. Discourse knowledge refers to what one knows about how to write. Translating refers to the ability to transform ideas (semantics) into written symbols that satisfy the constraints of standard rules of the language (e.g., syntax). Writers who have easier access to knowledge of discourse (e.g., grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, and text structure) translate their ideas more automatically and accurately and, consequently, they produce more syntactically correct prose. Therefore, improving the discourse knowledge of student participants' writing performance was posited to be important for generating grammatically correct prose, sentences that were cohesively linked, and for producing an overall cohesive text.

The secondary purpose was to monitor the pedagogical usefulness of a mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction. In an effort to engage student-participants in writing tasks that enabled them to develop as independent writers and thinkers, the teacher-researcher guided them through the process of making independent choices about genre, content, structure, organization, and style using a variety of exemplar texts. The teacher-researcher choose a mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction as a way to decrease student dependency on formulaic writing models and hone judgments about the effective choices writers make purposefully with the reader in mind.

METHODOLOGY

This study examined the impact of a mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction on the writing self-efficacy, attitude, and narrative writing processes of six fourth grade students in an urban public charter school located in Normal Heights, San Diego. The

student demographics were 50.5% African American, 25% Hispanic, 22.3% White, 2.2% Asian, and 0.5% American Indian/Alaska Native. Females made up 43.7% and males, 56.2%. Students with special needs equal 10.9% of the students and 10.9% were English Language Learners. Seventy-six percent qualify for free/reduced lunch as defined by the National School Lunch Program.

Multiple case studies were used to examine individual student writing beliefs and their narrative writing processes. These six multiple case studies provided an opportunity to compare student writers of varying abilities and the impact that using a mentor text writing instruction approach had upon their narrative writing experiences in the classroom. Both pre- and postsummative narrative essay assessments were collected at the onset and conclusion of the study. Every 2 weeks, the student-participants also wrote an on-demand essay to a narrative prompt. These formative essays were scored by a teacher-researcher and another educator trained in scoring essays using both analytical and holistic rubrics. The essays were scored independently and compared for interrater reliability purposes. An educator who had previous experience interviewing subjects conducted pre- and postinterviews with all six student-participants regarding their personal and academic identities in relation to their writing. Pre- and postwriting attitudes and self-efficacy were also measured.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Two overarching questions guided the present study:

1. What is the effect, if any, of using a mentor text inquiry approach to narrative writing instruction on the writing attitudes and writing self-efficacy of fourth grade urban elementary student-participants?
2. What is the effect of using a mentor text inquiry approach to narrative writing instruction on the writing abilities of fourth grade urban elementary student-participants specifically on content, structure, fluency, and conventions?

KEY FINDINGS

Data from this study suggested that integrating a mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction for six weeks resulted in these noticeable key findings:

The Mentor Text Inquiry Approach Positively Impacted Writing Attitude and Self-Efficacy

All of the student writers identified in this study as either below-, at-, or above-grade level writers positively gained in writing attitude scores as measured by pre- to posttest survey results. Of these writers, only those classified as below-grade level writers displayed a negative attitude toward writing prior to exposure to the mentor text inquiry approach and a significantly more positive attitude toward writing afterwards. Four of the six student-participants maintained positive attitudes toward writing throughout the study. After exposure to the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction, these student writers confirmed in their writing attitude surveys and interview transcripts that they experienced a more positive attitude when writing for both personal or academic purposes.

On measures of self-efficacy, all student participants, except for one of the below-grade level writers, remained consistently positive from pre- to posttest. Data

reflected divergent results for the two below-grade level writers. In one case, the student's self-efficacy ratings positively increased after exposure to the mentor text inquiry approach, aligning with the positive increases in her writing attitude. However, in the second case, the student's self-efficacy scores decreased from pre- to posttest survey, even though his attitude toward writing itself improved.

One consideration posited by Alvarez and Adelman (1986) that might explain the latter student's decrease on measures of self-efficacy may be found in the nature of miscalibration of his internal beliefs with the subsequent performance task. In their study, when students overestimated their self-efficacy scores it was attributed to a "self-protective" function, in which students erected a "façade of competence" to hide their academic difficulties. In the present study, utilizing an author's published text as an explicit standard against which to measure a student-participant's own writing abilities may have caused him to realign his ideal writer identity with a more realistic one. This consideration may provide an explanation for a decrease in self-efficacy scores from pre- to posttests for one student in this study, even though his attitude toward writing increased positively at the same time. In reviewing the postinterview transcripts of the six student-participants, one key finding is that all of them either improved in their attitude toward writing or continued to remain positive from pre- to postinterview. All six student-participants indicated in their posttest responses that they felt more confident as writers due to their participation in mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction. Each of them described the basic tenants of the mentor text approach which included deconstructing exemplar texts for comprehension purposes and then using these same texts to discuss how the author constructed them.

All student-participants confirmed that they felt more confident as writers after engaging in the mentor text inquiry approach. Four of the six participants, including at- and above-grade level writers, cited writing as an important component of their future aspirations after experiencing the mentor text inquiry approach either for the purposes of getting into college or as a critical skill to possess in their professional careers. Three of the student-participants revealed that they considered becoming published writers in their post-interviews. All six student-participants were able to name at least one specific author they had studied by name and were able to articulate that their writing did not copy the authors exactly but that they tried to write in a similar style to emulate them.

The mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction utilizes a collaborative process that accentuates discovery, engagement in meaningful tasks, and practicality while diminishing the importance of competition, demonstration of intellectual skills, and public comparison of written products. The approach allows student writers to utilize the structure of published or expert writers as a guide to generating their own individual written attempt. Novice writers may be persuaded to feel more efficacious about their ability to write because they are aided by the structure of a published text, which may lead to actual improvements in their own writing performance over time.

Schunk (1991) and Schunk and Zimmerman (1994) claimed that teaching students to be more efficacious and persuading them that they are efficacious improves their actual performance. Perceptions of personal ability have been shown to be one critical factor that influences patterns of achievement (Meece, 1994). If individuals believe they can become better writers by making an effort, they are more likely to embrace a mastery goal orientation. They see themselves as able to improve over time by making an effort to master challenging

tasks. By making the effort to acquire knowledge and skills, students' feelings of self-worth and competence are equally likely to increase.

The Mentor Text Inquiry Approach Increased Writing Fluency

All student writers in this study gained writing fluency from their first to final formative essays as measured by word count. Five of the six students writers also made gains in writing fluency in their summative essays. The one student who did not make gains in her summative essay was noted as having the highest word count of all essays and only decreased her post assessment by five words.

In measuring fluency on the summative essays, the below-grade level writers provided the strongest evidence of growth regarding writing fluency, the at-grade level writers increased positively, and the above-grade level writers remained consistent with the same fluency rate from pre- to posttest results. The mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction overall had a positive impact upon the fluency of the student writers in this study.

Truckenmiller (2011) noted that in the area of writing, very little is known regarding the effects of fluency-based interventions on elementary aged students' writing fluency growth. There is little evidence to suggest that students get sufficient writing repetition (i.e., practice) in order to become fluent in written expression skills (Abbott & Berninger, 1993; Graham & Harris, 1997; Graham & Harris, 2005). An analysis of the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction revealed that using an author's published work to explicitly name craft elements helped increase a writer's fluency, as measured by words written per minute, and the organizational structure of their writing.

Scaffolding or the gradual “release of responsibility” from the expert to the learner has been documented to result in a child eventually becoming fully responsible for his/her own performance (Wood et al., 1976). In the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction, students experience a gradual release of responsibility through a decrease in the degree of assistance provided to assist in understanding the process of reading like a writer. Once the students had a grasp of the “reading like a writer” process, they were able to transfer the process onto any text of published work without waiting for the teacher to cue for understanding.

Scaffolding makes the student writer’s job easier by providing the maximum amount of assistance at the beginning stages of learning and then, as the student’s mastery grows, withdrawing this assistance. If the concept of scaffolding is applied to writing instruction, educators must choose the right kind of initial assistance and then engineer its withdrawal in such a way that the student’s independent performance stays at the same high level as it was when the assistance was provided. The mentor texts which student writers use as a foundation for their own writing purposes may reduce writers’ anxiety and increase positive attitudes and self-efficacy toward writing as well as writing abilities, thereby increasing willingness and motivation to write more.

The Mentor Text Inquiry Approach Improved Attention to Language Conventions

An analysis of the development of student-participants from the first to the third formative essay indicated that a majority of student-participants demonstrated a noticeable increase in awareness and usage of punctuation beyond ending marks but still struggled with the complexity of knowing when and how to appropriately utilize punctuation as it related to

their own content. Every student participant attempted to include either quotation marks for dialogue, dashes, or colons for sentence interrupters, or commas for listing items in a series in at least one of their three formative essay samples. These punctuation markers were explicitly acknowledged during the mentor text inquiry process and student-participants demonstrated varying levels of mastery depending upon the type of conventional punctuation attempted.

