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EDITORS

Amy Burke, PhD, is an associate professor in the Department of Literacy and Learning at Texas Woman's University. She holds a doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction with a specialization in Language and Literacy Studies from The University of Texas at Austin . While at UT, she participated in the National Writing Project (Heart of Texas Writing Project). Dr. Burke regularly presents her scholarly work at conferences including the Literacy Research Association (LRA), AERA, and NCTE. Her work has been published in journals such as *Language Arts* and *Literacy Research and Instruction*.

Elizabeth L. (Betsy) Kaye is an associate professor in the Department of Literacy and Learning at Texas Woman's University. She has 18 years of public school experience, serving as a special education teacher, classroom teacher, reading interventionist and district literacy staff developer. She holds a Ph.D. in Reading Education and is actively involved as a Reading Recovery trainer in addition to teaching undergraduate and graduate students. Dr. Kaye regularly collaborates with teachers and district leaders to support literacy learners in elementary schools.

Mary Amanda (Mandy) Stewart is an associate professor in the Department of Literacy and Learning at Texas Woman's University. Through the National Writing Project and the federally-funded ELLevate! grant, she regularly learns with/from multilingual high school students while supporting their teachers. She has authored two books about teaching adolescents acquiring English and leveraging their strengths.

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COLUMN INTRODUCTION

The number of bilingual students in our schools is growing which includes many different kinds of learners, each with their unique potential and literacy needs. These multilingual learners are in various educational programs including mainstream, ESL, sheltered, bilingual, language immersion, or world language classes. Though not mutually exclusive, we might refer to them by using these categories: emergent bilinguals (students who are acquiring English as an additional language), heritage language speakers (students who speak a language of their parents in addition to English), simultaneous bilinguals (students who have grown up with more than one language), sequential bilinguals (students who are acquiring an additional language after the beginning of formal education such as in a secondary world language classroom), or even dual-language learners (students are beginning their education by receiving instruction in two languages). This myriad of classifications of bilingual students only scratches the surface of understanding this growing and complex group of global citizens. Therefore, there is a need for all literacy educators (bilingual or not) to have working knowledge of biliteracy assessment, development, and instruction in order to help all students reach their full potential. This column will be devoted to discussing relevant trends of biliteracy in the state of Texas.

JUNTXS WITH THE COMUNIDAD: A COLLABORATION ACROSS TWO UNIVERSITIES AND ONE SCHOOL DISTRICT

MARIA FERNANDA ORTEGA

ABSTRACT

In this column, a pre-service bilingual teacher from the University of North Texas shares her journey with the Bilingual Homework Hotline—an online homework help platform created in response to COVID-19's impact in Denton's Latinx community. She brings a unique perspective as a Latina who has held positions as both volunteer and leader for homework help sessions and who has conducted research with the Hotline to explore the interdisciplinary collaboration between Denton ISD's Bilingual/Dual Language & ESL Department, the University of North Texas, and Texas Woman's University. These roles allowed her to develop a deeper understanding of what it means to be a critical ethnographer while developing critical consciousness (Palmer et al., 2019) with the goal of contributing to what Ladson-Billings (2021) calls the "hard reset." This column contributes to the developing literature about university and bilingual education program partnerships due to the unique nature of this collaboration.

Keywords: university partnerships, English learners, critical ethnography

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, many schools were operating online as classes became virtual. This unprecedented method of schooling left many students isolated and in need of guidance both academic and socio-emotional. Denton Independent School District's students faced the same issues but they noticed that their Latinx students were struggling more than most due to language and resource barriers. In order to better serve their bilingual, Latinx students, the district partnered with the University of North Texas and Texas Woman's University to create the Bilingual Homework Hotline in 2020. The Bilingual Homework Hotline pairs pre-service bilingual teachers from both universities with Denton ISD's emergent bilingual students to help them with their homework, and in the beginning of the partnership this was the main focus.

I became involved with the Homework Hotline in August of 2020 at the beginning of the project. A couple of my bilingual education courses had a volunteer requirement as part of the course's learning goals with the hotline and I have been involved ever since. During that time, I was learning about the different types of bilingual programs. I was excited to be part of a project that aimed to help children during this difficult time, but I was even more excited to be able to apply all of the knowledge I gained from my bilingual education courses.

Two main themes that I situated myself into were critical consciousness (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017; Palmer et al., 2019) and *acompañamiento* (Heiman & Nuñez-Janes, 2021; Sepulveda, 2011, 2018) because they were the most prevalent in my early experiences in the hotline. Critical consciousness is the proposed fourth goal of dual language education and is composed of four actions: interrogating power, critical listening, historicizing schools, and embracing discomfort. This goal aims to foster awareness of the structural oppression that surrounds us and a readiness to take action to correct it. In the literature, acompañamiento means to stand with someone and accompany them in their struggles and successes and see them as fully human.

Throughout my experience I found myself emanating all four actions of critical consciousness, but in the beginning due to my sole position as tutor, I mainly participated in critical listening by actively listening to parents' and students' experiences during the pandemic and their suggestions to improve the hotline and I embraced discomfort when learning how to meaningfully connect with students and their families online and when developing my academic Spanish. I practiced acompañamiento right from the start before really knowing what it was. I wasn't just helping the students with homework, I was sitting with them as they recounted traumatic events as a result of the pandemic, I was helping students with their transition from moving from a different country, and I was forming meaningful relationships built on trust and through my use of Spanish.

As time passed, I became more confident in my abilities to navigate the Zoom space that we used to host the tutoring sessions and I built relationships with colleagues from Texas Woman's University and DISD, opening the door to assume a leader role on the hotline. At this point in time, leaders would receive phone calls from parents, give them the Zoom meeting code and then they would be paired with a tutor waiting on standby and placed in a Zoom call. Leaders were also expected to manage and solve any internet problems and make sure that all tutors logged on for their time slot. This role as leader offered me a new perspective in that I could start to think about ways we could improve and streamline the communication between parents, students, and tutors.

The Research Experience

In the Spring of 2021, I became a McNair Scholar and I chose to deepen my connection with the hotline by proposing to conduct research with my mentor. Because we have been with the project since the beginning, we felt like we built enough trust and *confianza* with the school district and the community to move forward with the collaboration. I now had the privilege of attending weekly meetings with professors and staff from both universities and DISD and I started to document my experience from four perspectives: bilingual pre-service teacher, tutor, leader, and now researcher. This new added perspective allowed me to engage in the other two elements of critical consciousness: interrogating power and historicizing schools.

During this time period, the discourse surrounding learning loss and test scores was gaining popularity, causing tensions between stakeholders. Some believed the hotline should primarily focus on homework help and other stakeholders believed the hotline could be used as a means to do more transformative work to accompañar students and their families during this difficult time, to develop and offer other programs with different departments, and to aid in lowering the college achievement gap among other ideas. We engaged in interrogating power by continuing to advocate for the students' needs and by

continuing to focus on their socio-emotional health during our homework sessions. For example, some students just wanted to hang out with tutors because they felt lonely and some simply wanted the tutors to silently accompany them while they completed their homework or silent reading. We were more than happy to do so because we understood that this pandemic was affecting these students in ways that we couldn't even imagine and we were willing to do whatever we could to provide emotional support during this unprecedented time. No act was too small.

We also interrogated power and engaged in critical listening by advocating for a morning time slot with one of the middle schools. Up until this point, we were only helping elementary school students with their homework in the evenings, but we realized that more students in the district needed our help. The district also hired teachers to start taking appointments after school to aid in the increase of calls. The way we received calls was different this semester as well in order to streamline the communication process and build community with the tutors. We now had a single Zoom space where all tutors congregated before being placed in breakout rooms with their student. To mark the end of an improved semester, a celebración was held with testimonios from students and parents to share their positive experiences with the hotline.

Just because the school year ended didn't mean that the collaboration was over. In fact, the same stakeholders from DISD, TWU, and UNT met online throughout the summer to brainstorm new ideas for the project for the upcoming semester as well as apply to different professional conferences to start sharing our experience with other people.

BRANCHING OUT

The start of the 2021 school year was met with excitement because the Bilingual Homework Hotline decided to branch out and provide workshops about applying for and attending college through the sharing testimonios of current bilingual college students. We

also provided pre-service teachers opportunities to virtually interact with *libros acompañantes* in a dual language classroom and offered expertise in parent meetings that were in Spanish. This was possible due to the many connections the Hotline built over time with departments and programs from other disciplines. We now have university students from the anthropology and math departments participating as tutors as well. When you are involved in a project that centers racially minoritized children and their families during difficult times, you quickly realize that there is no other choice than to partner with as many institutions and departments as possible.

We also partnered with the same middle school to offer another online, morning time slot. However, instead of offering homework help, we are reading the Spanish version of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* by Sean Covey and developing lessons to mentor the students and accompany them through each habit. The time slot was labeled as a remediation period so that the students could continue to develop their oral and written Spanish and English with the help of bilingual and monolingual tutors. In order to make these lessons more engaging and worthwhile for the students, we have integrated libros acompañantes, videos, and testimonios from Latinx university graduates. We have also given the students posters and materials to create their own vision boards to document their thoughts and lessons learned with each habit that we cover. The project is ongoing at the moment and I'm excited to continue to build more connections with students and their families and I'm excited to watch the project grow even more.

CONCLUSION

My journey with the Bilingual Homework Hotline has been immensely rewarding and has shown me the complexities and tensions that arise from university and school partnerships. It has also proved that it is possible to contribute to what Ladson-Billings (2021) calls the hard reset.

Ladson-Billings (2021) postulated that "going back to normal" is not a viable choice because black and brown children's "normal" has historically consisted of multiple inequities. They have been more likely to have underprepared teachers, disproportionately suffer from school discipline policies, and have less access to advanced courses and gifted and talented programs. They have also been more likely to be assigned to special education courses without sufficient evidence. To give racially minoritized students equitable opportunities during the pandemic, we must push for a hard reset by implementing culturally relevant pedagogies and participating in partnerships that work together to affirm students' cultures and ways of being. Partnerships like the Bilingual Homework Hotline are our best chance to ensure academic, social, and cultural success for the students we serve.

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About the Author

Maria Fernanda Ortega is a pre-service bilingual teacher and McNair Scholar at the University of North Texas. She is expected to graduate with a B.S. in Education with Bilingual Certification in the Fall of 2022. Her research interests include the gentrification of dual-language programs, university and school partnerships, and acompañamiento in online contexts. Her identity as a bilingual, Latinx female fueled her inspiration to contribute to the field of bilingual education.

SELF-DIRECTED KINDERGARTEN WRITERS

KATIE SCHRODT, BONNIE BARKSDALE, AND R. STACY FIELDS

ABSTRACT

This article seeks to empower teachers to create a literacy environment in which children begin to identify as writers: confident, willing to take risks, engaged, excited, persistent, resilient, resourceful, and self-starting. The teaching methods provided in the article are centered around the writer's workshop model, applied in a Kindergarten classroom in the mid-South, where the focus is on independent writing time and not a task completion. Writing was viewed as a time to dive deeper into creating meaningful messages, work on writing craft, and set goals as a writer. The methods discussed in the article can foster an environment where young children can become self-directed writers, and nurturing within them the confidence to share their stories with the world.

Keywords: Kindergarten, writing, motivation

The term *self-directed writer* was made popular in Leah Mermelstein's book of the same name (Mermelstein, 2013). Mermelstein describes the qualities of self-directed writers as students who are independent first and interdependent second These writers are confident, willing to take risks, engaged, excited, persistent, resilient, resourceful, and self-starting. The first and second authors of this article spent a year writing and learning alongside 20 kindergarteners in a rural public school in the mid-south. They were seeking the most effective strategies to nurture our youngest children into becoming risk-taking, autonomous writers.

This article seeks to empower teachers with strategies to create a literacy environment in which the youngest children begin to identify as writers through choice, self-directed writing strategies, and a brave writing mindset (Schrodt, 2020).

SELF-DIRECTED WRITING

Several evidence-based strategies have been combined to create this idea of self-directed writing for young children. Previous meta-analyses have revealed that both direct, explicit writing instruction and goal setting are effective for improving writing quality in elementary students (Graham et al., 2012). In addition, modeling good writing has been shown to be effective for adolescents (Graham & Perin, 2007). Schrodt et al. (2019) found that adding student choice increased student writing growth, motivation, and perseverance. Keeping all of these things in mind, we set out to provide an instructional strategy which would be both steeped in research and allow our students to have choice and freedom as they grow as young writers.

WRITER'S WORKSHOP

The writing workshop structure (Calkins, 1986; Graves, 1994) was selected for this study due to the focus of a mini-lesson with direct, explicit instruction, time for student engaged in writing, and opportunities for peer feedback (Calkins, 2020). The writing workshop begins with time for direct, explicit writing instruction through a mini-lesson and then moves into independent writing time where students write and the teacher confers with students. During this conferring time, the teacher reinforces the ideas from the mini-lesson, listens to students' needs, and helps direct them in goal setting and reflection. The workshop ends with a time to share their writing with an audience beyond the teacher, reading what they produced during writing time on an author's chair or to a small group of friends. The final step in the workshop is a short reflection time (Kissel, 2017) for students to think about what they did as a writer today and what they will do tomorrow to be successful in the workshop. This predictable structure allows students to be able to be in "a constant state of composition" (Graves, 1994, pg. 104) where the focus on the independent writing time is not a task completion, but a time to dive deeper into creating meaningful messages, work on writing craft, and set goals as a writer.

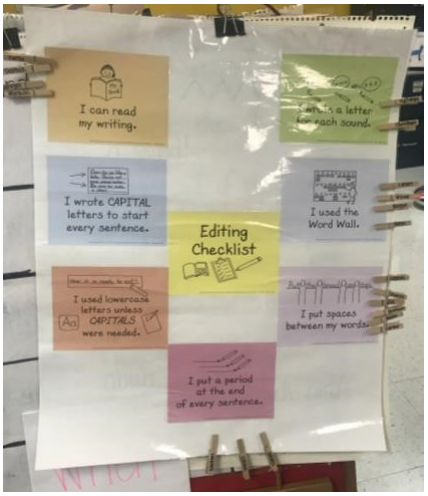
SETTING WRITING GOALS

For students to become more self-directed, it is important that they know clearly the goals and expectations for their writing (Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997). Though primarily

researched in older elementary and adolescent students, research has repeatedly shown that adding goals to writing increases writing quality (Graham & Perin, 2007; Graham et al., 2012). For young children, rubrics and checklists allow for a set of clear criteria for success to be visible and available to students before, during, and after their writing. These goals allow for differentiation and choice as students take responsibility to improve their writing. Rubrics and checklists were located in each student's writing folder, as well as magnified to provide large visual cues for the kindergarten students. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1

Goal Setting Chart with Name Clips and Rubrics



	YES!	NOT YET
I used good coloring.		
I wrote my name and short cut date.		
I thought about something I love, something I know a lot about, or something that happened to me.		
I used illustrations to give more detail to my writing.		
I used kindergarten spelling.		
I put spaces between my words.		
I wrote one or more complete ideas.		
I used the word wall to spell sight words.		
I started sentences with a Capital letter.		
I used an end mark (.?!).		

Using a think-aloud, the teacher modeled setting a goal by placing a name clip next to the goal that matched her need as a writer. The students then came up one by one and clipped their name next to their focus for that writing session. These goals would show up often in writing conferences as students worked toward mastery. Goals can be continued over several writing sessions or modified based on conference outcomes. Two transcripts of conferences are included below along with the writing sample in Figure 2.

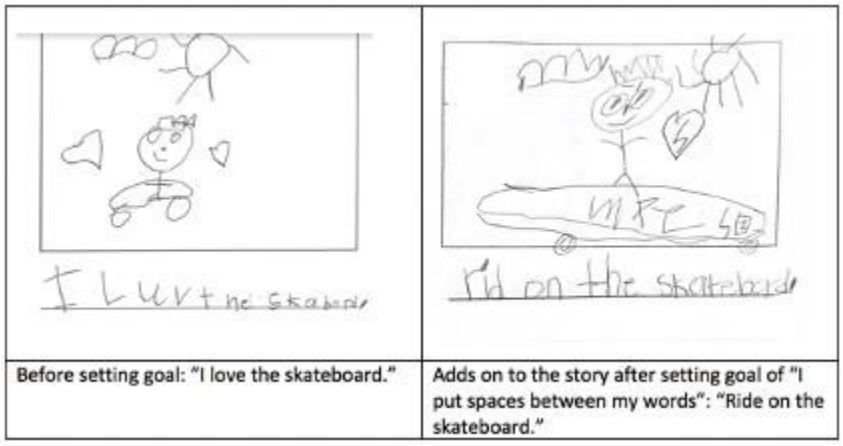
Teacher: When you put your clip on the goal "I can read my writing," what is something you are going to do to make sure we can read it?

Student: Finger spaces.

Teacher: That helps us to know where the word starts and where the word ends. Can you show me where you added spaces?

Figure 2

Student Sets the Goal "I put spaces between my words."



Before setting goal: "I love the skateboard."	Adds on to the story after setting goal of "I put spaces between my words": "Ride on the skateboard."

After the interaction above, the student went on to add the next part of the story, working on the spacing goal. Here is another example of goal setting.:

Teacher: What did you place your clip on to work on today?

Student: Reading my sentences. Reading my story. If you can't read your own story then someone else won't read your story because you won't understand your story.

Teacher: How do you do that? How do you know you can read it?

Student: You go back and reread your sentences and see which one you need to go back and fix.

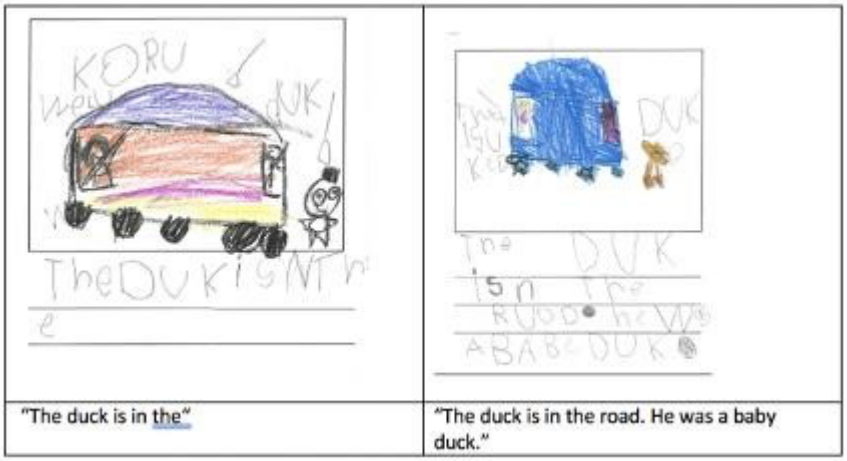
Teacher: I am going to challenge you to do just that!

