THE RESULTS OF USING A TRAITS-BASED RUBRIC ON THE WRITING PERFORMANCE OF THIRD GRADE STUDENTS

CHANELLE MAYNARD AND CHASE YOUNG

ABSTRACT

The quasi-experimental study utilized an interrupted time-series design to examine the effect of 20 third graders' writing achievement as a result of a trait-based instructional approach to writing. The primary researcher provided writing professional development on traits-based instructional and assessment for a third-grade team. One of those teachers agreed to participate in the study. Nearly 200 writing samples were independently scored to establish a pre-test baseline, and a post-test baseline to investigate the effects. The pre-test trend was slightly negative, and the post-test was 23% higher and showed a more positive trend. A paired samples t-test indicated a statistically significant increase and the effect was large (d=2.38). Implications for instruction and limitations of the study are discussed.

Keywords: writing instruction, 6 Traits of Writing, writing rubrics

Writing was once characterized as the neglected "R" by the National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges in the educational reform movements (College Entrance Examination Board, 2003). National and state data on writing achievement suggest a need for an increased focus on writing instruction and student performance. This data revealed a majority of students in selected grades do not achieve proficiency standards in writing (National Center for Education Statistics (ED), 2012); (Texas Education Agency, n.d.).

THE NATION'S REPORT ON WRITING ACHIEVEMENT

The 2002 report on the Writing Assessment of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) showed only up to 31% of the students in grades four, eight, and twelve achieved the proficient score or above that benchmark (NCES, 2003). A later NAEP study

revealed the trends in writing achievement reflected a sustained underperformance (NCES, 2012). The 2012 *Nation's Report Card Writing* (NCES) indicated only 27% of eighth-graders and 24% of the twelfth graders achieved a proficient rating. The NAEP results reflected low writing achievement for nearly a decade, indicating a need for improvement.

WRITING ACHIEVEMENT IN TEXAS

This underperformance in writing is also evident at the state level. For example, analysis of The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) writing results for grades four and seven are comparable with the NAEP's data (TEA, 2017b). The TEA report indicated only 32% of fourth-grade students met the grade-level standard, and in seventh grade, 37 % of the students did. In the writing composition component of the test, most students in both grade levels scored a "4", which is considered a basic score in writing.

Both the national and the Texas state writing tests results indicated the majority of students assessed are not meeting the proficiency levels in writing achievement (NCES, 2012); (TEA, 2017b). There is a need to address students' writing attainment on both the state and national levels based on the results. This current study can contribute information about instructional strategies for writing and their effect on student achievement.

WRITING ACHIEVEMENT IN AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The fourth-grade writing data from the school included in this study aligned with the state and national trends in student achievement. Only 37% of fourth-graders met the grade-level standard on the 2017 state writing test. The school leadership team identified improving writing instruction and achievement as campus goals. The writing results had been declining for several years. It was determined the focus on effective writing instruction could not wait until 4th grade, the first year of the state's writing tests.

There are many instructional practices that have been identified by researchers as effective methods to improve students' writing performance (Graham, Harris, & Santangelo, 2015). Graham and his colleagues (2015) conducted a meta-analysis and synthesis of 40 years of writing research. The data showed effective practices included using a writing process and routines, giving students the opportunity to write frequently, and using peer collaboration, and providing teacher support. They also emphasized the importance of teacher feedback on students' writing. The researchers concluded writing instruction should be aligned to students' interests and their learning needs, in an environment where their writing is visible. The use of writing rubrics has been shown to improve students' writing achievement (Bradford et al., 2016).

THE 6+1 TRAIT MODEL: A WRITING RUBRIC

One of the changes implemented by the researcher, in her role as an instructional coach, was the introduction of the traits of writing framework for the instruction and assessment of writing. The framework can be used to teach students to identify the traits of good writing, self-evaluate their writing, and set goals. There were several factors specific to the school and the state's requirements which informed this decision. For example, it is a state writing standard for students to use rubrics beginning in grade one (TEA, 2008). In addition, the state's rubric for the grade four writing test is similar to that of the 6+ 1 TRAIT model or 6+1 Traits of Writing model (Culham, 2003; TEA, 2017a).