In analyzing the data for language conventions, all student-participants were found to be successful at using commas to indicate a series of items in a list and parentheses as a way to add supplemental information for the reader that did not alter meaning. All student-participants also attempted to include dialogue in their essays; however, only two of the six student-participants were successful at both appropriate placement and intentional usage of quotation marks. Five of the six student-participants attempted to include a sentence interrupter using either dashes or a colon, but only two were able to do so accurately. Student-participants in this study were aware of punctuation modeled in the mentor text exemplars provided and were in fact willing to use them independently but were unable to do so yet with complete accuracy. These findings suggest that punctuation may be one of the first explicit features of the mentor text process that students notice and are willing to replicate in their own writing in an attempt to mimic published authors. The type of punctuation marks attempted and implemented successfully varied depending upon student ability which may confirm research that progress in the realm of punctuation does not proceed in a straightforward linear way, and errors indicate increased awareness of complexity.

Nigal Hall (2001) found that most research in the area of punctuation suggests that learning to punctuate is not a passive process in which children simply learn a set of rules and can then punctuate accurately. He cites earlier studies (R. C. Anderson, 1996; Arthur, 1996; Goodman & Martens, 1996; Ruiz, 1996) that strongly reinforced the notion that learning to punctuate is not about passively accepting rules and applying them. A misuse or omission of punctuation on the part of the student is an indication they are coping with substantial cognitive burden when trying to accomplish the multiple demands of writing tasks that exceed their processing capacity as a young or novice writer.

Calkins (1980) compared Grade 3 children in two classes and found that the children in the class in which punctuation was taught in context had a far better understanding of the nuances of punctuation, in particular the developing understanding of the comma, than the children in the class in which punctuation was taught by rote. The mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction would provide educators a way to demonstrate to novice writers the different nuances of punctuation published authors draw upon when generating a text. All student writers in this study demonstrated an awareness of punctuation variety, if not yet always able to use it accurately.

The Mentor Text Inquiry Approach Increased Quantity But Not Quality of Content

Although it has been stated in a previous key finding that a majority of student-participants increased the quantity of words on a page, these same student-participants did not improve the overall quality of the text itself. The craft elements listed under the category of content as measured on the Narrative Mentor Text Rubric (see Appendix B) included features such as setting and character description, figurative language, and dialogue.

Both below-grade level writers improved dramatically in fluency on their formative and summative pre- to postessays by a gain of nearly a hundred words. However, when measuring the quality of content they produced as determined by their inclusion and accurate use of setting and/or character description, figurative language and dialogue, each student writer either showed an absence or misuse of these features in both their formative and summative essays.

Each of the at-grade level writers omitted the use of setting and character description and figurative language altogether in all three of their formative essays. Only one of the two at-grade level writers attempted to insert dialogue into one formative essay, but it was not punctuated appropriately. In comparing their growth on their summative pre- to postessays, the at-grade level writers both remained stagnant for setting description, earning 1 out of 4 possible points on the rubric. However, both students increased one point on the scale for figurative language from pre- to postessay.

The greatest gains for quality in the content area occurred in the postessays for the above grade-level writers. Since their pre-essay scores were higher than that of their counterpart peers, they had less opportunity for growth. However, the above-grade level writers accurately produced the most qualitative evidence of features including setting and character description, as well as figurative language. Only one of the two above-grade level student writers provided accurate evidence of dialogue in her pre-essay and continued to master the concept in her postessay as well. The other above-grade level student only attempted to use dialogue once in his third formative essay, but it was not punctuated appropriately.

Langer (1986) suggests that student writers will only gradually transform structures they already control. Slobin's (1979) research found that students solve new text-forming problems by adapting forms already controlled rather than adopting wholly new structures altogether. Bartlett (1981) agreed that transformation in student's writing is generally conservative and that text features are added on gradually before internal restructuring occurs. The lack of change in quality of content-related features for the below- and at-grade level student-writers may indicate that they were not developmentally ready to produce these type of text features and needed more time to problem-solve and adapt their own style of writing to the examples provided in the mentor text inquiry approach.

The Mentor Text Inquiry Approach Improved Organization and Structure

The structure of an essay in this study was considered organized if the author was able to relay the events of a narrative sequentially in order with a coherent beginning, middle, and end that remained on topic from a first person point of view. All six student-participants provided evidence they could write a first-person narrative about a personal experience that remained on topic by their postsummative essays.

The below-grade level writers struggled to produce clear, coherent sentences at the onset of this study. They struggled laboriously with handwriting issues, conventional spelling, and punctuation errors, along with extremely low levels of confidence as writers. Their pretest essays were either nonexistent, since one of the two student-participants refused to write altogether, or they were not even a paragraph in length. Upon completion of the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction, both student-participants had grown tremendously as writers. By the formative and summative postessays, they both had written

full essays that stayed on topic, while maintaining both coherent sentences and paragraph organization in sequential order. The writing of these below-grade level writers did not reflect evidence of quality content features such as description, figurative language, or dialogue, but they did increase in fluency, organization, and structure.

Each of the at-grade level writers struggled to produce effective leads, developed middles, or conclusions in their first formative and presummative essays. Throughout the study, the at-grade level writers improved their lead and concluding sentences but still struggled to write a developed middle portion of the essay that maintained sequential order.

Both of the above-grade level writers were capable of writing a variety of clear, coherent sentences that stayed on topic from the onset of the study. However, they both struggled to organize events in a sequential manner to create a coherent beginning, middle, and ending for all their formative essay attempts. Their third formative essays revealed growth as writers in sentence variety and utilizing figurative language, but they still continued to struggle to sequence events in a logical manner that created an effective lead, developed middle, nor a coherent conclusion. Only one of the two above-grade level student writers was able to produce a well-organized essay with an inviting beginning, developed middle, and meaningful ending on their postsummative essays.

A mentor text can be one sentence or more, a paragraph, a section of newspaper, a magazine article, or any published piece of work written by a professional writer. It is a piece of quality literature text that students can use as an exemplar text to model their own attempts for writing. F. Smith (1983) found that when students “read like a writer,” they notice the way words are spelled, the way authors use a phrase or sentence to create an image, how a certain word or punctuation mark conveys the right connotation, and how a writer leads

readers through a clear explanation of a complex process (Farnan & Dahl, 2003). Utilizing the exemplar narrative mentor texts in this study with student-participants helped model coherent beginnings, middles, and conclusions that remained on topic from a first person point of view, allowing the teacher-researcher to gradually release responsibility to student-writers to develop a vision of the type of writing they were capable and willing to produce. However, students appeared to respond to instruction differently, depending upon their stage of development and in keeping with the recursive nature of learning to write.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A number of design-related factors limit the generalizability of findings of this study including:

1. A relatively small number of student and teacher-participants.
2. Exclusive use of an urban charter elementary school site setting for study. Parents must self-select to enroll their children and find their own transportation to the site, as it is not provided by the district. The choice to attend this public charter in lieu of the local neighborhood school may impact home-school relationships between teacher and parents, which may also impact the learning environment.
3. Short treatment time of 6 weeks to investigate impact of mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction.
4. Educator B and the teacher-researcher analyzed the narrative summative essays for reliability. However, only the teacher-researcher analyzed the narrative formative essays.
5. Students were not provided the option to revise their formative or summative essays.
6. Teacher-researcher's own biases and understanding(s) as a teacher who utilizes a mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study confirmed that student writers of varying abilities are positively impacted by the mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction for certain aspects of the writing process. It is recommended that future studies extend the length of time in which students engage in a mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction. Researchers might also want to consider the influence of an educators' writing pedagogy and philosophy of writing instruction and the impact that the latter would have on implementation of the mentor text inquiry approach to instruction.

To effectively deal with issues of generalizability, future researchers should conduct studies with larger student samples and implement the approach in a wide variety of diverse student populations and school site settings, such as other public charters, public districts, and private school sites. Also, future studies should consider classroom and school environment to determine if these variables may be conducive to or hinder implementation of a mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction. Finally, future researchers may study the impact that a mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction has upon the various stages of student writing development.

As a result of this research, it is also recommended that the writing attitudes and self-efficacy of students in a larger study be compared to student's actual writing abilities. A recommendation for future research would also provide student-writers an opportunity for purposeful revision for both their formative and summative pre- and postessays, with the results analyzed for impact, if any, upon content, structure, fluency, and language conventions.

Finally, one long-term recommendation is to study the impact on students in the K-12 public education system if their first introduction to writing by parents/guardians in the home used a mentor text inquiry approach. This type of research would focus on the effectiveness of early intervention with students at the emergent stages of literacy development and the long-term impact it has upon their writing development in school.

RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE PRACTICE

Our best writers read the most (J. Anderson, 2011). In order to improve the writing abilities of our students in the classroom, as educators we must provide them with consistent quality writing instruction that meets their developmental needs on an on-going basis. A recommendation for educators who want to provide quality writing instruction that meets the diverse needs of students with different writing abilities and learning modalities is to use mentor texts as model pieces of writing in an inquiry approach to writing instruction. First, the students spend time with you in class deconstructing the mentor text for meaning, and then they identify aspects of the writer's style they would like to emulate and they reconstruct their own ideas within the context of the author's model. The scaffolds that published writers offer teachers in the classroom are both cost and time effective in that a single text can be analyzed at various levels including, but not limited to, punctuation, mood, word choice, figurative language, organization, and so forth.

