The Effects of the Delivery Style of Teacher Feedback on the Writing Self-Efficacy and Dispositions of Young Students

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THE EFFECTS OF THE DELIVERY STYLE OF TEACHER FEEDBACK ON THE
WRITING SELF-EFFICACY AND DISPOSITIONS OF YOUNG STUDENTS

By

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I dedicate this to my students. You make me want to be a better teacher and person.

Thank you for inspiring me.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables xi

List of Figures xiii

Abstract xiv

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION 1

  Purpose of Study 2

  Research Questions 4

  Hypotheses 4

    Population and Sample 5

    Definition of Variables 5

  Conceptual Framework 6

  Definition of Terms 10

  Internal Validity 15

  Assumptions, Delimitations, and Limitations 16

  Summary 17

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW 19

  A Brief History of Writing Instruction 19

  Writing Today 22

  Writing Feedback 24

  Types of Feedback 24

  Delivery Method of Feedback 28

  Teachers’ Beliefs About Feedback 29

  Students’ Beliefs About Feedback 30
Research in Favor of Feedback 32
Research Against Feedback 34
Self-Efficacy 35
Dispositions 38
Gender 46
Skill Level 49
Research Design 50
Summary 50

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY 53

Identification of Setting and Participants 53

School 53

Third Grade Teachers 54

Students 55

Design of the Study 55

Description of Independent Variables 55

Delivery Style - Comparison Group 56

Delivery Style - Treatment Group 57

Controlling Variables - Both Comparison and Treatment Deliveries 58

Description of Dependent Variables 59

Writing Self-Efficacy Instrument 60

Writing Dispositions Instrument 61

Procedures 62

Data Collection 67
C: Writing Sample from the Treatment Group

D: Conferencing Script

E: Student Surveys:
   Writing Self-Efficacy Scale (1-8) and the Writing Dispositions Scale (1-11)

F: Researcher’s Script for Survey Administration

G: Original Self-Efficacy Scale

H: Letter of Support from Elementary School

I: Letter of Support from the School Board

J: Letter of Approval from the Human Subjects Committee
   at The Florida State University

K: Teacher Consent Form

L: “Glow and Grow” Feedback Form

M: Script for Recruiting Students for the Study

N: Parental Consent Form

O: Student Assent Form

P: Agenda for Teacher Training

Q: Worksheet Used to Explain Variables During Teacher Training

R: Lesson Plans for the Study

S: Worksheet Used to Review Six Traits During Teacher Training

T: Graphic Organizer

U: Student Independent Writing Prompt 1

V: Student Independent Writing Prompt 2

W: Student Independent Writing Prompt 3

X: Student Independent Writing Prompt 4
LIST OF TABLES

4.1 Description of Teachers 71
4.2 Description of Overall Sample 72
4.3 Gender and Race of Comparison and Treatment Groups 73
4.4 Skill Level of Comparison and Treatment Groups 73
4.5 Pre-Test Self-Efficacy Results by Comparison and Treatment Groups 74
4.6 Pre-Test Self-Efficacy Chi-Square Test 75
4.7 Pre-Test Self-Efficacy Contingency Table for Comparison and Treatment Groups 76
4.8 Pre-Test Dispositions Results by Comparison and Treatment Groups 78
4.9 Pre-Test Dispositions Chi-Square Test 79
4.10 Pre-Test Dispositions Contingency Table for Comparison and Treatment Groups 80
4.11 Post-Test Self-Efficacy Results by Comparison and Treatment Groups 81
4.12 Post-Test Self-Efficacy Chi-Square Test 82
4.13 Post-Test Self-Efficacy Contingency Table for Comparison and Treatment Groups 83
4.14 Post-Test Dispositions Results by Comparison and Treatment Groups 85
4.15 Post-Test Dispositions Chi-Square Test 86
4.16 Post-Test Dispositions Contingency Table for Comparison and Treatment Groups 87
4.17 Pearson Correlation Coefficients: Pre- and Post- Tests 88
4.18 Self-Efficacy ANCOVA Results by Comparison and Treatment Groups 89
4.19 Self-Efficacy ANCOVA Results by Teachers 92
4.20 Self-Efficacy Post-Test: Teacher Contrasts 93
4.21 Dispositions ANCOVA Results by Comparison and Treatment Groups 95
4.22 Dispositions ANCOVA Results by Teachers 97
4.23 Dispositions Post-Test: Teacher Contrasts 98
4.24 MANCOVA Results 99
4.25 Teacher Feedback: Number of Words Written to Students 100
4.26 Popular Types of Feedback Provided by Teachers 101
A.1 Self-Efficacy ANCOVA Interaction Effects by Group 158
A.2 Self-Efficacy ANCOVA Interaction Effects by Teacher 159
A.3 Dispositions ANCOVA Interaction Effects by Group 160
A.4 Dispositions ANCOVA Interaction Effects by Teacher 161
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Estimated Marginal Means of Self-Efficacy Post-Test by Group and Gender</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Estimated Marginal Means of Self-Efficacy Post-Test by Group and Skill Level</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Estimated Marginal Means of Self-Efficacy Post-Test by Teacher and Gender</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Estimated Marginal Means of Self-Efficacy Post-Test by Teacher and Skill Level</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Estimated Marginal Means of Dispositions Post-Test by Group and Gender</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Estimated Marginal Means of Dispositions Post-Test by Group and Skill Level</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Estimated Marginal Means of Dispositions Post-Test by Teacher and Gender</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>Estimated Marginal Means of Dispositions Post-Test by Teacher and Skill Level</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to examine the effect of the delivery method of teacher feedback on elementary students’ writings upon the writing self-efficacy and dispositions of young students. The participants in the study were third grade students from a public elementary school in the Southeastern United States. Using Bandura’s social learning theory (1977) which holds that personality differences are acquired through the learning process, especially through the process of modeling, data were collected to measure two affective domains of writing, self-efficacy and dispositions. During a nine-week study in which a comparison group had teacher feedback written on a separate rubric sheet and a treatment group had feedback written directly on their papers both based on the Six Traits of Writing, students were given a pre-test and post-test Writing Self-Efficacy Scale (Shell, Colvin, & Bruning, 1995) and a Writing Dispositions Scale (Piazza & Siebert, 2008). Analysis of Covariance and Multivariate Analysis of Covariance were used in the evaluation of hypotheses related to self-efficacy, dispositions, gender, and skill level. No significant differences were found between the comparison and treatment groups, by gender, or by skill level; however, significant differences by teacher were observed on the Writing Self-Efficacy Scale. The results of this study provide teachers with practical applications for the classroom as well as address gaps in current writing research.
CHAPTER ONE

In the 2003 report, “The Neglected R: The Need for a Writing Revolution,” the National Commission on Writing had a simple but direct message for American schools: We must do better. Out of the three “R’s” (reading, writing, and arithmetic), the report called writing the most neglected subject of the three, and found that with gaps at the K-12 level, writing difficulties could spread to the college level and to society at large.

In 2007, The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reported that 88% of eighth graders had basic writing skills; however, NAEP defines basic writing skills as only “partial mastery” of writing knowledge. In actuality, only 33% of the 88% scored at the proficient level, which represents “solid academic performance,” and even fewer, 2%, scored at an advanced writing level. Nationally, tenth grade results were similar. Eighty-two percent of tenth graders displayed basic skills, with only 24% of the 82% scoring at the proficient level, and only 1% at an advanced level. This national sample painted a worrisome picture - more than two-thirds of eighth and tenth grade students were not writing proficiently.

With alarming statistics at the K-12 level, it is no surprise that a writing cause and effect phenomenon is observed at the college level. From a sample of 300 college instructors, Hart (2005) found that 50% of high school graduates were not prepared for college-level writing demands. Similarly, in a study by the publishers of the American College Test (ACT), over 20% of students entering college need to take a remedial writing course (Quible & Griffin, 2007). In fact, when college professors were asked to choose one or two areas in which high schools could do a better job in preparing students for college, writing quality was their number one answer (Hart, 2005).

Beyond college, Gray, Emerson, and MacKay (2005) reported that employers consistently rate oral and written communication skills as among the most important, if not the most important, qualification their employees should possess. However, in a study of 120 major American corporations, it was reported that “businesses in the United States spend $3.1 billion annually for writing remediation” (National Commission on Writing, 2004, p. 3). Referring to writing as a “threshold skill,” one business person simply explained in the Commission’s report, “In most cases, writing ability could be your ticket in… or it could be your ticket out” (p. 3).
With deficiencies at virtually every educational level as well as concerns in the business sector, it is apparent that writing is an important subject that should be both improved upon and further researched.

**Purpose of Study**

To improve writing, many educators are seeking the best research-based instructional and assessment practices to implement in the classroom. In regards to instruction, many K-12 schools are using similar curricula that strive to balance the process and skills approach in writing and grammar. What does seem to differ in the area of writing is assessment, specifically how to respond to students’ writing in order to promote student writing growth. When it comes to writing assessment, Phelps (2000) stated:

Teachers’ response to student writing is as conspicuous and arresting a feature in composition teaching as Cyrano’s nose on his face. But mainstream scholarship in rhetoric and composition has never really looked in the mirror and realized the need to highlight this distinctive “nose” in any serious theory of student composition. (p. 92)

Along with Phelps, in its call to action, The National Commission on Writing (2003) suggested “best practices in assessment be more widely replicated” (p. 32) in American classrooms; however, when it comes to how to assess, the Commission’s publication, much like many writing instructional guides, did not spell out research-based assessment in the area of writing. The publication did state, “Schools that do well insist that their students write every day and that teachers provide regular and timely feedback with the support of parents” (p. 28).

But what does research-based teacher feedback look like?

Researchers agree that feedback in the area of writing is important (Atwell, 1998; Bratcher, 2004; Calkins, 1994; Dustro, Kazemi, & Balf, 2006; Goldstein, 2004; Graves, 1983; Hale, 2008; Hyland & Hyland, 2001; Tompkins, 2000); however, there is not one clear cut method that academia has embraced. Most researchers believe that feedback should start in a positive and helpful manner (Atwell, 1998; Bardine, Schmitz-Bardine, & Deegan, 2000; Calkins, 1994; Gee, 1972; Goldstein, 2004; Tompkins, 2000), even if there is only one positive word or phrase (Spandel, 2009).

Some researchers believe that teacher suggestions and commentary do nothing to improve student papers (Fazio, 2001); whereas, other researchers believe that providing feedback, even if just one area of growth at a time (Atwell, 1998; Spandel, 2009; Tompkins,
2000), can be helpful in many ways. Research has shown that providing teacher feedback can improve writing overall (Matsumura, Patthey-Chavez, Valdes, & Garnier, 2002), improve content (Olson & Raffeld, 1987; Patthey-Chavez, Matsumara, & Valdez, 2004), reduce errors (Feng & Powers, 2005), help students improve their writing self-esteem (Reeves, 1997), and also allows teachers to keep track of what lessons students need to be taught again in order to strengthen their writing skills (Feng & Powers, 2005).

Once the amount and/or type of feedback are decided upon, teachers need to decide the delivery method of their feedback. Currently, this researcher has only been able to locate one study on the delivery style of feedback. Smith (1989) argued that when teachers write their feedback on a separate sheet of paper instead of writing on the student’s paper that it may interfere with a student’s concentration during the revision process. Similarly, in their book “Tutoring Writing: A Practical Guide for Conferences,” McAndrew and Reigstad (2001) reported that when teachers make corrections or give feedback directly on a student’s paper, it helped the student by allowing the student to have something to refer to while revising or writing a new piece. However, both the study and textbook discussed above deal with students at the college level.

On the flip side, some believe that teacher feedback can be harmful to a student if it is written directly on a student’s paper. Hillerich (1985) stated:

No matter what the problem is, it is absolutely essential that you never put a mark on the writer’s paper in the process of your conferencing about that paper. The minute you do so it becomes your paper. You may – and should – offer help and make suggestions, but the writer must retain ownership of the paper. (p. 150)

Bolker (1978) added that if students maintain ownership of their papers, they could “accept and use criticism in a more productive way” (p. 183). However, this researcher was unable to locate studies that support those claims.

Making light of the above, Bratcher (2004) described providing writing feedback as schizophrenic in nature as the teacher wants to teach and fix every mistake but at the same time, remain positive and praise the young writer(s). There are many different techniques to assess student writing, but which one is the most effective? If a teacher does choose to provide feedback, which delivery method works best? Does writing on a student’s paper take away
student ownership of the paper? Do particular delivery styles in correcting writing affect children on an emotional level, such as a child’s writing self-efficacy or dispositions?

In the past, written composition has received little attention from self-efficacy and disposition researchers. Most self-efficacy research revolves around mathematics and most writing self-efficacy research revolves around how students compose a text (Pajares, 2003; Pajares & Valiante, 1997), and in regards to dispositions, most studies are focused on critical thinking at the college level. Searle and Dillon (1980) argued that an important missing question in writing research is how teacher responses affect students. This researcher was unable to locate any studies about the delivery style of teacher feedback at the elementary level and is also not aware of any research that couples the delivery method of teacher feedback with students’ writing self-efficacy or dispositions. Along with this gap in the current research, previous researchers have recommended that writing self-efficacy studies be conducted at lower academic levels, especially at elementary levels where self beliefs are taking root (Bandura, 1997; Pajares & Johnson, 1996; Schunk, 1991).

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to compare the effects of two different delivery styles of constructive content feedback and error correction on the writing self-efficacy and dispositions of third grade students at a public elementary school. The educational significance of this study is that it may help improve assessment practices in the area of writing and help contribute to the current gaps in research.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions were examined in the study:

1. Is there a difference in the effect on third graders’ writing self-efficacy of teachers’ feedback when written directly on a student’s paper versus when written on a separate rubric form?
   a. Do possible differences in self-efficacy based on feedback differ by gender?
   b. Do possible differences in self-efficacy based on feedback differ by skill level?

2. Is there a difference in the effect on third graders’ writing dispositions of teachers’ feedback when written directly on a student’s paper versus when written on a separate rubric form?
   a. Do possible differences in dispositions based on feedback differ by gender?
   b. Do possible differences in dispositions based on feedback differ by skill level?
Hypotheses

Based on the research questions, the following hypotheses were developed:

1. There will be a difference in the effect on third graders’ writing self-efficacy of teachers’ feedback when written directly on a student’s paper versus when written on a separate rubric form.
   a. There will be a difference in self-efficacy based on feedback by gender.
   b. There will be a difference in self-efficacy based on feedback by skill level.

2. There will be a difference in the effect on third graders’ writing dispositions of teachers’ feedback when written directly on a student’s paper versus when written on a separate rubric form.
   a. There will be a difference in dispositions based on feedback by gender.
   b. There will be a difference in dispositions based on feedback by skill level.

Population and Sample

The students in this nine-week study were drawn from third grade students at Lakeview Elementary School, a K-5 grade school with an enrollment of 608 students during the school year 2009 – 2010. Lakeview is located in a small town in a southern state.

Definition of Variables

The independent variable in the study was the delivery style of constructive content feedback and error correction of students’ papers by teachers. In the comparison group, the teacher wrote constructive content feedback and error correction on a separate rubric form instead of the child’s paper. In the treatment group, teachers’ constructive content feedback and error correction was written directly on the student’s paper.

The independent variable, delivery style of constructive content feedback and error correction of students’ papers by teachers, was further delineated by gender and skill level in both the comparison and treatment groups. Gender indicated male or female, and skill level represented low, middle, and high skill groups based on each student’s previous year’s standardized reading tests (as no standardized scores were available in the area of writing).

The dependent variables were the children’s attitudes regarding their writing abilities, specifically their writing self-efficacy and dispositions. The students completed two self-report instruments in a pre-/post-test design. The previously published instruments are a Writing Self-
Efficacy Scale (Shell, Colvin, & Bruning, 1995) and a Writing Dispositions Scale (Piazza & Siebert, 2008).

**Conceptual Framework**

Affective components strongly influence all phases of the writing process, as writing is as much of an emotional activity as it is a cognitive activity (McLeod, 1997). Both the theoretical framework, Bandura’s social learning theory, and the constructs of this study, writing self-efficacy and dispositions, involve affective components. Both of these components will be described in detail.

The lens through which this study is being viewed is Bandura’s social learning theory. Social learning theory is a personal-social development theory of personality and affective development. Social learning theory holds that personality differences are acquired through the learning process, especially through the process of modeling, which shows that children can learn and develop cognitively and affectively by observing others (Bandura, 1977). Social learning theory can be treated as a developmental theory, because it views cognitive and affective development as dependent on the cumulative effects of three important events: (1) maturation of the child’s increasing perceptual and physical abilities, (2) exposure to the increasingly complex verbal and physical behavior of models (parents, siblings, friends, teachers), and (3) an increasing ability to attend, recall, imitate, and be motivated. (Borich & Tombari, 1997, p. 71)

A simple example of social learning theory involves how children learn to share with others. According to the theory, a parent, sibling, or teacher would call a child’s attention to sharing by modeling how to share and then praising children who do share. After that, the model provides feedback and praise to children through the sharing process. Children will learn how to share but also learns that the expectation of sharing will please others and that they can become good at it. Feeling good about success reinforces a child’s self-efficacy, which is at the core of social learning theory and a construct of this study.

The definition of self-efficacy is a person’s belief about one’s capabilities to carry out an action that requires one to achieve a confident level of achievement (Bandura, 1997). “Self-efficacy beliefs provide the foundation for human motivation, well-being, and personal accomplishment” (Pajares, Johnson, & Usher, 2007, p. 105). There are four sources from which
individuals attain self-efficacy: mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal messages and social persuasions, and physiological states (Pajares, 2003; Pajares et al., 2007).