The original version of the 6+1 TRAIT model used in this study was developed by a research team at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) in the 1980s in Portland, Oregon (Culham, 2003). The team's goal was to produce a "performance assessment for writing that was comprehensive, reliable, teacher and student-friendly" (p. 10). The developers identified the scoring criteria which eventually became known as the 6+1 TRAIT model. Culham, who published books and resources based on the model, summarized the writing traits as ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency,

conventions, and presentation. *Ideas* refer to the author's message and the content. Organization is the structure of the writing, and *voice* reflects the author's feelings and unique style. *Word choice* is defined as vivid and personal language and style, and *sentence fluency* is the smoothness of the sentences or coherence. *Conventions* are grammar, punctuation, and spelling. *Presentation*, which is considered the +1 trait, addresses the appearance of the writing. The model includes instructional strategies and involves the use of rubrics for scoring students' writing.

By 2009, 35 states had adopted elements of the 6+1 Traits of Writing model in their writing assessments, and 22 used them in their writing standards (Coe, Hanita, Nishioka, & Smiley, 2011). For example, The Texas Grade 4 Writing Expository Scoring Guide (TEA, 2016) of the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) uses the language of the TRAIT scoring criteria in their assessment descriptors. This was relevant in adapting the model for the current study.

Teachers in the study school expressed needing support in adapting the standards to student-friendly rubrics, as well as a tool they could use to assess writing. One of the potential benefits of using a rubric- based on the 6+1 TRAIT model was the consistency of writing vocabulary and assessment processes across the grade levels. It could also involve student self-evaluation and goal setting which teachers were also working on improving. Third grade was chosen as the focus for extra support from the researcher because the teachers indicated a desire to better prepare their students for the fourthgrade writing expectations. During the previous school year, the teachers had begun the process by refining their minilessons and choosing mentor texts for writing. The plan was for the researcher to provide professional development for the teachers, model lessons using the traits for writing model for instruction and assessment, and provide ongoing support through planning and collaboration with the third-grade team. This study developed in part from this coaching process.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Andrade, Du, and Wang (2008) provided descriptions of what rubrics are and examples of their use. A definition derived from Andrade's previous work described a rubric as, "a document that articulates the expectations for an assignment by listing the criteria, or what counts, and describing the levels of quality" (p. 3) on a scale. The researchers summarized studies that demonstrated educators could use rubrics for evaluating student work, in addition to using them for writing instruction. In this study, the traits-based rubrics were used for both purposes.

THE USE OF WRITING RUBRICS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

One hundred and sixteen third and fourth grade students participated in Andrade, Du, and Wang's study (2008). One of the goals was to determine if generating and using a rubric would increase students' writing scores. Andrade and his colleagues identified the qualities of good writing which were similar to the criteria of the 6 +1 TRAIT model (Culham, 2003). The seven domains identified were: ideas, organization, paragraphs, voice, words, sentences, and conventions. The results showed students in the treatment group outperformed the control groups in both grade levels. The improvement shown was statistically significant on average (p < .001), but the effect was small (ηp^2 =.15). The small effect sizes indicate the need for more studies to determine the efficacy of using rubrics in writing assessments.

The researchers used a model text in their study for the students to evaluate and identify the elements of effective writing (Andrade et al., 2008). An integral part of the current study was using mentor texts for writing. Andrade and his colleagues also used the writing workshop model which was also employed in the current study. Andrade and his colleagues concluded the use of the models in this way and the self-assessment improved the quality of the writing the students produced.

A more recent study of first and second graders' (*n* = 32) writing found the use of rubrics to guide instruction and assessment of students led to an improvement in students' scores (Bradford et al., 2016). The researchers used a pre-test and post-test study design, and the students wrote opinion paragraphs. The rubrics used were comparable to the traits model but were provided by the Houghton Mifflin publishers. The students were taught how to use the rubrics and the teacher provided mini-lessons based on the rubric criteria. The research design and the use of minilessons related to specific writing traits were elements used in the current study. Results were generally positive, and the mean difference effect size was large (*d* = .93). This was a larger effect size than the Andrade, Du, and Wang (2008) study, but there is a question of whether there would be a similar outcome on the writing of older students who would be expected to write with more complexity and volume than first or second-grade students.

Coe, Hanita, Nishioka, and Smiley (2011) conducted cluster randomized trials at multiple sites to evaluate the effect of the use of the 6+1 Trait Writing model on 2, 230 fifth-grade students. The control group accounted for an additional 1, 931 students. The researchers compared pre-and post-test essays of the students in the treatment group (after controlling for baseline scores). They used a benchmark statistical model in the analysis. The benchmark estimates indicated the treatment group outscored the control group, with an average of 0.109 standard deviations higher (*p* = .023). Coe et al. concluded the gains could represent an average percentile gain from the 50th to the 54th. Three traits had statistically significant differences between the groups, including organization, voice, and word choice. The effect sizes were small, 0.117 to 0.144, (*p*=0.031 to 0.018).