Student: I'm gonna challenge you too. I'm gonna challenge you to come back in a minute and see how I'm doing.

After the interaction above, the student chose to read her piece of writing shown in the first box of Figure 3. While reading her writing, she realized she left out the word "road" at the end of her sentence. Reflecting on her writing goal, the student also noticed she did not have spaces between her words which made her writing hard to read as well. The student decided to start fresh and ended up adding another sentence detail to her writing.

Figure 3

Student uses her writing goal to revise her story



WRITING CONFERENCES

Carl Anderson's seminal work on writing conferences has taught many teachers to begin writing conferences with the phrase "How's it going?" (Anderson, 2000). This phrase

allows for the student to set the agenda for the conference, allowing for both choice and responsibility in the conference. Part of becoming a self-directed writer is learning to access and use strategies for persevering when the writer gets stuck (Schrodt et al., 2019). Teachers can use conferring as a time to help students identify and use self-regulation strategies to keep going in their writing. Kindergarten writer Layla was a striving writer who had not yet written a whole sentence on her own in writer's workshop. She was stuck as she started her sentence "I see a unicorn." A portion of the conference is transcribed below:

Layla: I am trying to say, "I see a unicorn."

Teacher: Let's count out that sentence. I see a unicorn. That's four words. You already got the word *I*. That's wonderful. The second word is see. How do you think you could figure that out?

Layla: The wall.

Teacher: That's right. You used a strategy to point to the word wall. Now unicorn. That's a long word. What strategy could we use for spelling that word?

Layla: Stretchy snake.

Teacher: Let's practice our stretchy snake we did earlier. *stretches out the word *unicorn* slowly*

Layla's writing is seen in Figure 4. The first lines of her writing show her struggle as she starts and stops and restarts her sentence, "I see . . . a . . . I . . . a . . ." After her conference, Layla was able to write on the third line many of the phonemes found in the sentence "I see a unicorn" and her first complete sentence (I C A UNCN). Layla added one more sentence

saying “I love unicorns” (I L UNCNC). The conferring moves made by the teacher helped Layla move her writing forward. Table 1 provides a starting point for teachers as they work with students in writing conferences with a self-directed lens.

Figure 4

Layla’s Unicorn Writing

In the video below, Layla is seen reflecting on what she did as a writer that day. She is demonstrating the hard work of sounding out the word “unicorn,” using her arms and hands to stretch out the sounds in the word.

https://youtu.be/NtTHNhZTnHw

Table 1

Writing Conference Questions to Encourage Self-Directed Writing
How's it going? (Anderson, 2000)
How do you think you could figure that out?
What strategy could we use for spelling that word?
What tool could you use to help you figure that out?
What did you do really well today as a writer?
What are you working on as a writer today?
What is something you are doing as a writer to help yourself meet that goal?
When you reread your writing, do you notice anything you want to change or add?

CHOICE

The term authentic writing has been used to describe writing instruction that allows for students to write for meaningful purposes. This term can be vague in the sense that authenticity means different things for different people. Choice is one way to increase authenticity
(Behizadeh, 2015), motivation (Graves, 1994), and agency (Janks, 2009) in student writing. Two strategies for choice in writing in kindergarten were used in this class: 1) choice on where to physically sit and write during writer's workshop and 2) choice on what topic to write about.

CHOICE IN SEATING

Many kindergarteners are experiencing their first formal education setting as they step into the classroom in August. The goal of many teachers is to help these children develop independence and self-management skills that will help them stay motivated and take charge of their learning. Developing these skills gives students self-confidence. Just as an adult chooses the library, a comfy chair, or a coffee shop as the most effective place to work, students in this kindergarten writer's workshop were allowed to choose any place around the room to write. Just like any other skill presented in class, choice seating in writer's

workshop should be gradually released to the students as the teacher models, practices, and sets expectations for this time. The teacher sets expectations from the beginning by modeling how to gather the supplies needed to find a spot and what kind of spot is the most effective for writing. Lap desks, clipboards, bean bag chairs, and easy-to-transport supply boxes are all great materials for supporting this work environment (see Figure 5). See Table 2 for an anchor chart that can be co-created with students while teaching this routine.

Table 2

Choice Seating Anchor Chart

Expectations for Choice Seating	**Questions for Self-Reflection**
Choose a place that is comfortable.	Will I be able to sit here comfortably for 30 minutes?
Choose a place that is effective.	Do I have a hard surface to write on (a desk or a clipboard)?
Choose a place that allows for space.	Am I an arms-length apart from my friends?
Choose and place and stay there.	Am I ready to start writing?

Figure 5

Kindergartener Chooses Where to Sit During Writer's Workshop

Choice in Writing Topics

By self-selecting topics, children can connect their writing to their own experiences and interests, compelling them to write with a purpose beyond the teacher. When students are allowed to write on topics of their choice, they write with more variety and creativity, and increase their overall achievement (Bonyadi, 2014; Schrodt et al., 2019).

Over the course of the year, the kindergarten students wrote on over 200 unique writing topics. Students wrote on topics ranging from sharks to painting their nails to dragons and hot chocolate. Figure 6 demonstrates choice in genre (how-to) and topic (Star Wars). Writing topics were inspired and spread across the room through modeling and sharing. Each workshop would end with students sharing their writing with their friends, spreading around ideas for the next person to write with (Author 1 et al., under review).

Figure 6

Kindergartener Writes on the Self-Selected Topic of Star Wars

More Sophisticated Invented Spelling

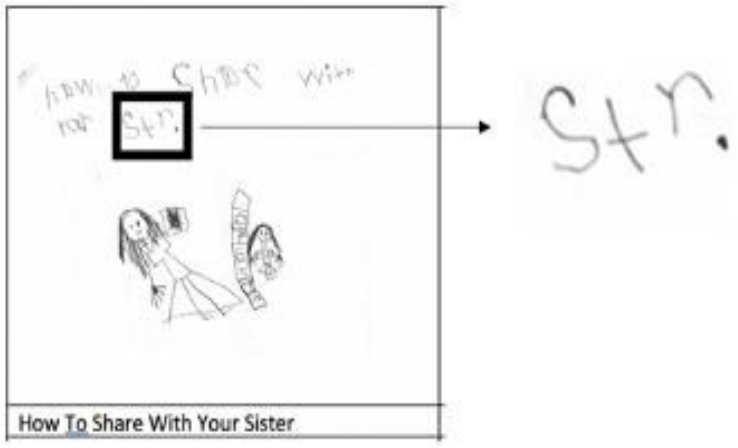
Invented spelling is the ability of young children to use their knowledge of letter sounds and alphabetic knowledge to create words. Research has shown that invented spelling may be a predictor of reading success in kindergarten and spelling in first grade (Ouellette & Sénéchal, 2017). The use of invented spelling frees children to creatively write, rather than focus on conventional spellings (Schrodt et al., 2020). When combined with self-regulation and mindset training, invented spelling has led to an increase in significant growth for young writers (Schrodt et al., 2019). Spelling is one of the most common obstacles for students to overcome when writing. Not knowing how to spell a word can stop a student's writing flow and prevent them from continuing to write. A self-directed writer must be willing to take spelling risks, becoming a brave speller (Author 1 et al., 2020) in order to write independently.

First, it is important for students to be able to make a first attempt independently at spelling the word they would like to spell, encouraging phonetic spelling when necessary. In this class, kindergarteners were taught to use a visual cue called "stretchy snake" to slowly stretch out the sounds in a word in order to hear each phoneme in the word. The

students used their hands as physical support, balling up their fists together in front of their chest and then slowly pulling them apart as they stretch out the sounds in the word. Maya was writing a how-to story about sharing. During her writing conference, the teacher asked if there were any words she spelled bravely on her cover page. Maya said the word "sister." See Figure 7.

Figure 7

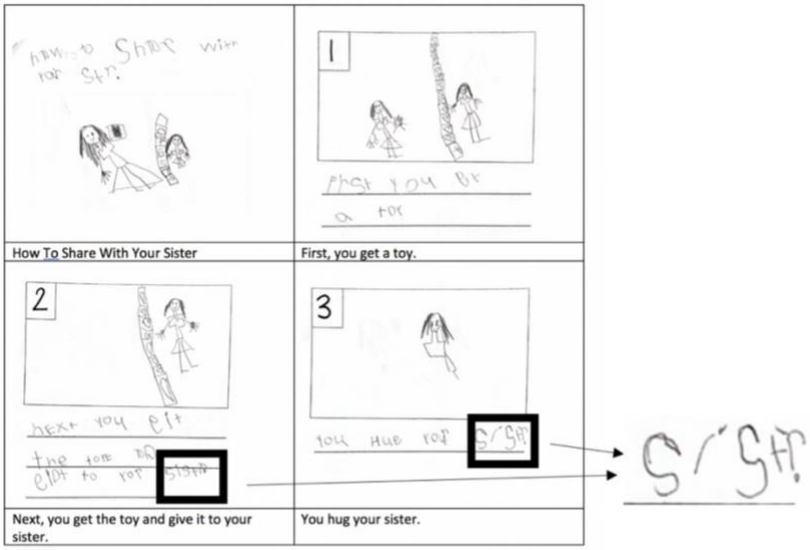
Maya Demonstrates Brave Spelling



After an initial independent attempt at spelling the word, the teacher can then guide the student into a slightly more sophisticated spelling of the independently spelled word (Pulido & Morin, 2017). Maya's teacher said, "I see you bravely wrote the word 'sister' here. I see lots of sounds that you heard when stretching out this word. You wrote STR. Are there any sounds you can add or take away to make this spelling even better for your reader to read? Let's stretch it out and see . . . /sssiiiiissstttteeeerrrrr/." Maya increased the sophistication of her spelling by adding /i/ and another /s/, moving her spelling from STR to SISTR. See Figure 8.

Figure 8

Maya Increases the Sophistication of her Spelling



Modeling and Reflecting

At the end of each writer's workshop, the teacher left approximately 5 minutes for reflection (Kissel, 2017). Toward the end of the workshop, students had the opportunity to walk around and read their work from that session to at least three classmates. This gave the young writers time to reread their work, think about the letter sounds or words that were written, think through the message (did I write what I wanted to say), before having the opportunity to sit in the author's chair and share with the whole class.

During the author's chair, the teachers would use their own writing to model reflection strategies on how to appropriately respond to a classmate when they moved into the author's chair. The students would then be asked to think about their work as writers, reflecting on something they had been successful at (a star!) and something they still needed to work on (a wish!). Depending on time, one or more students would put their writing on the document camera for all to see and would read their writing for the class. This would be an opportunity for classmates to give a star and a wish for the writing

presented in class. The compliment always came first, with the suggestion at the end. This created a culture of feedback, making it the norm in the classroom to have a goal to be working on as well as establishing a respectful writing community.

Celebrations with Lens Toward Self-Directed Writing

Writing celebrations are a hallmark of the writer's workshop. Celebrating the hard work of young writers for an authentic audience can give students the feeling of instant success and is an important factor of motivation and purpose in their writing. The celebrations in this kindergarten class were thrown with a self-directed writer lens, communicating to caregivers and students that we are celebrating the effort, progress, and content of the writers, *not* the perfection of the work. A successful self-directed writer's celebration includes the following:

1) **Invite an authentic audience:** It is important that students experience an audience outside of the classroom walls for their work. Invite caregivers, grandparents, support faculty, principals, and older schoolmates to the celebration. When students have opportunities to discuss their writing with an authentic audience, it helps them think through and articulate their process of writing (Bomer & Arens, 2020).
2) **Work on display does not have to be "perfect:"** Resist the urge to correct every error in the writing shared at the celebration. It is ok to show the growth process, including displaying student invented spelling.
3) **Display progress:** Display previous writing from earlier in the year to show growth. Figures 9 and 10 show Ethan's writing progress on display at the celebration.
4) **Compliment page:** Provide a page that visitors can sign with a compliment for the students, encouraging visitors to compliment beyond neatness and spelling, recognizing effort and content. See Figure 11.

Figure 9

Ethan's October Writing Sample

Figure 10

Ethan's February Writing Sample

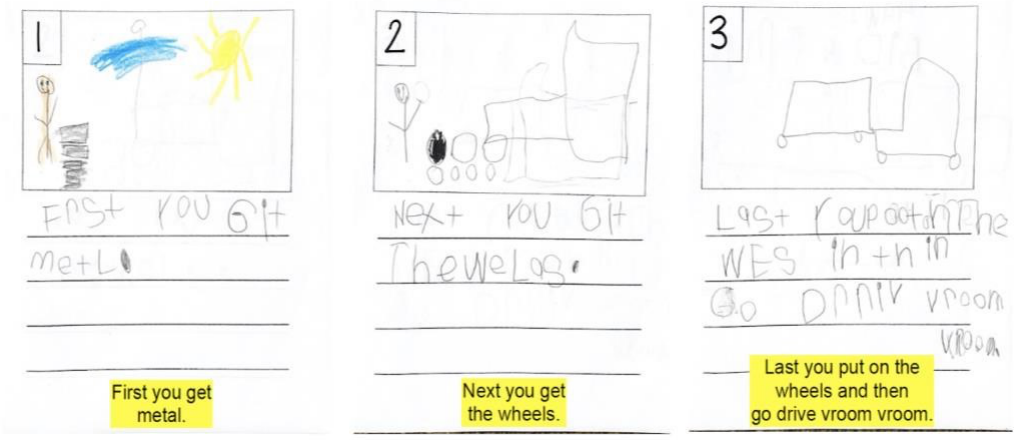


Figure 11

Compliment Page for Writing Celebration

CONCLUSION

Working with the writing workshop model of mini-lesson, independent writing time, and reflection, has shown that kindergartners can take on these important steps and often take these ideas and strategies to the next level on their own. Choices in seating and writing topics can give young writers motivation, as well as an authentic celebration experience to share their work. Conferencing and modeling can serve as a way to support individual writers throughout the workshop experience. Goal-setting enables young writers to look at their work with a critical eye, and make plans for their next steps in developing their craft as a writer.

The literacy experiences described above help to outline strategies to empower teachers to create a literacy environment where young self-directed writers can thrive. The young writers in this classroom were able to take on the role of a self-directed writer by making choices in many aspects of their writing for authentic purposes. Using choice of writing

topics, location for productivity, and writing goals motivates young writers to share their messages with the world.

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About the Authors

Katie Schrodt, PhD, is an assistant professor of literacy education at Middle Tennessee State University. Her email address is katie.schrodt@mtsu.edu

Bonnie Barksdale, PhD, is an assistant professor of literacy education at Middle Tennessee State University.

R. Stacy Fields, PhD, is an assistant professor of literacy education at Middle Tennessee State University.

THE DESIGNING WORKSHOP: A PEDAGOGY OF MULTILITERACIES IN A THIRD GRADE CLASSROOM

CHRISTINE KYSER

ABSTRACT

This research conducted with third graders examined a teacher and her students as they transformed their traditional writing workshop to a multimodal designing workshop. Using the New London Group's (1996) pedagogy of multiliteracies and Katie Wood Ray's (2006) units of study as frameworks, students participated in a unit of study on informational texts. After immersing themselves in a study of both traditional print-bound informational books and interactive electronic informational books, the students designed multimodal digital compositions using iBooks Author. The study focused on the teacher's transformation, the students' design process, and students' final compositions. Preliminary results demonstrated that students designed using a cyclical process, transforming to seeing themselves as designers employing a variety of modes. The study has many implications specifically in the areas of students' design process, students' multimodal compositions, and teachers' technological pedagogical content knowledge.

Keywords: multiliteracies, design, design workshop, writer's workshop

Digital technology has allowed for literacy to extend beyond the words and images of a static page. When consuming and creating text messages, blogs, and videos, readers and writers interact with multiple modes, including textural, gestural, spatial, visual and audio (Bezemer & Kress, 2008, Marcus, 2009). Just as Marcus (2009) states, "We think in all ways we experience the world. We think in pictures, in sound, in movement . . . we think spatially, abstractly, and texturally" (p. 1934). Students now have the option of using digital technologies to design in all available modes, just as they, too, experience the world. This digital technology has also enhanced our students' writing experiences by allowing them to consider the affordances and constraints offered by modes and intentionally choose the mode or modes that best meet their specific need.

As a third-grade literacy teacher, I wanted to provide opportunities for my students to consume and design text in both its traditional context and in all the ways new technologies have provided. My goal was for them to understand how modes like text and image come together in meaning-making and to value the content and design of multimodal texts such as webpages, YouTube videos, and digital stories, just as they valued the *Harry Potter* book that they loved. I also challenged them to embrace digital technology and use multimodal modes to design slideshows, movies, and to share their work on the Internet for the world to see. To meet this goal, I attempted to transform my writer's workshop into a designer's workshop.

Just as I had done in my previous writing workshop, I approached the designing workshop as a unit of study (Ray, 2006). A study is a model in which students immerse themselves in a genre of text, deepening their understanding of the genre, and reading and writing like the mentor texts used in the study. My students were familiar with the inquiry model and this process, and using this framework, we immersed ourselves in a study of informational texts in both traditional print-bound books and electronic interactive books. Ray (2006) refers to print-bound books and eBooks as being "containers." Students were given the opportunity to explore and notice the constraints and affordances offered by the two containers.

The purpose of this descriptive qualitative study was to examine students' design process as they composed multimodal informational texts. Eight third-grade students participated in a design workshop for one semester in which they completed a study (Ray, 2006) of both traditional print-bound and digital, interactive informational texts. The students used iBooks Author to design and publish their books, using a combination of text, image, video, voice, and interactive tools.

Review of the Literature

To gain a deeper understanding and determine the breadth and depth of current research, a thorough review of the literature was conducted. Several themes are addressed: pedagogy of multiliteracies, students as designers, and multimodal composing.