Mastery experience is the most influential and powerful aspect of self-efficacy. “A resilient sense of efficacy requires experience in overcoming obstacles through perseverant effort” (Bandura, 1997, p. 80). If a person experiences mastery or a successful performance of a skill, self-efficacy can be increased; however, if someone feels they have failed a performance, self-efficacy can be reduced. Mastery experience coincided with teacher feedback in this study. It is one of the reasons that teachers did not give negative feedback that would have fostered a feeling of failure; instead, teachers strived to foster a feeling of learning and mastery of the expository writing unit through constructive feedback, where the teacher helped the student figure out how to correct his problems.

Vicarious experience involves observing others perform tasks and coincides with teachers modeling the writing process. “People must appraise their capabilities in relation to the attainments of others” (Bandura, 1997, p. 86). Teachers’ modeling of expository writing and teachers’ modeling when they give feedback were prime examples of vicarious experiences. While observations are taking place, students can make social comparisons with others to increase or reduce their own self-efficacy.

According to Bandura (1986), children learn vicariously through modeling (Borich & Tombari, 1997). “Modeling involves being attentive to, remembering, imitating, and being rewarded by people, television, movies, books, and magazines” (Borich & Tombari, 1997, p. 335). Children can learn attitudes, values, standards, and intellectual skills from observing. Through the social learning theory, Borich and Tombari (1997) explain that a child is not popular because of an inherited temperament. Instead, through modeling, the child has learned behaviors involved in making and keeping friends. Children also have expectations that their efforts to make and keep friends will be rewarded. Modeling is effective for young learners, as they may have a harder time understanding complex subjects, like writing (Borich & Tombari, 1997). A child can learn by directly imitating a model or through inferring why a model is acting a certain way or doing a certain thing, and teachers who use this type of activity were found to be far more effective at helping young children learn than those who did not (Zimmerman & Kleefeld, 1977).

There are four psychological processes that need to occur for students to learn from modeling: attention, retention, motor reproduction, and motivation (Bandura, 1977).
Specifically in terms of schooling, during the attention phase, teachers would provide a
demonstration for students. During the retention phase, the transfer of knowledge must occur
with the learner. Retention can involve linking modeling to background knowledge, using
mnemonics, and conducting rehearsals for the student. The third phase, motor reproduction or
production, involves the teacher providing feedback to students in order for children to know if
they have mastered the material. The final stage is motivation, where students are encouraged
and praised to continue the modeled actions.

Finally, not as influential but as a part of self-efficacy, verbal messages and social
persuasions also affect this construct. If one hears positive persuasions, it can empower self-
efficacy beliefs, but on the other hand, if one hears negative persuasions, it can weaken self-
efficacy beliefs. In this view, teachers praised students as well as remained constructive rather
than negative in their feedback. Physiological states, like stress or mood, can also affect self-
efficacy. Due to this, grades and timed writings, where students would be given an exact
amount of time to write, were not part of this study.

Specifically related to writing, self-efficacy is a strong predictor of writing performance.
Having a strong writing self-efficacy does not instantly make a student a better writer; however,
having a high self-efficacy in writing will generate students who “have a greater interest in
writing, more sustained effort, and greater perseverance and resiliency when obstacles get in the
way of the task” (Pajares & Valiante, 1997, p. 353). Teachers need to take seriously their share
of responsibility in nurturing the self-beliefs of their pupils, because it is obvious that self-beliefs
can have beneficial or destructive influences (Pajares, 2003). For instance, students with low
self-efficacy focus on performance rather than learning, but students who are efficacious are
more likely to persist, work hard, and seek help so they can complete a task (Linnenbrink &
Pintrich, 2003). Due to the strong link between writing and self-efficacy, many self-efficacy
instruments have been used in a variety of writing studies, such as the Writing Self-Efficacy
Scale (1995) created by Shell et al., which was used in this study as a pre-/post-test.

In addition to self-efficacy, another construct in this study was writing dispositions. In
the past, intelligence has been largely based on abilities, such as IQ or aptitude tests; however, in
the past few decades, findings have shown that thinking dispositions are stable traits that can
help explain intellectual performance over and above measures of intellectual aptitude (Perkins,
Tishman, Ritchhart, Donis, & Andrade, 2000). “Several investigations have proposed that
intelligent behavior in the wild – in everyday circumstances in which carefully framed tests do not tell people exactly what intellectual task to attempt – depends in considerable part on thinking dispositions” (Perkins et al., 2000, p. 269). Dispositions are not only the abilities people have, but how people are disposed to use those abilities, hence the term dispositions (Perkins et al., 2000). “Dispositions are a very different type of learning from skills and knowledge. They can be thought of as habits of mind, tendencies to respond to situations in certain ways” (Katz, 1988, p. 30). A simple example of dispositions by Perkins and Tishman (2001) is that a person may tend to be grumpy in the morning. That does not mean that the person is always grumpy nor does it mean that other people without that disposition are never grumpy in the morning. “Studies have demonstrated over and over again that dispositional measures account for additional variance in intellectual performance beyond that explained by ability measures such as IQ or SAT scores, or equivalently, show corrections with intellectual performance holding ability measures constant” (Perkins et al., 2000, p. 287). People are not only governed by their intelligent behavior. They have tendencies or predilections to exhibit a certain behavior under a certain condition. Knowing the importance of dispositions, researchers must allow dispositions to take their place along side the discussion of abilities.

Contemporary attention to dispositions began in the mid-eighties with a paper by Robert Ennis, where most authors began treating dispositions as tendencies. From there, a panel of experts met in the late 1980’s to create an official definition for critical thinking and explore its components: cognitive skills and affective dispositions (Facione, 1990). Soon, researchers began to break down the aspects of dispositions. Resnick and Klopfer (1989) reported three aspects of dispositions: skill, inclination, and sensitivity to occasion, and similarly, Perkins et al. (2000) and Perkins and Tishman (2001) labeled three distinct components of dispositions: sensitivity, inclination, and ability. “Sensitivity and inclination make up the dispositional side of this story, the side that authors have merged together into a general tendency” (Perkins & Tishman, 2001, p. 6). Sensitivity can be defined as “the likelihood of noticing occasions to engage in the behavior” (Perkins et al., 2000, p. 273). For example, if students are reading a story about a person who had to make a decision, the sensitivity component of the reading is if the students are able to notice where decision making may or may not have taken place in the story. In addition to sensitivity, inclination is also part of the dispositions component. “Inclination concerns the motivation or impulse to engage in the behavior” (Perkins et al., p. 272-273). An example of
inclination is that once students find the decision making that needs to take place in the above mentioned story, the students begin thinking what their own ideas and/or decisions may be. Finally, ability is the basic capacity to carry out a behavior. In the above example, the students would be told exactly the decision that had to be made, then they would generate ideas related to the decision that needed to be made.

As there are components to general affective dispositions, Piazza and Siebert (2008) found three affective stances towards writing: confidence, persistence, and passion. These three components were an important part of this study. “Confidence reflects faith or belief in an individual’s ability to write and a certainty about his or her effectiveness as a writer” (Piazza & Siebert, 2008, p. 278). Knowing he or she can write rather than thinking writing is a gift or talent gives confidence and motivation to a young writer (Piazza & Siebert, 2008). The authors also regard confidence as a social component due to the collaborative aspect of writing as well as instructional conditions. Confidence can also mix with self-efficacy. In addition to confidence, persistence has been found to be an affective stance of writing. Prenzel (1988) defines persistence as “the maintenance of the relation by repeated, active engagements” (p. 3). When people are persistent, they frequently and continuously give their interest to something. When writers are persistent, they spend time writing, plan before or during their writing, solve problems in their writings, revise, and self-monitor their work (Piazza & Siebert, 2008). Finally, passion is a component of writing dispositions. Passion is “a writer’s intense drive or desire to write, a strong commitment to writing, and a repeated enjoyment of writing over time” (Piazza & Siebert, 2008, p. 278). Students who have a passion for writing voluntarily write because they believe writing has value. They also have strong self-perceptions as writers (Piazza & Siebert, 2008). Piazza and Siebert created a Writing Dispositions Scale which measures these three affective stances towards writing and was used as a pre-/post-test in this study.

**Definition of Terms**

In order to make the study as clear as possible, several terms need to be defined. The following is a list of important terms with their definitions:

Teachers assessed students’ writings by communicating with the students about how to make their writing better. “Assess, from the French, means to ‘sit beside,’ to exchange thoughts” (Graham, MacArthur, & Fitzgerald, 2007, p. 275). Assessment is different than evaluation. “Evaluation is the product of assessment;” whereas, “assessment refers to a collection of data,
information that enlightens the teacher and the learner, information that drives instruction” (Strickland & Strickland, 1998, p. 20). Teacher assessment in the area of writing has been explained using a variety of terms, including teacher feedback (Dutro et al., 2006; Goldstein, 2004; Hillocks, 1982; Matsumura et al., 2002; Patthey-Chavez et al., 2004), teacher commentary (Fazio, 2001), teacher response (Harris, 1977; Searle & Dillon, 1980), teacher comments (Bardine et al., 2000; Gee, 1972; McAndrew & Reigstad, 2001; Olson & Raffeld, 1987; Smith, 1989), teacher corrections (Fazio, 2001), and teacher editing (Feng & Powers, 2005).

For the purposes of this study, the researcher called teacher assessment of student writing, teacher feedback. Teacher feedback was broken into two parts, constructive content feedback and error correction. Constructive content feedback referred to the teacher commenting on the actual content of the student’s paper – what the student has to say and how thoughts are organized (Fazio, 2001), and error correction involved the use of conventions. “Conventions consist of the rules for capitalization, punctuation, and spelling” (Bradley-Johnson & Lesiak, 1989, p. 2).

The researcher did not refer to teacher feedback in this study as negative criticism. Bratcher (2004) explained the difference between positive and negative criticism when responding to a student’s paper. Negative “criticism focuses on what’s wrong without giving any feedback about how the ‘mistake’ can be corrected” (p. 76); whereas, positive feedback, or what Bratcher called “suggestions” show the writer how he can make his paper better. In this study, all teacher feedback was positive feedback, in that when a teacher gave constructive content feedback or made an error correction, the suggestion was always coupled with a model of how the student could correct or accomplish the task.

There were two different types of delivery styles of feedback in this study. When delivery style is mentioned, it does not mean the teacher/student writing conference. Delivery style refers to how the feedback is given in its written form. One way a teacher provided feedback was through a separate rubric form. In contrast, the other delivery method consisted of the teacher writing directly on a student’s paper next to identified problems in the students’ writings instead of on a separate form.

Both delivery methods were based on the six traits of writing. The six traits of writing are not a curriculum or program; they are a vision (Spandel, 2009). Spandel explained that the first six traits rubric was developed in 1984 by the Analytical Writing Assessment Committee, a
group of teachers from Oregon. The vision was based largely on Diederich’s work (1974). Diederich was curious to know if people agreed upon a set of common attributes of what makes writing work. After bringing together writers from various fields, Diederich created a list of common writing traits: ideas, mechanics, organization and analysis, wording and phrasing, and flavor. Following Diederich, the Analytical Writing Assessment Committee completed the same task for common writing traits among young writers. The committee created six traits. Since the inception of the six traits, the group has revised the traits many times, and they currently exist in both five and six point versions.

The six traits of writing are ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions. “Ideas” are the writer’s main message. Experienced writers will present a fresh, unique idea. They will understand their topic well and provide details and support for their idea. “Organization” is how the writing is organized. Most writing has a beginning, middle, and end. Experienced writers may have a title, use effective transitions throughout their writing, and have a piece of writing that is easy to follow. With “voice”, writers’ point of view comes through. “Voice and style reflect choices writers make. It is their unique stance toward the subject and the way they reach out and connect with readers” (Piazza, 2003, p. 113). Experienced writers can use voice to elicit a variety of emotions from the reader, connect with the reader, and show that they care about their topic. “Word choice” is selecting just the right word or phrase that makes everything come clear for the reader. Experienced writers choose words that can create images in the reader’s mind, use figurative language, and avoid repetition of words. “Sentence fluency” is the use of sentence variety. Experienced writers will use many different types of punctuation and start sentences differently than others. The variety gives the writing flow and rhythm. “Conventions” deal with spelling and grammar rules. Experienced writers spell high-frequency words correctly, use correct punctuation and capitalization, indent paragraphs, and show understanding of beginning grammar.

The beneficial aspect of using the six traits in this study was that the traits combine content and error correction. Instead of the teacher only making content feedback or only marking errors, as is the case in many studies (Feng & Powers, 2005; Olson & Raffeld, 1987), both content and surface errors were explored with each student. The six traits were chosen because they provided consistency among the amount of feedback and the type of feedback given.
Both groups of students discussed their papers in relation to the six traits of writing with their teachers in a one-on-one writing conference. There are three ways to respond to students’ writings: oral responses, written responses, and with grades (Bratcher, 2004). In this study, oral and written responses took place during a student/teacher writing conference; grades were not given. A writing conference is a one-on-one, knee-to-knee event when the teacher meets with an individual student to discuss that child’s paper. A conference can take place at a classroom table where the child and teacher can sit next to one another and away from other students.

There are many different types of one-on-one conferencing, such as on the spot, prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, instructional, assessment, and portfolio conferences (Tompkins, 2000). The conferences in this study were best described as drafting conferences. In drafting conferences, the child brought a rough draft and talked with the teacher about how to “improve specific trouble spots” in the draft (Tompkins, 2000, p. 139). During the conference, the teacher and child read through the child’s paper to find both positive writing techniques and areas of potential growth. The conference allowed the teacher to provide individual instruction in problem areas, or if larger problems existed with a majority of the classroom, conferences provided the teacher with mini-lesson ideas for the entire class. Conferences provide students with the next step whether it related to content, context, or craft (Hale, 2008). Students then took their teacher’s feedback and their first draft and revised their writings. First drafts, feedback methods, and final drafts were kept in the students’ writing portfolios.

During the conference, praise took place verbally. In regards to praise, Atwell (1998) reminds teachers to avoid generalized praise. Praise should not be sugarcoated; praise should be specific and honest (Hillerich, 1985). Teachers praised verbally whenever they deemed appropriate; however, the only written feedback the teachers provided were in the areas of improvement based on the six traits.

Once students received feedback, they revised and edited their papers to make their writing better in their next draft. Tompkins (2000) explains that novice writers sometimes believe that their first draft is their only draft. After providing feedback, teachers reminded students that experienced writers revise their papers through the comments and feedback they have received from readers of their papers. Revising can include “adding, substituting, deleting, and rearranging material” (Tompkins, 2000, p. 16). In addition to revising, editing can also take place. Editing involves polishing a paper through error correction and readability. After creating
a second draft, students published their writing by making a final copy to share with others. Publishing of student work can include hanging the writing on a bulletin board, adding the writing to a newsletter, allowing students to type or make a book of their writing, or reading their writing with a real audience.

The genre of writing that took place in this study was expository writing. Expository writing allows a child to provide her perspective on a certain subject. Expository papers have an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. Expository prompts, or topics, may be written in this format: “Everyone has a favorite food. Think about your favorite food. Now, explain why you like a certain food.” All assessments in this study were based on expository prompts and all of the lessons in this study were based on expository writing.

During the expository writing unit, teachers brought expository writing to life through mini-lessons and modeling. Mini-lessons were conducted daily on the six traits of writing. Mini-lessons are short lessons that can be conducted to demonstrate a writing concept or strategy (Atwell, 1998). Mini-lessons can highlight a topic, provide information about a topic, and give opportunities for guided practice (Tompkins, 2000). It is important to understand that mini-lessons are not worksheets, instead, they are taught in context to demonstrate how or what the students are currently writing (Tompkins, 2000). Topics that can be taught in mini-lessons include the use of alliteration, onomatopoeia, details, capitalization, and so on. Hale (2008) refers to these skills as writing craft. She calls specific craft techniques the small building blocks of writing. Hale (2008) suggests that when teachers begin a mini-lesson they ask themselves – what exactly am I teaching and why am I teaching this? These brief lessons can be taught with one child, in small groups, or with the entire class. After conferencing with students and seeing their individual work, the teacher had a better idea of what students need in the form of mini-lessons (Bardine et al., 2000); however, the researcher also provided detailed lesson plans with ideas for daily mini-lessons.

Along with mini-lessons, teachers also conducted model writing in the classroom. Modeling is “demonstrating what learners are about to learn” (Borich & Tombari, 1997, p. 335). It is the “process of being attentive to, remembering, imitating, and being rewarded for imitating specific behaviors” (Borich & Tombari, 1997, p. 335). When teachers model how to write, they can write with students on an overhead projector or on large chart paper (Graves, 1983). In this study, teachers conducted model expository writings on large chart paper. The paper was
clipped to an easel and was large enough that the entire class could read as the teacher composed. According to Tompkins (2000), there are three purposes of modeling writing: 1. to demonstrate how to do a new writing activity before the students do the writing activity on their own; 2. to demonstrate how to use writing strategies, such as monitoring and sentence combining; and 3. to demonstrate how conventions work. Tompkins (2000) also explains that when teachers model, they can write and create the text themselves or with suggestions from students, and they may talk aloud about the decisions and choices they are making as they compose. Modeling is also linked to self-efficacy. After seeing a successful model, observers may believe that if the model can learn they can as well (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007).