Coe and his colleagues (Coe et al., 2011) provided instructional activities they wanted the teachers involved in the study to use. At the end of the program teachers in the treatment group reported 85.6 % fidelity of implementation. Several of these strategies were used in this current study. The teachers used the rubric when planning writing lessons, creating a "student-friendly" version. and using writing prompts. They also used mini-lessons and

mentor texts, usually picture books, to teach specific writing traits. The teachers developed learning goals with the students using the rubrics and monitored their progress. The rubrics are used for both instruction and assessment which is consistent with how they are used in the current study.

Several of the limited studies on the use of the 6+1 Writing Traits model are nearly two decades old, and the effect sizes are not reported. The research James, Abbott, & Greenwood (2001) conducted is an example of this occurrence. James and his colleagues implemented what was known as the Six Trait Assessment (the presentation trait was not included) during a nine-week intervention period. The participants were a group of 13 high and another of seven low performing fourth grade students. A comparison of the pre-test and post-test scores showed the writing achievement of both groups of students increased, but the low-performing group showed more improvement. Their scores increased by one rating for five of the traits.

The statistical significance and the effect sizes were not reported. This study is indicative of the need for more empirical studies on this topic and the reporting of the effect of the intervention. Paquette (2009) conducted an investigation to determine the effect of a crossage tutoring program in which the 6+1 Writing Traits model was used to assess writing (Paquette, 2009). She used a pre-test/post-test nonequivalent groups research design. The essays of the students in grades two and four were compared with control groups of students who did not participate in the tutoring program. The results showed the means of both the second and fourth graders in the treatment were greater than the control group's scores. The fourth graders' improvement was greater than the secondgrader students' results and there was a statistically significant difference between the two fourth grade groups. Paquette concluded the higher-level thinking involved in the fourth graders' act of teaching the traits to the younger students had a positive effect on their learning and writing.

THE USE OF THE WRITING RUBRIC ON A STATE LEVEL

An example of the use of the model on a state level is the Nebraska Statewide Writing Assessment system (Dappen, Isernhagen, & Anderson, 2008). Dappen and his colleagues studied the implementation of what they termed simply the "six-trait writing assessment model" (p. 50) in the development of the writing assessment, the training of the teachers as raters, the testing, and scoring process. The grade levels tested were four, eight, and eleven. The researchers referenced studies, such as which indicated most of the teacher-raters expressed positive views of the use of the six-traits rubric for instruction and assessment. Teachers reported explicitly teaching the traits and the criteria. In contrast to national trends (NCES,2012), the results of the Nebraska Statewide Writing Assessment from 2001-05 showed gains in proficiency scores which were statistically significant, except for one year. For example, in the 2004-2005 period, the percentage of fourth-grade students rated as proficient grew from 80.83% to 84.41%, *p 0.01*. The researchers reported students at all grade levels showed gains in writing. The effect sizes were not reported.

Although educators in many states use the traits model in their writing assessments and standards (Coe et al., 2011), research on the effectiveness is limited and is not current (James et al., 2001). The effect sizes are not reported in some of the studies (Dappen et al., 2008; Paquette, 2009), or when they were (Coe et al., 2011), the effect sizes were small. The low writing attainment scores at the national (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012)and state (Texas Education Agency, 2017b) levels, and the research limitations, all indicate a need for information on how to improve writing instruction and assessment. This study can add to the research on the impact of using writing rubrics based on the 6+1 Traits model to improve writing achievement. The results obtained by Dappen et al. (2008) provide some evidence that the model can foster positive learning outcomes for students.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for this study is the "social cognitive model of the development of self-regulation" (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007, p.12). Schunk and Zimmerman proposed the combination of self-efficacy and self-regulation can contribute to reading and writing achievement. The self-regulation model they developed consisted of four stages: *observation, emulation, self-controlled and self-regulated* (p.12) which mirror the writing workshop instructional context used in this study.

The observation stage involves modeling and instruction (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007). In the context of this study, this stage corresponds with the teacher introducing the writing traits and rubric to the students, modeling their application in writing, or using mentor texts. The emulation stage describes the students imitating the skills demonstrated by the teacher and receiving feedback. In the self-controlled stage, the students are demonstrating the skills as they are internalized by applying them independently. Lastly, self-regulation involves the generalizing of the skills taught. An example of this is students writing independently for different purposes and audiences. The stages of this framework are aligned with the gradual release practices used during the writing workshop in this study.