When teachers immerse students in reading and studying the kind of writing they want them to do, they are actually teaching at two levels (Ray, 2006). They teach students about the particular genre or writing issue that is the focus of the study, but they also teach students to use a habit of mind experienced writers use all the time. They teach them how to

read like writers (Ray, 1999; F. Smith 1983), noticing as an insider how things are written. Students must be exposed to a wide variety of real world texts in multiple genres to ensure that the writing examples students are studying are exemplar texts of genres they would see published in the real world. The mentor text inquiry approach is not exclusively intended for only novice or reluctant writers but allows all students on a continuum of writing development to learn how to write from professional writers within a zone of proximal development.

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APPENDIX A

NARRATIVE MENTOR TEXT

WRITING FRAMEWORK

NARRATIVE MENTOR TEXT WRITING FRAMEWORK

Personal Narrative—Essay #1

Time Period: Two weeks

Mentor Text(s):

- A) Waterfall by Jonathon London
- B) Fireflies by Julie Brinckloe

Specific Targeted Skills/Craft Elements—Personal Narrative Essay #1

(** = A new skill/craft that has not been explicitly taught prior to onset of study)

1. Purpose/Perspective
 - ☐ The author writes about an experience that happened to them or someone they know. **
 - ☐ The author used the first person point of view. **
2. Setting Description
 - ☐ The author describes where the story took place. **
 - ☐ The author provides sensory details- sights, smells, sounds. **
3. Figurative Language
 - ☐ Similes and/or metaphors. **
 - ☐ Personification **
4. Dialogue/Inner Monologue
 - ☐ Uses quotation marks appropriately for dialogue **
 - ☐ Characters speak authentically in the story. **
5. Organization of Text Features
 - ☐ The author stays on topic **
6. Conventions
 - ☐ Quotations for Dialogue **
 - ☐ Punctuation for Sentence Interrupters (commas, dashes, parentheses) **

Essay Prompt-Personal Narrative #1:

We all have memories connected to our experiences. Think about an experience you feel you'll always remember. Try to picture the time, the place, and the people involved. Try to remember everything you can about this experience. Write about the experience you remember. Be sure to include enough details so that your reader can share your experience and understand why it stands out for you.

Assessment: Final drafts for Personal Narrative-Essay #1 will be assessed by the teacher-researcher. The teacher-researcher will utilize the Narrative Criteria Checklist for Personal Narrative Essay #1. Anecdotal notes will be generated for each craft element listed. (See Appendix ____)

Personal Narrative—Essay #2

Time Period: Two weeks

Mentor Text(s):

- A) Heat Wave by Helen Kettermann
- B) Sweet, Sweet Memory by Jacqueline Woodson

Specific Targeted Craft Elements-Personal Narrative Essay #2:

(** = A new skill/craft that has not been explicitly taught thus far in ten-week study)

1. Purpose/Perspective
 - ☐ The author writes about an experience that happened to them or someone they know.
 - ☐ The author used the first person point of view.
2. Character Description
 - ☐ The author describes the characters – makes them come to life. **
 - ☐ The author uses physical details such as clothing, age, sensory details, hair color and style. **
 - ☐ The author shows the character in action (physically, emotionally and/or mentally). **
 - ☐ The author shows the character's persona such as bossy, shy, rowdy, mean, gracious etc. **
3. Figurative Language
 - ☐ Similes and/or metaphors.
 - ☐ Personification
 - ☐ Hyperbole **
4. Organization of Text Features
 - ☐ The author stays on topic.
 - ☐ The author includes an effective ending. **
 - ☐ The author uses an appropriate sequence for the reader to understand the story. **
5. Conventions
 - ☐ Quotations for Dialogue
 - ☐ Punctuation for Sentence Interrupters (commas, dashes, parentheses)

Essay Prompt-Personal Narrative Essay #2:

Think about an event in your life that seemed bad but turned out to be good. Maybe you got injured and while you were waiting for your broken leg to heal, you learned how to use a computer. What makes the event change from bad to good may be something that you learned as a result, something that you did differently as a result, or something that happened that wouldn't have occurred otherwise. Tell the story of the event that you experienced and help your readers understand how an event that seemed negative turned out to have valuable consequences.

Assessment: Final drafts for Personal Narrative-Essay #2 will be assessed by the teacher-researcher. The teacher-researcher will utilize the Narrative Criteria Checklist for Personal Narrative Essay #2. Anecdotal notes will be generated for each craft element listed. (See Appendix ___)

Personal Narrative—Essay #3

Time Period: Two weeks

Mentor Text(s):

- A) The Relatives Came By Cynthia Rylant
- B) We Had a Picnic This Sunday Past by Diane Greenseid

Specific Targeted Craft Elements-Personal Narrative Essay #3:

(** = A new skill/craft that has not been explicitly taught thus far in ten-week study)

1. Purpose/Perspective
 - ☐ The author writes about an experience that happened to them or someone they know.
 - ☐ The author used the first person point of view.
 - ☐ The author shows the reader why this experience was important to them personally (what they learned, understand etc.) **
2. Character Description
 - ☐ The author describes the characters – makes them come to life.
 - ☐ The author uses physical details such as clothing, age, sensory details, hair color and style.
 - ☐ The author shows the character’s persona such as bossy, shy, rowdy, mean, gracious etc.
3. Figurative Language
 - ☐ Similes and/or metaphors.
 - ☐ Rhyme/Repetition **
4. Organization of Text Features
 - ☐ The author stays on topic.
 - ☐ The author includes an effective lead. **
 - ☐ The author uses an appropriate sequence for the reader to understand the story.
5. Conventions
 - ☐ Quotations for Dialogue
 - ☐ Punctuation for Sentence Interrupters (commas, dashes, parentheses)

Essay Prompt-Personal Narrative Essay #3:

Families are an important part of our lives. All families are different but all are special. Write about a special time that you spent with your family such as birthdays, holidays, or a trip you took together. Choose one family event and write a story about it.

Final drafts for Personal Narrative-Essay #3 will be assessed by the teacher-researcher. The teacher-researcher will utilize the Narrative Criteria Checklist for Personal Narrative Essay #3. Anecdotal notes will be generated for each craft element listed. (See Appendix ___)

APPENDIX B

NARRATIVE MENTOR TEXT RUBRIC

NARRATIVE MENTOR TEXT RUBRIC

Narrative mentor text craft elements	4	3	2	1
PURPOSE/ PERSPECTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes a clearly presented central idea with relevant facts, supporting details, or explanations Establishes a well developed idea/plot, and setting Provides meaningful insight into why event/experience was memorable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes a central idea with mostly relevant facts, supporting details, or explanations Establishing an idea/plot and setting Provides meaningful insight into why events/experience was memorable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes a central idea with limited facts, supporting details, and/or explanations Establishes a weak idea/plot and setting Provides little insight into why the event/experience was memorable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes a central idea but lacks related facts, supporting details, and/or explanations. Establishes no real idea/plot of setting Provides no insight into why the even/experience was memorable
SETTING DESCRIPTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentions the setting but does not elaborate Provides sensory details including sights, smells, sounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentions the setting but does not elaborate Provides sensory details including sights, smells, sounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentions the setting but does not elaborate Provides minimal sensory details including sights, smells, sounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fails to mention the setting for the story Fails to provide any sensory details including sights, smells, sounds
CHARACTER(S) DESCRIPTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Character(s) are expressive, engaging, and/or sincere Describes character(s) persona through many physical details and actions (physical, mental and/or emotional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Characters are somewhat engaging and expressive Provides some description of character(s) persona through a limited number of physical details and actions (physical, mental and/or emotional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Characters are weakly described and developed Provides minimal description of character(s) persona through one or two physical details and actions (physical, mental and/or emotional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Characters are not present in story and/or Fails to describes character(s) persona through physical details and actions (physical, mental and/or emotional)
FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses descriptive language and concrete sensory details to enable reader to visualize the events or experiences using 1 or more of the following appropriately: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Simile Metaphor Personification, Hyperbole Rhyme/repetition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses descriptive language and concrete sensory details to enable reader to visualize the events or experiences using one or more of the following appropriately: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Simile Metaphor Personification Hyperbole Rhyme/Repetition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses limited, repetitive word choice that does not give reader a visual picture. Fails to include or uses inappropriately: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Simile Metaphor Personification Hyperbole Rhyme/Repetition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses dull, repetitive word choices that may confuse the reader. Fails to include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Simile Metaphor Personification Hyperbole Rhyme/Repetition
DIALOGUE/INTERIOR MONOLOGUE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Characters consistently use dialogue or interior monologues appropriately. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Characters use dialogue or interior monologues appropriately. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal evidence of characters using dialogue or interior monologues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No evidence of characters using dialogue or interior monologue.