Independent writing is when children do the writing themselves. In this study, children wrote independently once every two weeks. Tompkins (2000) reports six reasons for students writing independently: 1. to provide an authentic context for writing; 2. to give students an opportunity to choose their own forms and/or topics; 3. to gain writing stamina and fluency; 4. as a tool for learning, such as content writing; 5. to make books or publish their writing; and 6. to document learning. During the independent writing, the students did not have a time limit.

Before and after the writing unit took place, the students completed both a Writing Self-Efficacy Scale and a Writing Dispositions Scale. Both scales use a five point Likert style. Likert scales allowed the students to pick one of five choices in answering a question: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree. The Writing Self-Efficacy Scale was created by Shell et al. in 1995 for elementary students. The eight question scale is a self-report instrument for measuring self-efficacy in the area of writing. The Writing Dispositions Scale was created by Piazza and Siebert in 2008. The 11 question scale is a self-report instrument for measuring affective stances toward writing.

All of the data analysis in this study was conducted by SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences), a computer software system for statistics.

**Internal Validity**

To ensure that implementation of the study was successful, threats to the internal and external validity were addressed. Mortality, also known as a loss of subjects, is a major concern in educational settings; however, Lakeview is known for a lower than average mobility rate due to its rural location so subject mortality caused by families and their children leaving the school before completion of the study was not an issue.
Both surveys used in the study had been tested for validity and reliability, so the main threat to validity in this study was consistency. Because the study involved five third grade teachers, it was important to ensure that all five teachers implemented the methods addressed in the study the same way. At the beginning of the study, all five teachers participated in a mandatory half-day training on each of the study’s variables. It was important to train the teachers at the beginning of the study in order for them to fully understand the two delivery methods that were being employed, such as the importance of providing six items of feedback for each student based on the six traits of writing, as well as how to provide positive feedback.

Another key concern was that individual teachers participating in the study may have a bias for or against one of the delivery methods. For instance, a teacher who has a strong belief in not writing on student papers may find it difficult to write/edit on a child’s paper. During the half day inservice, teachers had a chance to openly discuss the methods in order to minimize any confusion. During the discussion, none of the five teachers disclosed any problems in being randomly assigned to either of the two groups. In addition to data collection bias, there was also a discussion at the teacher training on the attitudes of subjects and the Hawthorne effect. Teachers were instructed to treat the two groups as similar as possible and to downplay the differences in delivery methods.

**Assumptions, Delimitations, and Limitations**

There were several assumptions that were made in conducting the study. First, it was assumed that teachers would conduct their duties as instructed. To help teachers understand their roles fully, the researcher provided teachers with lesson plans and written instructions for the study during the mandatory inservice. At this initial training, the researcher also discussed the importance of consistency among teachers, including teacher personality and the importance of following the study provided lesson plans. At this initial meeting, the researcher also led the teachers through several model writings and provided examples of student conferences. For example, the researcher played the role of teacher and had the third grade teachers play the role of students in both modeling and conferencing example lessons. After the study started, the researcher met with teachers on a weekly basis during their regularly scheduled grade groups meetings. At these meetings, the researcher provided teachers with supplies for the upcoming week and also reviewed the upcoming week’s lesson plans. The researcher also used this time to answer any questions, clarify instructions, and collect students’ writing papers.
It was also assumed that students would respond naturally to the writing instruction that was given in both groups. Most of the students were familiar with narrative writing, as they had studied it from kindergarten through third grade. Expository writing was chosen for this study, because it was a new concept for third graders. As a new concept, it was expected that the children would feel as though the experiment was a part of every day instruction. It was also assumed that students would understand the two attitudinal instruments, where they would have to self-report data using a Likert scale. To help students familiarize themselves with the Likert scale, the researcher provided an example using potato chips, and the instruments were also read aloud to the students by the researcher.

A delimitation of this study was the fact that only one site was explored. At this time, the researcher was only able to focus on one school. It would have been interesting to use a random sample and collect data on numerous schools to make the results more generalizable. In addition to only using one site, the researcher was also conflicted in regards to the grouping of students. The key concern was that the study should have a no feedback control group; however, when setting up the study, the researcher determined that this practice would be unethical. For the proper education of all students, it was decided to compare the two different delivery methods against each other instead of comparing a no feedback group to one or more types of feedback.

There were two limitations in this study. The first limitation was that the researcher was conducting research within the school in which she works. However, the researcher does not have a supervisory role within the school and among teachers. The researcher was also located within a different grade level than the grade level where the study took place. Another limitation of this study involved time. It would have been interesting to carry the study out over an extended period to find out which assessment method produces better, stronger writers as the students progress. For instance, how would these same students’ writings look at the end of next school year or even at a high school level? Unfortunately, the timing of this study in the school year limited the study to nine weeks.

Summary

To summarize, this study was conducted to better guide writing assessment and address gaps in current research, especially in the area of how students feel about teacher feedback (Searle & Dillon, 1980). Because writing is as much of an emotional activity as it is a cognitive activity (McLeod, 1997), the research questions in this study revolved around two affective
components, self-efficacy and dispositions. Self-efficacy is a person’s belief about his capabilities to carry out an action that requires him to achieve a confident level of achievement (Bandura, 1997). There are four sources from where individuals attain self-efficacy: mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal messages and social persuasions, and physiological states (Pajares, 2003; Pajares et al., 2007). In addition to self-efficacy, dispositions are not only the abilities people have, but how people are disposed to use those abilities, hence the term dispositions (Perkins et al., 2000). “Dispositions are a very different type of learning from skills and knowledge. They can be thought of as habits of mind, tendencies to respond to situations in certain ways” (Katz, 1988, p. 30).

Bringing self-efficacy and dispositions together, the theoretical framework in this study was based on Bandura’s social learning theory. Social learning theory is a personal-social development theory of personality and affective development. Social learning theory holds that personality differences are acquired through the learning process, especially through the process of modeling, which shows that children can learn and develop cognitively and affectively by observing others (Bandura, 1977).

The purpose of this nine-week study was to determine the effect of the two types of teacher written feedback delivery styles on the students’ writing self-efficacy and dispositions in the hopes of improving assessment practices in elementary writing. Using both a comparison and treatment group and also looking at gender and skill level, it was hoped that the study would shed light on the effect of teacher feedback, whether written on a separate rubric form or directly on a child’s paper.
CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

The following literature review provides past research in the area of writing. The review begins with a brief history of writing and continues by addressing previous research on the study’s variables.

A Brief History of Writing Instruction

America has an ever-changing curriculum in the area of writing. According to “A Short History of Writing Instruction: From Ancient Greece to Twentieth-Century America” (Murphy, 1990), American teachers first began teaching writing by instructing students to translate classical languages, such as Latin, from the Bible or from lectures, for the purpose of oral performance. In the eighteenth century, the classical curriculum transitioned to the vernacular, English; however, writing assignments still focused on oral performances, such as debates.

In the nineteenth century, oratorical pedagogy transitioned to silent prose. The silent prose culture was brought about by a changing America, including access to new technology (pen and paper), a curriculum that focused on belletristic rhetoric, and a new era of professionalism. Belletristic compositions were ones that were aesthetically pleasing. Instead of translating, students began to show their own voice, be poetic, and grow their own taste in writing; however, at the same time, teachers ensured students wrote correct English, as this would show a level of professionalism and holding in an upper class of society. An 1892 report from the United States Bureau of Education indicated that although responding to student papers was “grueling and fatiguing work,” student writing “should receive careful and appropriate criticism” in order to ensure correct English (p. 88). This type of teaching, focusing on correct English and grammar, was known as traditional school grammar and was focused on a rules-based approach to writing (Quible & Griffin, 2007). During this time period, sentence diagramming was born.

In the twentieth century, more and more Americans attended school, and the teaching of language arts began to attain professional standing, including the formation of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) in 1911. During this time, groups, such as NCTE, encouraged “creative and individual activities at the lowest grades (middle school) to social and more practical activities at the upper grades (high school)” (Murphy, 1990, p. 195). The
elementary grades were still not focused on composition. “Curiously, textbooks dealing with writing in the elementary school did not appear until early in this century, and then focused on penmanship, manuscript form, and elements of grammar and usage” (Squire, 2003, p. 3). However, at all levels, English teachers were reminded to correct spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure. It was said at that time that teachers focused on rating compositions because of an “illiteracy crisis” of the 1880’s and 1890’s (Connors & Lunsford, 1993). In 1912, researcher Walter Barnes explained of rating compositions, “Writing students live in an absolute monarchy, in which they are the subjects, the teacher the king (more often, the queen) and the red-ink pen the royal scepter” (Connors & Lunsford, 1993, p. 201). Rating was known by the United States Department of the Interior as “corrective cooperation” between teacher and student (Sperling, 1984). During this time period, scales were created to rate students’ essays, but by the mid-1920’s, many teachers found the scales to be too complex to use (Connors & Lunsford, 1993).

During the period between the World Wars, Murphy (1990) reported that writing became known as art. It was believed that as an art, writing could be learned but not taught. The role of the teacher was to provide an environment conducive to writing for all students, and as Rugg emphasized, “The teacher must focus on the process of composing, not merely the product” (Murphy, 1990, p. 198). However, Connors and Lunsford (1993) report that “between 1900 and 1940, the concept that students could have anything to say in their writing that would really interest the teacher was hardly imagined except by a few rare teachers” (p. 204). During this time, it was also believed that instead of traditional school grammar, grammar should be taught within the act of composing.

During World War II, a period known as “life adjustment” overtook American schools. Because the war had disrupted lives, schools sought to prepare students for post war life and civic competence. Students were now taught writing skills that they would need as adults, such as letter writing and interviewing. There was also a recovery of reading and responding to literature, and a new concept of structural linguistics that focused on sentence combining.

In the 1950’s, teachers considered themselves as an audience to student papers (Connors & Lunsford, 1993). Teachers reacted to student content, what the students had to say, in addition to surface errors. Teachers also wrote comments in the margin of papers as well as at the beginning and end of papers.
Between 1960 and 1975, there became two similar schools of thought in the area of writing. Cognitivist theorists, such as Jerome Bruner, focused on the process of composing. With Bruner’s spiral curriculum, “the product of the student writing is not as important as engaging in the process of writing” (Murphy, 1990, p. 208). Another type of curriculum during this time was the expressive model of writing, which came as a result of the Dartmouth Conference. This curriculum said that writing should be “pursued in a free and supportive environment in which the student is encouraged to engage in an art of self discovery” (Murphy, 1990, p. 210). During this time, composition finally became important in the lower grades as well (Squire, 2003). Additionally, the traditional approach to grammar was spotlighted during this time in many research studies. Researchers found that the rules-based approach was ineffective (Quible & Griffin, 2007).

Specifically in the 1970’s, peer response became popular. Sperling (1984) explained that this decade in particular simply shunned tradition and instead responded to the growing cultural awareness of the importance of the individual. Teacher responses to writing were observed less and less. Instead, researchers, like Elbow (1973) began to talk about “teacherless” writing classes, where writing and responding were left up to peers. Elbow explains “to improve your writing you don’t need advice about what changes to make; you don’t need theories of what is good and bad writing. You need movies of people’s minds while they read your work” (p. 77).

In addition to Elbow, Macrorie (1970) coined the word “helping circle” which also indicated a peer response group. He explains that “a teacher has to get over the impulse to correct a sentence such as ‘I had too horse’s’” (p. 71). Instead, Macrorie explained that when a teacher makes a correction, it shows that the teacher does not care about what the child has to say. In essence, according to Macrorie, the child will stop bothering to say anything that he really means.

In the 1980’s, accountability became the new buzz word. Although the birth of the standardized test happened decades earlier, standardized tests were now being used for more than just program evaluation. They were being used to assess students and even teachers. Soon, writing was squeezed out of the daily schedule because it was not easily tested in a multiple choice, standardized test format. Surveys completed during this time show that although advanced tracks of schools were teaching writing, there was virtually no instruction in many
other classrooms. Due to this phenomenon, many teachers began to initiate their own writing focus by creating groups, such as The National Writing Project in 1974.

During the 1980’s and 1990’s, writing became added to the standardized test phenomenon with students having to complete timed essays, which were scored not by a machine but by a person. With schools now being held accountable in the area of writing, schools began to pay much more attention to the subject. So, with writing back in the curriculum, many advocated a process-oriented approach (Matsumura et al., 2002). Scholars believed that writing should be a discovery of meaning and that teachers were facilitators, especially as errors in the early years were to be expected and would take care of themselves. Theorists began to produce frameworks for teachers of writing. Both Atwell (1987) and Graves (1994) agreed that writers need to choose their own topics and that they need some type of response. Atwell also said that writers need chunks of time to write, learn mechanics in context, see adults write, read, and have teachers that take responsibility for their own learning. Graves said students should write preferably four out of five days, publish their work, keep portfolios, and have teachers that model.

Along with frameworks such as these, the NCTE (1985) passed a position statement regarding traditional school grammar during this time as well:

Resolved, that the National Council of Teachers of English affirm the position that the use of isolated grammar and usage exercises [is] not supported by theory and research [and] is a deterrent to the improvement of students’ speaking and writing… and that the NCTE urge [sic] the discontinuance of testing practices that encourage the teaching of grammar rather than English language arts instruction (p. 1).

Writing Today

In the new millennium, students are still being tested in the area of writing; therefore, the subject is gaining back status, as evidenced by the growing amount of commercial-based writing programs. In today’s classrooms, what does good writing instruction look like? In addition to the frameworks listed above, one will see a balanced approach of process and product teaching, which includes teacher modeling, shared writing, mini-lessons, word walls, student conferences, peer response, and more. Another current emphasis in writing is the idea of crafting good writing. Hale (2008) explains that as more and more students are being taught how to write, then there is more time for instruction on how to write well, or on how to craft writing. This idea
stresses once again the artistic side of writing. Hand in hand with writing, grammar is being taught using Weaver’s (1996) context-based approach. Instead of repetitive grammar exercises, students can interact with grammar problems in texts created by themselves.

Even though there are many research-based instructional strategies, one problem that has emerged over the past few decades in writing is that instruction has become uneven (Matsumura et al., 2002). In many instances, it appears that teachers are teaching many variations of writing and grammar instruction. So the question becomes, not what good writing instruction looks like, but what are teachers of today actually teaching in the area of writing? In a recent national survey of 294 primary writing teachers (Cutler & Graham, 2008), 72% of educators showed that they are taking an eclectic approach to writing by combining the two major forms of writing curriculum: process writing and skills instruction. The process approach focuses on the act of composing; whereas, the skills approach focuses on systemized instruction of basic writing skills (Cutler & Graham, 2008). In the national survey, the sample showed that teachers of grades first through third are spending a median of 21 minutes of writing instruction per day. During that time, 56% of writing time is with whole group instruction, 23% is for small group instruction, and 24% is for individual instruction. In the study, it was also reported that 65% of teachers did not use a commercial product to teach writing; 84% of teachers encouraged invented spellings; 75% of teachers taught basic writing skills several times a week, which included spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation; 80% of teachers taught using mini-lessons at least once a week; 80% of teachers allowed students to work at their own pace in writing; 68% of teachers have their students use writing portfolios; and 68% of teachers use rubrics to assess writings.

In addition to these statistics, a majority of the teachers reported modeling and revising exercises at least once a week and allowing students to share their writings with their peers at least once a week. With a clear picture of what current writing instruction looks like, the authors called for four recommendations to improve writing instruction, one of which is to better monitor students’ writing progress. In the study, nine percent of teachers reported that they never monitored progress or did it only several times a year. While their findings do not address how to monitor students’ writings, they do suggest that it is important and wrap up by saying, “Additional research is needed, however, to better understand what and how primary grade teachers’ assess writing” (Cutler & Graham, 2008, p.929).
Along with writing, what are teachers actually teaching in regards to grammar? With the battle between the traditional rules approach and the context approach, Johansen and Shaw (2003) found that some teachers decided not to teach grammar at all even though research showed the ineffectiveness of the TSG (traditional school grammar) approach and recommended the use of the context-based approach.

Now, in the hopes of improvement, the National Commission on Writing (2004) has suggested placing correctness at the sentence level at the forefront. They hypothesize that writing may be more effective if educators distinguish between teaching correct grammar and mechanics and teaching writing. But once again, what is the most effective way to do this?

**Writing Feedback**

When it comes to feedback in the area of writing, much research has been conducted among second language learners. At the current time, there is a debate between editing students’ papers (Ferris, 2004; Hyland, 2003; Shin, 2007) and the idea that editing can actually harm second language students (Truscott, 2007; Truscott & Hsu, 2008). However, for this paper, the research of second language students will not be included. Instead, the literature review will focus on studies conducted primarily in K-12 education as well as some studies at the college level. These studies will focus on the types of feedback, the delivery of feedback, students’ and teachers’ feelings about feedback, and research specifically for or against teacher feedback.

**Types of Feedback**

There are many different ways that teachers can provide feedback to students. Several studies have been conducted at all levels to show the effect of the different types of writing feedback.

To begin, Connors and Lunsford (1993) painted a clear picture of what feedback looks like at the college level. In 1986, the researchers began collected 21,000 teacher marked essays for a national study of patterns on feedback and formal errors. The 21,000 papers were narrowed to 3,000 through a stratified random sample of papers. Fifty analyzers worked to find feedback methods and the top 20 error patterns of contemporary college students. The results showed first that 77% of the papers had global teacher comments; whereas, 23% of the papers had no comments. Out of the 77% with comments, 16% had initial comments and 84% had end comments. Nine percent of the comments were positive and 23% were negative. Forty-two percent of the comments began positive and turned negative and 11% began negative and turned
positive. Thirty-six percent of comments lead with rhetorical issues, and 18% of comments lead with mechanical issues. Twenty-four percent were exclusively rhetorical issues and 22% were exclusively mechanical issues. Twenty-four percent of comments had fewer than ten words and 5% had more than 100 words. Twenty-four percent of comments argued with the content points in the paper and 17% were response as the reader of the paper. Seventy-five percent of the papers had a grade, and 59% of teachers said they gave comments to justify the grades. Only 11% of teachers gave comments on papers that were in draft form.