Schunk and Zimmerman (2007) summarized research on writing instruction which reflects the concepts and processes of their model. Some of the findings emphasized the practice of combining the modeling of writing strategies and goal setting led to improvements in students' writing skills. A 1999 study with high school students conducted by Zimmerman and Kitsantas (2002) involved teaching a writing revision strategy using different configurations of the model. Students who relied on the process of self-regulation and goal setting had higher self-efficacy and writing skills. The processes of the social cognitive model of the development of self-regulation model (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007) and those of the writing workshop used at the school follow a similar progression. This indicated the model would be a suitable framework for the intervention

used in this study. The goal-oriented focus of the process was also aligned with the use of a rubric for instruction and assessment.

RESEARCH QUESTION AND SIGNIFICANCE

The research on the impact of both the six-trait model and rubrics, in general, is limited. This study may add needed information about their impact on writing achievement and investigate the effects on third-graders, a grade level not included in the studies reviewed. The purpose of the study is to determine the effect of using a traits-based rubric as an instructional tool on the writing performance of third-grade students. The current study was guided by the following research question: *How does the use of a traits-based writing rubric influence third-grade students' writing scores?*

METHODS

This quasi-experimental study utilized an interrupted time-series design. This design is suitable where only one group of participants is available, and no control group (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Johnson and Christensen explained that during the baseline period, multiple pre-tests are performed, and multiple post-tests are given during or after the treatment. The effect of the treatment is demonstrated by the comparison of the pre-test and post-test scores.

SCHOOL CONTEXT

The research was conducted in a suburban elementary school in Texas with an enrollment of 603 students. Based on most state's performance reports, most of the students were white (72%) or Hispanic (22) %. Eight percent of the students were considered economically disadvantaged, 2.6% were English Language Learners, and around six percent of the students received services for their learning disabilities.

PARTICIPANTS

All the third-grade Language Arts teachers were invited to participate in the study but only one consented to participate. The final analysis consisted of an intact class of 20 students after losing one student due to a transfer. There were 10 girls and 10 boys in the final sample. Three of the students were English Language Learners. The benchmark data, which is based on the district's guided reading levels expectations and Istation goals, showed only one student was considered performing below grade level in reading and needing intervention. These indicators showed three were "slightly" below grade level, while all other students' data showed they were performing at or above the level in reading.

The teacher had 11 years of teaching experience and taught English Language Arts and Reading and social studies to two of the five third-grade classes. She elected to participate in the study to implement the 6 +1 Traits of Writing model in the classroom due to her concerns about her students' writing skills. Her current writing instruction included a minilesson and opportunities for the students to write independently, usually using a prompt. She did not use rubrics. The leadership team had determined writing was a focus area of the campus improvement plan. Each teacher had a goal that involved implementing the 6+1 Traits of Writing model in their writing instruction.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The researcher, who is a certified literacy specialist and instructional coach, provided two workshops on using the 6+1 Traits of Writing model which the teacher attended at the beginning of the school year. She also provided a follow-up professional development during the study. During the workshop, the researcher explained the purpose and descriptors of the model and its alignment with the state's writing standards. She modeled how to use the rubric during the writing workshop and conduct writing conferences with the students. The teachers practiced scoring student writing using the rubrics. They also analyzed mentor texts to determine which could be used to teach specific writing traits. The researcher also planned writing lessons with the teacher each week. Additionally, the researcher provided ongoing professional development for the teacher by modeling a

lesson using each week and conducting writing conferences with students using the student rubric. The teacher's participation in the professional development and her instruction indicated she understood the purpose and instructional practices needed to implement the 6+1 Traits of Writing model.

PRE-TESTS AND POST-TESTS

 The students were given five pre-tests which consisted of writing prompts from previous state's writing tests for the fourth grade based on expository prompts. An example of one of the writing prompts is provided in Appendix A. The teacher or the researcher read the prompts in their entirety to the students. Students completed their writing responses during the daily writing workshops. After six weeks of intervention, the students were given five post-tests expository writing prompts the researcher created. The administration procedures were the same for both testing periods.