Narrative mentor text craft elements	4	3	2	1
ORGANIZATION OF TEXT FEATURES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizing structure is extremely clear. Relates significant events Includes a Lead Clear conclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizing structure is evident Most details appropriate Relates significant events Lead somewhat engages reader Somewhat clear conclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lacks a clear organizing structure. Organization may not be in correct order May have inappropriate details Minimally developed sequence of events Lead is missing and/or Lead fails to engage the reader Conclusion is missing and/or fails to engage the reader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little or no attempt to organize Inappropriate details or no apparent cohesion to details Sequence of events is not present or confusing Lead is missing Conclusion is missing
CONVENTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently includes appropriate use of quotation marks for dialogue (if included) Consistent appropriate use of punctuation for sentence interrupters (commas, dashes, parentheses) Contains few if any errors in conventions that makes the writing easy to read and understand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes appropriate use of quotation marks for dialogue (if included) Includes appropriate use of punctuation for sentence interrupters (commas, dashes, parentheses) Contains some errors in conventions that do not interfere with the meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inappropriate use of quotation marks for dialogue (if included) Inappropriate use of punctuation for sentence interrupters (commas, dashes, parentheses) Contains frequent errors in conventions that are noticeable and confuse the reader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fails to use quotation marks for dialogue (if included) Fails to use punctuation for sentence interrupters (commas, dashes, parentheses) Contains so many errors in conventions that the writing is difficult to follow

APPENDIX C

NARRATIVE MENTOR TEXT CRITERIA CHECKLIST AND ANECDOTAL NOTES

NARRATIVE MENTOR TEXT CRITERIA CHECKLIST AND ANECDOTAL NOTES

Essay 1

1. **Purpose/Perspective:**

- ☐ The author writes about an experience that happened to them or someone they know.
- ☐ The author used the first person point of view.

Anecdotal Notes:

2. **Setting Description:**

- ☐ The author describes where the story took place.
- ☐ The author provides sensory details- sights, smells, sounds.

Anecdotal Notes:

3. **Figurative Language/Craft Elements:**

- ☐ Similes and/or metaphors.
- ☐ Personification.

Anecdotal Notes:

4. **Dialogue/Interior Monologue:**

- ☐ Characters speak authentically in the story.
- ☐ Uses quotation marks appropriately for dialogue.

Anecdotal Notes:

5. **Organization of Text Features:**

- ☐ The author stays on topic.

Anecdotal Notes:

6. **Conventions:**

- ☐ Quotation Marks for Dialogue
- ☐ Punctuation for Sentence Interrupters (commas, dashes, parentheses)

Anecdotal Notes:

Essay 2

(** = A new skill/craft introduced in study for Personal Narrative Essay 2)

1. Purpose/Perspective:

- ☐ The author writes about an experience that happened to them or someone they know.
- ☐ The author used the first person point of view.

Anecdotal Notes:

2. Character Description:

- ☐ The author describes the characters—makes them come to life. **
- ☐ The author uses physical details such as clothing, age, sensory details, hair color and style. **
- ☐ The author shows the character in action (physically, emotionally and/or mentally). **
- ☐ The author shows the character's persona such as bossy, shy, rowdy, mean, gracious, etc. **

Anecdotal Notes:

3. Figurative Language/Craft Elements:

- ☐ Similes and/or metaphors.
- ☐ Personification.

Anecdotal Notes:

4. Organization of Text Features:

- ☐ The author stays on topic.
- ☐ The author includes an effective ending. **
- ☐ The author uses an appropriate sequence for the reader to understand the story. **

Anecdotal Notes:

6. Conventions:

- ☐ Quotation Marks for Dialogue
- ☐ Punctuation for Sentence Interrupters (commas, dashes, parentheses)

Anecdotal Notes:

Essay 3

(** = A new skill/craft introduced in study for Personal Narrative Essay 2)

1. Purpose/Perspective:

- ☐ The author writes about an experience that happened to them or someone they know.
- ☐ The author used the first person point of view.
- ☐ The author shows the reader why this experience was important to them personally (what they learned, understand, etc.) **

Anecdotal Notes:

2. Character Description:

- ☐ The author describes the characters—makes them come to life.
- ☐ The author uses physical details such as clothing, age, sensory details, hair color, and style.
- ☐ The author shows the character's persona such as bossy, shy, rowdy, mean, gracious, etc.

Anecdotal Notes:

3. Figurative Language/Craft Elements:

- ☐ Similes and/or metaphors.
- ☐ Rhyme/Repetition **

Anecdotal Notes:

4. Organization of Text Features:

- ☐ The author stays on topic.
- ☐ The author includes an effective lead. **
- ☐ The author uses an appropriate sequence for the reader to understand the story.

Anecdotal Notes:

6. Conventions:

- ☐ Quotation Marks for Dialogue
- ☐ Punctuation for Sentence Interrupters (commas, dashes, parentheses)

Anecdotal Notes:

APPENDIX D

STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about yourself as a writer. (Allow student to take the lead-this may mean that some of the questions that follow are already answered)
2. When and how did you learn to write?
3. What kinds of writing do you do at home?
4. What kinds of writing do you do at school?
5. Where is your favorite place to write?
6. What kinds of things do you enjoy writing about?
7. Where do you get your ideas?
8. Do you think it's important to be a good writer? Why or why not?
9. How or where do you use writing the most?
10. What piece of writing are you most proud of?
11. What makes writing good?
12. What improvements would like to make in your writing?
13. How do you feel when you are asked to share your writing with others?
14. How do you feel when others share their writing with you?
15. How do you feel about yourself as a writer?
16. What else would you like to tell me about you as a writer or what else would you like to tell me about your writing?

APPENDIX E

PARENTAL CONSENT LETTER

PARENTAL CONSENT LETTER

San Diego State University

Consent to Act as a Research Subject

Investigating the Impact of a Mentor Text Inquiry Approach to Narrative Writing Instruction on Attitude, Self-Efficacy & Writing Processes of Fourth Grade Students in an Urban Elementary School

You are being asked to allow your child to participate in a research study. Before you give your consent for him/her to volunteer, it is important that you read the following information and ask as many questions as necessary to be sure you understand what he/she will be asked to do.

Investigators: Christine Kane (Principal Investigator), Dr. Barbara Moss (Co-Chair) & Dr. Pamela Ross (Co-Chair)

Purpose of the Study: This research study is designed to examine the writing process of fourth grade students using a mentor text inquiry approach to writing instruction in a formal classroom context.

Description of the Study: Your child will be asked to complete an attitude, self-efficacy and writing assessment activities with the principle investigator on an individual basis. Your child will be interviewed individually by the principle investigator in regards to their concept of themselves as a writer. These interviews will be audio-taped and will be kept strictly confidential with only the principle investigator (Christine Kane) using the audio-tape to analyze for data purposes. The research will be conducted at San Diego Global Vision Academy. All writing lessons will be conducted during routinely scheduled events during the school day and will not require any volunteer time commitments on the part of you or your child. Individual interviews will be conducted after school hours between 3:00-4:00 and will require a minimum of 30 minutes of volunteer time on behalf of you and your child. These interviews will be audio-taped and conducted only by a credentialed teacher who is an expert in the area of writing instruction for research purposes only. These audio-taped interviews will be kept strictly confidential and will only be used for the purposes of completing this dissertation. Conducting writing samples and interviews after school will ensure your child's privacy. You will also be required to complete a demographic questionnaire in regards to parental education status, socioeconomic level and home language preference.

Risks or Discomforts: The risks associated with this study are minimal. During the interview process your child may experience discomfort while responding to a questionnaire or interview. Prior to beginning the interview, your child will receive explicit instructions that guarantee his/her right to discontinue the interview at any time, either temporarily or permanently, without penalty from the principle investigator.

Benefits of the Study: The anticipated benefits of participation in this study include contributing to an emerging field of research on the connection between writing process, attitude and self-efficacy in using a mentor text approach to writing instruction. I cannot guarantee, however, that you will receive any benefits from participating in this study.

Confidentiality: The information gathered during this study will remain confidential in a security locked laptop during this project. Only the researcher and San Diego State University IRB will have access to the study data and information. There will not be any identifying names on the audiotapes, attitude assessments, self-efficacy assessments or essays. Your child's name will not be available to anyone not associated with the project itself. All data will be destroyed at the completion of the study. The results of the research will be published in the form of a graduate paper and may be published in a professional journal or presented at professional meetings.

Incentives to Participate: Your child will receive a chapter book to compliment the learning instruction in the classroom. Your child will receive a chapter book regardless if they are able to complete this study or not.

Costs and/or Compensation for Participation: There is no cost to you or your child for participation in this study.

Voluntary Nature of Participation: Participation in this study is voluntary; refusal to participate will involve no penalty. Each participant is free to withdraw consent and discontinue participation in this project at any time without prejudice from San Diego Global Vision Academy or San Diego State University. Furthermore, a decision to participate or not to participate will not influence in any way the care you receive at San Diego Global Vision Academy.

Questions about the Study: If you have any questions about the research now, please ask. If you have questions later about the research, you may contact Christine Kane from San Diego Global Vision Academy at (619) 347-9630. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the Division of Research Administration San Diego State University (telephone: 619-594-6622; email: irb@mail.sdsu.edu).