Arguing for content level revisions, Patthey-Chavez et al. (2004) completed a study on teacher feedback by examining rough and final drafts of students’ papers from past writing portfolios. Working with 11 teachers at both third and seventh grade, the researchers were able to secure 64 students’ work that showed a rough draft with teacher feedback and a final draft. The researchers found that teachers only treated 10 out of 64 cases as what they deemed “improvable,” meaning the teachers provided commentary to improve the context of the students’ essays or stories. In the end, their final recommendation is that feedback can be effective; however, Patthey-Chavez et al. urge content level revisions over context to increase the level of writing in a classroom.

Content level revisions also proved to be successful at the college level. Olson and Raffeld (1987) completed a study on the types of comments written on students’ papers with 66 elementary education majors in a reading education course. There were two treatment groups in the study. One group received content comments, which required the instructors to view the students’ papers as readers. They supplied the students with ideas to add, delete, or in restructuring. The second treatment group received only surface comments. Surface comments included errors in word choice, spelling, punctuation, and language usage. The treatments were applied after students completed first drafts of papers. The control group in the study received no comments. During the study, the researchers gave five writing assignments and also a multiple-choice test over the course’s content. The study revealed significant differences among groups for holistic scores and for learning course content. First, the treatment group that received content comments wrote significantly better essays than the other treatment group or the control group. Second, there was no difference in the holistic scores of the final essays between the surface treatment group and the control group, which received no comments. Olson and Raffeld declared, “Results of this study argue that surface comments on students’ papers are as
effective in helping students improve their papers as not requiring students to write at all” (p. 285).

However, it appears in the study that after receiving surface comments, that treatment group simply corrected their errors and resubmitted their papers. The paper does not explain if deception was involved in the study. It is unknown if the students knew that they might need to look and correct their papers’ content. The authors end by stating, “Content comments seem to help students learn to revise their compositions from a reader’s point of view, revise, and produce compositions of better quality” (p. 287). Finally, it was also interesting to note that students in the content treatment group and the control group received significantly better scores on the course content test.

In contrast, Feng and Powers (2005) conducted a study with 22 fifth graders in a single elementary school in a southern state that focused on error correction feedback. Students in the study wrote at the beginning, middle, and end of the year for the purpose of data collection on writing growth. Teachers edited students’ papers to identify class-wide mistakes which could be used to create meaningful mini-lessons. Interestingly, the most needed lessons spotlighted homophones. Feng and Powers found that students improved their writings in three areas, namely mechanics, but also in sentence structure and usage. The researchers found that the short-term effects were even more pronounced than the long-term effects; however, both were significant. This study points out the positive effect of teacher editing in a unique way. Not only did it help students, it also helped the teacher know which type of mini-lessons to create in order for student growth.

Looking at mixed methods of content and error correction feedback, Matsumura et al. (2002) showed that total teacher feedback improved students’ writings at the elementary level. Their study looked at teacher feedback, writing quality, and student revisions in lower and higher achieving schools. The study defined the low achieving school by the fact that 28% of third graders scored at or above the 50th percentile on the 1999-2000 SAT 9 reading test; whereas, the high achieving school had 82% of third graders at or above the 50th percentile. The researchers based their ideas on Zellermayer’s work (1991) that novice writers need feedback and become better writers by gradually appropriating new skills. Using 29 urban third grade classrooms in eight schools, the study found that teacher feedback did indicate writing improvements of students from both schools. From first to final draft, both types of schools showed significant
improvements in organization, mechanics, and content. Throughout the year long study, students in the low achieving school showed significant improvement in organization and mechanics, and the high achieving school showed significant improvement in mechanics. In addition to the effectiveness of feedback, Matsumura et al. also reported that teachers in both low and high achieving schools wrote feedback based on surface level mistakes (grammar and spelling) four times as much as they gave feedback on content. Both low and high achieving schools received little content feedback from teachers; however, the teachers at the lower achieving school did provide more content feedback than teachers at the high achieving school. On the flip side, it was found that the higher achieving school provided a higher quality of writing assignment than the lower achieving school.

Looking just at specific versus general feedback, Robinson (1985) found that young students need specific feedback from teachers. Robinson conducted a study among 260 students from grades two through six from a Midwestern school district of moderate size. In the study, the students were given a story starter after a group discussion. Students were given thirty minutes to write. The students were then randomly assigned to two conditions, to receive teacher feedback in the form of a specific probe or a general comment. In the probing group, teachers often asked who, what, when, where or why questions to further the content of students’ writings. In the comment group, students were given general comments like “good job” or “tell me more”. The writings were then revised and scored on a five point holistic scale. Using ANOVA, Robinson found that students in the probe group produced qualitatively better text than the comment group as measured by their holistic scores. Robinson also found that grade level was not significant nor was the interaction of grade level and teacher feedback group, which showed that the teacher feedback was not more or less effective in any particular grade level.

Looking just at positive or negative praise, Gee (1972) conducted a study to discover the effect of the type of teacher comments on the quantity and quality of students’ expository essays and on students’ attitudes. Gee separated 193 eleventh grade English students into three ability groups: high, middle, and low. He randomly placed one-third of each of the ability groups into three categories: students who would receive only praise from their teacher, students who would only receive negative comments from their teacher, and students who would receive no comments. During a four-week period, no instruction or discussion about writing or writing strategies took place. Instead the students wrote and the teachers marked papers. The no
comment group received only check marks for turning in their papers. The negative comments group had grammar and content problems marked. There were not a standard number of comments given; however, approximately five to eight comments were given per paper. The praise group had only good ideas and correct grammar commented on, as the mistakes were ignored. No grades were given for writing during this time. After the four weeks, the students were given a questionnaire about their writing attitude (Taylor & Hoedt), and the students’ first and last papers were compared by a panel of three English teachers. In regards to quantity, the negative criticism and no feedback groups wrote less over four weeks as did the praise group. With quality, the study found no significant differences among the three groups. The researcher acknowledged that the four-week study might have been too short for quality differences to occur. Gee did show that the high and low ability groups acted more strongly towards negative comments than the middle group; however, there were no gender differences. Through the attitudinal survey, Gee also found that the praise group had a significant difference in their positive attitude; however, there were no attitudinal differences between the no comment group and the negative comment group.

Examining the length of feedback, Hillocks (1982) completed a study in which he looked at short (less than 10 words) versus long (more than 10 words) teacher feedback on students’ writings. Using 274 eighth grade students, Hillocks assigned half of the students to receive short comments and the other half long comments. After that, he split the group into two groups again, half receiving instruction before the writing assignment and the other half not receiving instruction before the assignment. The students did four writing assignments in all. Hillock found that the strongest papers were those of students who received instruction first. Along with that, long comments of these students prove to be more effective than short comments. Hillocks concluded that the long comments had more meaning when instruction preceded the writing assignments. Without instruction, the long comments had a depressive effect. Hillocks concluded that the longer comments without instruction were interpreted as criticisms. With this study, it is important to note that feedback can be deemed negative if appropriate instruction does not precede it.

**Delivery Method of Feedback**

Smith (1989) spent two years interviewing freshmen students at New York University and Boston University’s College of Basic Studies. Before interviewing, Smith had the students
pick two final draft papers that were graded and contained teacher’s comments. Knowing Hairston denounced writing marginal responses to students and instead using a separate response sheet, Smith wanted to discover how students felt about teacher comments. A majority of students liked teacher comments on their papers. One student responded:

I like having the response on the paper, and I like having it in the margin. The reader was reading, had a response right there, and you get it. Having to go back and forth, looking at a response sheet, is a problem for me. It breaks your concentration (p. 256).

Additional students called the teacher’s comments directly on their paper more dialogic. They liked the teacher’s response as a reader. Only one student saw the use of writing teacher comments on separate sheet of paper. The student explained, “On the rough draft, I like when you use a reading response sheet, rather than writing on the paper, because it makes me go back and read through the paper to match your comments with the paper” (p. 257). In regards to how many comments are written, one strong writer complained when not receiving enough comments saying, “Too many comments might tear down the dignity of the writer and hurt the student’s relationship with the teacher, but some comments are needed. I put a lot of work into my writing, and I expect feedback” (p. 256). Similar to that, when students did not receive any or little response, they assumed they made no errors in their writing. One interviewee describes, “I think it would be better if the error was marked at least once on the paper. Clearly, I didn’t know there was an error, or else it would have been corrected” (p. 260).

**Teachers’ Beliefs About Feedback**

At the elementary level, Searle and Dillon (1980) studied teacher response in grades 4 through 6. Working in five elementary schools, the researchers asked a random sample of teachers to submit three pieces of writing from five randomly selected students, which equaled 15 samples per teacher. The teachers evaluated their students’ papers in their own way and then completed a questionnaire. When papers were submitted to Searle and Dillon, the researchers found that the teachers had evaluated through oral responses, individual conferences with students, peer response, and student evaluations of themselves; however, over half of the teachers wrote comments and made corrections directly on the students’ papers. Of the comments, 84% of praise was not specific. Instead, many of the teachers wrote comments, such as “well done” and “excellent”. Fifty nine percent of the comments were corrective, and eight percent of comments focused on content. In the questionnaire, although it did not match their
comments, a majority of the teachers stated that their major purpose in responding to students was to praise and encourage them. The teachers also mentioned that they needed to diagnose mechanical errors for future instruction. In Searle and Dillon’s conclusion, the authors recommend that future studies need to discover how teacher response is affecting pupils.

Harris (1977) found the same results at the high school level. The researcher asked 36 high school teachers to submit 12 random student papers that they had already marked. Harris wanted to look at the response patterns of teachers and the types of comments they made to students. Teacher in the study submitted 12 papers using their customary practices, ranked the 12 papers from highest to lowest, and also answered a questionnaire about writing. Harris found that 40% of the teachers’ comments were positive in nature; however, only .007% of those positive comments were written throughout the students’ papers. Almost every positive comment written was either at the beginning or end of a student’s paper. Negative comments represented 60% of the sample. A majority of negative comments were influenced by errors in mechanics and usage; however, in the questionnaire, the teachers said that content and organization was most important in a paper. Harris found that over half of the teachers ranked a paper lower if it had more mechanic and usage problems even when the content and organization had merit.

**Students’ Beliefs About Feedback**

Focusing on how students felt, Bardine et al. (2000) conducted a study in tenth grade in a medium sized private high school in the Midwest. The researchers’ study had three purposes: 1) to find out how much attention students paid to writing comments, 2) to find out if students knew why teachers responded to their writing, and 3) to discover if students understood the comments on their papers. The researchers obtained a random sample of students’ papers and then randomly numbered six to 12 comments on the papers. The papers were then returned to the students along with a questionnaire. In the end, students said the main reason teachers write comments is to tell students what they are doing wrong. Most students saw comments as a way to get better grades, not necessarily to improve as writers. Students said that it was important to read comments, but many only spent a moment doing so. For the future, Bardine et al. suggest that teachers conference with students to explain their comments and also provide praise during that time. The researchers also suggested that comments take place during the draft phase, as
many students ignore comments unless they need to use them to revise. Finally, mini-lessons are suggested for those common, reoccurring errors that teachers see in students’ writings.

At the college level, Ziv (1980) completed a case study with four college freshman in an expository writing course that showed students prefer explicit feedback based on content. Over the course of a year, the teacher repeatedly provided comments to the four students’ essays. The essays were the students’ second drafts and were not taken for a grade. After the teacher provided the comments, the students were tape recorded in regards to their reactions to their teacher’s comments. Also, the students’ revisions were examined to see how they revised their papers. The results of the study showed that students reacted favorably to explicit comments on conceptual and structural levels, meaning they preferred comments where the teacher explained how to “fix” their paper in regards to main ideas and organization of their paper. On the other hand, students reacted unfavorably to implicit comments at a lexical and sentential level, meaning students did not prefer teacher questions surrounding word level problems, where specific words or phrases might need to be deleted or substituted. In her recommendations, Ziv suggests that “teachers should try to write comments in a positive and empathetic manner, to be aware of the intentions of student writers, ascertain the effects of their comments, and move away from the role of evaluator and toward establishing a dialogue with their student writers.

Using the data from the same study, Ziv (1982) further explored the unfavorable reactions by the four freshman college students to their teacher’s comments. She found the students reacted in three different ways: one student followed the written suggestions from their teacher, some tried to defend what they did, and some avoided the teacher’s comments by deleting a word or section in question. Ziv’s recommendations from this study were the same as her original study: teachers should write more positive comments and establish more of a dialogue with students.

Reed and Burton (1985) conducted three questionnaires with 47 first quarter Freshman in two English classes at a southeastern University. The questionnaires had both open-ended and force choice questions. The first questionnaire was conducted at the end of the third week of school, before any essays were collected in class. In the questionnaire, 100% of the students indicated that they had fears of turning in essays to be evaluated. Most of the students reported their fears were based on harder grading in college. When asked how their work had been graded in the past, 45% reported checking grammar only, 38% said grammar and content, and
17% said content only. When asked if they are anxious to turn in writing in non-writing classes, 21% said yes and 79% said no. The second questionnaire was taken the fifth week of school after one essay had been evaluated. When asked if they thought an instructor should only evaluate what is wrong in an essay, 77% said that would be a disadvantage, calling it depressing and that the teacher would not point out what is correct. Twenty-three percent called it an advantage, because then the writer would know what is wrong. When asked if they thought an instructor should only evaluate what is right in an essay, 59% said that would be a disadvantage, because it would give the writer a false sense of hope by not telling what is wrong. Forty-one percent called it an advantage saying it would make the student feel like they know something. When asked how they felt about their instructor giving directions on how to correct an error, 20% said it was a disadvantage, because the directions would restrict them in their corrections. Eighty percent said it was an advantage to know exactly how to fix an error.

The third and final questionnaire was at the end of the nine weeks after three essays had been evaluated. Ninety-eight percent of the students indicated that student/instructor conferences were helpful. Those students liked when their instructor was able to explain comments, and some student thought conferences gave them a chance to get to know their instructors. When asked if grades were needed incentives to writing, 60% said yes. If the students could create their own writing program, 12% said assignments would go ungraded, 21% said assignments would be graded, and 67% preferred a mix of the two. If they could choose, students would also focus their writing programs on a mix of grammar and content (88%). In the end, Reed and Burton (1985) had a great recommendation for all researchers in the area of writing feedback:

If we want our evaluation efforts to be as effective as possible, we need to find out from our students what types of evaluation work best for them when we attempt to provide feedback to improving their writing (p. 282).

Research in Favor of Feedback

Baines, Baines, Stanley, and Kunkel (1999) found that the writing process movement has been interpreted by teachers in many different ways. In their six year study observing in over 300 secondary (grades 6-12) classrooms of teachers of English in the act of teaching writing, their qualitative study categorized three main types of the process movement: the “classic” process classroom, the “anti-grammarians” approach, and the “five paragraph” process. In the “classic” process classroom, the observers viewed teachers facilitating perfect process writing.
These teachers encouraged students to experience every phase of the process and to work with peer editors. In the “anti-grammrian” classroom, the researchers heard teacher comments that painted grammar as a low priority in writing, such as “I won’t count off for spelling or punctuation” and “Just write - what matters is what you have to say, not silly commas or periods” (p. 69).

In the “five paragraph” classrooms, the teachers gave topics, modeled writing, and then the students wrote silently at their desks. In the end, the authors found that each of the three types of strategies being used had strengths; however, they all had one main weakness – teachers seem to be too focused on the process than the product. The authors explained, “Amid our observations of 300 classrooms, no teacher ever said, ‘That is wrong,’ or ‘this is an error’ (p. 70). The authors go on to reason that this may be a cause of current problems in writing in post-secondary schooling. They explained, “Although a student may experience some unpleasant disequilibrium when an error is identified, the experience is not something from which most students will be unable to recover” (p. 74). In their conclusion, the authors called for the word “error” to be brought back into the classroom.

Business researchers agree. In their article “Are Writing Deficiencies Creating a Lost Generation of Business Writers?” Quible and Griffin (2007) draw the following conclusion:

We believe that students’ sentence-level errors should always be marked as part of grading their work. If English teachers do not see themselves as grammar police and therefore do not mark grammar and punctuation errors, students remain unaware of the magnitude of their writing insufficiency and have no way of knowing what types of deficiencies need to be corrected. The result is that they will make the same sentence-level errors (p. 37).

According to Goldstein (2004), there are several strategies that teachers can focus on to make feedback effective in classrooms. First, teachers must recognize the context of their situation. They should ask if their attitude towards their writing instruction is positive. They should also make sure they are not focused on length requirements. The teacher and institution should display in some fashion that they believe all students can write and be successful. Along with a positive attitude, teachers must strive to communicate their feedback with students. Instead of seeing a conference as a teacher talking to the student, the conference should also be the student talking to the teacher. In this fashion, there will be less confusion regarding
feedback. Finally, it is suggested that teachers should first read a student’s paper all the way through before commenting. That way, teachers are able to see the finished product. As the teacher begins to provide feedback, they should always ask the student what it is they would most like feedback on. Also, praise should also be included in feedback; however, praise should only be given when it is genuinely deserved, as it will serve as a strong motivational factor.