IMPLEMENTATION IN THE WRITING WORKSHOP

The daily writing workshop started with whole group instruction and lasted approximately one hour. The teacher modeled a writing skill using a mentor text for the first 10-15 minutes of the lesson. The minilessons were based on one or two of the writing traits related to the writing standards, and the students' needs. The teacher defined the traits, showed examples, composed writing with the students which featured that trait, then the students applied the trait to their writing. The students were encouraged to "read like writers", which meant looking for examples of the traits of good writing in the mentor texts. The teacher created an anchor chart or recorded student responses for display where appropriate. The mentor texts were books or excerpts from existing texts, or student and teacher writing samples. An anchor text used throughout the intervention was " River Heart", a story excerpt from Fletcher's (Fletcher, 2011) book about using mentor texts. It was so-named because the students were given a copy which they referred to repeatedly during the writing activities.

The students applied the skills and traits to their writing using new or old drafts. During the independent writing time, the teacher conducted conferences. The teacher provided oral feedback to the students or wrote brief notes on their work. At the end of each one-hour lesson, selected students shared their writing, and the other students gave them feedback using the language of the traits. The students in this study each had a writing goal that preceded the start of the intervention, but they developed targets with the teacher and researcher during the conferences. Feedback was provided to the students orally during writing conferences. This involved the teacher/student identifying a trait the students were using in their writing, and identifying an area for improvement.

Daily sharing sessions also allowed students to provide feedback to their peers. The students each had a copy of the rubric which the teacher referred to the rubric during conferences with the students to help them set goals for their writing and conduct selfevaluations. The rubrics provided the traits focus for the minilessons, the purpose for "reading like authors", a framework for peer and teacher feedback, as was an assessment tool. The timeline and sequence of lessons are shown in Appendix B.

INSTRUMENTATION

The researcher developed a writing rubric based on the categories of the 6 +1 Traits of Writing model (Culham, 2003) using six of the traits: ideas, organization, voice, sentence fluency, conventions, and word choice (Appendix C). Only the category names were used. The descriptors used in the rubric were based on the Grade 4 Writing Expository Scoring Guide (TEA, 2017) and the district's English and Language Arts department's scoring guide. This was to ensure alignment with the state standards for writing instruction. The students could earn a maximum of 24 points, four per criteria. The point system on the Grade 4 state documents was Score Point 4= accomplished; Score point 3= Satisfactory; Score Point 2= Basic; and Score Point 1= Limited (TEA, 2017). This rubric was for the teachers' use.

A student-friendly rubric (Appendix D) was also developed using all seven trait categories, and they were based on the third grade Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) (Texas Education Agency, 2008). The researcher modified the language of the standards and rubrics to create "I can" statements the students could use to evaluate their writing. The students were given the rubric before the study, and they were used throughout the treatment during the writing conferences. These two instruments were evaluated by literacy experts: a university professor and researcher and three veteran literacy teachers. The rubrics were found to be appropriate for the study.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Data collection started the week before the intervention began. The teacher or researcher read the prompts to the students who were told they had the entire writing workshop time (one hour) to complete their essays. The students wrote an essay each day based on five different writing prompts to establish a baseline. Three of the prompts were from previous state writing assessments for fourth grade, and two were created by the researcher.

The students' writing samples were scored using the teacher version of the rubric. The students were given a score out of a maximum of 24 points for each sample. The post-tests were administered after the 6th week of intervention. The students wrote five essays in response to writing prompts. The same procedures were followed for post-test administration and scoring: the teacher or researcher read writing prompts to the students who completed their essays during the writing workshop period. The teacher and researcher scored the sample independently of each other. Based on the results of the inter-rater reliability analysis which indicated a high level of agreement between the two scorers, and the researcher's scores were used in the analysis. The means were calculated for the five pre-tests and five post-tests scores of all students, and a graph was generated to show the time series data and a visual representation of the impact of the intervention. In addition, a paired- samples t-test was used to compare the students' pre-test and post-test scores to determine the magnitude of the intervention's effect.