A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies

The New London Group (Cazden et al., 1996) saw a shift in terms of how we communicate in the 1990s including, but not limited to, technological advances and with whom we communicate, expanding this network to include the world. In their work, the NLG created the term "multiliteracy" to expand on traditional literacy (Cazden et al., 1996). Anstey and Bull (2006) define multiliteracies in its simplest form as "being cognitively and socially literate with paper, live, and electronic texts" (p. 23). Multiliteracies include reading, writing, and communicating and uniting them with all text, including the text of social situations and electronic platforms such as conversations and websites.

Historically, two factors have contributed to the decline of traditional literacies and the advancement of multiliteracies: changing technologies and increased communication with diverse cultures (Cazden et al., 1996). Changing technologies have created an abundance of new containers of composition: web pages, text messages, and blogs (Ray, 2006). Increased communication occurs as we begin to operate on a more global scale for personal and business opportunities. Ultimately, the NLG's (Cazden et al., 1996) work resulted in a manifesto, *A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures*, calling for a pedagogy of multiliteracies to best support students for the 21st century. The NLG believed that a pedagogy of multiliteracies "focuses on modes much broader than language alone" (Cazden et al., 1996, p. 64). Furthermore, the group believed that the education system in 1996 continued to focus on traditional literacy, reading, writing, and communicating, neglecting cognitive and social literacy practices that were made necessary by the communication shifts. These cognitive and social literacy practices were necessary for students in their future private, public, and working lives.

A pedagogy of multiliteracies supports students in all modes of composition, including traditional styles. Traditional composition refers to all modes offered by print and image. Traditional compositions include picture books, notes, drawings, and others that are not digital. As Anstey and Bull (2006) believe, there are two goals in educating multi-literate students: (a) instructing students to read and write in all modes of text, and (b) preparing students to be critical as they encounter text in various contexts. When technology is explicitly infused in pedagogy in the literacy classroom, students can make the transformation from readers and writers to designers (Jewitt & Kress, 2003, Hyler & Hicks, 2014, Walsh, 2007).

Students as Designers

In the NLG's (Cazden et al., 1996) original manifesto, the group called for approaching composing from a designer's perspective, regarding both teachers and students as designers. Jewitt and Kress (2003) define design as "how people make use of the resources that are available at a given moment in a specific communicational environment to realise [*sic*] their interests as makers of a message/text" (p. 17). Design can remove the emphasis on the teacher as the authority of the learning, suggesting participation and flexibility. In facilitating a classroom of design, teachers can focus on building on students' innovative thinking and creativity (Walsh, 2007).

The NLG (Cazden et al., 1996) called for three frameworks that would support teachers and students in collaboration and coming together to make meaning: "Available Designs, Designing, and The Redesigned" (Cazden et al., p. 74). These three frameworks create the content in the four factors of implementation: "Situated Practice, Overt Instruction, Critical Framing and Transformed Practice" (Cazden et al., 1996, p. 83). In its simplest form, Available Designs refer all available modes and the combinations of those modes. Modes may be written, visual, oral, spatial, or gestural. In the design process, the learner creates more modes by experimenting with existing modes. When creating a webpage, the designer may use still images to create a video. The learner then adds his voice to create commentary to the images moving across the screen. In this sense, as a designer, the

learner has created an additional Available Design in the video. The reader's understanding of design evolves during the process, impacting both the Available Design and the Designing. Analyzing the new video deepens the learner's understanding of Designing. As the learner critically analyzes his design choices, what he says, why he chose a certain picture, the speed at which the pictures change, and others, the learner may be synthesizing why some design choices are more effective. As improvements are made through Designing, the webpage becomes the Redesigned. The teacher can use this discourse to promote a deeper level of learning. Building on the foundation of available designs, students can begin to analyze the available designs and the designing, evaluating the affordances of modes and inter-play of the modes.

Multimodal Composing and Design

Bezemer and Kress (2008) define a mode as "a socially and culturally shaped resource for making meaning. Image, writing, layout, speech, and moving image are examples of modes, all used in learning resources" (p. 117). Multimodal composing is a process of combining more than one mode. Because our society places a literary emphasis on the written and spoken word, the school tends to disregard this multimodality (Crafton, Silvers, & Brennan, 2009). Students are often rewarded for their handwriting skills or large vocabularies, rather than their natural communication skills of using gestures and voice to tell a story. Reading the traditional textbook pages is a much different experience than navigating the pages on the web. "Writing and image are combined in ways that could not have been conceived of in the 1930s" (Bezemer & Kress, 2008, p. 167). The traditional textbook typically has text features of headings, images, diagrams, and callout boxes. These features are often limited to a two-page spread. Web pages, however, allow the reader to click on links, watch a video, have the computer read aloud, view an animation, click on words and images that link to other pages, and receive immediate feedback from multiple-choice questions. The reader interacts with the text by scrolling, clicking, dragging, listening, and viewing the various modes on the screen. By transitioning from a focus on just textual features for writing to a focus on designing, students will be required to consider various

modes and what they can do for their communicative endeavors (Werderich, Manderino, & Godinez, 2017; Hyler & Hicks, 2014; Hicks, 2014; Yelland, 2018).

The biggest difference between reading and writing and design is best understood by the differences in availability of modes. As Jewitt and Kress (2003) state, "Rather than taking talk and writing as a starting point, a multimodal approach to learning starts from a theoretical position that treats all modes as equally significant for meaning and communication, potentially so at least" (p. 2). As Bomer, Zoch, David, and Ok (2010) believe, "To 'write' as a designer is to bring together the resources and habits of the writer, the artist, the choreographer, the impresario, the musician, and the engineer into one textual event" (p. 10). Designing allows a student to use the most modern of tools to make meaning, embracing recent technological advances.

In the design workshop, students are encouraged to experiment and create with modes. And, while the teacher may continue to share mentor texts of published books, they also show exemplars of multimodal compositions such as web pages, videos, digital stories, and blogs. The teacher guides the students in discussions of why the author chose a particular mode over another. The workshop time is also used for the teacher to model composing in various modes, focusing discussions on the affordances and constraints of those modes.

Research Questions

The purpose of this descriptive qualitative study was to describe students' process in designing their multimodal compositions in a design workshop. I was seeking to understand how my students chose modes and justified their choices.

Q1 How does a pedagogy of multiliteracies support students' constructions of multimodal compositions in a third-grade design workshop?

Q2 How do students design multimodal compositions?

METHODS

Using qualitative descriptive methods, I was able to provide a recount of my experience and of participants' experiences throughout the research at a rural neighborhood school in the western United States.

PARTICIPANTS

As an Academic/Instructional coach at the school, I had the opportunity to work with eight students that were released from their 90-minute reading block because of their advanced reading data. Research participants consisted of four boys and four girls. All students were White, and five had qualified for the district's Gifted and Academically Talented Education (GATE) Program. Students had a varying degree of technology experience and access outside of school.

It is important to note that I, as the researcher, did not believe that a designing workshop should be reserved for only the highest-achieving students. The participants were chosen as a convenience sample. Furthermore, the students' race was not representative of the school or community population. I would have preferred to have participants representative of the whole school, including minority students, and those of all academic abilities. I chose to pursue the research at this site because of my relationship and history with the school and knowledge of the curriculum, assessments, and norms. However, conducting the study with proficient writers, I was able to see how those students were able to perform when shifting their workshop space and providing them more options in terms of media and mode (Hicks, 2014).

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PEDAGOGY

Using the NLG's (Cazden et al., 1996) Pedagogy of Multiliteracies and Katie Wood Ray's (2006) Units of Study as frameworks, I implemented a design workshop in a third-grade classroom for 90 minutes per day for one semester. I used Ray's (2006) model as a framework for students as they read a variety of information texts in traditional and digital formats and determined what makes an exemplary information text. Using this inquiry method, students dictated the direction of the study in terms of specific daily lessons. As

Ray (2006) points out, "Framing instruction as study represents an essential stance to teaching and learning, an *inquiry stance*, characterized by repositioning curriculum as the outcome of instruction, rather than the starting point" (p. 19). While the overall goal was for students to read and write their own informational *iBooks*, the definition of an informational text was guided by the students' insights and connections with the mentor texts. As a teacher, I had a general idea of the scope and sequence of lessons; but ultimately, the inquiry process dictated the specific daily lessons.

Students approached their study of informational texts as designers, ultimately designing their own multimodal compositions, electronic interactive books (see Appendix A for digital tools and applications). While my previous writers' workshop originated with the textual mode, the designers' workshop had its origins in all modes (Cazden et al., 1996, Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, Smith, 2017, Nichols & Johnston, 2020). In designing, students were taught to consider all modes and determine which mode or modes would best portray their message.

Daily Lessons

Immersing ourselves in informational text, I read aloud and conducted class discussion, students read and discussed with partners, and some individual reading occurred. Throughout the reading of mentor texts (Dorfman and Capelli, 2007), in both traditional printed text and digital text, I continually asked, "What choices did the author make in writing and designing the informational text?" Students were supported in reading like a writer, thinking about the choices the writer made that they could emulate.

I then revisited some of the mentor texts to develop specific language regarding the genre of information text. Students were asked to use their learning from the study of mentor texts in their writing and design, constantly reflecting on the specific choices they were making. Students used this information to craft their own information text on a topic of their choice. Students were guided in their cyclical process of researching, drafting, revising, and editing. Throughout their work, I conferenced with them, and they

conferenced with peers with the goal of improving their designing craft. Students' conferences were specific to the genre and phases of the study.

Designing with iBooks Author. I chose to have students design electronic books as a culminating project in the study. An electronic book is simply a "container" for students writing. Ray (2006) uses the term "container" to describe newspapers and other texts that contain multiple formats and types of writing (p. 66). Because the school had purchased MacBooks for students, they used iBook Author, a pre-installed application. But, ultimately, an inquiry of informational compositions resulting in electronic books could be created with a variety of platforms.

During the months of August, September, and October, our genre studies focused on how-to, comics, interviews, and memoirs. While studying these genres, I simultaneously built students' capacity in working with technology tools and applications. The students designed various projects using Mac applications, Keynote, Photo Booth, Pages, iMovie and Comic Life, and web-based tools, Weebly, Animoto, Voki, and Flickr. All these tools could be imbedded or linked in the students' iBooks.

Data Collection

Data collection methods included: observation, interviews, artifact collection, and researcher's analytic memos and reflective journal. Interviews included think-aloud protocols and photo elicitation.

Interviews played a pivotal role in data collection as they allowed me to determine how and why students made certain design choices. To describe the essence of their design process, I conducted unstructured, open-ended interviews with the students throughout the research duration (Merriam, 2009, p. 88). Asking students in the moment when they made their design choices was also guided by the theoretical framework of constructivism, allowing students to reflect on their learning of multimodal composition.

Data Analysis

I began analyzing the data using Glaser and Strauss's (1967) Constant Comparative Method. I used this method of data analysis in looking at all data to get a sense of students' overall design process. The process of making sense of the data began with open coding, followed by axial coding, and selective coding. Specifically, I coded my observations, artifacts, memos, reflective journal, interviews, and student compositions to describe students' process on designing their multimodal compositions, beginning with their study of the mentor texts, and ending when they shared their final compositions with the class. Using observation notes and interview transcripts as a starting point because they were collected each day of instruction, I conducted a line-by-line analysis and made margin notes that attempted to answer the research question (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) to create initial codes. Shortly after the initial codes were developed, I noticed a trend in the codes. I had consistently made codes referring to "available designs," "designing," and "the redesigned" (Cazden et al., 1996). At this point, I became curious about students' process in terms of the NLG's (Cazden et al., 1996) framework of Available Designs, Designing, and the Redesigned, so I chose to recode all the data. I color-coded the data for each of the three frameworks to see if students' process was more linear or cyclical. I also looked to see if students' process focused on one framework over another, looking for evidence that the students were designing by combining available designs in different ways and that they had created new designs in the redesigned composition.

These concepts from using the Constant Comparative Method and the NLG's (Cazden et al., 1996) three frameworks of design were then grouped together, known as categorizing (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Five categories and subcategories were created including: (a) students learning new set of boundaries and expectations; (b) students applying learning/using Available Designs; (c) students transitioning in their design process from privileging text to considering all modes; (d) students valuing their own work as being on par with published compositions; and (e) students growing in their understanding in intentionality of design decisions.

Following the open coding, the categories and subcategories were further examined in axial coding. During the axial coding process, I continued to do open coding, switching back and forth as data were presented. Axial coding, also known as analytical coding, is the coding that came from my reflections and interpretations (Merriam, 2009). Strauss and Corbin (1990) explain this as putting the data back together. I used The Paradigm Model as defined by Strauss and Corbin (1990) as "link[ing] subcategories to a category in a set of relationships denoting causal conditions, phenomenon, context, intervening conditions, action/interactional strategies, and consequences" (p. 99). Using this paradigm further focused the data in identifying students' design process. In causal conditions, I looked back through the codes, searching for things that would cause a specific phenomenon (category). I also looked at the context of the day just as I had when analyzing the data through the lens of the three frameworks, looking at the day's mini lesson, where students were in relation to their final composition, and whether they had conferenced with me that day. I continued this recursive process in attempt to answer the research questions.

Findings

After a thorough analysis of the data, several findings were evident: (a) students made use of Available Designs, Designing, and the Redesigned as a cyclical process; (b) students transformed to seeing themselves as designers, consuming and producing text from a design perspective; and (c) students used a variety of modes, but relied on text and image throughout their design process. Each of these findings are described below with examples from students' work.

Available Designs, Designing, the Redesigned as a Cyclical Process

Students' process of using available designs, designing, and redesigned was non-linear. In fact, students regularly cycled through all three frameworks. Using Mary's (all names are pseudonyms) book, *K9 Creations*, as an example, she continually looked at available designs by picking up mentor texts and looking at design ideas. She was designing as she

experimented with design features offered by iBooks Author and created the redesigned by combining modes.

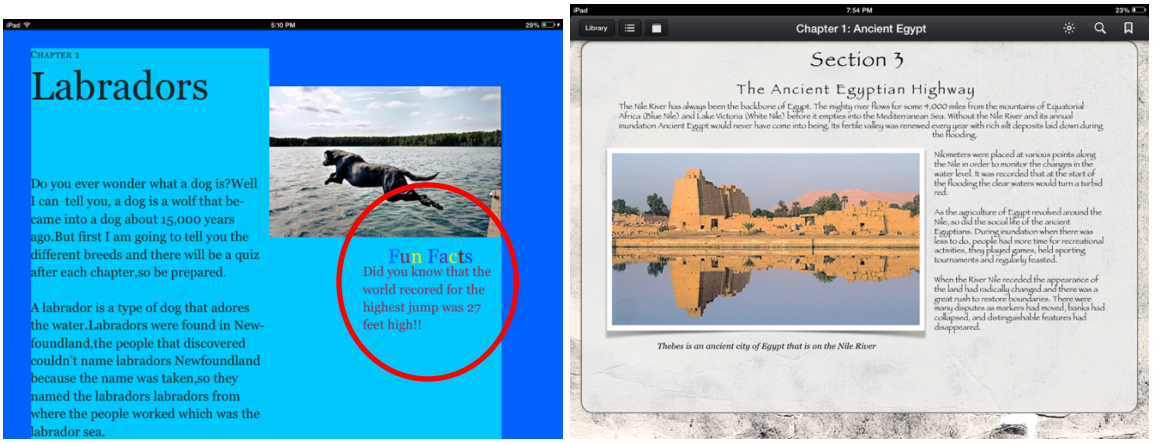
AVAILABLE DESIGNS

Mary consistently made use of a variety of available designs, including those offered by all mentor texts and iBooks Author design tools. Mary had a strong foundation of options in terms of organizing her content, formatting the layout of their pages, and choosing specific modes and media to portray their message from our mini lessons. In coding for Available Designs, Mary chose to write "Fun Facts" in each chapter of her iBook, an idea and available design she saw the author use in the mentor text, *The Way the Universe Works*.

Mary also utilized available designs in the mentor iBooks including content, layout and design, and the author's use of visual, spatial, textual, gestural, audio, and the combinations of these modes. As shown in Mary's chapter page on Labradors in Figure 1, she also included an image, text, and heading in an organized layout, very similar to the mentor text, *Ancient Egypt* (Figure 2).

Figure 1

Mary (left) used available designs in designing fun facts in her iBook (see red circle). She also used a similar overall design on this page as the mentor text, Ancient Egypt (right).

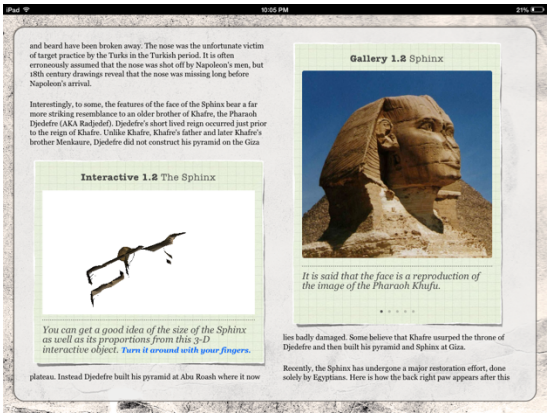


Students were also provided the available designs of the iBook Author Templates. The "Template Chooser" consists of 15 themes offering various layout options with built-in

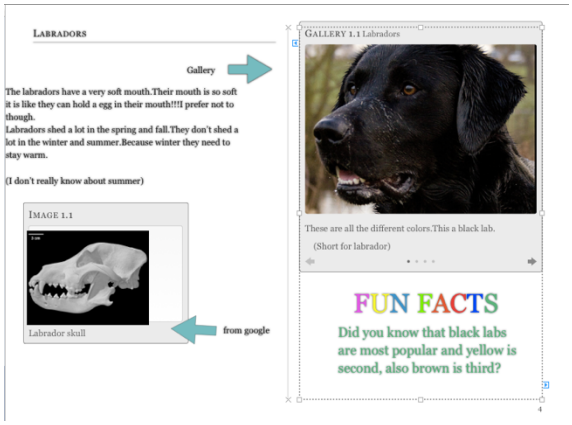
design elements such as backgrounds, fonts, and colors. The designer has the option of changing any of these elements in their design. Figure 3 shows a comparison of the mentor text and Mary's book. Mary's page, lower right, had nearly the same layout, with text and image on the left side of the page and an image gallery with text on the right side of the page.