In the qualitative study, “Making Sense of ‘The Boy Who Died’: Tales of a Struggling Successful Writer”, Dutro et al. (2006) present a case for providing feedback to students through conferencing. The study is of Max, a fourth grade boy who does not enjoy writing. In the beginning of the study, Max even writes a tale of a boy who could not think of anything to write about and eventually stops breathing. After examining Max’s experiences with writing workshop, journal writing, responding to literature, and a state writing assessment, the researchers provide two suggestions for teachers. “Max’s experiences suggest two critical pedagogical moves in the writing classroom: individual conferencing with students and close analysis of student work” (p. 352). Through close analysis and feedback of Max’s work, the teacher would be better aware of areas of instruction that would benefit Max. Even though the teacher in the study sometimes engaged in these activities, the researchers suggest that conferencing and teacher feedback are regularly scheduled events in the writing classroom.

**Research Against Feedback**

“Graves’ recommendations for teacher intervention in the writing classroom is the assumption that rewriting texts as well as other sorts of revision will lead to improved performance for primary children” (Robinson, 1985, p. 5). But, is that necessarily the case? Robinson found in a study of revision undertaken by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (1977) that approximately 60% of nine-year-olds, 78% of 13-year-olds, and 68% of 17-year-olds revised a first draft when asked to do so. However, the revisions did not result in a higher holistic rating. In additional studies, Scardamalia, Bereiter, Gartshore, and Cattani (n.d.) found that elementary school children did not improve the quality of their writing by revising.

One of the ideal ways that teachers provide feedback is through conferences, but “because teachers cannot always consult with children individually, they must also rely on written comments” (Robinson, 1985). However,

Many times teacher comments have little effect, or even a negative effect, on the quality of student writing. Therefore, teachers should view comments as rhetorical acts, think
about their purpose for writing comments, and should have as their goal teaching student
to become their own best readers. To achieve this goal, teachers should respond to
student drafts with fewer judgments and directives, and more questions and suggestions
(Hyslop, 1996, p. 17).

Through journal writing, Fazio (2001) tested Hyslop’s statement; however, she found no
significant difference in accuracy due to feedback conditions on students’ journal writing, even
when a teacher did just write questions and suggestions. Fazio’s classroom-based experimental
study involved 112 fifth grade students in Montreal, Canada in French speaking classrooms.
Fazio placed students randomly in three separate groups in her experiment. One group received
content-based feedback. Students in this group “received a comment (statements and questions)
that pertained to the contents of the writing at the end of their entry” (p. 239). Another group in
the study was labeled the form-focused group. This group “had all their errors in grammatical
spelling (subject/verb agreement and noun/adjective agreement) underlined, and the correct form
was modeled above the location of the error” (p. 239). A third group in the study received both
content-based and form-focused feedback. The overall findings in Fazio’s study show that over
time neither native speakers of French (francophones) nor minority language students experience
a significant change in their spelling and/or grammar accuracy as a result of receiving
commentaries, corrections, or a combination of the two.

Self-Efficacy

In 1997, Pajares & Valiante completed a study that tested the influence of writing self-
efficacy of elementary students. The study sampled 218 fifth grade students (115 girls and 103
boys) from three public elementary schools in the South and Southwest. Participants completed
the Writing Self-Efficacy scale developed by Shell et al. (1989), the Writing Apprehension Test
by Daly and Miller (1975), the Writing Outcome Expectations Scale by Shell et al. (1989), and
also complete a timed thirty minute essay. Using path analysis to determine direct and indirect
effects between variables, the researchers found “self-efficacy beliefs made an independent
contribution to the prediction of performance despite the expected powerful effect of writing
aptitude” (Pajares & Valiante, 1997, p. 353). Aptitude predicted writing performance, however,
it made no contribution to the prediction of writing apprehension or perceived usefulness;
whereas, self-efficacy did. In fact, when self-efficacy beliefs are included in the statistical
model, writing apprehension and students’ perceived value of writing is nullified (Pajares, 2003).
Similarly, Pajares and Valiante (1999) found the same results while studying middle school students. They once again found that self-efficacy was the only construct in their study to predict writing competence. The other constructs in their model, self concept, writing apprehension, perceived value of writing, self-efficacy for self regulation, previous writing achievement, gender, and grade level, did not predict writing competence. The study did show self-efficacy differences among grade levels. Grade six had higher self-efficacy scores and found writing more valuable; whereas, grade seven had the lowest self-efficacy scores.

Pajares and Johnson (1998) also studied high school students in regards to self-efficacy. Sampling 181 ninth graders, the researchers found that aptitude and self-efficacy had strong effects on writing performance. Aptitude was found to have direct effects on self-efficacy, which redirected the indirect effect of aptitude on performance. Self-efficacy had a strong direct effect on writing apprehension; however, writing apprehension had a modest effect on writing performance.

Pajares, along with Johnson and Usher, (2007) conducted another study surrounding self-efficacy; however, it strictly looked at the influences of the four hypothesized sources of self-efficacy, which are mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and anxiety. The participants of the study were 1,256 students in grades four through eleven at one public elementary school in the South, one middle school in the Northeast, and one high school in the South. The sample was mostly White, middle class students, and gifted, special education students, and limited English proficiency students were not included. The researchers adapted the Sources of Self-Efficacy scale (Lent, Lopez, & Bieschke, 1991) to reflect the domain of writing, and they also used the Writing Skills Self-Efficacy Scale and teacher’s ratings of students’ writing competence. The researchers used multiple regression analysis to determine the influence of the sources on writing self-efficacy on the full sample, by gender, and by academic level. First, the research showed that all four sources significantly correlated with writing self-efficacy and with each other. In regards to the elementary school level, students reported stronger mastery experience, vicarious experience, and social persuasions than the middle and high students. They also showed stronger self-efficacy than the other two levels.

At the elementary level, mastery experience and anxiety proved predictive of self-efficacy beliefs. Mastery experience was the greatest proportion of the variance in the writing self-efficacy beliefs for elementary, both genders, and the entire sample. Because mastery
experience proved to be important, the researchers suggest “to increase student achievement in school, educational efforts should focus on enhancing students’ self-conceptions” (Pajares et al., 2007, p. 115). With that, the authors suggest providing private feedback in a personal encounter and to focus on positives more so than negatives.

Shell et al. (1995) conducted a self-efficacy study among 364 students at all ages (105 fourth graders, 111 seventh graders, and 148 tenth graders) from a Midwestern public school system. The purpose of the study was to examine the nature of grade-level and achievement-level differences in self-efficacy for writing and the relations between those beliefs and actual writing achievement. The instrument used was Shell et al.’s Writing Self-Efficacy Scale (1989), which is also being used in this study. It was in this 1995 study that the scale was adjusted for elementary school students. The writing task and skill subscales were composed of nine questions and were answered using a 5 point Likert scale.

The measurement of writing achievement was taken through a holistic scoring of a two paragraph essay on the students’ favorite television program. Using multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA), the study had the following results. First, gender had no interaction with grade or achievement level. Next, there were differences among the three grade levels tested and differences among high, average, and low achievers. Task self-efficacy increased at each grade level tested. “Bandura (1986) has proposed that the development of self-efficacy is directly associated with improvement in actual cognitive and behavioral skills and, therefore, can be expected to continue to develop as long as these skills are developing” (Shell et al., 1995, p. 403). However, the skill subscale in self-efficacy remained the same through the three grade levels indicating that the aspect of self-efficacy that develops across grade levels is the belief in the capability of writing skills. The biggest difference in the study was among high and low achievers. The study showed that self-efficacy is strongly linked to achievement, as high achievers had high self-efficacy scores and low achievers had low self-efficacy scores.

Lackey, Miller, and Flanigan (1997) examined written feedback on the writing goals and self-efficacy of college freshman. The study, which involved 137 freshman enrolled in an English composition class, surveyed the self-efficacy of students at the beginning and end of the college course. During the course, the students were given feedback by outside sources on both early and final drafts of a persuasive essay. The essay was also part of the students’ grades. The results of the study supported Bandura’s social learning theory in that the best predictor of
change in writing performance where changes in the students’ self-efficacy. The best predictor in writing self-efficacy involved grades, and the best predictor of improved writing performance was task-specific comments from the outside graders. The researchers defined task-specific comments as those where the graders pointed out a problem and gave directions on how to correct the problem.

Finally, Graham, Berninger, and Fan (2007) compared writing achievement with writing attitude. Using a sample of 128 first graders and 113 third graders, Graham et al. sought to discover if writing achievement influences writing attitude or if writing attitude influences writing achievement. In their study, each child wrote a composition and then completed a survey regarding their attitude towards writing. Using a structural equation modeling (SEM) approach, the study showed that the model with a direct path from writing attitude to writing achievement fit the data well, “thus students who were more positive about writing had higher writing achievement” (p. 526). This result supports Graham’s conclusion that motivational variables shape students’ writing developing in terms of their writing scores; therefore, students who have a more positive attitude toward writing may be motivated to put more effort into brainstorming, revising, etc. when working on a paper. The opposite would also be true that students who have a negative attitude towards writing might not put in the effort to make their writing as great. There are limitations in this study, as most of the students came from well educated families with 93% of mothers and 83% of fathers attending some form of post-secondary school. The authors also point out that the students in the study were relatively good writers with no students having writing disabilities or other struggles.

Dispositions

Before the nineties, most dispositions were studied individually. For example, Prenzel (1988) conducted a study that was specific to the disposition of interest. Prenzel defined interest as “a special kind of relation between a person and an object. The relation is established by engagement of the person with the object” (Prenzel, 1988, p. 3). Although he listed writing as a well known example of interest, Prenzel’s study used computers and playing the guitar to characterize the disposition of interest. Prenzel’s three studies all used the same design and procedures. In his first study, Prenzel studied seven subjects between the ages of 15 and 17 who had studied microcomputers for two years. During one month, he interviewed the individuals, had them keep a logbook of their participation along with the time spent on the computer, rate
their emotional state during participation (-3 for very unpleasant to +3 for very pleasant), the
degree of difficulty of their activity, and their gained proficiency from the activity (0 to +6). The
computer users showed the students used the computer between 15 to 54 hours during a one
month’s time. The users’ general emotional state was pleasant, difficulty was medium to high,
and proficiency was medium to high. Prenzel showed that six of the seven cases coincided with
his theoretical prediction that interest includes persistence and selectivity. Persistence is the
maintenance of the relation which can be measured by repeated, active engagements. Selectivity
is the content of the relation, which can be measured by the form of the activity and content. In
his second study, Prenzel had the same findings. He followed guitar users for two months.
These seven subjects had already studied guitar for at least two years previously. The researcher
found that the subjects practiced continuously, had pleasant emotional states, had medium
difficulty ranges, and high proficiency rates. In his final study on interest, Prenzel targeted ten
subjects who signed up for a free introductory computer course. These subjects had not yet
worked with computers. After following them for three months, Prenzel found two interesting
findings. In some cases, he found individuals who were starting to develop an interest in
computers. For these individuals, computer usage was high, emotional level high, difficulty
high, and proficiency high, much like the individuals in the first two studies. However, on the
flip side, Prenzel found that those who used the computer less than 10 hours during the three
months reported lower emotional states, difficulty, and proficiency.

In the late eighties, critical thinking dispositions in the K-12 and post-secondary
curriculum gained momentum, but it also brought about many questions, including its overall
characteristics, how to teach it, and how to assess it. In 1988 and 1989, a group of critical
thinking experts came together through a qualitative research method called the Delphi Method,
which requires the formation of a panel of experts who share their expertise and opinions on a
specific topic (Facione, 1990). The panel was composed of 46 individuals (52% affiliated with
philosophy, 22% education, 20% social sciences, and 6% physical sciences) who participated in
six rounds of questioning surrounding critical thinking. The results showed a definition of
critical thinking, both a skill and dispositional dimension of critical thinking, and 15
recommendations pertaining to instruction and assessment of critical thinking. First, the
definition of critical thinking from the Delphi Report was:
We understand critical thinking to be purposeful, self-regulatory judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological, or contextual considerations upon which that judgment is based. CT is essential as a tool of one’s personal and civic life. While not synonymous with good thinking, CT is a pervasive and self-rectifying human phenomenon. The ideal critical thinker is habitually inquisitive, well-informed, trustful of reason, open-minded, flexible, fair-minded in evaluation, honest if facing personal biases, prudent in making judgments, willing to reconsider, clear about issues, orderly in complex matters, diligent in seeking relevant information, reasonable in the selection of criteria, focused in inquiry, and persistent in seeking results which are as precise as the subject and the circumstances of inquiry permit. Thus, educating good critical thinkers means working toward this ideal. It combines developed CT skills with nurturing those dispositions which consistently yield insights and which are the basis of a rational and democratic society (Facione, 1990, p. 2).

Along with the definition, the Delphi Method uncovered that critical thinking has two dimensions, cognitive skills and affective dispositions. Cognitive skills were shown to be the core of critical thinking skills. The experts believed that cognitive critical thinking skills should be a part of every subject in every grade level and not taught as an individual class. The group came up with six cognitive subskills: interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation, and they explained these subskills in great detail. For this study, the second dimension of critical thinking is of greater importance. In their findings, the group explained, “As water strengthens a thirsty plant, the affective dispositions are necessary for the critical thinking skills identified to take root and to flourish in students” (Facione, 1990, p. 11). Affective disposition was said to be the personal traits, habits of mind, and attitudes of individuals. More specifically, the group listed the following dispositions as part of the conceptualization of critical thinking:

- inquisitiveness with regard to a wide range of issues,
- concern to become and remain generally well-informed,
- alertness to opportunities to use CT,
- trust in the processes of reasoned inquiry,
• self-confidence in one’s own ability to reason,
• open-mindedness regarding divergent world views,
• flexibility in considering alternatives and opinions,
• understanding of the opinions of other people,
• fair-mindedness in appraising reasoning,
• honesty in facing one’s own biases, prejudices, stereotypes, egocentric or sociocentric tendencies,
• prudence in suspending, making or altering judgments,
• willingness to reconsider and revise views where honest reflection suggests that change is warranted.

Approaches to Specific Issues, Questions, or Problems:
• clarity in stating the question or concern,
• orderliness in working with complexity,
• diligence in seeking relevant information,
• reasonableness in selecting and applying criteria,
• care in focusing attention on the concern at hand,
• persistence though difficulties are encountered,
• precision to the degree permitted by the subject and the circumstance (Facione, 1990, p. 13).

In the end, the report called for the fostering of critical thinking skills and dispositions of the K-12 curriculum as well as the development of valid and reliable disposition assessments, such as the California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory (CCTDI), which was the first instrument of its kind developed shortly after the Delphi Report, as well as specific subject disposition scales, like the Writing Disposition Scale (Piazza & Siebert, 2008), which is being used in this study.

As just mentioned, the California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory (CCTDI) was developed in 1992 and used as one of the first critical thinking dispositions instruments (Facione & Facione). The CCTDI has seven subscales as well as an overall score. The subscales of critical thinking dispositions are: truthseeking, open-mindedness, analyticity, systematicity, critical thinking self-confidence, inquisitiveness, and maturity of judgment. The instrument contains 75 Likert-type items. On each subscale and with the test overall, students can score
from a minimum of 10 points to a maximum of 60. A score of 40 or higher shows a positive inclination toward a characteristic. A score of 40 or less shows a negative inclination toward a characteristic, and a score of 31-39 shows ambiguity or ambivalence toward a characteristic. The inventory is used in the next three studies.

In 1995, Facione, Giancarlo, Facione, and Gainen conducted a study with 587 college freshman at a private university. During freshman orientation, the students completed the CCTDI. These students were academically strong with a mean of 3.47 GPA and 1095 combined SAT scores, and they had yet to take college classes. Out of the 587 students, only 13% were positive in all seven critical thinking dispositional scales of the CCTDI. The other 87% were against at least one of the seven aspects of the CCTDI. The most common profile (19% of students) showed students who has positive dispositions toward six of the critical thinking aspects except for truth-seeking. In all, the following description was made of the college freshman:

1) Positively disposed toward open-mindedness and inquisitiveness.
2) Their CT-confidence, analyticity, and cognitive maturity varies, but tends in the positive direction.
3) They are not inclined toward focus, diligence, and persistence in inquiry.
4) They oppose seeking knowledge which threatens their preconceptions or interests (Facione et al., 1995, p. 8).

In addition to the data provided at freshman orientation, the researchers also collected the data once again at mid-year of freshman year. The mean scores on the CCTDI remained about the same, but it showed slight decreases for “C” students and a slight increase for “A” students in English composition. The researchers were also able to correlate English Composition grades to the analyticity and cognitive-maturity scores of the CCTDI. The remainder of the study discussed possible ways to correlate instruction to the lower scoring aspects of the CCTDI.

In 2001, Giancarlo and Facione conducted a follow up investigation focusing on two primary questions regarding dispositions: did a student’s critical thinking dispositions change during the four years of undergraduate education and would significant differences in dispositions be found among students of different demographics and academic groupings? The researchers conducted a longitudinal study over a four year time span at a private, Catholic four year university. During freshman orientation in 1992, all students were offered to participate in
the study by taking what would serve as a pre-test. The instrument used was the CCTDI. The students were not offered any incentives to take the test. The test was also conducted before any college classes had taken place. Four years later, in 1996, the CCTDI was offered once again in select classes and in areas near commencement information. Altogether, over 1,000 students completed both the pre- and post- surveys; however, 147 students (57 males and 90 females) completed both the pre and post surveys. The results showed that critical thinking disposition scores either remained stable or increased among the 147 students. Significant increases were found among two of the seven subscales of the CCTDI, truthseeking and self-confidence, which increased the overall scores of the CCTDI. Openmindedness and inquisitiveness were already positive in 1992 and proved to stay positive in 1996. In addition to examining the data overall, upper level students (seniors) tended to score more positive than lower level students (freshman), and the students’ major field of study did not show any variance in their scores.