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this document and have had a chance to ask any questions you have about the study. Your signature also indicates that you agree to be in the study and have been told that you can change your mind and withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You have been given a copy of this consent form. You have been told that by signing this consent form you are not giving up any of your legal rights.

Name of Parent/Guardian of Participant (please print)

Name of Child (print)

Signature of Parent/Guardian of Participant

Date

Signature of Investigator

Date

APPENDIX F

STUDENT-PARTICIPANT ESSAYS:

FIGURES 3-29

I remember my aunt Sues (I just call her Sue)
wedding. It was different than the other weddings.
The bride was wearing a brown
dress with lots of decorations.
And as fast as night they were
married. My mom and I both cried
really hard. It was different than
most weddings and that's why
I like it.

Figure 3. Kylee's formative essay 1. Translation: I remember my aunt Sues (I just call her Sue) wedding. It was different than other weddings. The bride was wearing a brown dress with lots of decorations. And as fast as night they were married. My mom and I both cried really hard. It was different than most weddings and that's why I liked it.

Figure 4. Kylee's formative essay 2. Translation: Something that started out bad but that was good is if when I had practiced my guitar chords, notes and neck only one time this week and my guitar lesson got canceled because at first I had practiced my chords, notes, strings or the neck on they other but then it got canceled. And that meant that I learned to be more responsible practicing guitar more often or more happy either. And I have never more that expense after since it has happened and will practice always and every thing that I am supposed to practice and that is my story of some thing bad that was good.

Some think that started
 out Bad that was good
 is if when I ~~had~~ ^{my} practiced guitar -
Conrad's note's the neck only
one time this week and my guitar
one lesson got can not use
at first I had practice my
Conrad's note's stinging on the
neck on the guitar But then
it got called and if
that me to practice

and ~~at~~ that I ~~kind to~~
 be more resosable - ~~at~~ ~~ing~~
 gative more of in - or more
 happy ether and I have
 never more more than
 ex pene se exer
 sice it has hupped
 and will ~~pr~~ practice
 allay as and every think
 that I am slost
 to pratice and
 that is my
 stony of some
 think Bad that was good.

Figure 5. Kylee's formative essay 3. Translation: One time my grandma lost her bird. Some (people) and my dad went there. We looked all night and we didn't find her. We put out bird food, flyers and put her on the lost and found on Craig's List. Even the neighbors helped. The next day more people from houses and my dad said "why is mum calling?" Then he checked in after and she found crash (that's the birds name). At the moment I thought the bird was as crazy as alien. But at the moment I could have been more happy—for my grammy—or more mad either.

one time my
gradma losse a hen
bird. Some and
my dad went there
we look all night and
we didt find her.
And wwe put bird
food out, filer a mid 5.
And put her on d
lost and found think
on crer's list. Even
then naber's helped.
the next day meur 2

Partridge's forest Ord
the Pfoom and my dad
said "why is mum
calling?)" then he peck
up the foam and she food
crashed that's the bird's
name). At the moment
I thought the bird was
as crazy as a lion. But at
that moment I could have
been more happy - for food
yum - or more mad
either.

I would Like to relive
my Brtday on June 28 2010 (6/28/10)
I was turning 9 years old and it
was one of the best days of
my life. On my Brtday I went
to Peter Pipers and my best friend Joi
was there and I want to relive
it.

Figure 6. Kylee's summative pretest essay. Translation: I would like to relive my birthday on June 28, 2010 (6/28/10). I was turning 9 years old and it was one of the best days of my life. On my birthday I went to Peter Pipers and my best friend Joi was there and I want to relive it.

Figure 7. Kylee's summative posttest essay. Translation: A memory from SDGVA is when we had Penny Wars. We had the best strategy. What we did was keep some of our pennies in the class instead of in the jar. At home I asked for pennies and I got a lot. Me and my friend Laraya filled a whole Pringles can with pennies. But we also had a lot of quarters, nickels and dimes. And on Friday we put them in after two weeks and before then I gathered as much pennies as I could and we soon had more than a whole Pringles can worth of pennies. Then when they day came I was so excited I couldn't wait. But I put mine in last because I had the most. After that we went on to our normal life. But on Wednesday we got told the winners. 3rd place went to kindergarten, 2nd place went to 5th and 6th grade and 1st place went to us in 4th grade. I could have never been more happy—that we had won after all of our hard work—or more proud either. And that was my favorite memory of SDGVA.

A memory from SDGVA
is when we had Penny Wars. We
had the best strategy. What
we did was we kept some of our
Pennys in the class instead of in
the jar.

At home I asked for Pennys and
I got lots. me and my friend/anya
filled a hole Prings can with Pennys.
But we also had a lot of Quaker's rice's
Pine's. And on Friday we put them
in after two weeks and before

then I gathered as much Penny's
as I could and we soon had more than
a hole Pringle's can worth of Penny's

Then when the day came I
was so excited a colded what. But I put
mine in last because I had the most

After that we went on to our
normal life. But on wednesday we got
told the winners. 3rd Place went to kindy and
2nd Place went to 5th and 6th and 1st
Place went to us 4th grade. I could
have never been more happy - that

We had won after all of our
hard work - or more said ether.

and this was my favrit memory
of SDg Va.

Figure 8. Jo'Quon's formative essay 2. Translation: (1) One day I was racing it was on the day before my birthday and I fell and then I could not breathe because there was a step on the side and I fell and ruptured my spleen. So I went to hospital and when it was my birthday my best auntie gave me 400 dollars. They were all twenty's and I was in the bed for 3 weeks and I were it was my birthday everybody should up at the hospital and I started to cry because they were all there to help and to support me. (2) When I went to go play I went in my mom's room and I broke the glass in her room and I ran in my room. My dad said EJ did you brake the glass? He said no that was Terrell and he said Terrell! Come here right now and I said yes dada and they started to laugh but that was when I was three years old. And my dad could not get mad because he was laughing so hard and my brother EJ was laughing so hard too. So he did not get mad because he was laughing and he looked at my face and said my baby boy.

① one day I was rascing it was on the 1st day before my birthday and I fell and ~~then~~ I could not breath because there was a step on the side and I fell and ruptured my spleen so I went to I hospital and when it was my birthday my best aunt gave me 400 Dollars and they were all twenty's and I was in the bed for 3 weeks and I went it was my birthday every day should up at the hospital and I started to cry because they were all there to help me and to support me.

② When I went to go play I went in my mom's room and I broke the glass in her room and I ran in my room and my dad said oh did you break the glass he said no that was terrible and he said terrible! come here right now and I said yes daddy and they started to beat me but that was when I was 12 years old and my dad could not get mad because he was laughing so hard and my brother EJ was laughing so hard to go he did not get mad because he was laughing and he looked at my face and said I was a boy

Figure 9. Jo'Quon's formative essay 3. Translation: One day I woke up and it was my birthday. My dad said happy birthday baby boy. I said hi dad. My mom had a nina and she would send me 20 dollars in the mail every time it was my birthday. But I turned 10 year's old so she gave me double up. So $20 + 20 = 60$ dollar's. So I got 60 dollar's for my birthday. My dad took me to the Game Stop and then we went to Ms. Cobene's house and Ms. Cobene is my older sister's boyfriend's mom. So my mom, and, dad tricked me. I told my dad where are we going to? He said Ms. Cobene's house. I said for what? He said I left something there so we went. But there was a door that lead's you to the garage and . . . 40 people were in there so my dad took me into the garage and every body surprised me with a loud group held. I ran because they all scared me and then my mom brought in the cake. She had dropped some cake on the floor and it was funny because my brother, my older sister and my little sister had to clean it up because I was the birthday boy. I was telling them look you forgot something and I was laughing my butt off. They all were about to beat me up because I dropped the frosting on the floor on accident. My bother, and, my sister's socked me 10 times so hard it was 30 hits altogether. It made me cry and every time I dropped they had to pick them up so I told them this is payback for them 30 hits that you guys gave me so I said this is payback.

one day I Woke up it was my Birthday
 and my dad said happy Birthday Baby Boy
 I said hi dad my mom had a nina
 and she would send me 20 dollars
 in The mail every time it was my
 Birthday But I turned 10 Year's old
 so she gave me duBer up 20
 + twenty + twenty = 260 dollars so
 I got 260 dollars for my Birthday.
 My dad took me to The Game stop and
 then we went to ms. cobene's house and
 ms. cobene is my older sister's Boyfriend's
 Mom so my mom, and, dad Ticked me
 I told my dad where are we going to he
 said ms. cobene's house I said for what
 he said I left something there so we went.
 But there was a door that leads you to The
 Garage and 10 people were in there
 so my dad took me into The Garage
 and every body suprise with a loud
 Group held I ran because they
 all scared me and then my mom
 Blown in the cake she had dresed
 some cake on the keys and it was funny
 because my Brother, my older sister and my
 little sister had to clean it up because I was The

Bertthy Boy and I was telling them
 took you to ~~foot~~ something and I was
 laughing my butt off they all were
 crying to me we were ~~because~~ I dropped
 the frosting on the ~~floor~~ on accident
 my Brother and my sister's socked me
 10 times so hard it was so hit all
 to it made me cry and everything
 I dropped they had to pick them
 up so I told them this is Ray
 back from the 20 hits that you
 guys gave me so I sold these 16 Ray Becks

two year's ago The chargers lost the
playoff to the jets It was at night it was
raining and kaedding missed two field goals
Then they were down Then kaedding had a
chance to tie it up and he missed and
the Chargers lost the game and I was
mad for a month in a day a month

Figure 10. Jo'Quon's summative pretest. Translation: Two years ago the Chargers lost the playoffs to the Jet's. It was at night. It was raining and Nate Kaedding missed two field goals. Then they were down. Then Kaedding had a chance to tie it up and he missed and the Chargers lost the game and I was mad for a month.