RESULTS

The teacher and the researcher scored the papers independently to determine inter-rater reliability. Two hundred samples were independently scored, and the result was Cronbach's Alpha was .82, indicating a high level of agreement between the two scorers. The times series graph showed the students' baseline scores showed slight downward levels by the completion of the fifth essay. The post-test data showed substantial growth from the baseline results after the six-week treatment period, and the resulting trend was positive (Figure 1). The intervention period shown represents daily writing lessons of about one-hour duration or 30 instructional sessions.
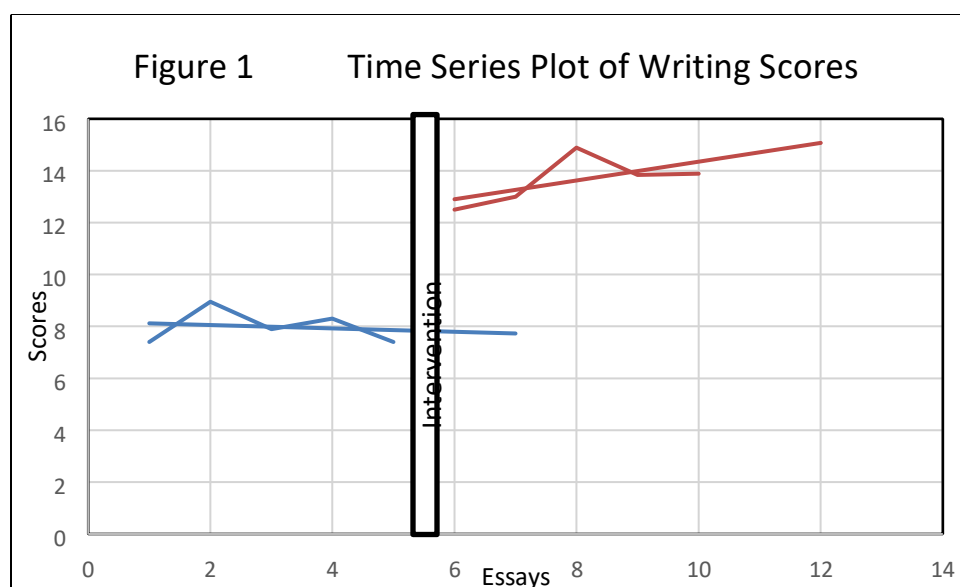
Figure 1. Time series plot of writing scores.

A paired-sample t-test was conducted to compare the pre-test and post-test scores. There was a significant increase between the pre-test scores (M=7.98, SD= 2.05) and the post-test scores (M= 13.53, SD=3.04); t (20) = .642, p < .01, which was significant, and the mean difference effect size was large (*d* =2.38.)

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study was to determine if using a traits-based writing rubric as a framework for instruction and assessment would lead to an improvement in the writing scores of third-grade students. After six weeks of intervention, the results showed a statistically significant increase in the students' post-test scores. These results were consistent with previous research (Bradford et al., 2016; Coe et al., 2011; Dappen et. al, 2008) which showed the use of a traits-based rubric led to students' improved writing scores.

The intervention immersed the students in writing activities. It exposed them to mentor texts as models for their writing, and it gave them the language to talk about their writing. It also allowed them to "read like writers", to look for examples of great writing in their reading books. The student-friendly rubric provided an accessible way for them to evaluate their writing with support from the teacher. The students exhibited increasingly positive attitudes towards writing and reflected on their writing and the process. Having a framework that was accessible and reinforced daily, as well as having feedback about their writing, appeared to have a positive effect on the outcomes. The use of mentor texts provided models for their writing, and the students appeared to enjoy finding evidence of the focus traits and imitating them in their work. As the study progressed, the students identified the evidence of the traits in their writing and what they needed to improve more independently.

The teacher received coaching by having the researcher model lessons in class and used the data for her professional evaluation. She shared her learning and resources with the other teachers on her team. The teacher's desire to improve her writing instruction and her commitment to participating in the study was central to the study's completion and supported the students' progress.

Limitations and Further Research

The sample size was small, which limits the generalization of the results. Having a control group would have also strengthened the study, but the other teachers declined participation in the study, although they integrated the rubric and writing strategies in their instruction. The intervention was very short, and it is not possible to ascertain if the students retained or generalized their writing skills. The study also ended before the students had the opportunity to review their progress formally towards meeting their goals which the teacher discussed at their writing conferences. The use of prompts did not allow for student choice in the ten assessments, so it is possible the scores would have been different if the students chose their topics. It was also possible that some students' writing in the pre-tests and post-tests improved when writing about preferred topics.

There were three English Language Learners (ELLs) included in the study. Their writing was not used for separate analyses, nor were their Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System(TELPAS) levels reviewed or included in the study. It is possible however that their writing performance could have skewed the data. The inclusion of information about the students' writing and TELPAS levels before the intervention and performing additional analyses of the data could have strengthened this study design. The impact of the use of writing rubrics with students who are ELLs is an area for future research.