Figure 3

Comparison of mentor text, Ancient Egypt, and Mary's page.



Page from Mentor Text

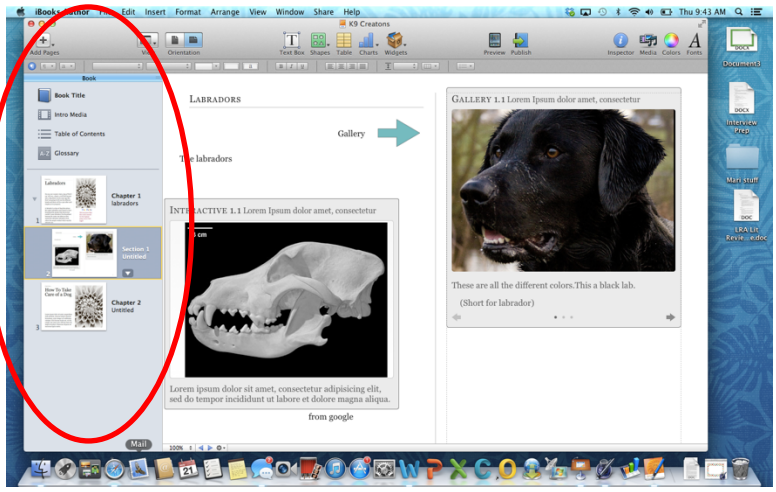


Page from Mary's Book

Oftentimes, students began their design process by building a structure for their books with the available designs of pages, sections, and chapters. In Figure 4, the book outline is shown on the left of Mary's screen. You can see that she built several pages and was beginning to add images to her first chapter.

Figure 4

Mary's book outline early in her design (circled in red). She was just beginning her third page.



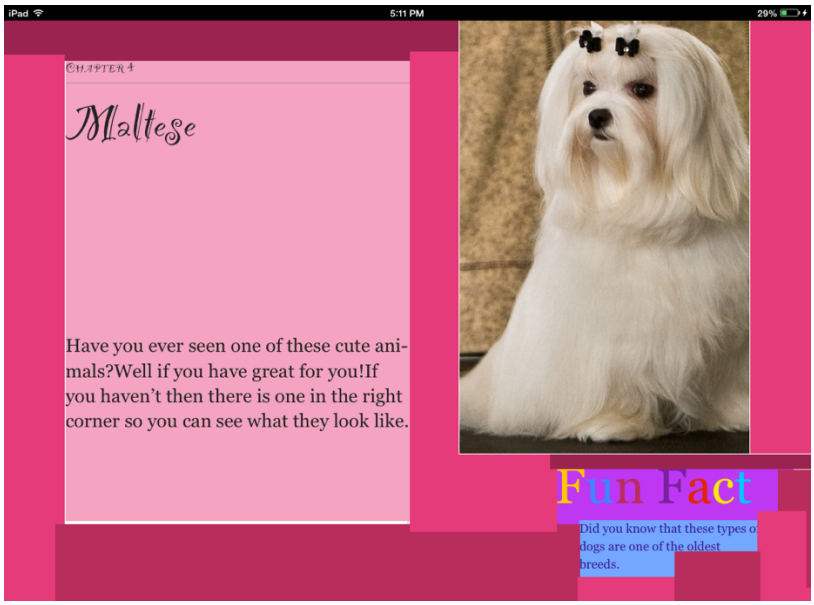
While some students created all the pages of their book first and then went back and created the content, others designed their books one page at a time. Mary chose to design the chapters. Each chapter was about a different dog breed and was two pages in length.

DESIGNING

Mary used available designs, as if layering them together in her designing. For example, Mary would add images to the pages of her books. She would then add frames to the images, followed by a header and caption. Each of these elements––the image, frame, header, and caption––were available designs that were layered together in designing. As a designer, Mary had to think about each specific layer and whether the layer added meaning for the reader as each element served a different purpose. For example, in Figure 5, the page Mary built used image and text. She designed the background and used a "rainbow" font to draw her viewer's attention.

Figure 5

Mary's page using image and text.



When reflecting on the design of her page (Figure 5), Mary said:

Today I worked on my first page of the Maltese. I decided to make the background pink because it's one of my favorite colors, and the Maltese is a small dog. It's also a delicate breed. I also used rainbow font for my fun fact to catch the reader's attention.

During think-alouds and during interviews, students were asked to articulate what, how, and why they were designing specific layers, just like Mary's example above. Students often experimented with various colors, frames, fonts, and specific words to see how they all worked together. As Mary said in her video reflection at the end of a class period:

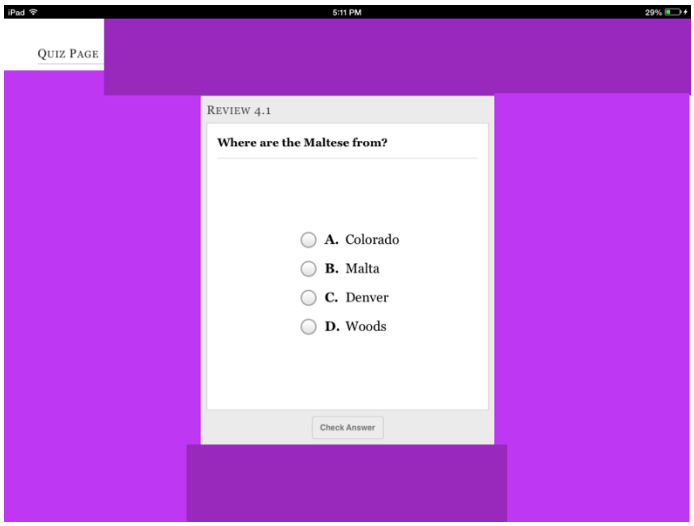
Today I put the frame on the first chapter. I was working on the background on my quiz page. I made the background dark green because I thought it would go with the quiz. I made my quiz questions. It was about the labs being popular so I thought I could do a question on which one is most popular. They frequently referred to the Available Designs during this process, often revising multiple times to find the combination that they felt best met their specific need.

REDESIGNED

Through this designing, students' books contained the redesigned. The redesigned consisted of combinations of modes that had been layered together in their designing. At times, the redesigned was simply an available design set in different colors and using a different font that better matched the topic of the book. Mary included quizzes at the end of her book chapter. The quiz is an available design, shown below in the gray box, and is a "widget" option built into the iBooks Author Application. Mary redesigned the page to match the colors of her Maltese chapter.

Figure 6

Mary's redesigned quiz page.



Mary's final composition was completely redesigned. Her design process of using the available designs and designing to make the redesigned allowed her to consider her learning from the mentor texts and from our lessons in design.

In another student example, Gina wanted to use video to teach her reader about cat species. She used the available designs of her voice for providing an explanation, and she used images she had drawn on the whiteboard. When Gina was recording herself, she made some simple errors and ended up laughing at herself on the footage. As Gina said in her

think aloud, "I just began my American Shorthair video. And instead of typing, I'm going to have a typing area and a place where you can just watch the video. I messed up the video a few times because I started laughing. I think they are funny." The other students also found these clips entertaining, so she decided to include them in a redesigned "Outtakes" section as the end of her book. Although this was not the original intention of the video, she said that she thought of having outtakes from the *Toy Story* movies. While usually outtakes occur in movies, Gina redesigned this available design to include in her iBook.

Students See Themselves as Designers

Students made an evident transition from readers and writers to designers over the semester. Not only did they move past consuming multimodal texts to producing multimodal texts, their understanding and complexity of modes and design greatly increased.

Students' use of text decreased, and their use of other modes increased. Once students had the structure of their books in place with chapters, sections, and pages, they were able to focus on how which mode would best portray each piece of information. All students began the process by building a structure for their books with pages, sections, and chapters. Some students built a page at a time, while others created the outline of the entire book before adding content and other modes. For instance, Cole began by creating every page of his book. He then inserted page headings to identify the content. Next, he inserted images on every page. Early in the process, Cole commented, "Today I made a page on my iBook, and I entered 15 pages with at least one photo on each. I made some text boxes, photos, and galleries." Cole continued in this fashion for several more days before adding video of him and another student playing football, paragraphs of text, and other content which described the history of football, how to play the game, and famous players.

In contrast, Isaac, who wrote about space, literally built his iBook one page at a time. Although he knew from the beginning that he wanted to have a chapter about each planet and wanted them to go in order from closest to farthest from the sun, he completed his

Mars page before beginning Venus, then moved on to Earth, and so forth. He reflected on one day early in the project:

I made a sentence on my Earth section in my Chapter One. I looked for some photos. And, we were trying to get the 3D images. I looked on Flicker and searched for Earth. I got two pictures, but I only used one. Tomorrow, I'm going to write about how fast the Earth rotates. I'm going to put the rest of the information to finish my Earth Chapter. I chose not to include sub-headings after my conference. I made my Earth font blue and green.

Isaac's statement demonstrates his process for writing about Earth. And, while Cole and Isaac completed their books, but they went about their designs using different processes. While Cole created the entire book and went back to fill in the content, Isaac created one page at a time. The students continually shared their processes with each other and gave each other feedback and ideas. With teacher guidance, students embraced one another's methods and asked about these intentional design choices.

After establishing the structure of their books, students continued to rely on text, but were able to honor all modes over time, decreasing their use of text. When I asked Jim about his choice of image for his book on soccer, his first response was, "I used it because it matches the prompt." In his homeroom class, Jim has been doing a lot of prompt writing in preparation for the state assessment, so this idea of his ideas "matching a prompt" have been reinforced many times. While he chose the topic of soccer for his book, he related the idea of a topic to his homeroom teacher's usage of "prompt".

In the first few weeks of working on their iBooks, students were eager to share the number of pages they had designed during each class period. During their reflection think-alouds at the end of each class, the number of completed pages was often the first thing they shared. As Sam said, "I worked on my iBook today. I got lots of images, and it was really fun. I also

added lots of info and tried to get a 3D image. It was mostly text, about four pages, and I added information and compare and contrast."

During my conferences, I also noticed that students got frustrated as they spent entire class periods creating very short videos. As Mary reflected at the end of class one day, "Today I worked on a video. I made it with Photo Booth. It took the whole class time, and it's four minutes and one second." After spending so much time, the video took up three square inches of space on the book page. At that point, they were honoring the quantity of space the information took, as opposed to the quality of the information portrayed as I overheard them comparing how much they had completed at the end of class one day. The students compared their work in terms of the quantity of pages completed.

With time, students stopped monitoring their progress and comparing the quantity of pages completed with their peers. They began spending more time creating and exploring with the options afforded by videos. Students interviewed each other, recorded themselves in front of the whiteboard or modeling an activity, and used montages of still images, text, and music to create their own videos.

At the same time, video data and reflective notes showed that students spent less time over the course of the semester exploring different stylistic features such as font types, text box frames, and slideshow transitions. Although specific mini lessons were conducted on how these stylistic features add to the reader's meaning, students seemed preoccupied with increasing the quantity of content, rather than focusing their attention on those details. They continued to recognize the importance of keeping the reader's interest with visual elements, having a focal point on each page and choosing the mode which best portrayed each specific piece of information.

Thinking Critically

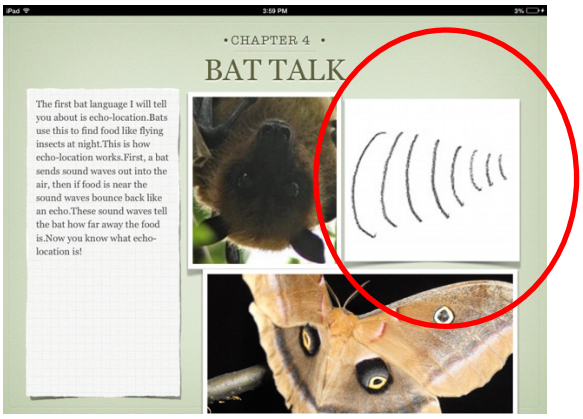
Students also began thinking more critically as they reflected on work that was published, that of their peers, and their own. Students demonstrated this increase in their depth of

knowledge around design in class discussions and interviews. This change was evident in their eagerness to design their own images, rather than use those available on the Internet, their ability to critique published iBooks and provide feedback and suggestions to their peers, and their increasingly more complex discussions in designing conferences and think-alouds.

As Amy looked online for images representing echolocation, she knew what she was looking for, but couldn't find it. During our conference, I was trying to help her search when she decided that she could easily draw the exact image that would demonstrate echolocation for her viewer. Amy, Mary, and Dana chose to draw images for their books (see Figure 7). The girls believed they could better represent the exact image, rather than using images online. In these cases, the girls saw the value in their own work as being better than published images.

Figure 7

Amy drew an image (see red circle) for her chapter, Bat Talk.



Amy drew this image, scanned it, and uploaded it to her iBook.

As students were designing their informational iBooks, I also modeled designing a book about pizza that I entitled *Pizza Pizzazz.* The text included chapter titles and brief descriptions of the content of the chapters. When sharing, one student commented that he did not like the font I had chosen for the chapter titles because it was too "old" looking. I responded that I chose the particular font, "Herculanum," because I wanted to portray

pizza's long history and European heritage. Other students chimed in that several of the letters were too "round," and they didn't like it. Ultimately, their reasoning and suggestions convinced me to change the font. The students had the same opinions and suggestions on other work and their own.

Students considered all elements of the books in thinking critically as they, too, were making countless design decisions every class period and with every element in their books. Students' justification and reasoning of their choices also grew in complexity. Early in his design, when I asked Jim about his choice of color for his title page, he simply said, "I just like it." And, in December, when I asked him what he was working on, he responded, "I'm using the 'Dance Party' theme for my intro media because the music and colors are upbeat and fun just like Soccer." Rather than choosing a font color because they liked it or using video to convey information because it was easiest, the students understood that bright, colorful fonts may catch the eye of the reader or that the reader would best understand how to play the game of soccer when shown how on a video, as opposed to reading about it.

Students Designed with a Variety of Modes

When considering how students designed their multimodal compositions, I surveyed their published iBooks for the quantity of various modes. In the eight student books, there were 1,098 instances of modes used. Table 1 highlights the number of instances of modes used in each book. When comparing the students' quantity of modes to that of the mentor texts, their usage was much less. The example show above in Figure 4 compares a page of Mary's book with the mentor text. While Mary, a third grader, has two paragraphs of information, the professional published mentor text has four paragraphs, both have titles, and an image. Mary's page has a "fun fact" and the published book has an image description.

Table 1

Total Modes for Individual Books

Book	**Total Occurrences of Modes**	**Percentage of Total**
Dogs	210	19%
Dolphins	158	14%
Bats	143	13%
Bow Hunting	118	11%
Football	111	10%
Soccer	107	10%
Space	94	9%

Students used a variety of modes in their iBooks, but continually relied on text to convey their information. Table 2 below highlights the total instances of individual modes and the percentage of instances of each type of mode (text, image, etc.) in relation to the total number of instances of all modes. These ratios of text to image and text to video were similar to the professional published books. In both the students' iBooks and the mentor text, for each image, for example, designers included a title and heading to describe the image.

Table 2

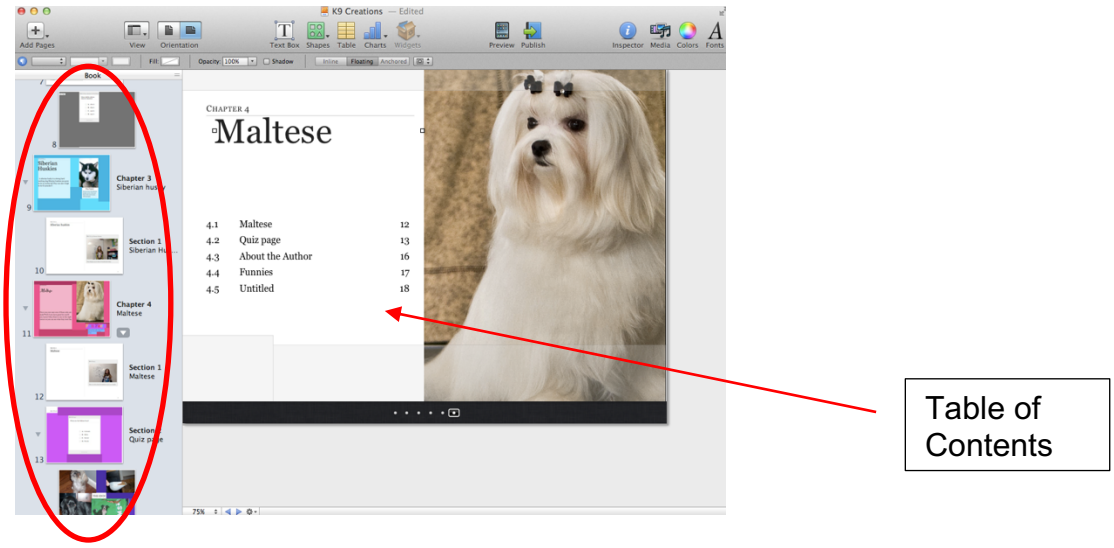
Instances of Modes and their Percentage of the Total Modes Used

Mode	Number of Instances	Percentage of total
Text	568	52%
Image	479	43%
Video	44	4%
Hyperlinks	7	.6%
Voice	1	.09%

Text was the dominant mode in seven of the eight books, used in each book in the following instances: (a) dogs, 48%; (b) dolphins, 61%; (c) football, 60%; (d) space, 49%; (e) bow hunting, 47%; and (f) soccer, 51%. In the final student book, *Bats,* text was used 48% of the time, but was surpassed with the instances of image. It was apparent from the beginning of students' design process that students were using text frequently to organize their book pages. When students designed a new page, they always began with the Available Designs, writing a header for the page; this was necessary as iBooks Author automatically integrates the headings of pages into the table of contents (see Figure 8).

Figure 8

Book outline (see red circle) and its corresponding page in the Table of Contents of Mary's iBook.