Figure 11. Jo'Quon's summative posttest. Translation: One thing I will remember about SDGVA is my friend's because they helped me with my math with my reading with the things that I did not know before like my words and my division. On Tuesday my friend Joseph helped me with my division. Everybody knew their division but me. But on Tuesday all of that was going to turn around. "So I asked Joseph if he could teach me math" I said "I just don't know my division" He said "Oh that explains a lot." So when he said "Yes" I said "Thanks man" So when (I did one problem I had got the division) know I rock star at it and when people tell me who taught you how to do division I always going to say my best friend Joseph. When he grows up and when I grow up we are always going to keep in touch. These are the best friends. Terrell, Joseph, Izaiah, and, Roheem. We are all going to truly to keep in touch over the year. Oh, and my friend Brandon and you know what they said so no one get's left behind so you know what they say pictures and friends last for just a little while but our memories last forever. Plus your mom, dad, brother, sister, cousin, and, your whole aunts and plus your whole family and my friends—we love SDGVA.

One thing I will remember
 One thing I will remember about SDEA is
 my friends. Because they helped me with
 my math with my reading with the things
 that I did not know before. Like my work
 and my division. — On Tuesday my friend
 Joseph helped me with my division every
 body knew there division but me. But
 on Tuesday all of that was going to turn
 all around! So I asked Joseph if
 he could teach me math. He said "You
 don't know your math?" I said "I do
 I just don't do my division." He said
 "Oh that's easy." So when
 he said "Yes" I said "Thank you man
 so when I do one problem I had got
 the answer. Know I rock star at it
 and that's how I got to be. Who told
 you how to do division I
 always going to say my best friend
 Joseph. When he told me I said "Oh
 I got it." We were always going to
 keep in touch. These are the best friends,
 Terrell, Joseph, Izzy, and Nochem.
 We all are going to Shirley to keep
 in touch over all the year.

Oh and my friend Brandon
 that and you know what they say
 say that one gets left behind so
 you know what they say picture
 my friend's last for just a little
 while but memories last for ever
 PMS your mom, dad, brother, sister,
 cousin, and your love interest and
 PMS your love interest and
 my friend in the friend —
 SDEA.

I was going to Disney Land
 and I fell asleep on the
 way there. "My mom said
 what's the matter?" I said I
 am hungry and have to use
 the bath room really bad
 so we stop. 10 minutes later
 we were at the hotel waiting
 to go to the pool. "My mom
 and dad said that it was
 time to go to the pool" I and
 three hour later we were
 still in the pool and we
 saw fire works. The fire
 works were Tinker bell, mico,
 Mike, Indiana Jones, and Alice.
 The next hour later we
 went to eat at California
 Kitchen. I got mac and
 cheese. it was a blast and
 we ate at Disney Land
 I got on splash mountain
 and space mountain and all
 of the mountains at Disney-
 Land.

Figure 12. Brooklyn's formative essay 1. Translation: I was going to Disneyland and I fell asleep on the way there. "My mom said what's the matter?" I said I am hungry and have to use the bathroom really bad so we stopped. 10 minutes later we were at the hotel waiting to go to the pool. "My Mom and dad said that it was time to go to the pool" 1 and 3 hours later we were still in the pool and we saw fire works. The fire works were Tinkerbell, Minney Mouse, Mickey, Indiana Jones, and Alice. Then an hour later we went to eat at California Kitchen. I got mac and cheese. It was a blast and we ate at Disneyland I got on splash mountain and space mountain and all of the mountains at Disneyland.

Figure 13. Brooklyn's formative essay 2. Translation: When I was going to go to Disneyland I went to and it was a 4 day weekend and we went on the 2 day so we were there for 3 days. So the first day and we went swimming then and we saw fire works then the 2nd day we went to Disney and we went on Mad Hater and Space Mountain and then the most scariest ride of all time is Splash Mountain. "And I saw it and my "Parents said" What ride should we go on now? And I was looking at Splash Mountain and I was hoping we would not go on it so my parents said lets go on splash mountain I said I don't want to and my sister said yeah let's go. Then she said where is it I said it is right there she said no I don't want to go on this ride my said to Dad! And it was in so bad but my sister said she was still scared my dad said let's go on it again.

When I was going to go
 to Disney Land I went to
 and it was a 5 day week
 and we went on the
 2 day so we were there
 for 3 days. so the first
 day and we went swimming
 then and we saw fire
 works then the 2 day
 we went to Disney and
 we went on mad hater
 and space mountain and
 then the most scariest ride
 of all time is splash
 mountain. and I saw it
 and my parents said what ride
 shall we go to now and I was
 looking at splash mountain
 and I was hoping we would
 not go on it so my parents
 said less go on splash
 mountain I said I don't
 want to and my sister said
 yay well's go. then she said
 well's it's so scary it's
 right there she said

No I don't want to
go on this ride
my dad said to Dad!
and it was in So bad
but my sister said she
was still scared my
dad said less soon
it a 3th.

One time it was my
 birthday and we went to my
 house and me and my sister
 spent the night at my Nana's
 house. Then in the morning
 we went back to my house
 and my sister knew it was
 a surprise party at my house.
 and we had a party on till
 11:00 at night and I turned
 5. It was the night of my
 life.

Figure 14. Brooklyn's summative pretest. Translation: One time it was my birthday and we went to my house and me and my sister spent the night at my nana's house. Then in the morning we went back to my house and my sister knew it was a surprise party at my house. And we had a party on til 11:00 at night and I turned 5. It was the night of my life.

Figure 15. Brooklyn's summative posttest. Translation: When we went to Meriposa ice cream shop and we were sitting down reading and miss kane said we are going to mariposa ice cream shop and so we got our stuff and went to mariposa ice cream shop. Then we had waited at the gate and we waited for ms. Kane to get her stuff and then as soon as miss kane was done we were gone by the time we got there school was not even out yet. "We had to wait for the ice cream" "I said." So I was the 3rd person to get my ice cream I got cookes and cream and monse got coffee ice cream it looked nasty but it was good once I tasted it it was good that I tried it because I might of hurt somebody so that is why I gave it a try. You should try it someday miss kane you should try it someday. A lot of the kids in the class got cookies and cream and the 2nd is cookie dough and the 3rd was vanilla and the 4th was strawberry and then we left and went back to school with the ice cream and we had a big blast with the ice cream we walk like were cool kids in the street.

When we went to Merpass
 ice cream shop and we were
 sitting down reading and miss Kane
 said we are going to Merpass ice
 cream shop and so we got a few
 stuff and went to Merpass ice-
 cream shop. Then we had waited at
 the gate and we ~~waited~~^{waited} for
 ms. Kane to get her stuff and then
 as soon as miss Kane was done
 we were done at the time.
 We got there school was not even
 out yet. "We had to wait for
 the ice cream" I said. So I
 was the 3 person to get my
 ice cream I got cookies and cream
 and mmm got coffee ice cream it
 looked nasty but it was good
 when I tasted it it was good that
 I tried it ~~because~~^{because} I mit
 of what somebody so that I
 way I gave it a try. You
 should ~~try~~^{try} it someday miss Kane
 you should try it someday.

Allot of ~~the~~ kids in the class
got Cookies and Cream And
the 2 is Cookies Dough and
the 3 was ~~the~~ ^{the} the 4
is Strawberry and then we
Left ~~the~~ and went back to
School with the ice cream
and we had a big blast
with the ice cream we
Walk like were cool
Kid in the streets.

Figure 16. Treyshawn's formative essay 1. Translation: One experience I will never forget is the day I went to my friend Rhys's house, and another is the day his mom died. The day my mom told me Rhys mom died it was like time froze for me I was devastated. The next day I went up to Ms. Kane and we had a conversation I said "excuse me Ms. Kane" and she answered. It was a secret. So my classmates wouldn't hear. "Rhys mom died" I said Then Ms. Kane said "really what happened." "She was sick and in the hospital." "Wow" Ms. Kane the people that were in his class will sign a card ok". My mom was holding a beautiful card that reminds people of memories and then next day at school Miss Kane said everyone that was in Rhys class stand up.