A student motivation measure would be useful, to determine if motivation is related to the students' writing achievement. The addition of a qualitative design study, for example, to determine students' perceptions of the use of the rubrics and the writing process could also provide important data to inform planning and instruction.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Chanelle Maynard EdD, is an assistant professor of literacy at Schreiner University in Kerrville. She teaches pre-service teachers in the EC-6 program. Prior to her time at Schreiner, she served as a literacy coach and reading specialist, and an adjunct at Sam Houston State University and the University of Texas Permian Basin. Her research interests include technology integration in literacy instruction and writing practices. Her email address is cmaynard@schreiner.edu

Chase Young, PhD, is a professor in the School of Teaching and Learning at Sam Houston State University and the director of the Education Doctorate in Literacy. He earned his PhD in Reading Education from the University of North Texas in 2012. Previously, he was the Silverman Endowed Chair of Literacy at Texas A&M University in Corpus Christi where he was also selected as one of Corpus Christi's 40 Under 40 for his work with young readers in the community. He was awarded the Excellence in Research Award in 2021 by the College of Education. In 2014, the Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers selected him as their Jerry Johns Promising Researcher. He is working on his 5th book, *Artfully Teaching the Science of Reading* (Routledge) along with David Paige and Tim Rasinski. He is also currently an editor of *Literacy Research and Instruction* and previously served as editor of the *Journal of Teacher Action Research* and the *Texas Journal of Literacy Education*. Previously, he taught elementary school and served as a literacy coach. His email is chaseyoung@shsu.edu

APPENDIX A

A Post-test Writing Prompt

Number: _____   Date: _____

Written Composition

You have two more months left in third grade! What are some special memories you have of the past year?
Think about the third-grade activities, events and memories, and explain why they are important or special to you.

Be sure to:

- plan your writing
- state your central idea
- organize your writing
- add details • Use CUPS
- Use the writing traits to guide your writing!

APPENDIX B

Intervention Sequence

Table B1

Dates	Focus Trait(s)	Topic	Mentor Texts / Resources
January 30th - Feb 9th	Pre-Tests		
Feb 5-9	Introduction/ 6+1 Traits Professional Development		
Feb 12 - 16	Ideas Voice Sentence Fluency Organization	Autobiography	*The Scraps Book: Notes from a Colorful Life* (Ehlert) Biographies and autobiographies *Firetalking* (Polacco) *The Good Old Days* (Fletcher)
Feb 19-23	Voice Organization Word Choice Sentence Fluency	Persuasive Essays Autobiographies	*A Fish Story!I* Scholastic debates (online) Discovery Education Board Builder Conversation card
Feb 26- Mar 2	Ideas Word Choice Conventions	Personal Narrative	Student Writing

Mar 5- Mar 9	Ideas Organization Sentence Fluency Word Choice Conventions	Expository Writing: Adding details Writing about favorite places	Teacher and student writing Gretchen Bernabei's writing icons *River Heart* (Fletcher)
Mar 19- Mar 23	Organization Sentence Fluency Conventions	Expository Writing: Topic sentences and adding details Linking to reading Main ideas and supporting details	Post-its for paragraphing Student mentor texts from STAAR writing 2017
Mar 26- Mar 28	Organization Sentence Fluency Conventions	Expository Writing: Paragraphs Complex sentences	Student writing Informational texts
Mar 29- April 5	Post-tests		

APPENDIX C

Writing Rubric

| Name/ Number: |
| Date: |

6 +1 Traits for Writing Rubric Expository Writing (Adapted)

	Score Point 4 *Accomplished*	Score Point 3 *Satisfactory*	Score Point 2 *Basic*	Score Point 1 *Limited*
Ideas	• Shows understanding of the writing task/genre. Has a clear central idea. All details /examples support the central idea. Uses original ideas.	▪ Some understanding of the writing task/genre. Has a clear central idea. Most details /examples support the central idea.	▪ Some understanding of the writing task/genre. ▪ clear central idea. Some details /examples support the central idea	▪ Unclear or missing central idea. Weak examples and details. Does not show understanding of the writing task/ genre.
Organization	▪ Expository writing structure. ▪ Uses transitions to connect sentences /paragraphs. Introduction and conclusion (sentence/ paragraph) support the central idea and genre.	▪ Some elements of expository writing structure. Some use of transitions. Introduction and conclusion mostly support the central idea and genre.	▪ Some evidence of expository writing structure. ▪ Introduction (sentences/paragraphs) or conclusion unclear. ▪ Limited or no use of transitions.	▪ Organization is not suitable for expository writing. ▪ Lacks an introduction or conclusion. Ideas are expressed in a random manner.
Voice	▪ Writing is engaging and thoughtful. Writer's purpose is clear. Expresses writer's unique views and experiences. Tone is appropriate for genre.	▪ Parts of the writing are engaging and thoughtful. ▪ The writer's purpose is mostly clear. Some expression of the writer's views and experiences. The tone is	▪ Lacks engaging or interesting parts. ▪ Shows some of the writer's views or experiences. ▪ The writer's purpose unclear.	▪ Does not reflect the writer's views or experience. The writer's purpose is unclear. Tone inappropriate for the genre.