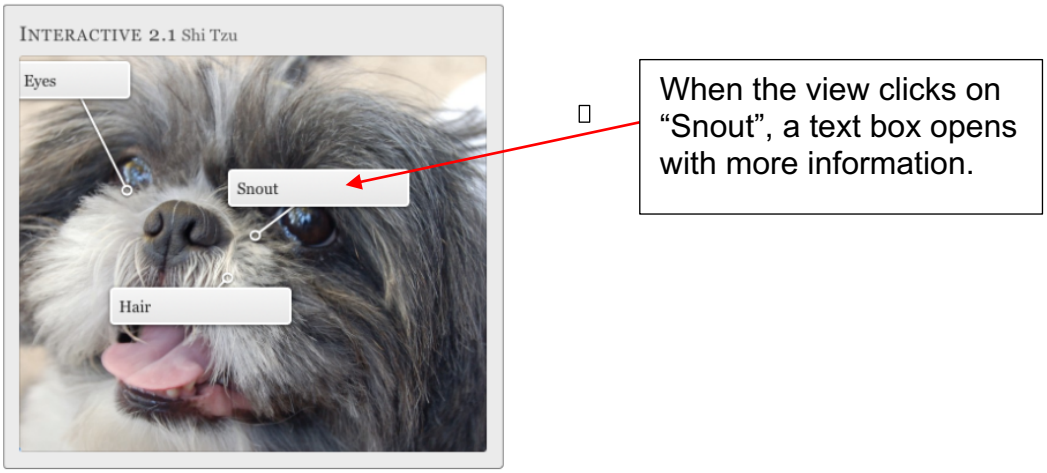


Additionally, when students embedded an image in their book, the image contained a title and caption 70% of the time. In cases such as those, during the frequency count, there would be two instances of text for each image. Students used the text in those cases to introduce, name, or give directions on the navigation of images. Text was also used in call-out boxes and diagrams to give definitions and specific information to a part of an image. The interactive image below from Mary's book (Figure 9) labels the parts of the dog's face when the viewer clicks on these images, definitions, and descriptions. For example, when

the viewer clicks on “snout,” the text of the call-out box reads, “These creatures have a tiny mouth that is powerful. My shi tzu has two layers of teeth. She won’t lose any though.”

Figure 9

An interactive image from Mary’s iBook.



Images accounted for 43% of the total instances of mode in the eight student books. Images were used in the following percentages per book: (a) dogs, 46%; (b) dolphins, 35%; (c) football, 33%; (d) space, 47%; (e) bow hunting, 48%; (f) soccer, 45%; and (g) bats, 50%. Images included those used from the Internet, student photographs, and students’ scanned drawings. Images included in the frequency count also included clipart and image frames. Students used images on 100% of their double-page spreads.

There was a total of 43 videos in the eight student books, accounting for used video 4% of the total modes. Videos occurred in students’ books at percentages of: (a) dogs, 3%; (b) dolphins, 4%; (c) football, 6%; (d) space, 4%; (e) bow hunting, 5%; (f) soccer, 3%; and (g) bats, 1%. Some videos used were taken with a digital camera or on Photo Booth and were embedded into the iBooks. Other videos used were created in iMovie or Animoto or were videos taken of avatars made using the Voki website. The videos gave explanations, directions, and information and allowed the students to speak candidly about their topics.

Seven hyperlinks were used in student books, making up less than 1% of the total instances of modes. The student book on dogs contained six hyperlinks, and the student book on dolphins contained one hyperlink. The hyperlinks occurred most frequently in students' reference pages; however, two instances were embedded in the content pages of books. Embedding the links in the content allows the reader to go to click on a word, phrase or image and be automatically directed to a website, document, or different page of the iBook to learn more.

There were 78 interactive elements imbedded in the students' iBooks. Interactive elements were not counted in the total frequency mode of 1,098 modes. Interactive elements included modes that do not occur without the reader interacting with them. For example, with a slideshow, the image appears on the screen. The reader must swipe the image to move on to the next slide, can also zoom in and zoom out, or click the image to make it appear on the full screen. With a three-dimensional image, a two-dimensional version image appears on the screen; however, the reader can interact with it by using two fingers to rotate the image, looking at all sides of it. The reader can also zoom in, zoom out, and click the image to make it appear on the full screen. The interactive images allow the viewer to take an active role in making meaning, choosing what they want to learn more about. The students used the interactive images to make their books more interesting and further clarify their topic.

Implications and Conclusions

As the options for literacy continue to expand with new technology, there is a great need for research in implementing a pedagogy of multiliteracies. Not only is there a need for teachers to deepen their understanding of the implementation at the classroom level, but it is also important to understand students' experiences as they become critical consumers and producers of multimodal compositions. Building on the framework of the NLG, I had to expand my pedagogy to support literacy beyond traditional reading, writing, and communicating to include new technologies.

Teachers must develop their understanding of not only multiliteracies, but also the specific technology tools and media that expand students' design options. This understanding begins with teachers developing an understanding of all modes, beginning with the spatial, textual, and visual modes afforded by traditional literacy.

Students used the NLG's (Cazden et al., 1996) three frameworks of available designs, designing, and the redesigned cyclically when composing. Supporting students in using available designs of all modes allows for more possibilities in designing. Further, by designing using all options of modes, students must think critically in terms of the affordances and constraints of the modes and which mode will best convey their message in the redesigned. In this study, students tended to rely on text, when it may or may not have been the best mode of communication. They often defaulted to text because it was too tedious and time consuming to create a video or design with other modes. The students continually valued the quantity of filled pages, despite intentionally instruction on modality and design.

Teachers must not only give students the time to design with multiple modes, but we must further coach them in becoming designers. Explicit teaching is needed to support students in their design options in terms of intentionally choosing modes that best fit their purpose as they deepen their understanding of all modes and the combinations of modes that are used in making meaning.

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About the Author

Christine Kyser, EDD, is an assistant professor of literacy in the School of Teacher Education at the University of Northern Colorado. Her passion for teaching literacy and integrating technology inspired her classroom teaching and instructional coaching in Florida and Colorado. She now teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in literacy, with a focus on new literacies. Her research interests include multimodal composing, infusing literacy instruction with technology, and fueling the teacher pipeline in Colorado, specifically in rural areas. She can be reached at chriskyser9@gmail.com.

Appendix A

Digital Tools Used in the Designers Workshop

Tool/Application	Description
iBooks Author	Apple e-book author tool, discontinued in 2020 and replaced by Pages (all design options are still available)
iMovie	Apple video editing application (only available on Mac Operating Systems but similar to Windows Movie Maker)
Photo Booth	Apple application for taking photos and videos using computer camera
Animoto	Video creator using photos, videos, images and text, cloud based. Available online at animoto.com.
Voki	Presentation tool for creating a speaking avatar, cloud based. Available online at www.voki.com.
Keynote	Apple presentation application (only available on Mac Operating Systems but similar to PowerPoint)
Comic Life	Downloadable application for creating comics from photos and images. Available at https://plasq.com/apps/comiclife/macwin/.
Weebly	Free, cloud-based website builder. Available at https://www.weebly.com/.
Flickr	Online photo management and sharing application. Available at https://www.flickr.com/.

THE MYSTIQUE OF THE NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT

KIMBERLY ATHANS

ABSTRACT

This study explores the transformative nature of the National Writing Project (NWP). It employs an interpretive phenomenological analysis approach and self-efficacy theory in order to understand the perceptions of K-12 teachers who attended the NWP in Southeast Texas in the last five years. Using interviews, reflexive journals, and a reflective metaphor activity, the researcher attempts to understand the ways that the six participants see themselves as writers and teachers of writing after experiencing the summer professional development program of the NWP. Two research questions guide the study: What are the perceptions of select National Writing Project Fellows of themselves as writers after participating in a summer writing institute? What are the perceptions of select National Writing Project Fellows of the impact the NWP has had on the way they teach writing after participating in a summer writing institute? The researcher concludes that all of the participants developed a sense of self-efficacy; some of the participants viewed the program as a transformative process that changed the way they teach writing and the way that they see themselves as writers; and most of the participants immediately changed several of their teaching practices and felt a renewed sense of enthusiasm towards the teaching of writing after participating in the NWP. The researcher also concludes that the legacy of the NWP is a highly effective and transformative professional development tool for K-12 teachers in any discipline, and that the teachers teaching teachers training model is effective in professional development of teachers.

Keywords: National Writing Project, phenomenology, writing pedagogy

The mystique of the National Writing Project (NWP) is difficult to define, but one participant captures it well, stating, "A culture of warmth, empathy, and appreciation of individual and social differences characterizes the NWP's summer institute. . . .[which is] 'one third seminar, one third group therapy, and one third religious experience"' (Whyte et al., 2007, p. 12). As a doctoral student, I participated in the Sam Houston Writing Project Summer Institute (SI), an experience that not only enriched my classroom teaching and assessment of writing, but reignited my passion to write by inspiring me to write for myself and for publication as often as I can. The opportunity to participate as a Writing Project Fellow has been vital in developing my persona as a writer and as a teacher of writing, helping me to understand my pedagogical theories about teaching writing, and assisting me in serving my school and community to develop a writing program which implements the

ideas espoused by the legacy of the NWP. Every day of the SI was devoted to writing, sharing writing, reading mentor texts, modeling lessons, listening to others present and tell stories, workshopping, and sharing ideas with colleagues. The greatest gift I took away with me from that experience is that I am a *writer*, and that the model of teachers teaching teachers is the best mode of professional growth. Most importantly, I learned to listen to and trust my own voice.

The Legacy of the National Writing Project

The NWP model serves as a guide for the kind of professional learning community that has proven effective in a high school setting, and "is one of the most successful networks of teachers creating opportunities for teacher growth" (Votteler, 2007, pg. 51). It focuses on teachers teaching teachers, and teachers as writers. It was so refreshing to write every day and to share our writing. All activities were designed to put theory to practice, and what emerged was a sense of community, support, respect, and value placed on the written word. People come together when they share writing. There is something about the unveiling of our thoughts, dreams, fears, wishes, and desires on the page that connects us as a community of writers. As Lieberman and Wood (2003) shared, "Many have questioned whether any other subject matter can engage teachers the way writing can" (p. 91).

The NWP model of teachers as writers and teachers teaching teachers is vital to the success of classroom teachers of writing. Fruscella (2012) discussed the life changing experience of the SI, sharing that "Every day I left, I felt challenged to view my students and teaching with a new perspective, employed with new strategies of instruction, equipped with the most confounding recent research in educational issues, and supported by a network of teachers teaching teachers" (2012, p. 18). Teachers who have been trained under the National Writing Project model are better teachers of writing (Liberman & Wood, 2003).

As a NWP trained teacher of writing, I adopted practices which I know will enhance the learning and writing of my students, such as teaching them to write in various modes of

discourse and genres, showing them how to research topics and incorporate evidence into their writing, creating a nurturing and inviting environment that fosters confidence in themselves as writers and supports peer review, using portfolios and multiple authentic assessments, adhering to the writing process and teaching them how to find their own process, using conferencing, modeling, mentor texts, literature circles, and publication to motivate and inspire them to write. Most importantly, I write along with them so that I can better understand their experiences as a writer in my classroom and so that they feel the collaborative and constructive presence of a teacher who is also a writer and part of the community of writers in our class. As former NWP Director Robert Infantino (1990) espoused,

> no matter what age, people are usually reluctant to share their writing aloud. Yet the simple but powerful tool of hearing someone else's writing read by that person has made my teaching better and my classrooms more secure [as a low risk, comfortable environment] for all of us. (p. 20)

My study searched the core of this legacy. My research questions were (a) What are the perceptions of select NWP Fellows of themselves as writers?, and (b) What are the perceptions of select NWP Fellows of the impact the NWP has had on the way they teach writing?

Theoretical Underpinnings

Self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997) provides the theoretical framework for this study. Students must be taught how to assert themselves and express their views in their writing. Teachers need to empower them to have a sense of agency about their arguments and positions and teach them how to look at all sides of an issue when developing their assertions. Mascle (2014) claimed that due to the shifting contexts for writing our students face, fostering agency is a vital part of learning to write, yet our writing classrooms do not attend to agency- the fear and loathing of writing plays a large role because it interferes with the practice of writing as well as a willingness to embrace agency.

Self-efficacy theory explores the nature of agency in teachers and students, and how it transfers from teacher to student to the larger world of being a citizen in a democratic society. A construct of socio-cognitive models of behavior and learning, it is a theory that posits the nature of a person's sense of empowerment and confidence that derives from a particular experience, defined as "a person's belief that he or she is capable of dealing with complex tasks" which is an important factor in developing human agency (Bandura, 1997, p. 122). Bandura defined perceived "self -efficacy [as] concerned with judgements of how well one can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations" (p. 122). Klassen, Tze, Betts and Gordon (2011), have defined self -efficacy in teachers as "the confidence teachers hold about their individual and collective capability to influence student learning" (p. 21). Teacher's self-efficacy is the beliefs they hold about their capability to teach their subject matter even to the most challenging students, and are claimed to influence their instructional behavior (Tschannen-Moran, & Woolfolk, Hoy, 1998).

Lavelle (2006) noted that there are few studies which have explored teachers' beliefs about their own writing abilities. In an exploratory study, she examined teacher beliefs about writing competence and discovered a relationship between writing self-efficacy and writing performance. According to Locke, Whitehead, and Dix, (2013), there does not appear to be research in relation to self-efficacy in the frame of Writing Workshop teacher participation, even though Writing Workshop principles and practices are surmised by their transformational potential regarding teacher self-confidence as writers and teachers of writing. There is a long history of research on self-efficacy as an aspect of teacher competence (e.g., Klassen et al., 2011) in which teachers' self-efficacy beliefs are thought to play an important role in the educational process. Holzberger, Philipp, and Kunter (2013) asserted that as it was with prior studies, (Tschannen-Moran, et al., 1998; Woolfolk et al., 1990) teachers with higher self-efficacy beliefs showed higher instructional quality, as indicated by the three dimensions of cognitive activation, classroom management, and individual learning support. Teachers who possess self-efficacy produce students who possess self-efficacy. According to Selvester and Summers (2012), "teachers and students

need to take risks together by co-constructing opportunities for students to voice their opinions, their beliefs, and their desires without censorship" (p. 20). This self-efficacy empowers students to feel a sense of agency because literate thinking helps adolescents understand the sociocultural contexts in which they form their identities, assert their sense of agency, and participate in their own literacy development (Langer, 1987).

Darling-Hammond (2006) argued that what teachers know and do in the classroom with their students has the most influence on what their students learn. In their teaching practices, teachers must possess the confidence and ability to lead their students intellectually and ethically. Teachers who possess self-efficacy are able to acknowledge the social, political, cultural, and historical facets of literacy. They empower their students with critical skills to interrogate and rhetorically analyze texts and their purposes in order to see how texts have a sense of agency. (Selvester and Summers, 2012). This transference of agency is seen in the way students respond to texts in discussion as well as in their own writings. Selvester and Summers (2012, p. 81) shared:

When teachers and students engage in discussions to interpret a writer's intent, students learn that there are multiple interpretations of a text's meaning and that the interpretation is contextualized socially, culturally, linguistically, politically, and historically. They learn to value the diversity of their voices and gain confidence in the power of their own personally generated meaning.

Data Collection

For this study, I collected data from interviews, teacher reflections, and a reflective metaphor activity, which allowed me to obtain information on the perceptions of six NWP fellows who had participated in the SI in the past five years as they attempted to make sense of their experiences in the summer institute and how those experiences have transferred to the classroom setting. The interviews provided descriptive data in the participants' own words to garner insight into the participant's perceptions (Bodgan & Biklen, 2006).

During the interview process, I asked open-ended questions to obtain detailed information from the participants without leading their responses. Additionally, teachers were prompted to write a journal entry in which they reflected upon their philosophy of teaching writing and the "take-aways" from their experiences. These journals were coded according to first and second cycle coding (Saldana, 2013) to identify patterns and themes that emerged. The journals served to convey descriptive data regarding how the teacher teaches writing and how they believe the NWP has affected their philosophy of teaching writing.

Data Analysis

The analysis of data included thoroughly evaluating data and determining the themes that emerged using an In Vivo coding scheme (Saldana, 2013). I engaged in careful and concise data analysis, which is defined as the re-examination, re-categorizing, or otherwise recombining the data in order to derive empirically based conclusions (Ryan & Bernard, 2003: Yin 2014), employing a constant comparative approach and coding to cultivate and categorize the themes and patterns and developing themes identified during the study.

Data Coding Process

All responses from participants, either in writing or by verbal interview, were transcribed, then coded using Saldana's (2013) descriptions as a guide. As themes emerged, I analyzed cases through cross-case analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2013), which can help to focus themes and identify generalizability of teacher perceptions. Initially, I coded the interviews and journals through an inductive descriptive coding approach. I then employed In Vivo coding, in which I recorded codes using the words or short phrases from the participant's own language" (p. 74). In looking at the transformations that may occur as a result of participating in the NWPSI over time, I employed process coding, because it "connote[s] observable and conceptual action in the data. . .[by] imply[ing] actions intertwined with the dynamics of time, such as things that emerge, change, occur in particular sequences, or

become strategically implemented" (p. 75). In the first cycle of inductive coding, I summarized and organized the data, and in the second cycle of coding, I categorized the data according to themes and constructs which generated pattern codes, which tended to consist of the following summarizers: "categories or themes, causes/explanations, relationships among people, and theoretical constructs" (Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, 2014, p.87). I mapped these pattern codes, weaving first cycle codes into the narrative and supporting it with field note data.

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

In answering my research questions, I employed a phenomenological approach, in which I attempted to understand the perspectives of my participants as they attempted to understand their perspectives. According to Smith (2011), "Interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) is a recently developed qualitative approach which has rapidly become one of the best known and most commonly used qualitative methodologies" (p. 9). Phenomenology (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003; Smith et al., 2009; van Manen, 1990; Wertz et al., 2011) is the philosophical movement concerned with lived experience and the desire to construct the detailed examination of experience on one's own terms. Saldana (2013) describes it as "the study of the nature or meaning of everyday or significant experiences" (p. 272).