One experience I will never forget is the day I went to my friend Rhys's house, and another is the day his mom died. The day my mom told me Rhys's mom died it was like time froze for me. I was devastated. The next day I went up to Ms. Kane and we had a conversation. I said "excuse me Ms. Kane" and she answered. I was scared. So my classmate was with me. "Rhys's mom died" I said. "Ms. Kane" and "really what happened?" she was sitting in the hospital. "Wow" Ms. Kane the people that were in my class will sign a card for me. My mom was looking at her. "Rhys's mom died" and then next day at school Ms. Kane said everyone that was in Rhys's class stand up.

Figure 17. Treyshawn's formative essay 2. Translation: On my birthday celebration I was in the family tv room. I was watching Dragonball Z, Fairly Odd Parents, Spongebob, and Thick Battowski—so my big sister (Khira) wanted to watch T.V. and I was like no because I only had thirty minutes and her shows are more than an hour. So I also said no goes because I could not use the black and gray key bordered Toshiba laptop. I also couldn't play my dad's gray PS3 because it needs to be fixed. So there was nothing to do so my dad said I'm going to bring back some pizza Jay do you want to come and I said sure and I went to the little Ceaser's were I normally go and I saw these things before (McDonald's, a hair salon, and Mexican food). So then I when in the garage then I said what are all of these cars doing here (I'm surprised my little sister didn't shout the word out).

On my birthday dad and
 I was on the room. I
 family watching Dragon Ball Z
 family was playing, Sponge Bob,
 and other cartoons. So my
 big sister (the girl) wanted
 to watch TV and I was
 like no because I didn't
 like anything in there. I
 like things are more than
 in there. So I said and
 on my birthday because
 I could not see anything
 I said to my dad they
 wanted to play. I said
 I also couldn't play. I
 said to my dad I was
 it needed to be fixed. So
 there was nothing to do
 so my dad said I was
 want some pizza. I said
 you want to come with me
 yes sure and I went. I went
 to the little room there I
 normally go and I was there
 thing but I love McDonald's

a hair salon, and mexican food.
So then I went in the garage
then John from auto net then
L said what are all of these cars
doing here (I'm surprised my
little sister didn't shoot him
with a gun)

Figure 18. Treyshawn's formative essay 3. Translation: One time the day before I went to Disneyland I did not know that we were going to go and it was a Friday. When my parents told I was as excited as a bunny hopping in a race: fast. At six or five "o" clock we got up, brushed our teeth, washed our face, and got in the car with we all the stuff we needed. We bought stuff from Disneyland and expect for the stuff like swords, shield, gun (if they have them), those spinning things, and glasses. But the rides we went on were fun me and my big sister (Khira) were alone so we can go on the big rides my Dad I think was with us. The ride was filled with fake wood and going in the front of the roller coaster was a dragon and on the ride going in beast came out and monster and it went down fast scary turns and everything. After that we seen my Mom, Dad, and Jaiden, in the teacup like so we went with them and we went on the blue teacup and we were spinning and spinning and spinning and then we looked on the map and we got back on the train car and then we went back home.

One time the day before
 I went to disneyland I did
 not know that we were going
 to go and it was a Friday.
 When my parents told I was
 as excited as a bunny hopping
 in a race: fast. At six or
 five o'clock we got up
 brushed are teeth, washed
 are face, and got in the car with
 we all the stuff we needed.
 We bought stuff from
 disney land expect for
 the stuff like swords,
 shield, gun if they have them,
 those spinning things, and
 a glasses. But the rides we
 were on were fun me and
 my big sister (Anhila) were
 there so we could go on
 the big rides my big I
 thing was with us. The ride
 was filled with fake wood
 and going in the front
 of the roller coast I was
 a dragon and on the ride

going in boat came out and
motor and it went down fast
saw things and everything.
After that we saw my
mom, dad, and Jaden in the
teacup line so we went
with them and we went
on the blue teacup and
we were spinning and spinning
and spinning and then we looked
at the man and we got
back on the train car
and then we went back
home.

Figure 19. Treyshawn's summative pretest. Translation: A day I would like to relive is one of the day I was really good at, Dragon Ball Z. I would like to relive those days because I am not as good as I was and I could beat the people that are fighting me easier. The day I could beat the fighter without having to do it more than two or three times. Those days I didn't have any chores so I wouldn't get mad that I have to do them when I am beating them really bad I don't lose my concentration. (I only had to do my room). Now I get interrupted because I have to take out the trash, or do the bottles and cans, or I have to do the bathroom. So I rush to get those things done or in the bathroom I might not clean the bathtub just make water run.

A day I would like to relive is one of the day I was really good at, Dragon Ball Z. I would like to relive those day because I am not as good as I was and I could beat the people that are fighting me easier. The day I could beat the fighter without having to do it more than two or three times. Those days I didn't have any chores so I wouldn't get mad that I have to do them when I am beating them really bad. I don't lose my concentration (I only had to do my room). Now I get interrupted because I have to take out the trash, or do the bottles and cans, or I have to do the bathroom. So I rush to get those things done or in the bathroom I might not clean the bathtub just make water run.

Figure 20. Treyshawn's summative posttest. Translation: One big memorable thing I remember about SDGVA is spirit week, and on the first day was top to bottom and that meant your whole body had to be one color I was not there but I still did it, I was the color blue my shoes were gray, black, blue, and white: colorful. On twin day I was there then I saw my supposed to be twin- my school was all twined up my twin was not really my twin only one was my twin. On Wednesday it was flashback day and I thought my mom would like that day because I thought she was a fan. My friends Andraya, Julian, Isaiah H., Saul, and Monzerrat were dressed up but I just were free dress. On Thursday which is pajama day but not everyone were pajamas like my friend Raheem wasn't I wasn't and a few other people weren't. The actions I was walking into the school go in the 6 to 6 room and see people, talk to them and help with a game, then line up put all of our pajama day stuff in the classroom and have a normal day. Alright on the last and best day was character day and my parents had hooked me up by cutting, ripping, painting and looking at the computer to see what the character looks like. And Joseph wanted my suit he liked it so much.

One big memorable thing I re-
member about SDGIVA is spirit
week, and on the first day was
top to bottom and that meant
your whole body had to be
one color. I was not the LC
but I still did it, I was the
color blue my shoes were
gray, black, blue and white.
~~leather shoes~~ On twist day I was
there. Then I saw my support
to be a twin. My school was
all twined up. My twin was
not really my twin only one was
my twin. Up Wednesday it was
flash back day and I thought
my twin would like that day
because I thought she was
a for my friends. Andraya,
Junan, Isaiah H., Salil, and monz-
Idot were dressed up but
I just wore free dress. On
Thursday which is Pull-a
day but not everyone
were palomas like me

my friend Raheem wasn't
 I wasn't and a few other peo-
 ple weren't. The actions I were
 was walking into the school
 go in the C to C room and see
 people talk to them and
 help with a game, then
 line up put all of our pajama
 day suits in the class room
 and have a normal day. At
 right on the last and best
 day was character day and
 my parents had locked me
 up by cutting, ripping, painting,
 and beaming at the computer
 to see what the character looks
 like. And Joseph wanted my
 suit too much so much.

Figure 21. Ajai's formative essay 1. Translation: An experience I have had is when I was in Las Vegas and I had a family reunion and we flew on a plane. The flight was very boring. When I'm bored I'm like a girl in a grown up meeting. When I got there the hotel we went to was called Circus Circus. It was a hotel and a circus. We didn't all share a room. When we went to one of the shows my mom said "That is very cool—how flexible they are!" I was amazed to because I didn't think I could do that and I still can't. Anyways, we played games and we also went to the part with the rides and they were very fun. But some of them I couldn't get on because I was only five or six. I was crying because they looked very fun. But I guess they weren't for kids my age. The next day I got dressed for breakfast and I was wearing green shirt with a leaf and some shorts because it was very hot like I was sweating on my whole face. Las Vegas is a desert and we were there during the summer. Then after breakfast we packed up and got on a plane and left.

An experience I have had is when I was in Las Vegas and I had a family reunion and we flew on a plane. The flight was very boring. When I'm bored I'm a girl in a grown up meeting. When we got there the hotel we went to was called Circus Circus. It was a hotel and a circus. We didn't all share a room. When we went to one of the shows my mom said, "That is very cool-how terrable they are!" I was amazed to because I didn't think I could do that and I still can't. Anyway we played games and we also went to the part with the rides and the were very fun. But some of them I couldn't get on because I was only five or six. ~~I was crying~~ I was crying because they looked very fun. But I guess they weren't for kids my age. The next day I got dressed for breakfast and I was wearing green shirt with a leaf and some shorts because it was very hot like I sweating on my whole face. Las Vegas is a desert and we were during the summer. Then after breakfast we packed up and got on a plane and let

Figure 22. Ajai's formative essay 2. Translation: A time that was bad and turned out to be good was when I was at my track meet (it was my first one). I had anxiety. It was loud, a lot of people, yelling, and a shot gun. I didn't know there was shot guns in a track meet. My mom told me it was so the runners can start. When I did the 4 x 1 I was anchor and they didn't tell me I couldn't go out the triangle. And the third leg was very slow and even on my first track meet I was faster than her and she been there for 4 or 5 years. When I was about to start my legs started to shake: scared. We were winning but I was too fast for the girl (we got disqualified). I didn't even care because the other races I knew was going to win. I learned a lesson and rule. And on my other race I did. I never felt more ready to race and win—or more scared, either. My mom was cheering, my sister, my dad, and my coaches and teammates. I only came in second one time on my second track meet in the 200 m. The rest I won. I had a great time because I learned a lesson and a rule. I couldn't believe I won.