Focusing on the subject of writing, Wilson (2000) conducted a descriptive study to investigate the relationship between a disposition towards critical thinking and analytical writing. Using a sample of 73 college students (58 juniors, 12 seniors, and 3 graduate students) enrolled in one professor’s business communications course, Wilson collected two items. First, as provided in the business course’s syllabus, the students completed an analytical writing assignment based on a given prompt, “Investigate the social customs of another country that may affect the success of a business transaction.” The assignment was evaluated by the college professor using a writing rubric (A, 75-80; B, 69-74; C, 62-68; and D, 56-61). After the writings were completed, the students completed the CCTDI. Comparing the writing scores with the CCTDI, Wilson found that the two are significantly related. Thirty-two percent of the variance in a disposition towards critical thinking was explained by the analytical writing score. The analysis showed specifically that three of the seven subscales of the CCTDI were significantly related to the analytical report scores. The three subscales, Analyticity, Open-Mindedness, and Systematicity, showed 35% of the variability in the analytical report score. “Analyticity means that reasoning and the use of evidence to support main ideas is necessary in analytical writing as well as the need to use metacognitive skills – thinking about one’s evaluation process” (Wilson, 2000, p. 79-80). Analytical people break down the parts of a problem and look at the pieces in regards to the whole. If a person is not able to analyze, then they may have problems “evaluating multiple solutions to a problem or preparing a good argument” (Wilson, 2000, p. 81). In addition
to analyticity, “Open-mindedness means that new information and viewpoints must be assimilated into one’s own viewpoint and biases” (Wilson, 2000, p. 81). An open minded person can look at difference viewpoints and choose options that are right for him or her. A person that does not have an open mind may lack tolerance and diversity. Finally, “systematicity means that research must be conducted according to accepted methodologies, and information must be organized and categorized” (Wilson, 2000, p. 81). A systematic person is orderly, organized, and focused. A person without systematicity would be easily distracted and disorganized. “Accordingly, 17 of 19 students who received a “D” or “F” on their analytical report scored below 40 (negative score) on at least one of the three CT subscales of the CCDTI” (Wilson, 2000, p. 81). The results of this study show that the CCDTI and other writing dispositions scales may be an effective measure for assessing the development of writing skills in students.

Wilson’s study is also important because she calls for future research studies that provide some type of intervention between a pre- and post- writing dispositions instrument to show what might possibly help increase writing scores, which pertains directly to this study.

Moving beyond the CCTDI, Perkins and Tishman (2001) and Perkins et al. (2000) introduced a further ramification for dispositions. They argued that intellectual behavior has three distinct, separable components: sensitivity, inclination, and ability (Perkins & Tishman, 2001). In the studies below, they create their own instruments to focus on all three components and try to separate the tendencies from one another.

To begin overall, Perkins and Tishman (2001) conducted a study using 320 subjects from ninth grade through graduate school to people who had been out of college for some years. Part of the sample was a group of student lawyers. They posed questions about a current issue to the subjects. The subjects were asked to think about the issue, arrive at a position on the issue, and then to explain their reasoning. The results showed that most subjects, across all ages tended to elaborate reasons on their preferred side of an issue while neglecting the other side. Specifically, subjects offered one-third as many arguments on the other side of the issue than on their preferred side. Follow up studies were then done at the secondary school level. The same methodology was used; however, after providing their initial reasoning, the interviewer asked the students follow up questions, including if they could elaborate more, find holes in their own reasoning, or provide reasons for the other side of the argument. Overall, the students answered most all of these questions and on average their reasoning increased by 700%. The results show
what the authors called a “dispositional effect,” meaning that “people’s ability substantially outstripped their performance” (Perkins & Tishman, 2001, p. 16). The subjects may have known the answers but they were not disposed to think nearly as well as they could.

Studying the three components, Perkins et al. (2000) sought to determine if sensitivity, inclination, and ability were psychologically separable in the dispositions model. The study sampled 64 eighth graders to address four stories, each with two thinking shortfalls within the stories that would include the disposition to seek alternative options and to seek reasons on the flip side of a case. To test sensitivity, the students would underline any passage in the story where they perceived a shortcoming and explain their own thinking in the margin. “Sensitivity concerns the likelihood of noticing occasions to engage in the behavior” (Perkins et al., 2000, p. 273). To test inclination, the materials highlighted a potentially problematic thinking step. Students were asked whether they perceived the shortcoming as problematic, and if so, they were then asked how they would deal with it. “Inclination concerns the motivation or impulse to engage in the behavior” (Perkins et al., 2000, p. 273). Finally, to test ability, the shortcomings in the stories were isolated, and the subjects were straightforwardly asked to generate ideas related to them. “Ability concerns the basic capacity to carry out a behavior” (Perkins et al., 2000, p. 272). This would measure ability just a like a test would by instructing students exactly what to do. The results of the study show that sensitivity, inclination, and ability were separable. Findings showed that sensitivity to thinking shortfalls was surprisingly low; on average, “students demonstrated only about 13.5% of what their ability would let them do” (Perkins et al., 2000, p. 275). With inclination, students demonstrated only about 45% of what their ability would let them do. “In other words, the demands of sensitivity seem to decrease task performance by 86.5%; whereas in contrast, the demands of inclination decrease task performance by about 55%” (Perkins et al., 2000, p. 275). The researchers conclude that low sensitivity, rather than low inclination, may be a major obstacle to good thinking, which is surprising, because most often, failure of ability or motivation (inclination) is what is normally blamed.

Looking just at sensitivity and ability, omitting inclination, Perkins et al. (2000) had 94 sixth graders read passages that revealed problems. Once again, the researchers examined two types of dispositions: seeking alternative options and reasoning two sides of a case. Students were holistically scored on their responses on a 1-6 scale. Scores from 1 to 2.5 characterized
poor thinking and minimal investment. Scores from 3 to 4 characterized modest investment and short elaborations. Scores from 4.5 to 6 showed rich elaborations, creativity, and a wide range of options. Results showed that sensitivity scores ranged from 1 to 4.1 with a mean of 2.12. Ability scores ranged from 1.33 to 4.53 with a mean of 2.98. The difference in mean scores exceeds one standard deviation and shows that the difference is statistically significant. When looking at the range of scores, 91.5% of the sensitivity scores were considered low, whereas only 49% of the ability scores fell in the low range (below 2.5). The researchers called this a “dispositions effect” saying “the detection and awareness of opportunities to act and think is problematic for a vast number of students in our sample” (Perkins et al., 2000, p. 277). They explained that although students had the ability to perform, they generally were unable to detect and respond to shortcomings when presented in context. Through linear regression, the authors showed that as ability level increases, sensitivity improves as well.

Finally, Perkins et al. (2000) examined just sensitivity. The study sampled 105 eighth graders. The students were given one of four types of passages to read: a passage where the thinking shortfalls were underlined and a crib sheet of options was provided, a passage where just the thinking shortfalls were underlined, a passage where just a crib sheet was provided, or just a passage without underlining or a crib sheet. The results of the study showed no statistical differences in the priming (underlining and crib sheet) versus the natural groups (nothing provided). The researchers conclude that “people seem to do a better job at discrimination when they detect shortfalls naturally than when the shortfalls are disembedded for them, makes common sense and suggests that the alertness required for naturalistic or ‘in the wild’ detection may function as a kind of internal priming (Perkins et al., 2000, p. 278). Perkins et al. also conducted a test-retest reliability of the sensitivity instrument using both fifth graders (N = 35) and eighth graders (N = 20) and found the same results.

Gender

Researchers have found that females and males score the same self-efficacy scores at the elementary school level or that females may score higher than boys. This occurs at least through middle school where girls’ self-efficacy begins to shift. As students get older, it is found that the differences diminish or even reverse. In regard to critical thinking dispositions, there are two studies at the college level that show females and males tend to have the same results, except
women score higher in open-mindedness and maturity of judgment. Below are studies on gender starting from elementary school to college level.

In Pajares & Valiante’s 1997 study on the influence of writing self-efficacy of elementary students, the researchers found differences among girls and boys. The study sampled 218 fifth grade students (115 girls and 103 boys) from three public elementary schools in the South and Southwest. The study had the students complete the Writing Self-Efficacy scale developed by Shell et al. (1989), the Writing Apprehension Test by Daly and Miller (1975), the Writing Outcome Expectations Scale by Shell et al. (1989), and also complete a timed thirty minute essay. The study found that girls and boys did not differ in performance on the timed essay; however, there were differences among the writing instruments that were completed. The study found that girls reported higher self-efficacy scores, found writing more useful, and had lower apprehension.

Similarly, a study by Graham et al. (2007) also indicated gender differences in attitude but not performance. In their study, Graham et al. sought to compare writing achievement and writing attitudes among first and third graders. After completing a writing assignment and then an attitudinal survey, the researchers found that young girls have more positive attitudes towards writing than boys; however, there was no statistical significance in their writing achievement.

In contrast, Pajares, Miller, and Johnson did not find gender differences among self-efficacy beliefs in their 1999 study among elementary school students. Studying 363 students in grades three through five, Pajares et al. found that although girls were rated as more superior writers, there were no gender differences in writing self-efficacy after controlling for writing aptitude.

At the middle school level, gender began to change. Pajares and Valiante (1999) also studied gender differences at the middle school level. In a study of grades six through eight, they found girls were more competent writers than boys but there were no gender differences in self-efficacy beliefs. Girls also expressed that they were better writers compared to other boys and girls in their class and in their school to a greater degree than boys.

At the high school level, self-efficacy changes among gender. Pajares and Johnson (1998) found in their study of 181 ninth graders that girls and boys did not differ in writing aptitude or performance, but they did differ in regards to self-efficacy. The researchers found
that self-efficacy began to shift among gender, as girls reported lower writing self-efficacies than boys.

Pajares also studied gender with Johnson and Usher in 2007. In a study of the four sources of self-efficacy (mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and anxiety), the researchers surveyed 1,256 students at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The instruments in the study included the Sources of Self-Efficacy scale, Writing Skills Self-Efficacy Scale, and a teacher rating of students’ writing competence. Results showed that girls reported greater mastery experience, vicarious experience, and social persuasions than boys. Girls also reported lower anxiety than boys. Girls also reported stronger self-efficacy towards writing, and they were also ranked higher as writers by their teachers.

Cleary (1996) completed a study of 40 eleventh graders and their motivation to write. The students, 20 males and 20 females, were chosen from different kinds of schools and different ethnic backgrounds. Through student interviews, classroom observations, and writing exercises, Cleary found that her work mirrored Deci (1975) in that young men and women lose intrinsic motivation for writing as they progress academically. “Deci concluded that positive response reduces intrinsic motivation in females, that females are more sensitive to feedback, and that they tend to experience praise as controlling of future efforts” (Cleary, 1996, p. 51). As females tend to want to please the teacher, males are less dependent on feedback “except as it supports their view of their ability” (p. 51). In order to build motivation among young writers, Cleary suggests that teachers let students choose their own topics and that teachers “should not praise or criticize” (p. 55). She also suggests that teachers help students develop the audience that they are writing for and have a purpose for writing.

Gee (1972) placed 193 eleventh graders in three groups: those who received praise, negative comments, and no comments on their writings. After a four-week period, Gee found no differences among gender in relation to writing quantity, quality, or attitude.

In regards to studies that include gender, critical thinking dispositions have been researched at the college level. Facione et al. (1995) found that disposition scores on the California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory (CCTDI) showed more similarities than differences among gender. After sampling 587 freshman at a private university, Facione et. al found that “women were more disposed toward being open-minded and cognitively mature, whereas men were statistically more inclined toward begin analytical” (p. 10). The authors
asked if these findings go along with what men and women perceive to be their social-gender roles and called for further research in this area to determine possible implications in pedagogy.

Giancarlo and Facione (2001) found the same results that there were slight differences in critical thinking dispositions in relation to gender. In 1992, at freshman orientation, the California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory (CCTDI) was given as a pre-test, and in 1996 near commencement information and in some classes, the CCTDI was given as a post-test. One hundred forty seven students completed both the pre- and post- tests at this four year, Catholic university. The results showed that females scored significantly higher than males in overall disposition toward critical thinking as well as open-mindedness and maturity of judgment. Females tended to score more positively in these scales than males. Beyond those two subscales, females and males tended to score the same in the remaining five subscales of truthseeking, analyticity, systematicity, critical thinking self-confidence, and inquisitiveness.

**Skill Level**

Guenette (2007) argued that there are many research design problems in feedback studies because researchers are not taking into account proficiency levels of students. Many experiments on teacher feedback focused on natural classroom settings and did not report students’ skill levels. Guenette stated, “If we are looking to compare the efficacy of teacher feedback across studies, proficiency levels have to be carefully measured and reported” (Guenette, 2007, p. 42). She concluded that because researchers do not report this important variable that results may be attributed to students’ skill levels rather than the feedback itself. Guenette added, “What is needed is a control group that is in every way comparable to the experimental group in terms of proficiency level, writing conditions, and instructional context” (Guenette, 2007, p. 44).

One researcher who did report skill levels, Gee (1972), found one significant difference between the ability levels. Gee’s three ability groups (high, medium, and low) were each randomly assigned to three feedback methods: praise, negative feedback, and no feedback. In his four-week study of 193 eleventh graders, Gee found that the high and low ability groups acted more strongly towards negative comments than the middle group.

In Giancarlo and Facione’s 2001 study on critical thinking disposition, the researchers found that there were differences in relation to skill level, or GPA. In 1992, at freshman orientation, the California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory (CCTDI) was given as a pre-
test, and in 1996 near commencement information and in some classes, the CCTDI was given as a post-test. One hundred forty seven students completed both the pre- and post- tests at this four year, Catholic university. The results showed that four of the CCTDI subscales significantly correlated with GPA: openmindedness, analyticity, systematicity, and maturity of judgment. Overall, the CCTDI showed to be significantly correlated with GPA as well.

**Research Design**

One important problem in past research is time. Guenette (2007) found that short-term studies (day or week long) showed positive results to students’ writings when given feedback on form; however, those same studies done longer (months or semesters) proved to have negative results. Due to this, Guenette found that studies should be longer and include more than one writing sample. Also, the author found that instructional procedures need to be the same for all groups involved, such as writing lessons, during the entire length of the study.

Gee (1972) found in his four-week study that more time was needed in order to see possible differences in his experimental design of the effect of teachers’ comments on students’ writings. After creating three groups of students, those who received praise, negative comments, and no comments, Gee found no significant differences in writing quality by the three groups. In Gee’s dissertation, the research makes the case for making the study longer.

**Summary**

The following is a summary of the previous research that was examined and used in formulating the current study.

There have been many different types of studies on teacher feedback. Some researchers prefer content level revisions (Matsumura et al., 2002; Olsen & Raffeld, 1987; Patthey-Chavez et al., 2004) while others promote the correction of surface errors (Feng & Powers, 2005, Matsumura et al., 2002). Some researchers promote long written comments (Hilllocks, 1982) or specific comments (Robinson, 1985) while some say praise, negative feedback, or no feedback still do not make a difference in a student’s paper (Gee, 1972).

In regards to the delivery method of feedback, only one study (Smith, 1989) completed at the college level showed that students like comments but do not want to go back and forth between their paper and a teacher response sheet. In Smith’s study, students would have preferred a teacher delivering feedback directly on their papers.
The literature also showed how both teachers and students felt about feedback. In one study about teachers (Searle & Dillon, 1980) teachers declared that specific praise was important in giving feedback; however, when examined closely, teachers were not giving specific praise to students. In another study (Harris, 1977), teachers said that feedback about content was most important; however, the study determined that teachers were mostly giving feedback on mechanics instead. With students, one study showed that students feared writing (Reed & Burton, 1985) and that many students did not even read or just looked at teacher feedback for a moment (Bardine et al., 2000; Ziv, 1982). Students also said that if they received feedback from teachers, they wanted to have explicit content feedback on how to correct their papers (Ziv, 1980) and that they mostly used feedback to improve their grade (Bardine et al., 2000).

In some cases, feedback studies either called teachers to give feedback or urged teachers against using feedback. For feedback, studies suggested teachers marking students’ errors (Baines et al., 1999; Quible & Griffin, 2007), giving praise only when it was deserved (Goldstein, 2004), and giving feedback regularly (Dutro et al., 2006). Whereas, other studies showed that students do not write better as a result of teacher feedback (Fazio, 2001; Scardamalia et al., n.d.) or that teacher feedback can even have a negative effect (Robinson, 1985). Hyslop (1996) also suggested that teachers give fewer judgments.

In regards to self-efficacy, many studies suggested a link between self-efficacy and writing performance (Pajares & Johnson, 1998; Pajares & Valiante, 1997, 1999; Shell et al., 1995), and some even deemed self-efficacy the best predictor of writing performance (Lackey et al., 1997). Several studies found that high achievers had higher self-efficacy, and low achievers had lower self-efficacy (Graham et al., 2007; Shell et al., 1995). Breaking self-efficacy down into categories, a Pajares et al. (2007) study found that mastery experience, vicarious experience, and social persuasions are strongest at the elementary level along with self-efficacy overall.