In IPA research, the researcher talks to the participants in order to analyze how they make sense of what they say regarding the experiences that they have had. In this process, the researcher attempts to discover their perceptions of what the participants think is happening to them. Smith and Osborn (2007) defined it as a way "to explore in detail how participants are making sense of their personal and social world" (p. 53). In this form of analysis, the researcher attempts to get close to the participant's personal world through the process of interpretive actions based on the researcher's perceptions of the participant's meaning-making of their experiences. This method poses the question: does the researcher see something that the participant may not even be aware of? Smith & Osborn posited (p. 53):

> Thus, a two-stage interpretation process, or a double hermeneutic, is involved [in which] the participants are trying to make sense of their world, [and] the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world.

IPA is therefore theoretically connected to hermeneutics and theories of interpretation (Packer & Addison, 1989; Palmer, 1969; Smith & Osborne, 2007).

Smith and Osborn (2007) asserted that "the power of the IPA study is judged by the light it sheds within the broader context" (p. 56). They also added that IPA researchers wish to analyze in great depth and detail how participants perceive and make sense of things, which are happening to them. This analysis method is appropriate for this study because this particular study attempts to investigate teacher perceptions, and in doing so the researcher must employ a double hermeneutic in order to understand the way in which the participants understand their experiences. Smith (2011) argued that a paramount goal of IPA research is to make a contribution to research through "interrogating or illuminating existing research" (p. 43).

Additionally, Smith, Flowers, and Larking (2009) advocated for analytical processes to be iterative, fluid, engaged, and multi-directional. As such, analysis involves immersive and intense reading and re-reading of the text, initial noting on exploratory levels of relationships, processes, places, events, values and principles, fluid textual analysis of exploratory noting, developing themes, and searching for connections and patterns. Additionally, analyzing data involves a pre-analysis decision model to explore biases, assumptions in data analysis, and intra-coder agreement through member checking for informant feedback (Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Leech, N. L., 2007).

The Balloon Metaphor

In order to get a better sense of how my participants perceived themselves as writers on their writing journey, and to see the influences along the way as they developed as writers, I asked them to create balloon metaphors, visualizing the balloons as the writers who had

influenced their pedagogy and philosophy of writing and writing instruction. I used this visual from Bishop (1999), who imagined Don Murray and Peter Elbow as "individuals, in their author functions or rhetorical constructions, [are] raised and dismissed, treated as fatherly Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade balloons, floated through critiques as unitary. . .figures" (p. 11). This is especially significant to the work we do in the NWP because we are a network of teachers teaching teachers. We build a legacy that influences others before us and after us.

To illustrate the data which emerged from the balloon metaphors, I have created a balloon matrix of themes that "floated" through the data, as conveyed in figure 1. This cross-case display (Miles & Huberman, 1994) illustrates the contrasts and ranges of perceptions (Saldana, 2013).

Figure 1. Ballon Metaphor Themes

Explicating Themes

In an attempt to simplify the themes, and since so many of them overlap and interconnect, I created the following ten sub themes (which were distilled from a list of 30 themes):

Theme 1: first teaching writing experience ever

Theme 2: valuing and cherishing the writing journal

Theme 3: the collaborative experience of sharing writing with other participants and garnering new perspectives

Theme 4: entry into a discourse community of scholars in the field

Theme 5: gained confidence/empowerment/self-efficacy, voice

Theme 6: creative release/therapeutic nature of the experience/self-discovery

Theme 7: immediate transfer of skills and strategies to the classroom/changed the way I teach

Theme 8: writing as a way of life/freedom to write/a space to write

Theme 9: teachers teaching teachers

Theme 10: Teacher Writer/Writer Teacher dichotomy: discovering that you are a writer on some level (rediscovery, validated, emerged).

First Teaching Writing Experience Ever

Most of the participants stated that their experience as a fellow in the NWPSI was their first "course" ever on the teaching of writing. Only one participant who had her master's degree in education had a previous course on the teaching of writing. All participants stated that they felt uncomfortable teaching writing, and that they were never trained prior to the NWP on how to teach writing. They described their previous writing pedagogy as a journey of trial and error, in which they navigated the process alone. Several participants shared that they worked in English departments and elementary schools where their colleagues never discussed teaching writing with the exception of the research paper or writing workshop. Each of the participants stated that the focus in their schools had always been on teaching reading rather than on teaching writing. When immersed in a discourse community whose primary aim was to focus on best practices in the teaching of

writing, these NWP Fellows expressed feelings of relief, joy, validation, excitement, enthusiasm, uneasiness, and anxiety.

Valuing and Cherishing the Writing Journal

Each participant mentioned the personal journal and class book, which was published at the end of the SI. They spoke very fondly of their journals, recalling the process of creating it and stating that it was an extremely profound and personal experience for them. Each of them stated that they cherished their journals, and that they still had them and often revisited them when they wanted to recall where they were at that time in their life emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. This idea struck me as significant, not only because it was echoed time and again in the interviews, but because it resonates with Parker Palmer's (2017) notion of "who is the self that teaches?" (p.4), validating that an effective teacher must engage in continuous reflection, stillness, and contemplation as they attempt to understand who they are emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. Palmer mused (p. 4):

> Who is the self that teaches? How does the quality of my selfhood form the way I relate to my students, my subject, my colleagues, my world? How can [we] sustain and deepen the selfhood from which good teaching comes?

In this regard, the journal serves not only as an impetus for personal expression, contemplation, introspection, and reflection, but also as a tool to fully develop as an educator. One participant discussed how she profoundly remembers writing about the loss of her grandmother as a child, another recalls writing about her childhood, and another celebrates writing poetry. Whatever the content, the journal was a vital tool in the metacognitive work fellows endured to reflect upon their lives, ideas, values, feelings, discoveries, musings, and speculations.

The Collaborative Experience of the NWP

Each participant discussed the value of the collaborative nature of the NWP. One of the most significant experiences for them was the multiple opportunities they were given each

day to share, collaborate, and discuss ideas with their table groups or as a class. Sharing their writing was a valuable experience for all of them, and many of the fellows stated that they appreciated having an audience for their work. They welcomed feedback and enjoyed going through the stages of the writing process with their colleagues in a workshop environment. They also stated they enjoyed the lesson demonstrations and that they gleaned several new ideas of implementing strategies teaching writing in their classrooms across grade levels and content areas. Perhaps the most impactful statement about the collaborative nature of the NWP was the opportunity to see other teacher's perspectives and to understand idiosyncratic ways of teaching and learning. One participant even noted that the director and other faculty members took the journals home every night and commented on them with sticky notes, and that ever since then that is something that she has implemented with her own students because the authentic feedback made such a powerful impact on her.

Entry into a Discourse Community of Scholars in the Field

Half of the participants stated their experience with the personal writing served as the impetus to help them develop their voices as scholarly writers, equipped with the self-efficacy to do so. Most participants echoed that they gained exposure to seminal texts literacy scholars, and the articles, guest speakers, texts, and discussion topics immersed them into a discourse community of scholars where for once in their lifetimes they felt a part of the dialectic. This fruitful dynamic offered these teachers the opportunity to contribute and be a part of a conversation about best practices teaching writing that they had never before experienced. Four of the participants shared that the books and articles that they were exposed to motivated them to read more scholarship in the field, enabling them to discover more authors and gain exposure to new ideas regarding teaching reading and writing.

Confidence/Empowerment/Self-efficacy/Voice

NWP Fellows may have used different words to describe it, but every single one of them spoke or wrote about how the experience empowered them to use their voice and

knowledge to implement change in their classrooms, schools, and districts. Each of them shared that at the end of the four or five weeks, they left the SI feeling more confident and assured about who they were as professional educators, and that they felt as if their voice was important and vital to embracing change. Not only that, they felt heard and encouraged. With a renewed sense of authority that quickly transferred to agency, these teachers possessed the self-efficacy to share what they knew and had learned with other teachers, administrators, district leaders, fellow graduate students, and most importantly, the students who would enter their classrooms in the fall.

Creative Release/Therapeutic/Self Discovery

NWP Fellows claimed that there was something magical about their way of thinking that "opened up their mind[s]". They described the feeling as being that of a much-needed creative release, or as a vital outlet for a school year's worth of pent-up stress and mental exhaustion. They talked about the therapeutic nature of journaling, sharing, reflecting, pondering, meditating, and even going outside to write in the summer sun and be alone with one's thoughts for a time. Each of the participants stated that the SI offered them stillness, a pause, a third space all their own to write, think, and reflect.

The notion of a "third space", which comes from post-colonial theory and is an offshoot of post-structuralism, acts as an ambiguous area that develops when two or more individuals interact, challenging our sense of our identity as a homogenizing, unifying force. In this ambivalent area of discourse, "cultural statements and systems are constructed in this contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation, [implying] that individuals have no fixity and even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, re-historicized, and read anew" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 7).

The SI was neither their own classroom nor the university classroom, rather it was a "third space" all their own that they looked forward to every day with anticipation. It was a neutral space carved out just for them, a place to be a writer, and only a writer, if even for an ephemeral moment in time. In that space they discovered themselves. They explored their fears, dreams, desires, ambitions, goals, and writing baggage. The NWP Fellows made

it clear that they have never experienced anything like this in any other professional development experience before, nor do they think they will ever experience it again.

Immediate Transferability to the Classroom Writing as a Way of Life/Freedom to Write

Most participants celebrated the fact that they finally felt the freedom to write and to continue writing for themselves and their students long after their final session had met. They shared that they looked forward to writing each day, and that although it was a lot of work, it was by far the most rewarding work they had done in a professional development setting. They offered that their way of thinking shifted and that they began to value time and space for writing more. Many of them lamented the end of the SI, stating that they felt an emptiness when it was over and they were no longer immersed in the daily rhythms of writing. Their remedy was a commitment to this renewed way of existing as a teacher who is free to write.

Teachers Teaching Teachers

Perhaps the next most significant notion that emerged from the participants is the concept of "teachers teaching teachers." Teachers lauded the idea that they learn best from each other, that they are praised for being knowledgeable, skilled professionals who have a lot to offer their colleagues, and that they are given the opportunity to share what they know with each other. In most professional development programs, teachers are talked to from an expert who shows little value and respect for what they do on a daily basis in their classrooms. They are rarely asked to contribute their own ideas or share their unique experiences and perspectives, and sit passively as knowledge is imparted to them from someone in a position of power. In the NWP model, teachers are invited to share what they know. Teachers are ushered into the conversation by the director who facilitates their whole class discussion and listens as they share in their table groups. This kind of social constructive environment creates an atmosphere where knowledge is constructed together, and where authentic learning occurs.

Teacher Writer/Writer/Teacher Dichotomy

Most teachers feel a tension between the Teacher Writer/Writer/Teacher Dichotomy without actually being cognizant of it. They are torn between being a teacher who writes and a writer who teaches. Typically, the teacher overshadows the writer and the writing falls by the wayside due to the myriad of responsibilities teachers face in a school day. The participants leave feeling as though this tension has been dissolved into a new identity. Many of the fellows share that they emerged with the conviction that they are "a teacher who writes." They claim that they discover that they are in fact a writer on some level, whether it be that they rediscovered their love of writing and feeling of being a writer, that they already felt that way but that feeling was finally validated by the NWP, or that they emerged as a writer for the first time.

Implications for Teachers

Founded in 1974, The National Writing Project has a legacy as being the best professional development model for K-12 teachers because of its effective timeless practices, sound philosophy and theoretical underpinnings, and the valuable people at the core of its mission who pledge to uphold the integrity of the legacy. The notion of teachers teaching teachers, cemented in a collaborative learning environment that is rich with academic scholarship, grounded in research, and yet encourages personal reflection while upholding a commitment to best practices teaching writing, is what ensures its success. In an era where standardized testing and teacher and school accountability rein, where STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) is revered and literacy often forgotten, and where students are navigating a digital age with less and less focus on writing, thinking, reading, interpreting, and analyzing texts, students need NWP trained teachers who are passionate about writing, who are adept at teaching it, and who are writers themselves. Furthermore, teachers need the space and solace that the NWPSI provides for rejuvenation, reflection, introspection, and collaboration. Good writing teachers will nurture and create students who write well and who enjoy writing as well as reading, and quite frankly, our students deserve it. The NWP is an exemplar for models of professional development in any content area and grade level, and teachers who are trained in the practices of the NWP are better teachers of all disciplines across the curriculum. District leaders, school

administrators, teachers, literacy coaches, and university professors and deans need to work together to support and utilize the 180 local NWP sites throughout the country. The NWP is approaching its 50th birthday, and new generations of teacher consultants and directors are working hard all year long to ensure the continuation of a legacy of excellence in writing education.

CONCLUSION

In my attempt to glean the perceptions of the participants about how they viewed themselves as writers and teachers of writing, I uncovered much more: the impressive legacy of the NWP, the mystique of the local sites and their ability to make writers out of non-writers and scholars out of school teachers, and the notion of writing as a way of life. Adrienne Rich once said that we must read and write as if our lives depend upon it, and that is generally not taught in school (http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource/540t). I ask why not? As a former NWP Fellow myself, I too was transformed as a writer, teacher, scholar, and person. In fact, almost everything I do in the classroom has its roots in the pedagogical philosophy and theoretically underpinnings of the NWP. After 20 years of teaching high school and college level English, I am now a professor of teacher education, and I approach every class that I teach as if I am directing a writing project. Why? Because the strategies of collaboration, daily reading and writing, creating a community of writers, and nudging students to ask questions and explore ideas with each other, (while providing them with a nurturing and safe environment to do so), are what good writing teachers do. I am committed to encouraging my teachers to teach other teachers, while approaching my classes both as a writer who teaches and a teacher who writes, and providing my students with the freedom, space, and time to write and reflect. I am hopeful that this will instill in them the notion that writing is a way of life, encouraging them to publish their work, exposing them to mentor texts and good models while writing alongside them, and making it my goal each semester to foster a sense of confidence, self-efficacy, and empowerment in my students and encourage them to discover their voices. These are not only the marks of good

teaching, but the tenets, best practices, and mystique of a national organization that tries daily to do the same.

This article is dedicated to the legacy of Robert L. Infantino, Ed.D., Professor of Education, Emeritus, and Director of the San Diego Area Writing Project (1980-91), who encouraged me to attend the National Writing Project Summer Institute, and who was my mentor, professor, advisor, and friend for 27 years. He is the reason I am the teacher I am today.

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About the Author

Kimberly Athans, **EdD** attended the University of San Diego, where she received her Bachelor of Arts degree in English and her Master of Education degree in literacy. She also attended the University of Houston, where she received her Master of Arts degree in English, and Sam Houston State University, where she completed her doctorate in Literacy Education. Since beginning her career in education 25 years ago, she has taught high school English and college composition and literature in California and Texas. Her research focuses on best practices teaching writing, literacy in secondary schools, and the legacy of the National Writing Project. She currently teaches future teachers at Point Loma Nazarene University.

CREATING AND REPRESENTING INTERTEXTUAL CONNECTIONS TO SELF-SELECTED PAIRED TEXTS: A POETIC INQUIRY

WILLIAM BINTZ AND LISA CIERCIERSKI

ABSTRACT

This article describes an instructional strategy developed to integrate reading and writing. This strategy invites students to use reading, writing poetry, and illustrating as tools to represent intertextual connections to self-selected paired text. It identifies poetic inquiry as the research methodology, discusses intertextuality, and provides a rationale for this instructional strategy. It also shares a brief overview of paired text, discusses poetry as a useful and flexible literary tool for responding to self-selected paired text, and describes different theoretical perspectives on response to literature, highlighting one perspective that underpins this instructional strategy. Samples of student writing that resulted from using this strategy in the classroom are shared. Lessons learned and a lasting thought are provided.

Keywords: intertextuality, poetry, reading, writing, illustrating, inquiry

As a middle grades English/Language Arts teacher and a reading teacher, I want students to read and write in engaging and meaningful ways. I also want my teaching to reflect Common Core State Standards, especially those that require students to make connections between two or more texts. Now, I teach reading and writing separately. I want to integrate, not separate, reading and writing

-8th grade English/Language Arts and Reading teacher

We often collaborate with middle grades and high school English Language Arts and reading teachers. They always often remind us that teaching is a rewarding, but challenging profession. They work hard to find practical solutions to complex problems. This 8th grade teacher is no exception.

Here, we describe a classroom-based, inquiry project on an instructional strategy that we developed in response to this teacher's wish to integrate reading and writing. This strategy

invited students to use reading, writing poetry, and illustrating as tools to create and represent intertextual connections to self-selected paired text.

We begin by describing poetic inquiry as the research methodology used in this inquiry. Next, we discuss intertextuality and provide a theoretical rationale for using this instructional strategy in the classroom. Then, we share a brief overview of paired text and discuss poetry as a useful and flexible literary tool for responding to self-selected paired text. We also share different theoretical perspectives on response to literature, highlighting one perspective that undergirds this instructional strategy, and share samples of writing that resulted from using this strategy in the classroom. We end with lessons learned and a lasting thought.

POETIC INQUIRY

Poetic inquiry was used as the research methodology in this inquiry. This methodology has many definitions. Here, we used the definition of poetic inquiry as a phenomenologicallyinspired form of qualitative research approach in the social sciences that uses poetry in some way as a component of an inquiry project (Owlton, 2018).

Poetic inquiry is not a new form of qualitative research methodology. In the professional literature references to poetic inquiry as a methodology date back at least 70 years (James, 2017) and is based on many tenets (Galvin & Prendergast, 2015). This qualitative inquiry project was based on three of these tenets, namely, that poetry has much potential in the context of inquiry
(Pendergast, 2009), poetry is a valuable way to collect, analyze, and represent data (Prendergast, Leggo, & Sameshima, 2009), and poetry can be used as an analytical approach as well as a representational form in qualitative work and a form of inquiry (Butler-Kisber & Stewart, 2009).

Poetic inquiry is used by qualitative researchers in three ways: researcher voiced poems, participant voiced poems, and literature voiced poems (Prendergast, 2009). Researcher voiced poems are interpretive, expressive poems written by the researcher based on data collected in field notes, journal entries, reflective notes, etc. Participant voiced poems are interpretive, expressive poems written by a participant based on formal and informal interview transcripts between the researcher and participant. Literature voiced poems are interpretive, expressive poems written by the participant in response to literature.