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I had a great time because
 I learned a lesson and a rule.
 I couldn't believe I won.

Figure 23. Ajai's summative pretest. Translation: A day or event I would like to relive is when I was at a track meet and I had to run a 400m (1 lap) and I did not to run that long because I was only in second grade. I was super fast. Even fast than I am right now. But I did not like long distance running so I did not run good at all. I could have done it but I didn't want to. I was being very stubborn. I came in second to last place. When I saw that I was about to come in last place I zoomed. My mom wasn't too mad at me but when my dad came he was mad so he said I can whatever I need to get back on track. And I said I need to do short distances and that I want some Gatorade. When I was about to come in last place I was crying in the inside. But the girl that won was my friend and she was on a different team. The team was called Murcuary and my team was called The San Diego Cheetahs. But those two teams were the top fastest teams at that track meet.

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(195)

Figure 24. Ajai's summative posttest. Translation: A memory of SDGVA is Penny Wars. It was a game but to really help the world. It was to raise money. So, the game was to fill up a whole gallon (actually it's whoever gets the most pennies). And whoever got quarters, nickels, dimes, or any kind of bill. Our strategy for our class was to only put a little in the beginning and middle then at the end we put all of our. Unfortunately, we had bills. But luckily we had like a million pennies. The game lasted two weeks. I didn't bring in pennies every day just (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday). I loved how had to act—all non-challa. Just so that people won't put more silver in ours because we didn't care, but we did. The game was awesome and we were losing in the beginning and middle. We thought that we were going to lose because third was winning and kinder. But to tell you, WE WON!!!! I was so happy when Ms. Kane told us we were crossing our fingers too. So Mrs. Cass was the instructor and she didn't tell us what the prize was. 3rd place was Kindergarten and 2nd was 5th and 6th. Amber is in 5th grade and in the truck she said that they won. But the next day Ms. Kane announced that our class won. I was screaming to the top of my lungs and so was the rest of the class.

A memory of SDGIVA is Pennie Wats.

It was a game but to really help the world. It was to raise money.

② So, the game was to fill up a whole gallon (actually, it's whoever gets the most pennies). And whoever got quarters, nickels, dimes, or any kind of bill. Our strategy for our class was to only put a little in the beginning and middle then at the end we put all of our. Unfortunately, we had bills but lucky we had like a million pennies. The game lasted two weeks ~~but we lost it in the end.~~

① I didn't bring in pennies every day (just Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday). I loved how hard to get all non-challa. Just so that people won't get more silver in ours because we didn't care, but we did. The game was awesome and we were doing in the beginning and middle. We thought that we were going to lose because third was winning and kinder. But to tell you, WE WON!!! I was

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But the next day Ms. Kane announced
that our class won I was screaming
to the top of my lungs and so was
the rest of the class.

Figure 25. Samuel's formative essay 1. Translation: One day we wrote an essay about our favorite book. My favorite book was called Holes. It was like you were actually inside the book but it was also freaky. Then they called out the winners for the district and I was first in my school and third in the district. I said "Wow!" "I got in third." I was very proud of myself! Then I went to a place where there was a lot of people and I had to read it out loud to all of them. After I did then we all got a prize, it was a notebook and a boarder's book's gift card and I got a certificate as well. Then everyone went home happy.

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to all of them. After I did
that we all got a
prize: it was a note book
and a boarder's book's gift
card and I got
a certificate as well. Then
everyone went home
happy.

Figure 26. Samuel's formative essay 2. Translation: One time when I was 8 years old I fell off of a roof of a play structure at a baseball game and I hit my back really hard on a piece of metal and had to go to the emergency room there. When I go in the room I see white shelves, a blue wall, a colorful vase, and a big cart. They put me in the cart like injured lion cub: hurting. I heard my dad say. "You are all right." When I got in the ambulance to the children's hospital I fist saw buttons and wires for the doctor to help me, the second thing I saw was a big red door for my dad and others get through it, and the last thing I saw at the end was the shining clear window. I got there and I saw stuff I liked (toys, tv's bed's and food). It turned out I was fine and I never felt more—happy or more—praised, either.

One time when I was 8 years old I fell off of ~~the~~ a roof of a play ~~structure~~ -strucen at a baseball game and I hit my back really hard on a piece of metal and had to go to the emergency room there. When I go in the room I see white ~~shelves~~ shelves, a blue wall, a colorful vase, and a big cart. They put me in the cart like injured ~~and~~ lion exhibiting. I heard ~~the~~ ~~my~~ my dad say, "You are all right." When I got in the ambulance to the childrens hospital I first saw buttons ~~and~~ and wires for the doctor to help me, the second thing I saw was

a big ~~red~~ red door for ~~the~~ my dad and others get through it, and the last thing I saw at the end was a shining clear window. I got there and I saw stuff I liked (toys, tv's, beds, and food). It turned out I was fine, and I never felt more-happy or more-praised either.

Figure 27. Samuel's formative essay 3. Translation: One time when I went to work with my dad to Pamona I thought it would be boring, because I would have to do shopping for car parts, working on housing problems and, lots of driving: exhausted. But it was really cool because I got to go under a house, eat at In n Out, and play hang man with my dad, it was like having a pet bunny. I've never felt more happy—with my dad—or more proud, either. When we got to a office at his work he said, "This is my boss's office." The first thing I saw was lots of papers and tools, the second was his boss with really nice clothes on, the last thing I saw was a big chainsaw with sharp degrees. The things I wanted to do (eat lots of food, play video games, drink slurpees) I did take a nap after we got back and I still got to do all of those things.

One time when I went to work with my dad to Pamona I thought it would be boring because I would have to do shopping for ~~car~~ parts, working on ~~engine~~ problems and lots of driving exhaust. But it was really cool because I got to go under a house, eat at In N Out, and play hang man with my dad. It was ~~like~~ having a pet bunny. I've never felt more happy with my dad or more proud either. When we got to a office at his work, ~~he said~~ "This is my boss's office." The first thing I saw was lots of papers and tools, the second was his boss with really nice clothes on, the last thing I saw was a big

~~chainsaw with sharp edges~~
The things I wanted to do ~~eat~~ lots of food, play video games, drink Starpees. I did take a nap after we got back and I still got to do all of those things.

One week in the summer
 my scout troop and I went to
 a place called The Falls, we would make
 fires, huts, dinner for are
 troop. One day we went
 swimming under the fall
 and a kid was runn-
 ing, slipped and fell in
 and started to panic, he
 couldn't swim so I
 jumped off the water
 fall and tried to
 save. He panicked so much
 he put me under
 water, I tried to push
 him up to the rock
 so I could breath,
 all of a sudden my
 friend pulled him up
 and I got breath and
 we went home. But befo-
 re I left he gave
 me a hug and said
 thank you.

Figure 28. Samuel's summative pretest. Translation: One week in the summer my scout troop and I went to a place called The Falls, we would make fires, huts, dinner for are troop. One day we went swimming under the fall and a kid was running slipped and fell in and started to panic, he couldn't swim so I jumped off the waterfall and tried to save. He panicked so much he put me under water, I tried to push him up to the rock so I could breath, all of a sudden my friend pulled him up and I got breath and we went home. But before I left he gave me a hug and said thank you.

Figure 29. Samuel's summative posttest. Translation: One memory I had in fourth grade that I will forever bury in my heart is on the first day when I met Ms. Kane, it was awesome because she was the first teacher I really understood. She helped me find my favorite genre which is Adventure because I love the action and the little bit of horror I like. She also helped me with writing so when I get to be an adult I can be an author and write any age (adventure) books: cool. When I first walked in Ms. Kane's classroom I saw math, lots of math first, next I saw six shelves filled with books only, the last thing I saw was my nice classmates. I learned so much this year and I don't ever want to forget her or the knowledge I learned this year. I will miss this class and Ms. Kane this summer. I will also never forget this school or the other teacher and parents who got me where I am today. I hope everyone in my class comes back next year. One more thing, let the season of summer begin, -in, -in.

One memory I had in fourth grade that I will forever bury in my heart is on the first day when I met Ms. Kane, it was awesome because she was the first teacher I really understood. She helped me find my favorite genre which is Adventure because I love the action and the little bit of horror I like. She also helped me with writing so when I get to be an adult I can be an author and write any age (Adventure) books. Cool. When I first walked in Ms. Kane's classroom I saw math, lots of math first, next I saw six shelves filled with

books only, the last thing
I saw was my nice
classmates. I learned so much
this year and I don't
ever want to forget
her or the knowledge I
learned this year. I will
miss this class and Ms. Kone
this summer. I will also never
forget this school or the
other teacher and parents
who got me where I am
today. I hope everyone
in my class comes back
next year. One more
thing, let the season of
summer begin, in, in.