In regards to dispositions, many studies have been conducted that deal with critical thinking dispositions (Facione, 1990; Facione & Facione, 1992; Facione et al., 1995) and categories thereof, including sensitivity, inclination, and ability (Perkins & Tishman, 2001; Perkins et al., 2000). Wilson (2000) also linked dispositions with writing scores, and more current, Piazza & Siebert (2008) created a Writing Dispositions Scale that measures confidence, passion, and persistence towards writing.
With gender, researchers have found that there is no difference in females and males among self-efficacy scores at the elementary (Pajares et al., 1999), middle (Pajares & Valiante, 1999), or college level (Gee, 1972) or that females may score higher than boys (Graham et al., 2007; Pajares et al., 2007; Pajares & Valiante, 1997). This occurs at least through middle school where girls’ self-efficacy begins to shift. As students get older, it is found that the differences diminish or even reverse (Pajares & Johnson, 1998). In regard to critical thinking dispositions, there are two studies at the college level that show females and males tend to have the same results, except women score higher in open-mindedness and maturity of judgment (Facione et al., 1995; Giancarlo & Facione, 2001).

With skill level, Guenette (2007) argued that writing feedback studies should include skill level as a variable, however, very few studies did. Gee (1972) found that the high and low students acted more strongly towards negative feedback, but Giancarlo & Facione (2001) found no differences among skill levels in regards to dispositions.
CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

This study was designed and carried out based on a review of previous research literature along with the researcher’s experience in teaching elementary writing. The purpose of this study was to compare the effect of two different delivery styles of constructive content feedback and error correction on the writing self-efficacy and dispositions of third grade students at a public elementary school. This chapter will present the methodology used in examining the research questions. In this section, the following information will be presented in detail: the selection of the setting and participants, design of the study, variables, procedures, data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations of the study.

Identification of Setting and Participants

The sample in this study focused on the entire set of third grade classes at one school, Lakeview Elementary School. Third grade students were chosen because they represented the midpoint of elementary education where writing skills, self-efficacy, and dispositions are being developed. This grade level at Lakeview Elementary also represented the beginning of a new expository writing unit.

Because the study focused on a specific grade at a single school, the sample was a convenience sample. “A convenience sample is a group of individuals who are available for study” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009, p. 98). The conclusions drawn based upon a convenience sample are limited to the sample participating in the study; however, the sample is described thoroughly in order for possible results to be compared with similar populations and/or schools.

School

Lakeview Elementary, which serves kindergarten through fifth grade, is the only public elementary school in a small town in a southern state. The school was built in the 1940’s as a school for African Americans and converted to an integrated public elementary school in the 1970’s. At the time of this study, Lakeview Elementary was home to 608 students, 43 instructional staff, and one administrator. Out of the 608 students, of which 51% were female and 49% male, the racial breakdown was 77% were White, 16% were Black, 4% were Hispanic, and 3% represented other races. The school enrolled 87 children with disabilities (14% of the total enrollment) and had a total of 57% of students who were on free or reduced lunch, which
was higher than the state average of 49%. Due to its high poverty numbers, Lakeview is also a Title I school, which means the school receives federal funding to help support its economically disadvantaged and special needs students.

Out of the 43 instructional staff, 100% of Lakeview’s classrooms were taught by highly qualified teachers, meaning all teachers held at least a bachelor’s degree, had full state licensure or certification, and had proven that they knew the subject(s) they were teaching through state assessments (No Child Left Behind, 2005). Also, much like the state average, 32% of Lakeview’s teachers hold a Master’s degree or higher.

Academically, Lakeview had met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) five of the last seven years under the No Child Left Behind Act (2002). “AYP measurements target the performance and participation of various subgroups based on race or ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, and English proficiency” (Florida Department of Education, 2005). In Florida, AYP measures are based on students’ growth on Florida’s statewide standardized test, the Florida Comprehension Achievement Test (FCAT), in grades three through ten. The two years that Lakeview did not meet AYP, the school did achieve 90% and 95% of the AYP criteria respectively; however, 100% of the criteria must be met in order to achieve AYP. When AYP was not met, only one subgroup did not achieve growth - students with disabilities. In addition to the federal AYP program, the state of Florida also has an accountability system in the form of school grades. Since the 1998-1999 school year, Lakeview has received an “A” seven times, a “B” three times, and a “C” once. The current school grade from the previous school year is an “A” and has been for the past two years.

**Third Grade Teachers**

In third grade at Lakeview, there were seven teachers in five classrooms. Three of the teachers taught in single classrooms and had 18 students each. Two of the single classrooms were located in a new wing that was added on to the school in 2008, and one of the single classrooms was located in a nearby portable building. The remaining four teachers taught in two team teaching classrooms. Team teaching is a situation where two certified teachers are in one classroom with a larger number of students, which at this school was due to a shortage of classroom space. The two team teaching classrooms had 24 and 26 students each. The two team teaching classrooms were also located in the new wing of the school.
Before the study began, the researcher decided to eliminate one of the team teaching classrooms because a college intern who would be required to teach writing over several weeks during the study was assigned to the room. Therefore, the researcher only targeted five of the seven teachers. Even though the team teaching/intern class participated much like the other classrooms, student data from these classes were not used in the study. So, in total, five teachers who represented four classrooms, three single classrooms and one team teaching classroom, participated in the study.

**Students**

If all third grade students from the four classrooms had participated, the study would have had up to 78 third graders in the sample. In reality, 54 third graders from the four classrooms, or 69%, returned signed consent/assent forms and were able to participate in the study. Among the 54 students, there was a balance of females and males, but a majority of students were White and at a medium to high skill level. Almost all of the third graders were either eight or nine years old with just a few who were older due to past retentions. All of the third grade students remained in their classrooms with the same teachers all day learning reading, writing, math, social studies, and science. The students did leave class for 50 minutes a day to attend physical education, music, or science lab classes.

**Design of the Study**

The study used a pre- and post-test comparison group design. The intent when comparing groups is to assess the effect of the independent variable (the two delivery styles of teachers providing feedback) on the dependent variables (the students’ writing self-efficacy and dispositions). The study was quasi-experimental. Quasi-experimental designs are when two or more groups of subjects are compared, such as a comparison and treatment group, however, the subjects are not randomly assigned to the groups due to previously formed classes (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). Two classrooms (Teachers 1 and 2a/2b) served as the comparison group, and the other two classrooms (Teachers 3 and 4) served as the treatment group. In all, four classes participated, two in each group.

**Description of Independent Variables**

The main independent variable was the delivery styles of constructive content feedback and error correction of students’ writings by teachers. In the comparison group, the teacher wrote feedback on a separate rubric form instead of the child’s paper. In the treatment group,
teacher’s feedback was written directly on the student’s paper. Secondary independent variables were student gender and skill level. Gender indicated male or female, and skill level represented low, middle, and high skill groups based on each student’s previous year’s standardized reading tests. Reading scores were used because no standardized writing scores were available from the students’ previous grade. Because the independent variables varied by comparison and treatment groups, the differences in the two groups will now be explained in detail.

**Delivery Style - Comparison Group**

For the comparison group, the teachers did not write directly on the students’ writing papers. Instead, when teachers met with students during a one-on-one writing conference every other week, the teacher read through the paper with the student then provided constructive content feedback and error correction on a separate form (Appendix A). The form was a sheet of white paper that displayed all six traits of writing (ideas, organization, voice, sentence fluency, word choice, and conventions) (Appendix B). As the teacher read through the paper, she found one of each of the six traits and provided feedback for the student. When providing feedback, the teacher picked out the most troublesome mistakes or problems on the students’ papers. All of the feedback was constructive in nature in order to build students’ self-efficacy. For example, when the teacher pointed out a mistake, she did not just say, “This is wrong.” Instead, she pointed out the problem and then modeled how to correct the mistake or modeled how to make the content of the paper better. To help the students better see the connection from their papers to the rubric form, the teachers were instructed by the researcher to supply the mistake, such as the actual sentence, on the rubric form along with the modeled correction.

For example, if the child wrote, “You’re mom is cool,” the teacher pointed out the incorrect homophone and modeled the correct form. Because that is a spelling problem, the teacher would have given feedback about the problematic homophone under the “conventions” heading on the six traits rubric form. The teacher may have written, “You’re mom is cool is not correct. The correct for is - Your mom is cool. You’re stands for you are; whereas, your shows possession, such as your mom, your house, your dog.”

Another example could have involved the content of the paper. For instance, the teacher may have modeled a better way to write a sentence from the child’s writing on the rubric form under the “word choice” heading. The teacher may have written the student’s actual sentence, “We went to the store.” Then she would have modeled a more effective way of writing the
sentence, such as “Instead of saying, we ‘went’ to the store, you could have said, we ‘zoomed’ to the store like a rocket ship”. The teacher could have pointed out that “zoomed” is a strong verb versus the weak verb “went” or that “like a rocket ship” is an example of a simile.

At the end of the teacher/student writing conference, the student in the comparison group had his original writing paper with no additional teacher marks. However, he did have a separate rubric sheet that had six items of constructive content feedback and/or error correction by the teacher. The intent of this technique was for students to maintain a clean product of their writing and maintain ownership of their paper but to still have teacher input from which they can improve (Hillerich, 1985).

**Delivery Style - Treatment Group**

In the treatment group, every other week the teachers wrote comments, corrected mistakes, and asked questions directly on the students’ writing papers, instead of using a separate rubric form (Appendix C). The feedback, even though it was now written directly on the student’s paper, was still in the form of one item of feedback based on the six traits of writing. For instance, the teacher may have pointed out a misspelled word by circling it. The teacher would have then labeled the problem as a “conventions” problem and then modeled the correct spelling above the misspelled word or in the margin.

In addition to conventions, the teacher may have given organizational advice to strengthen the content of the paper. For instance, if the child was not using transitions to flow from paragraph to paragraph, the teacher might have added a transition between paragraphs. The teacher would write the transition near where it belonged on the paper either above a line or in the margins. This would have represented organizational feedback of the six traits of writing, so the teacher would have labeled the correction as an “organization” correction.

At the end of the conference, the student had only his writing paper with the teacher’s remarks directly on the original paper. There was a total of six items of feedback or error correction on these papers just like the comparison group. The intent of this technique was for students to see their errors or problems directly on their papers with the teachers’ guidance on how to correct their mistakes (McAndrew & Reigstad, 2001) and to not have to break concentration by looking at a different teacher feedback form when revising and editing (Smith, 1989).
Controlling Variables - Both Comparison and Treatment Deliveries

For both groups, the feedback session took place in a one-on-one conference between child and teacher. Conferences took place at a table where teacher and student sat side by side and as close to equal heights as possible. The teacher was instructed in training by the researcher to maintain eye contact with the child and to share the child’s paper with the child. Instead of the teacher taking the paper and holding it in front of herself, the teacher was directed to hold the child’s paper at an equal distance between herself and the student. All of this direction was done in order for teachers to be viewed as the child’s advocate (Graves, 1983).

The type of conferencing in this study is best described as a drafting conference. In a drafting conference, “children bring their rough drafts and talk with the teacher about specific trouble spots in their writing. Together the teacher and the student discuss the problems and brainstorm ideas for solving it” (Tompkins, 2000, p. 139). When discussing how to make the student’s writing better, the teacher and the student focused on the six traits of writing. The six traits were chosen to guide feedback because the traits provide both content related feedback and error correction. Because there are six of the traits, the traits also provided consistency among the amount of feedback given as well.

During the conferences, which each lasted approximately five to ten minutes, the researcher provided a script for each teacher to follow (Appendix D). The script allowed the teachers to be consistent with their conferences, and it also provided a routine for students. This was important because children tend to participate more when the conference is predictable (Graves, 2003). Before the conference took place, however, it was suggested that the teacher read through and be familiar with the child’s paper. To start the conference, the teacher asked an opening question, such as “How is it going, Tom?” or “What are you writing about now, Jane?” (Graves, 2003, p. 108), in order to get the child talking first (Murray, 1979; Bratcher, 2004). “As long as children talk, not only does the teacher gain more information about the subject, but the teacher acquires perspective on what will help the children” (Graves, 2003, p. 138).

Through the child’s opening monologue about his or her writing, a burning topic or question that the child had may emerge, and if so, the teacher was directed to let it be addressed first. After an opening question, the teacher, according to the script, immediately praised the student as conferences need to begin with praise. After that, the teacher then focused the conference on the six traits of writing through questions that deal with the six traits, such as
“Sally, how do you feel about the ideas in your essay?” or “Robert, what type of organization did you use in your essay?” The teachers went through all six traits and found areas of growth. After questions about ideas and organization, the teacher may have decided to read through the essay with the child in order to find the other four traits that were more embedded in the essay, such as voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions. When the teacher came across strengths and/or weaknesses with the six traits, she stopped and addressed the items. Before the teacher provided feedback, the teacher was always directed to ask the student if they could fix the problem first. If the child could not identify the problem or find a solution, the teacher then provided an option of how to make the correction or enhance the content. The teacher provided feedback for each of the six traits whether it was on a separate rubric form or directly on the child’s paper. There was not a minimum or maximum number of words that teachers were directed to write in their comments and corrections, as no studies have indicated that the number of words written in feedback affect writing self-efficacy or dispositions; however, it is important to note that all teachers in both groups used the same color of ink pen, blue, to provide written feedback to students.

As the teacher held conferences with students, she explained her feedback verbally to the students as well. In this way, the teacher ensured that the student understood the feedback that was given to him, and the child had time to ask questions and seek clarification. In addition to making six items of constructive content feedback and error correction, the teachers also verbally praised students on the writing techniques that they did well. At the end of the conference, the teacher asked the child to reflect on what he did well and what needed to be improved upon. Also, the teacher asked the student what his next step was in revising his paper (Tompkins, 2000).

After the conference was over, students from both groups used their teachers’ feedback to revise their papers. Students were given time to revise and edit and write a second draft. After their second drafts were complete, the students were able to publish/share their writings with others. Both first drafts with teacher feedback and second drafts were kept in the students’ writing portfolios and also copied by the researcher for possible future analysis.

**Description of Dependent Variables**

The dependent variables were the children’s attitudes regarding their writing abilities, specifically their writing self-efficacy and dispositions. The students completed two previously
published instruments: a Writing Self-Efficacy Scale (Shell et al., 1995) and a Writing Dispositions Scale (Piazza & Siebert, 2008). Both of these scales were self-report instruments and were combined into one document by the researcher (Appendix E). Perkins and Tishman (2001) reported that there are two approaches to measuring dispositions, and self-rating was one. Both scales used a Likert style format. The Likert style is used in many surveys and is age appropriate for elementary school students because “elementary and middle-grade students are acquainted with self-report instruments” (Piazza & Siebert, 2008, p. 279). In a Likert scale, students rate their feelings towards a statement by choosing strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree. To make the surveys clear and easy to understand, especially the Likert scale, the researcher read scripted directions and provided an example of the Likert scale format using an example involving potato chips to each class of students (C. L. Piazza, personal communication, October 21, 2009) (Appendix F). Both instruments will now be explained in detail.

**Writing Self-Efficacy Instrument**

Two concepts that are extremely useful in judging the value of an instrument are reliability and validity (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). Shell et al. (1995) took several steps in developing a valid and reliable Writing Self-Efficacy Scale for elementary school students. In 1989, Shell, Colvin Murphy, and Bruning first developed a sixteen item self-efficacy scale to survey 153 undergraduate students. The survey, which was based on the work of Bandura, was answered on a zero (no chance) to 100 (complete certainty) scale. Pajares (2003) reported that assessing both writing tasks and skills were proven methods in measuring writing self-efficacy. In 1995, Shell et al. (1989) adapted their self-efficacy instrument for elementary school students (Appendix F). The instrument was changed in three ways. First, the survey was shortened from sixteen questions to eight due to possible test fatigue that might occur with younger children. Second, the statements were adapted to better suit the tasks that would be conducted at an elementary school level. For the current study, Shell also encouraged that the statements be adapted to better suit the tasks that would be conducted in the current study (D.F. Shell, personal communication, November 17, 2009). Finally, the zero to 100 scale was changed to a five point scale, much like the Writing Disposition Scale (Piazza & Siebert, 2008). The researchers used the newly adapted instrument with 364 students at the fourth, seventh, and tenth grade levels and reported a 0.69 coefficient alpha reliability for the scale.
In 2001, Pajares, Hartley, and Valiante sought to discover if the zero to 100 scale or Likert format were best for Shell’s self-efficacy scale; however, they only tested it among middle school students, grades six to eight. In their study, they found that the zero to 100 scale showed that it was psychometrically stronger; however, because the study was not completed with younger students, in the current study the Likert scale was used.

**Writing Dispositions Instrument**

Piazza and Siebert (2008) also reported several steps of reliability and validity testing in the development of the Writing Dispositions Scale (WDS). The instrument began with 120 items, approximately 40 items each surrounding confidence, persistence, and passion towards writing. Before administering the WDS with students, Piazza and Siebert submitted the instrument to five experts in written composition. The experts fitted the items to operational definitions; verified each item’s function as a belief, behavior, or feeling; and checked the readability of the instrument for the elementary and middle school age group. “This procedure established not only inter-rater agreement but also face and content validity” (Piazza & Siebert, 2008, p. 279).