Literature voiced poems was the methodology used in this inquiry for several reasons. As an arts-based methodology, it invites researchers to use a variety of methods and non-traditional texts to collect, analyze, and represent data. For example, arts-based educational researchers use mediums such as photography, video, art, dance, prose, and poetry to represent data. The rationale is that "a plurality of methods can cast a wider net, catch more, put us in the web of a truly productive artful science" (Brady, 2009).

Moreover, poetry was used as a written response to literature, in this instance paired text, for several reasons. Writing is an important component of any research inquiry, and yet "poetry has been largely ignored in educational research" (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2003, p. 14). Poetry is a form of writing and representation that can create new ways of seeing and understanding (Eisner, 1997), and poetry can "surprise both ourselves and our audiences with new possibilities" (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2003, p. 37). As Cahnmann-Taylor (2003) states, "Just as the microscope and camera have allowed different ways for us to see what would otherwise be invisible, so too poetry and prose are different mediums that give rise to ways of saying what might not otherwise be expressed" (p. 35).

In sum, poetic inquiry is the study of written poetry. Here, we studied original poetry that was composed by students to represent the intertextual connections they made from self-selected paired text. We share one student's complete booklet of poems to illustrate the variety of poems that was characteristic of all students' booklets.

Intertextuality

Intertextuality means "to weave together" (King-Shaver, 2005, p. 1) and refers to relationships, or "the juxtaposition" (Bloome & Egan-Robertson, 1993, p. 305) between different texts. These relationships are based on the notion that "no literary text is written in a vacuum" (Orr, 1986, p. 814). Rather, every text is interwoven with other texts, or as Bakhtin (1986) states, "all texts are tinted with echoes and reverberations of other texts" (p. 91).

Intertextuality, or the more commonly used phrase *making connections*, is grounded in both national and state standards. In Texas, intertextuality is reflected in two important Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) Standards for English Language Arts and Reading. These standards include: (1) make connections to personal experiences, ideas in other texts, and society with adult assistance, and (2) make inferences and use evidence to support understanding with adult assistance (TEKS, 2017).

Teachers can develop and implement a variety of research-based instructional strategies to put these two standards, and many others like them, into action in the classroom. Fortunately, many instructional strategies have already been developed to help students make intertextual connections across texts in meaningful and engaging ways (Bintz, 2015). Three of the most popular strategies are making text to self, text-to-text, and text to world connections (Harvey &
Goudvis, 2017; see also, 2007). Another strategy is developing and implementing paired text.

PAIRED TEXT

Paired text are two texts that are conceptually related in some way, e.g. topic, theme, genre, etc. It builds on the notion that "learning is seeing patterns that connect" (Bateson, 1979,

p. 11) and "reading is making connections between the books readers are currently reading and their past experiences" (Harste & Short, with Burke, 1988, p. 358). Paired text invites teachers to put intertextuality into action. They help readers "develop both an expectation for connections and strategies and for making the search for connections more productive and wide ranging" (Short & Harste, with Burke, 1996, p. 537). Making connections between texts and representing those connections with poetry are two ways readers can respond to literature.

Poetry as Literary Tool and Flexible Genre

Historically, teachers, especially English/language arts teachers, have students read poetry, but also "write from poetry, write about poetry, and write poems themselves" (Somers, 1999, p. 125). Writing from poetry is when students use poems as starting points for writing personal reflections and formal papers. Writing about poetry is when students use poems to examine and critique genres and specific poems. Writing poetry is when students use models and patterns to write their own poems.

Poetry is a powerful literary tool. It makes an art form out of ordinary language (Brady, 2009, xii). It has "potential for sharpening oral communication, building vocabulary, facilitating closer readings of texts, and improving writing skills" (Eva-Wood, 2008, p. 564). Poetry is also a flexible genre across grade levels and content areas.

In this inquiry, we used poetry as a data source and viewed it as "a unique and vital way to express and learn" (Vincent, 2018, p. 64).

Response to Literature

Like poetry, reader response theory has a rich literary history. This history describes different theoretical relationships between a reader and a literary work. In this inquiry we used a transactional theory of reader response (Rosenblatt, 1995).

This theory of reader response depicts the relationship between reader and text as a transaction. A transactional perspective views reading as a process in which the reader and text influence each other. This perspective views reading as "an event, a transaction involving a particular reader, a particular text, occurring at a particular time and in a particular context in which the meaning does not reside ready-made in the text or in the reader, but happens during a transaction between reader and text" (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 4). Until transaction occurs, a text "remains merely ink-spots on paper until a reader transforms them into a set of meaningful symbols" (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 24).

Rosenblatt (1995) described the transactional relationship between a reader and a text as the reader's stance. Since readers transact with texts for different purposes, a reader's stance can fall along a continuum. At one end of the continuum is efferent reading. This is informational reading. The term *efferent* refers to the reader's stance that focuses primarily on obtaining, or carrying away, information from a text. In this stance the reader spends much attention on obtaining public, generally shared meanings, and less on privately felt aspects from a text. For example, efferent reading can be used to understand how a blood vessel carries blood to and away from the heart, reading a city map to locate a particular museum, an instructional manual for fixing a computer bug, and a professional guide for rewiring an electrical circuit.

On the other end of the continuum is aesthetic reading. This is experiential reading. The term *aesthetic* refers to the reader's stance that engages in the experience of reading itself. In aesthetic reading the reader's attention is "centered directly on what s/he is living through during her/his relationship with that particular text" (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 25). Reading happens only in the reader's mind. It does not take place on the page, on the screen, or in the text, but in the *act* of reading.

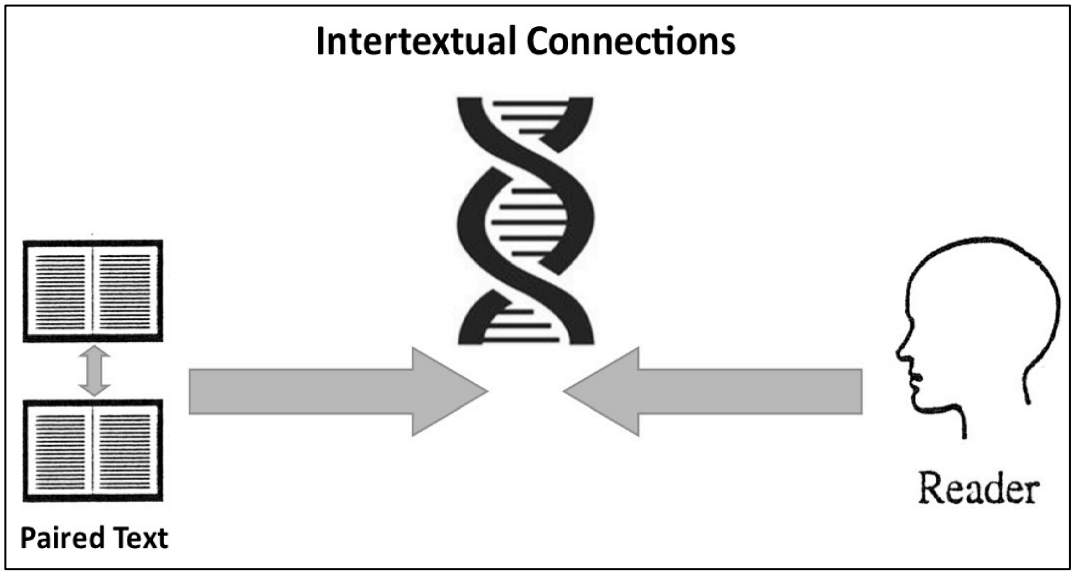
A transactional view of reader response posits that different transactions between readers and texts at different times, under different circumstances, and for different purposes may produce different interpretations. It also posits that a transaction is an event over time and a reader's stance may shift back and forth many times during any act of reading. The stance depends on why the reader is reading and what the reader aims to get out of the reading, e.g. gain information or create an aesthetic experience. The *poem* represents the result of the transaction, that is, it's what happens when the text is brought into the reader's mind and the words begin to function symbolically, evoking, in the transaction, images, emotions, and concepts.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY

We developed an instructional strategy to integrate intertextuality with selected CCSS and paired text and situate it within a modified version of a transactional view of reader response.

Typically, a transactional view of reader response depicts a single reader transacting with a single text. Figure 1 illustrates a modified version of this transactional view. This version depicts a single reader (on the right), but shows the reader transacting, not with a single text, but with a paired text (on the left). An image similar to a double helix appears in the middle. The large, curved, and interweaving lines on the helix represent each text in the paired text. The horizontal lines inside the helix represent the intertextual connections the reader creates with the paired text. The instructional strategy used in this inquiry was based on this modified version of a transactional view of reader response. This strategy invited students to select and read a paired text, create intertextual connections across texts, and represent these connections by writing and illustrating poetry.

Figure 1. Modified Version of Transactional View



RESEARCHERS' BACKGROUNDS

We both teach graduate courses in literacy education at different universities: one in the Midwest and the other in the Northeast. Our courses focus on intertextuality and instructional strategies to integrate reading and writing across the curriculum. Recently, we invited students, all of whom are practicing teachers, K-12, to experience this instructional strategy. Conceptually, we wanted students to experience intertextual thinking and learning. Instructionally, we wanted them to select a paired text, create intertextual connections, explore different poetry formats, and write and illustrate a booklet of original poems that represented the connections. Ultimately, we wanted students to experience this instructional strategy so that they, in turn, could use this same strategy with their own students when asking them to read and write poetry with paired texts.

We organized and implemented the instructional strategy in a series of interrelated reading, writing, and learning experiences. First, we read aloud *R is for Rhyme* (Young,

2010), an alphabet book consisting of a collection of illustrated poems with a variety of poetic formats, terms, and techniques, and invited students to consider using some of these to write their own poems. We also developed and shared a text set on different poetic formats across the curriculum (see Table 1).

Table 1

Different Poetic Formats

The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere
Troy Thompson's Excellent Poetry Book
Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices
I am Phoenix: Poems for Two Voices In Flanders Fields Why Explore?
Edgar Allan Poe's Pie: Math Puzzlers in Classic Poems
The House
Doodle Dandies: Poems that Take Shape
A World of Wonders
Birds on a Wire
One Leaf Rides the Wind
A Wreath for Emmett Till
Math Talk: Mathematical Ideas in Poems for Two Voices
Science Verse
Summer: An alphabet Acrostic
Before Morning
Sciencepalooza: A Collection of Science Poetry for Primary and Intermediate Students
When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer
R is for Rhyme: A poetry Alphabet

Next, we organized students in small groups and invited them to read through different texts. While reading, we invited them to record notes about poetic forms that appealed to

them. Then, we invited students to think about a content area they find challenging and develop a paired text in that content area. We wanted to transition students to integrate reading and writing and shared the following:

> Select a paired text from a content area that is appealing or challenging to you. During and/or after reading, jot down connections you found between the texts. Consider each connection a topic for a potential poem. Then, select different poetic formats that appeal to you, one for each connection. For example, you may want to write and illustrate a haiku for one connection, a ballad for another, a cinquain for yet another, and so forth. Submit your original and illustrated poetry in a booklet. Decide which poems from your booklet you wish to share with the whole class.

As a culminating experience, we invited students to share their paired text and read aloud to the class one or more poems from their booklet. We also invited them to write personal reflections about the experience and the thinking behind their actual creations.

Writing Samples

In this section we share selected poems for one student's booklet. Each poem focuses on a connection the student made from a self-selected paired text: *Red: A Crayon's Story* (Hall, 2015) and *The Noisy Paint Box: The Colors and Sounds of Kandinsky's Abstract Art* (Rosenstock, 2014).

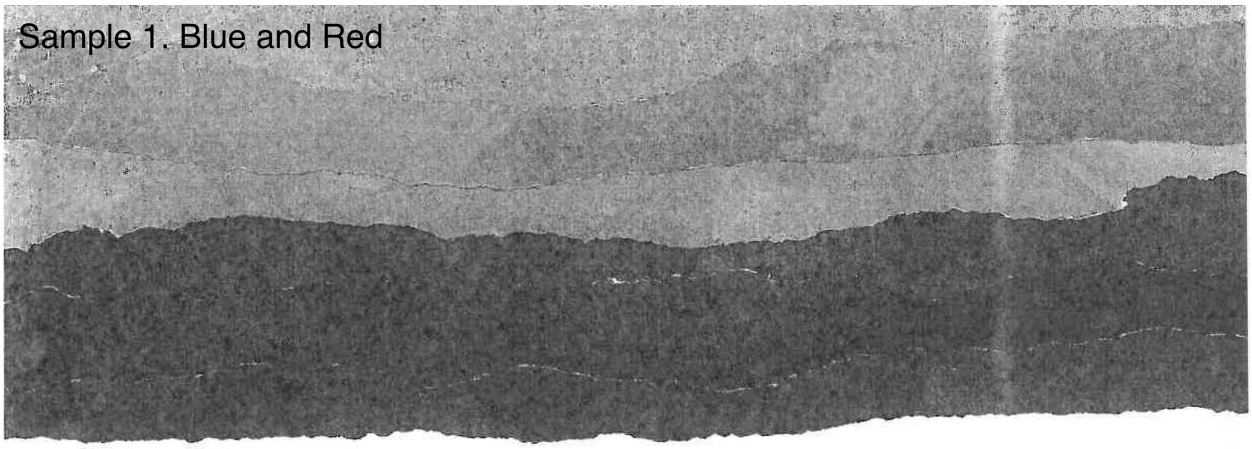
Red is a colorful story about a blue crayon with an identity crisis. The blue crayon is erroneously labeled "red." The blue crayon was unable to be red like the label everyone could see. A teacher, mother, and scissors try to help with his identity, but it remains miserable. Finally, a new friend provides a different perspective and red discovers its real identity, something readers have known all along. It's blue!

The Noisy Paint Box is the story of the life and times of Vasily Kandinsky, one of the first painters of abstract art. An intriguing facet about Kandinsky is that he had a harmless genetic condition called *synesthesia*. This condition allows people to hear colors, see music, taste words, or smell numbers. Because others knew he was different, Kandinsky struggled to be an authentic self throughout his life.

Sample 1 illustrates an untitled diamante poem that focused on the connection of being your authentic self. A diamante is a seven-line poem resembling a diamond. It can, but does not have to, rhyme. It is often used to describe two opposite topics (www.familyfriendpoems.com).

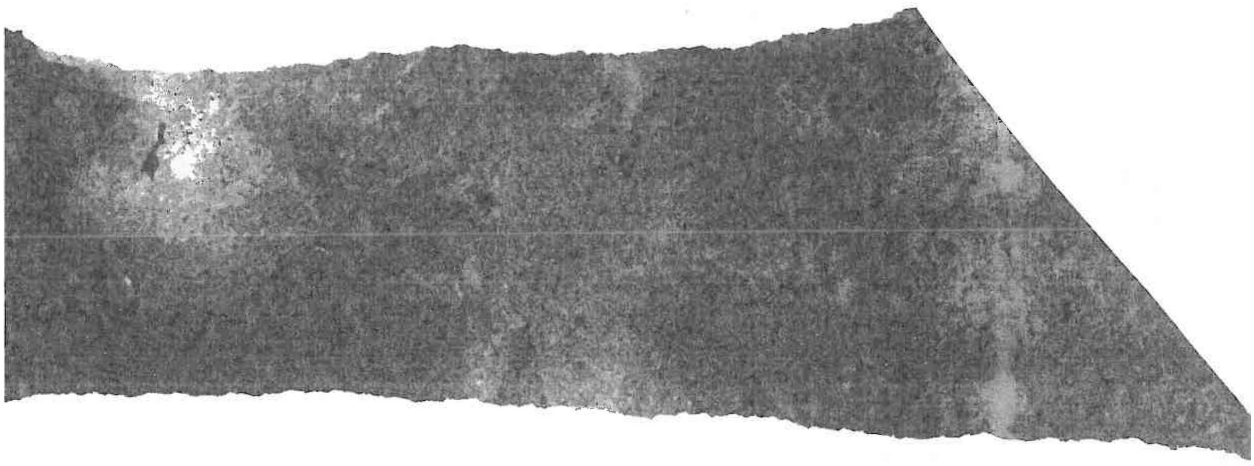
The structure for a traditional diamante is the following:

Line 1:	1 word (subject/noun)
Line 2:	2 adjectives that describe line 1
Line 3:	3 –ing words that relate to line 1
Line 4:	4 nouns (first 2 relate to line 1, last 2 relate to line 7-if author is writing about opposite topics)
Line 5:	3 –ing words that relate to line 7
Line 6:	2 adjectives that describe line 7
Line 7:	1 word (subject/noun)



Sample 1. Blue and Red

BLUE
BRILLIANT EFFORTLESS
FUNCTIONING INSPIRING DARING
BUT WHEN ASKED TO BE SOMETHING ITS NOT
TYING FAILING LACKING
OBVIOUS SUPERFICIAL
RED



Compared to the traditional definition and structure, this poem is a modified diamante. It contrasts the colors, blue and red, and is shaped in the form of a diamond. Line 4, however, does not consist of 4 nouns; it consists of eight words, only one of which is a noun, and functions as a transition to contrast the brilliance of blue to the superficiality of red, or contrasting the authentic self (blue) to the inauthentic self (red). The author stated:

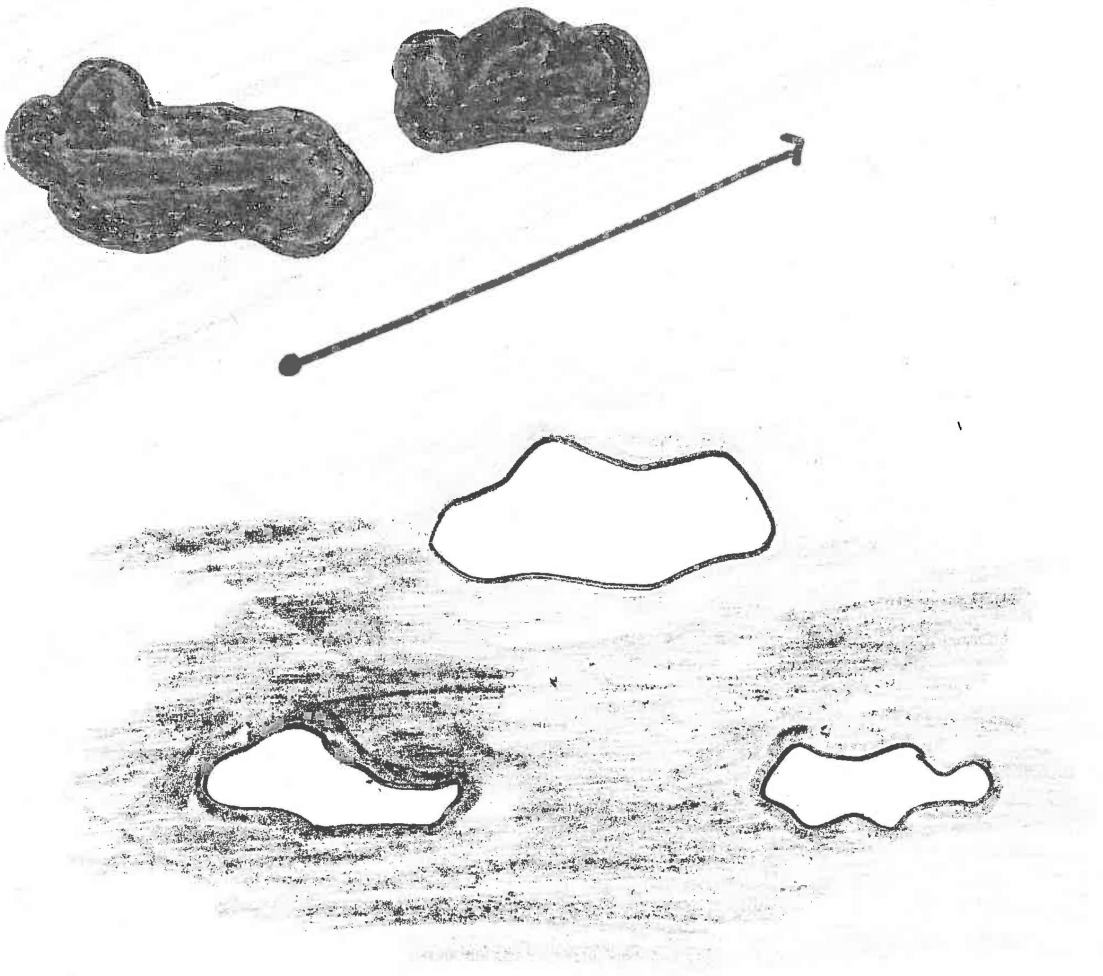
> My diamante poem contrasts blue and red in relation to Hall's story about the blue crayon that was labeled incorrectly. The crayon was unable, no matter how hard it tried, to be red like the label everyone could see. When someone came along and allowed the crayon to be blue, even encouraged it to be blue, then suddenly it was able to shine and others noticed what they didn't before when they were trying to force it to be less than its authentic self. I called red 'obvious' facetiously because that's all anyone saw even though that was only the wrapper.