		mostly appropriate for the genre.	■ The tone is inappropriate for the genre.	
Word Choice	■ Word choice is concise and accurate.	■ Word choice is mostly ■ concise and accurate. Uses some interesting words and phrases.	■ Word choice is general. ■ Some word choices are appropriate for the expository genre.	■ Limited or inaccurate word choice. Uses repetition and wordiness.
	■ Uses interesting words, phrases and language devices.			■ Inappropriate for the genre/task.
Sentence Fluency	■ Varied sentences e.g. complete simple and compound sentences. ■ Strong sentence to sentence connections. ■ Supporting sentences with details/ explanations.	■ Some use of varied ■ sentences. Some sentence to ■ sentence connections. Supporting sentences with details/ explanations.	■ Repetitive sentences. ■ Uses sentence fragments. ■ Some sentences are unrelated to the central idea.	■ Sentences are incomplete ■ Does not vary sentence ■ type. Sentences are unrelated to the central idea.
Conventions	Mostly correct use of CUPS: **C**apitalization **U**sage (Grammar) **P**unctuation **S**pelling	■ Some correct use of CUPS. Errors do not affect meaning.	■ Inconsistent use of correct CUPS which limits meaning.	■ Persistent errors in capitalization, grammar, punctuation and spelling.

Score: _____

APPENDIX D
Student Friendly Rubric
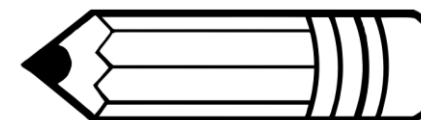
TRAITS RUBRIC for Writing   3rd Grade
Student: _____   School Year: _____
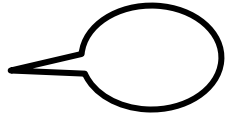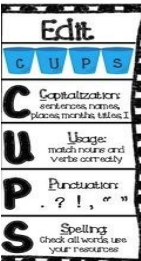
Choose the statements that apply to your writing:

Traits	My Writing	Goals
Ideas	I can choose an idea or topic. I can write about real people, events or ideas. I can write about imagined people, events or ideas. I can add details about my idea or topic. I can express why this topic/idea is important to me. I can choose and use the genre of writing that matches the purposes of my writing.	
Organization	I can write about personal experiences: central idea, supporting sentences, conclusion, transitions. I can write poems which include sensory details. I can write imaginative stories: plot, characters, setting, BME. I can write letters to specific audiences. I can write in response to texts to show my understanding. I can write to explain: topic, sequence, details. I can write to persuade: choose a position and add details.	

Voice	I can write how I feel. I can write what I think about a topic. I can create a tone or mood in my writing. I can use my unique words and expressions. I can write my wonders and questions.	
Word Choice	I can use parts of speech correctly in my writing: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, prepositional phrases, coordinating conjunctions, pronouns, transition words. I can use interesting words and phrases e.g. figurative language. I can paint a picture with my words.	
Sentence Fluency	I can write simple sentences with correct subject-verb agreement. I can write compound sentences with correct subject-verb agreement. I can start my sentences in different ways. I can use different types of sentences. I can add, change or remove words and phrases to revise my writing.	
Conventions	I can use a capital letter for the beginning of my sentence. I use a capital letter for I. I can use capital letters for proper nouns. I can use capital letters for dates and historical periods. I can use the correct forms of words e.g. plurals I can use punctuation correctly; periods, commas, apostrophes, question and exclamation marks. I can spell high frequency, compound words, contractions. I can match letters and sounds, use patterns to spell words. I can use a resource to find correct spellings.	
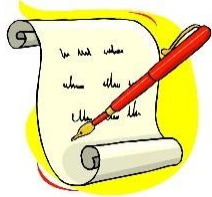
Presentation	I can use correct letter formation, spacing, and sizes when writing. I can write in cursive. My work is neat. I can use a word processor. I can add text features to my writing. I can use a rubric to revise and edit my work. I can publish my work.	