Sample 2 illustrates a doublet entitled "Red to Sky" and focuses on the connection of transformation. The format of a doublet is to make a list of words that change, one letter at a time, to make a different word. The doublet is written one word under another to make a word ladder. The poem is then written around this word ladder. The first and last words of the word ladder are usually the title (Young, 2010).

Sample 2. Red to Sky

Red to Sky

red won't always work
without a rad -ical shift to a world where periods
can be a starting point, like a ray,
we will say, "It can't be done like that."
And our sky will always be flushed ruby and scarlet
-instead of ever
azure, indigo, cyan, or cobalt



"Red to Sky" is consistent with the structure of a doublet. It contains a word ladder, starting with red, then rad, ray, say, and ending with sky. The words change one letter at a time to make a new word, e.g. red to rad, etc. The first word, red, and the last word, sky, are in the title. The author integrates and contrasts literacy and mathematics concepts into the doublet. From a literacy perspective, periods denote a stopping point, e.g. a specific punctuation mark placed at the end of a sentence to indicate the completion of an idea. From a mathematics perspective, a ray is a line with one end. It starts at a certain point and extends infinitely in one direction. When periods are viewed as rays, they become, not stopping points, but starting points to build worlds reflected in authentic colors. The author explained:

> My doublet poem is about the literal transformation of the word red to the word sky, but it is also a figurative transformation of the 'red' crayon as it changed in others' eyes to a beautiful blue when allowed to color the sky. It's like suddenly it was seen for what it was instead of what it was not. In the same way, a period can be seen as an ending, like when used in a sentence, but if renamed as a point, then it can be the beginning of a ray. Transformation from a stopping place to a starting place simply by choosing to rename and view it differently.

Sample 3 illustrates a limerick (untitled) and focuses on the connection of exploring your own reality. A limerick is a five-line, humorous poem that follows a rhyme scheme of AABBA (www.familyfriendpoems.com). The structure for a traditional limerick is the following:

Line 1:	7-10 syllables
Line 2:	7-10 syllables
Line 3:	5-7 syllables

Line 4: 5-7 syllables

Line 5: 7-10 syllables

Sample 3. Untitled Limerick

There once was a boy who was bored
To follow the norm he abhorred
He thought, "What's the big deal?"
To me THIS is what's real
New ideas must be explored!

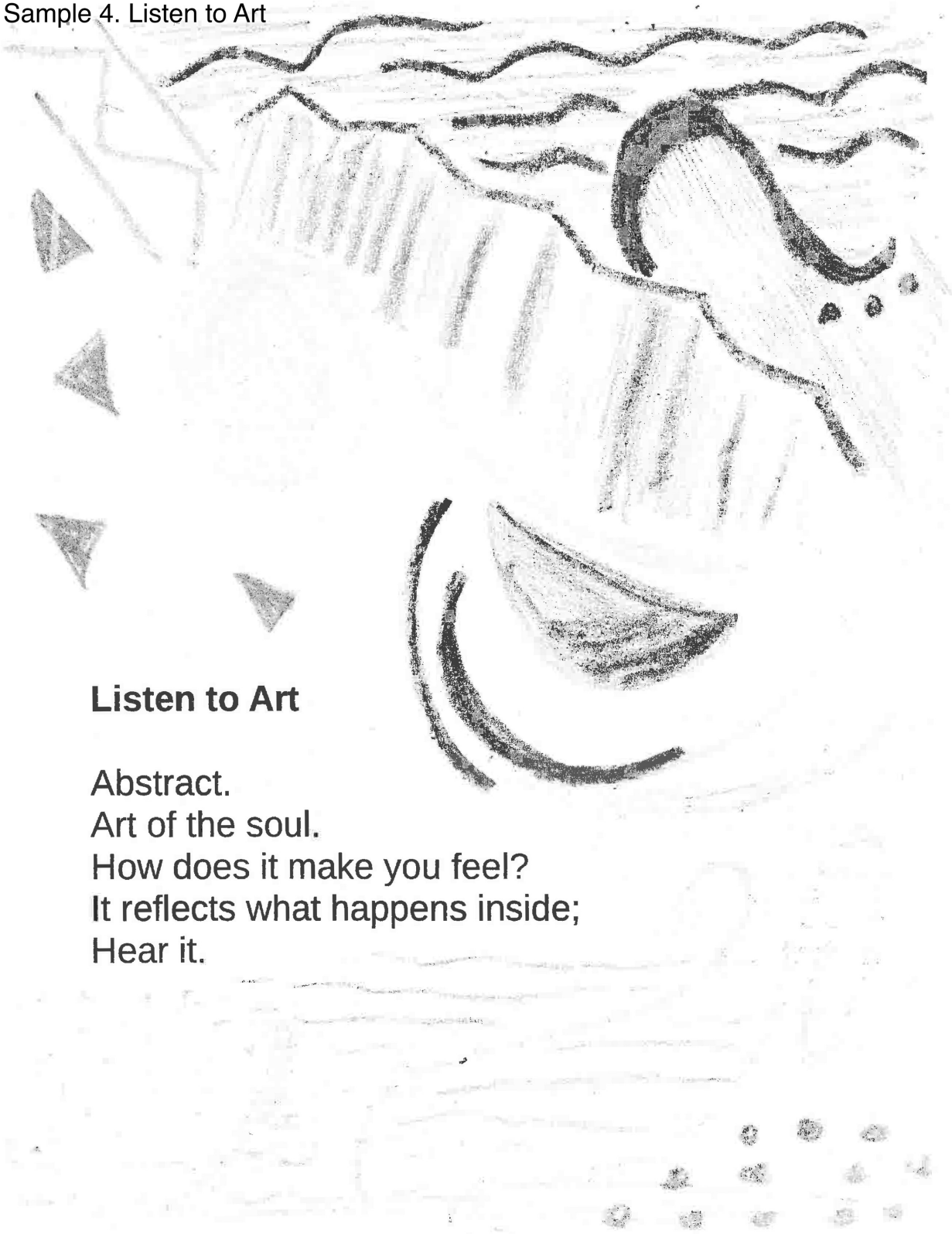
Sample 3 is consistent with the traditional structure for a limerick. It is a humorous poem about what Kandinsky might have felt like being a little boy, living normally from his point of view but being seen abnormally by others because there was little awareness of and knowledge about synesthesia at the time. It is also a challenge for readers to explore new ideas. The author said,

> This limerick is a silly way to Kandinsky's story. It also has a sort of moral or prompting explore your own reality, don't settle for what is. It makes light of the monotony of always doing things the same way and is an encouragement to the reader to try new things. Kandinsky created a whole new art movement and style, abstract art.

Sample 4 illustrates a cinquain entitled "Listen to Art" and focuses on the connection of inside is what counts. A cinquain is a 5-line poem that follows a particular format. It can vary depend on whether the poem is based on word or syllable count or parts of speech. The format for a syllable count cinquain is the following:

Line 1:	1-2 syllables
Line 2:	2-4 syllables
Line 3:	3-6 syllables
Line 4:	4-8 syllables
Line 5:	2 syllables

Sample 4. Listen to Art



"Listen to Art" is consistent with a syllable count cinquain. It focuses on the connection that inside is what counts. What's inside is important to understand abstract art and the reading process. Background knowledge and personal experience allow the viewer of art and the reader of text to really listen and understand. Just hear it. The author explained,

> My poem is primarily talking about the way to understand abstract art. It's sort of the same way we read literature. We bring our own experience and feelings into the creation. For each of us it may be different. This poem also hints to the blue crayon being inside the red wrapper. The most beautiful things that it could do were a result of the inside, not the outside.

Lessons Learned

In this article, we shared one student booklet because it was representative of all student booklets in this project. We learned several lessons across all student booklets. One lesson was that students genuinely valued this experience. They found this strategy an engaging, creative, an open-ended opportunity to represent their thinking and learning. One stated:

> I really enjoyed representing my learning in this creative format. I spent much time thinking through the connections I was creating and how I would represent them in writing. My thinking was divergent. I felt like there were so many connections between my paired set. There were color connections, the process of finding yourself connections, ways to look at outside influences and what is normal or desired connections, and ultimately how they all connect as a commentary on beauty. People are inspired to work and learn and grow when they are given permission to be truly themselves.

Another stated:

> This experience taught me much about myself as a reader and writer and teacher of reading and writing. I never realized how many connections can

> be made across two texts and how powerful poetry can be to express those connections.

Another lesson involved the element of surprise. Smith (1998) noted that when students are meaningfully engaged in learning experiences, they often learn more than they expect to learn. This happened with students. One stated:

> I was reluctant at the start. I don't consider myself a poet or artist and had some hesitation about delving into those two areas. In the end I was amazed at how thought-provoking this experience was. I enjoyed it immensely and found that writing poetry deepened my thinking between the texts. Writing poetry evoked emotions and made me sensitive to the fact that I had to choose words carefully. This led me to really think about what I was trying to say about the connections. It is one thing to make connections; it's another thing to expand on connections through writing poetry.

Still another lesson involved students' taking inquiry stances and asking new questions. Inquiry is messy and often filled with tensions (Lewison, Leland, & Harste, 2014). Asking new questions is a good way to explore tensions and invites thinking differently. Students used this experience to think differently about current tensions with their own teaching. One stated:

> I started reflecting on this paired text experience both as a graduate student and as a middle school teacher. I found myself asking new questions. What if we diagnose students like the crayon or Kandinsky as having a learning deficiency when in reality we are failing to see their intelligence? Students have different aptitudes and abilities in things that often go unrecognized, underutilized, and underdeveloped. School calls certain students successful because it caters to a certain set of valued skills.

We learned that making intertextual connections is not a static, but a generative process. Making connections generate other connections. One stated:

> This experience allowed me to analyze a paired text in more ways than I ever would have before. I found myself making endless connections between the books. I made connections to themes, connections with illustrations, and connections with characters. I look at books very differently than I did before.

Finally, we learned that paired texts invite readers to make connections that are not only generative, but also see connections as opportunities to do research. For example, when it came to the paired text, students did not treat each text equally. They created intertextual connections but saw different potentials from each connection. Some connections reflected aesthetic responses, while others reflected efferent responses. One student intentionally selected a paired text that included one fiction text and one nonfiction text. This student saw one connection as an opportunity to do research and represent findings from the research in a specific poetic format.

She stated:

> I liked using a fiction and informational book for my paired text. It gave me an opportunity to do research on one of my connections. I used my research to write a Ghazal.

This student saw potentials for taking both aesthetic and efferent stances in the same experience. Although a transactional view situates reader response along a continuum of two extremes, ranging from aesthetic at one end of the continuum and efferent at the other, much reading falls into the middle of the continuum with the reader responding to cognitive as well as emotive aspects (Roen & Karolides, 2005). Here, students did the same. They took both efferent and aesthetic stances on paired text and wrote poetry based on each of these stances.

LASTING THOUGHT

We believe that it is important for readers at all grade levels and across all content areas to respond to texts in a variety of ways, e.g. language, art, music, dance, drama, tableaux, improvisation, etc. Here, our aim was to invite and support students to use poetry as a literary form to respond to self-selected paired text. Specifically, students selected a paired text and read for the purpose to create intertextual connections and used specific poetic formats to represent connections they made.

Students were actively engaged and intellectually involved throughout this project. They spent time thinking critically and creatively, taking both aesthetic and efferent stances, creating generative intertextual connections, and inquiring and asking questions.

We hope this article helps teachers start new conversations and ask new questions about other engaging and creative instructional strategies to help students make intertextual responses to text.

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About the Authors

William P. Bintz, PhD, is a professor in Literacy Education in the Department of Teaching, Leadership, and Curriculum Studies at Kent State University. He has taught high school English/Language Arts in Chicago, Illinois, and middle school English/Language Arts in Aguadilla, Puerto Rico, San Juan, Puerto Rico and Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. He earned his Ph.D. in reading education at Indiana University. Prior to joining the faculty at Kent State, he was a Visiting Lecturer at the Armidale College of Advanced Education in Armidale, Australia, as well as an assistant professor at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, Kentucky, James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia, and the University of Kentucky in Lexington, Kentucky. His personal experiences and professional interests include literacy across the curriculum, K-12, collaborative teacher research, interdisciplinary curriculum, and using award-winning literature as "Way-In" and "Stay-In" literature to create and sustain student interest in content area topics where no interest currently exists. Currently, his professional interest is the use of *crossover icturebooks* in grades K-12.

Lisa Ciercierski, PhD, is an assistant professor of language and literacy education at Penn State Behrend, as well as the director for the PennLake National Writing Project. She earned her PhD in Curriculum and Instruction with a focus on literacy from Kent State University. Dr. Ciecierski's research interests include intertextuality, meaningful writing, and utilizing authentic literature both within and across the curriculum.

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.

WRITING INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

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 ($\eta p^2 = .15$). 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.

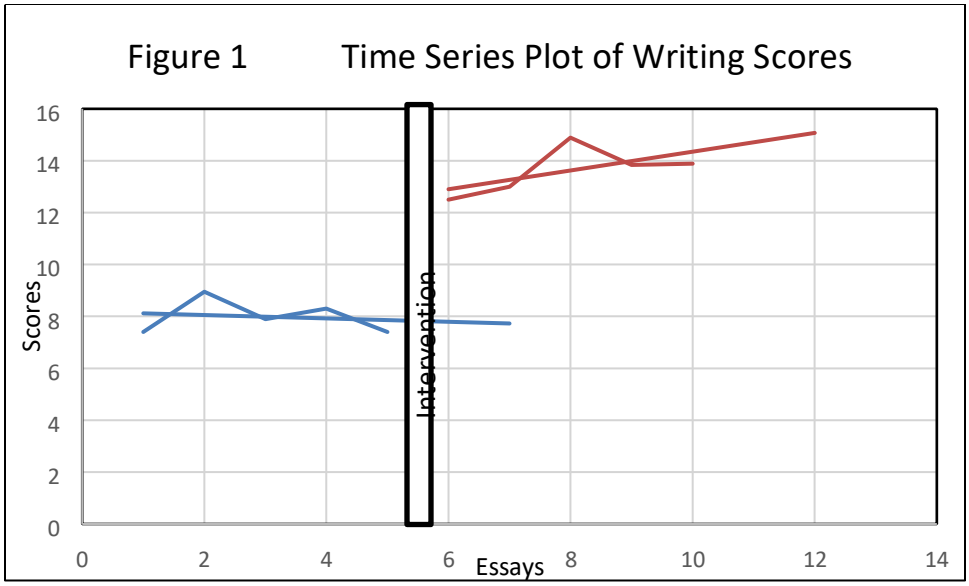

Figure 1. Time series plot of writing scores.

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?

<u>Think about the third-grade activities, events and memories, and explain</u> <u>why they are important or special to you.</u>

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

Name/ Number:
Date:

Writing Rubric

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: _____

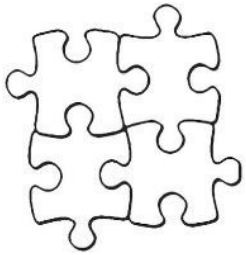
APPENDIX D

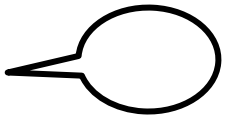
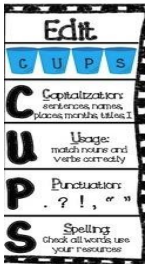
Student Friendly Rubric

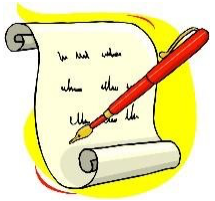
TRAITS RUBRIC for Writing 3rd Grade

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.	