After the experts examined the instrument, the 120 items were reduced to 93, and then the WDS was administered to 884 fourth through sixth grade students at six schools in northern Florida. After both an exploratory and confirmatory analysis of the data, Piazza and Siebert were able to use correlation and model fit data to remove redundant information and non-informative variables. The final version of the WDS, which was used in this study, has 11 valid and reliable items that measure confidence, persistence, and passion towards writing for elementary and middle school aged students. The final WDS had Cronbach alpha levels of 0.89 for the entire instrument, 0.81 for the confidence subscale, 0.75 for the persistence subscale, and 0.91 for the passion subscale. The final instrument also resulted in good fit indexes: “root mean square error of approximation = .034 and root mean square residual = .041, below the .05 criteria; normed fit index = .99, nonnormed fit index = .99, comparative fit index = 1.00, relative fit index = .98, and goodness of fit index = .98, all above the .95 criteria; and expected cross-validation index = .26 and Akaike information criterion = 115.66, both below their saturated values of .30 and 132.00, respectively” (Piazza & Siebert, 2008, p. 280).
Procedures

During Fall of 2009, the researcher received approval to conduct this study from the principal of Lakeview Elementary School (Appendix H), the board of the larger Lakeview Elementary school district (Appendix I), and from Florida State University’s Human Subjects Committee (Appendix J). Also during this time, the researcher met with the third grade teachers at Lakeview Elementary to discuss the upcoming study, its timeline, and its voluntary nature, as teachers were told that they might choose whether or not they wanted to participate. The teachers learned about the expository writing unit and the two delivery styles of feedback that were to be studied. The teachers were also asked to discuss any biases or problems at that time in relation to assessing students’ writings. By holding the meeting with teachers at the beginning of the school year and obtaining teacher consent (Appendix K) well in advance of the study, the researcher was able to minimize any upcoming problems or concerns.

Much like previous years, the teachers in the third grade conducted their writing classes by focusing on a narrative writing unit from September 2009 to February 2010. The teachers also continued to provide feedback to students as they have always done, through the use of a delivery method called a “glow and grow” form (Appendix L). This form, which was teacher-created and used by the entire school district, allowed teachers to provide three glowing comments, or what the child did well in their writing, and one growing comment, what the child needed to correct or expand upon in their second draft. With the “glow and grow” form, the teachers did not write feedback and error correction directly on the students’ papers, instead, they used a separate “glow and grow” sheet. Once the study began in March however, the teachers discontinued the use of the “glow and grow” form and instead used the six traits rubric form as provided by the researcher. The students have studied writing in the form of narrative writing since kindergarten at Lakeview Elementary School. Since first grade at Lakeview, the students have participated in a school-wide bi-monthly writing assignment followed by teacher writing conferences where their papers have been assessed with a “glow and grow” form, so the students were familiar with teacher feedback written on a separate feedback form, independent writing, and student/teacher writing conferences.

In January 2010, through a classroom visit to all of the participating teachers, the researcher read from a recruitment script to invite all third grade students to participate in the study (Appendix M). During this time, students received both a parental consent form
(Appendix N), because the students are minors, and a student assent form (Appendix O), because the students are above the age of seven. Both the parental consent form and student assent form provided information about the study, explained the timeline, indicated that no compensation would be provided, and explained that the study was strictly voluntary with no detrimental effects to students. As students return the completed forms, the students were enrolled in the study, and the researcher also provided parents and students with copies of their consent and assent forms. The original agreement forms were held by the researcher under lock and key in the researcher’s home.

In March 2010, the researcher met with the participating third grade teachers for a full explanation of the complete procedures of the study during a three hour training session. The training session focused on the following agenda items (Appendix P): the teachers’ roles in regards to the study’s variables (Appendix Q); how to maintain consistency; how to follow the study’s detailed lesson plans (Appendix R), including how to conduct model writings, mini-lessons, and how to conference with students; a review of the six traits of writing (Appendix S); and when to meet and how to notify the researcher. During this time, the teachers were also randomly assigned to either the comparison or treatment group. To randomize the sample, the researcher picked one teacher’s name out of a hat to be assigned to the comparison group. The teacher that was chosen (Teacher 2a and 2b) happened to be the largest classroom of participating students; therefore, that teacher was automatically paired with the lowest classroom number which was Teacher 1. Therefore, Teachers 1 and 2a and 2b were assigned to the comparison group. That left Teachers 3 and 4 for the treatment group.

After the initial training meeting and once the study began, the teachers met routinely every Thursday on the third grade hall with the researcher to discuss any unforeseen problems, concerns, and procedural issues. These meetings also allowed the researcher to address problems found in the teacher feedback that was given to the students. For example, during the first week of the study, one teacher left some of the six traits blank and another teacher wrote only praise for some of the six traits. At the meetings, the researcher also reviewed the upcoming week’s lesson plans and assessments and provided examples if needed. These meetings helped keep the study on track and reinforced consistency. Although there were no mortality issues, the teachers were able to alert the researcher about student absences and make
up writings. This meeting was also a time for materials to be exchanged between teachers and researcher.

To begin the study with students, all participating children completed the study’s two instruments, the Writing Self-Efficacy Scale (Shell et al., 1995) and the Writing Dispositions Scale (Piazza & Siebert, 2008). The researcher conducted the surveys with the third grade students on the first day of the study in March of 2010. The teachers pre-coded the surveys with individual reference numbers for anonymity purposes. Only the teachers knew which student belonged to which code. Once the students completed their pre-survey, their results were entered into the statistical software package, SPSS, on a password protected computer in the researcher’s home. After the surveys were entered into SPSS, the surveys were destroyed.

Using Atwell (1998), Graves (1983), Hale (2008), and others as a guide, lesson plans were created and provided to the teachers for a nine-week unit on expository writing, where every two weeks the plans cycle. These plans were used with both the comparison and treatment groups. Writing class was scheduled for approximately 45 minutes each day in the third grade classrooms from 9:45 – 10:30 a.m. Each day, the subject of writing opened with a six traits mini-lesson. These brief 15 minute lessons included instruction on the expository genre, literary devices, and grammar/conventions. In order to maintain consistency, teachers were provided one page sheets to guide each mini-lesson from a current writing curriculum guide called “Writing Superstars” (Forney, 2007). Mini-lessons provided students with strategy aspects of a learning task, which could in turn have a positive effect on self-efficacy in the area of writing (Walker, 2003).

After the 15 minute mini-lesson, which began each day of writing, the teacher then led students through thirty minutes of either model writing or conferencing. For example, each day of week one focused the last 30 minutes of writing on teacher modeling and/or shared writing and ended with the students writing their own expository paper. Week two focused the last 30 minutes of writing on student conferences and teacher feedback to students’ writings. Once again, both the comparison and treatment groups followed the same lesson plans. Every two weeks cycle which helped students begin to build and maintain an understanding of expository writing (Hale, 2008). Through unannounced teacher observations, by both the researcher and principal, the researcher ensured that instruction was taking place and also that teachers used the
same lesson plans, which was important for consistency (Guenette, 2007) and validation of treatment.

The following is a detailed explanation of the two-week lesson plan cycle which repeated four times over the nine-week unit.

Week 1

On Monday, the teacher conducted a mini-lesson on expository writing. Then, she introduced a prompt from the expository genre, brainstormed the prompt on chart paper with students using a cross graphic organizer (Appendix T), and then conducted a model/shared writing for the introductory paragraph with students.

On Tuesday, the teacher conducted a mini-lesson on expository writing. Then, she conducted a model/shared writing for the body of the essay with students.

On Wednesday, the teacher conducted a mini-lesson on expository writing. Then, she continued to conduct a model/shared writing for the body with students.

On Thursday, the teacher conducted a mini-lesson on expository writing. Then, she conducted a model/shared writing for the conclusion with students. Once the entire model/shared writing was complete, the teacher proofread the model writing with students. Then, the teacher wrapped up the week, clarified any questions that students had, and also hung the model writing on the wall for students to use as a guide. On Thursdays, the teachers also met with the researcher to discuss any questions or concerns and the upcoming week’s lesson plans and procedures.

On Friday, the students wrote independently to an expository prompt (Appendix U-Y). The students received a paper from their teacher that was pre-coded with an individual reference number for confidentiality purposes. The students were not given a time limit. Both the comparison and treatment groups wrote to the same prompt. After the writing assignment was complete, the teachers were directed to take the students’ papers home over the weekend to read through and generate ideas for writing conferences for the following week.

Week 2

On Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, the teachers conducted mini-lessons on writing each day and then gave seatwork assignments of their choice to their classes. Many times, this seatwork was extended work from the previous subject, reading. While the students worked on their seatwork assignments, the teacher called one fourth of her students for
conferences on their writings during each of the four days. The teacher provided feedback in the style that they had been assigned to – either writing on the separate rubric form or directly on the student’s paper. Each child received six items of feedback in relation to the six traits of writing. After receiving feedback, those students put away their seatwork and began revising and editing their writing papers and could do so each day during writing from Monday through Thursday. The teachers were encouraged to pull students who needed more time to revise and edit at the beginning of the week on Mondays; whereas, those students who did not need as much help could be called for conferences on the last day, Thursday. During the regular Thursday meeting, the researcher addressed next week’s schedule and discussed any questions or concerns that the teachers had.

On Friday, the teacher allowed students time to complete their revisions. Afterwards, all students shared their writings. This was done with a peer, in groups, with the whole class, or with adults, as students were given the option of how to share their work. To end the week, the teacher answered any questions or discussed any concerns about the past week’s writing activities. Before the papers were added to the students’ writing portfolios, the researcher collected all the papers on Fridays. The researcher took the weekend to make copies of the students’ writings along with the teachers’ feedback. The copies were kept in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher’s home, and the original papers were given back to teachers the following week to be stored in the students’ writing portfolios.

During the nine-week period, five independent student writings were conducted. The prompts were taken directly from past standardized assessments from the state of Florida’s fourth grade Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test in the area of writing (www.fldoe.org). The prompts, or topics, were written in a three sentence style. The first sentence was a general statement. The second sentence told the student what to brainstorm, and the third sentence told the student what to write. For example, “Everyone has a favorite subject. Think about your favorite subject. Now, write to explain why you like a particular subject.”

On the last day of the study, the researcher provided the post-test for students in the form of the same Writing Self-Efficacy Scale (Shell et al., 1995) and the Writing Dispositions Scale (Piazza & Siebert, 2008). Once again, the students received the same pre-coded individual reference number that only their teachers knew. The researcher reminded the students about the Likert format of the surveys by once again giving the potato chip example from the pre-test.
Once the surveys were completed, the researcher added the information to SPSS for data analysis, and the original surveys were destroyed.

**Data Collection**

Before the nine-week lessons began, the researcher provided each teacher with a list of all students who had completed consent and assent forms. The teacher then assigned each student a coded number. For instance, Teacher 1 coded her students 1-1, 1-2, 1-3, and so on. The teachers created their own system of assigning students to individual reference numbers. By doing this, the researcher did not know individual student names; the researcher only knew students by their numbers, which ensured confidentiality. Along with the coded number, the teacher also provided the researcher with the students’ gender, race, and skill level. Gender was indicated as male or female, and race was indicated by White, Black, or Other. Skill level was based on the students’ previous year’s standardized reading score. Below 50% placed a student in the “low” category; 51% to 75% placed the student in the “middle”, and 76% and higher placed the student in the “high” category. After the teachers provided the researcher with this information, the researcher entered the students’ demographics into SPSS.

During the study, whenever the students completed an assignment, whether it was a survey or independent writing, the teacher wrote the students’ individual reference numbers at the top of the students’ papers. Using numbers, the researcher was easily able to categorize papers and let teachers know if any data were missing. For example, if Teacher 1 had 11 students, the researcher categorized the papers in numerical order. If a number were missing from one to 11, the researcher was able to contact the teacher and let her know quickly which number was missing. In this way, all student assignments were collected in an orderly and timely manner.

For data collection, a single SPSS spreadsheet was used throughout the study. The document was kept confidential at all times and was only accessed by the researcher on her password protected home computer. In the document, students were indicated by their teacher assigned reference number, such as 3-1, 3-2, 3-3, and so on. The students were differentiated by gender (0 indicated female and 1 indicated male in SPSS). In addition to gender, race was also coded in SPSS (1 indicated white, 2 indicated black, and 3 indicated other), and students were ranked by their skill level based on their previous year’s Stanford 10 standardized reading test scores (1 indicated low, 2 indicated middle, and 3 indicated high).
Once the framework in SPSS was completed, the survey results for each student were entered. The researcher entered the answer for each question in both the eight question self-efficacy scale and the 11 question dispositions scale. Following the Likert scale, 1 was entered to indicate strongly disagree, 2 indicated disagree, 3 indicated neutral, 4 indicated agree, and 5 indicated strongly agree. For example, on the dispositions scale, the students were asked to rate the following statement: “Writing is easy.” If the student circled “strongly agree,” then a 5 was entered for that statement in SPSS. On items that asked negative questions, the researcher reversed the scale. For instance, on the dispositions scale, the students were asked to rate the following statement: “I am not a good writer.” If a child answered “disagree,” instead of getting a 2 in SPSS, the scale was reversed for the negative statement, and the statement scored a 4. In addition to inputting a number for each statement, the researcher also inputted a total score on both the self-efficacy and dispositions scales for each student. All of the above was completed for both the pre- and post-surveys.

Data Analysis

To begin data analysis, a description of the sample was provided, including the participating teachers; their number of students; and the make up of student gender, race, and skill level. From there, descriptive statistics were reported to paint a picture of the pre- and post-test results of writing self-efficacy and dispositions. “Descriptive statistics serves as a tool for describing and summarizing, and reducing to manageable form the properties of an otherwise unwieldy mass of data” (Glass & Hopkins, 1996, p. 2). To start, a central tendency, mean, of the overall instruments and for each Likert survey question was reported for the overall sample and individual groups, including gender, skill level, and the two feedback groups on both pre- and post-tests. To show the variability in the data, standard deviations were also reported. When groups were compared, such as gender, skill level, and the comparison/treatment groups, mean differences with t-tests were also reported. In addition to mean and standard deviation, the researcher used Chi-square results for each pre- and post-test statement, Contingency Tables to show frequencies, as well as Cronbach alpha scores to show reliability measures.

Once descriptive statistics were reported, inferential statistics were conducted to test the hypotheses. Inferential statistics attempt “to infer the properties of an entire set of data from inspection of only a small sample” (Glass & Hopkins, 1996, p. 2-3). First, ANCOVA (Analysis of Covariance) was used to investigate if significant differences occurred in writing self-efficacy
and dispositions between the two groups as well as by gender and skill levels. When using ANCOVA, three important steps were conducted: 1) an interaction effect between the treatment and time, 2) a test of the time component, and 3) a test of the treatment level. Also with ANCOVA, a covariate was chosen. The researcher chose to hold the pre-tests constant. Using ANCOVA allowed the hypotheses to be tested. By holding the pre-tests constant, ANCOVA showed if there were significant differences between the comparison and treatment groups’ post-test scores, by gender, and by skill level. ANCOVA provides a p-value which would show if significant differences between the two groups, as well as by gender and skill level, existed. ANCOVA also allowed the researcher to examine the differences between individual teachers as well to see if further differences occurred.

Because pre- and post-tests were correlated, the researcher also completed MANCOVA (Multivariate Analysis of Covariance). MANCOVA helps control for Type I Error rates. MANCOVA was also used to see if any additional differences occurred by group, gender, skill level, or teacher.

**Ethical Considerations**

Protecting participants from harm, ensuring confidentiality, and addressing the use of deception were three key ethical issues that needed to be addressed (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). First, students were not harmed. In fact, even though the comparison and treatment groups experienced different feedback methods from their teachers, both groups experienced common, widely used assessment techniques that might be found in schools across the nation at any given time.

In addition to protecting the students, great care was taken to keep subject, teacher, and school information confidential. Regarding participants’ information, the researcher kept all consent and assent forms in a locked filing cabinet in her home and used pre-coded numbers on student surveys and writings. Also, instead of listing the school, teacher, or student names, all names have been changed to pseudonyms for this and any future publications. Ensuring confidentiality also meant that the study’s data were protected. Once data were transferred from surveys to the statistical software program SPSS, the surveys were destroyed. The researcher accessed the data in SPSS via her home computer, which is password protected. Copies of the students’ writing papers were also kept in the researcher’s home in a locked filing cabinet.
In regards to deception, it was not an issue in this study. Starting with the consent and assent forms, students and parents were aware of the research and its purpose.

Summary

A convenience sample from the third grade at Lakeview Elementary School totaling 54 students participated in this study. During a nine-week unit on expository writing, students received a daily mini-lesson focused on the six traits of writing. Students also participated in model and shared writing with their teachers. During the nine-weeks, students completed five independent writing assignments on their own, four of which were revised and edited after conferencing with their teachers.

Students’ experiences differed in this study in regards to the delivery style of teacher feedback that they were given during conferences. In a comparison group, which represented two classrooms, teachers wrote constructive content feedback and error correction on a separate rubric form; whereas, in a treatment group, which represented two other classrooms, teachers wrote constructive content feedback and error correction directly on the students’ writing papers. Both groups of students received six items of feedback and/or error correction based on the six traits of writing, one item per each of the six traits. The researcher provided a pre and post-test, a Writing Self-Efficacy Scale (Shell et al., 1995) and a Writing Dispositions Scale (Piazza & Siebert, 2008), to determine how the two different delivery styles affected the students. Results of the study will be used to better inform writing assessment techniques for teachers and provide a missing link in the current literature on writing feedback.
CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Chapter Four will provide the results of the study beginning with a description of the teachers, the overall sample, and pre- and post- tests results of the comparison and treatment groups. The remainder of the chapter will test hypotheses in the form of ANCOVA (Analysis of Covariates) and MANCOVA (Multivariate Analysis of Covariates).

Description of Teachers

The five participating teachers, all Caucasian women, were referred to as Teachers 1, 2, 3, and 4. Teacher 2 was further delineated by 2a and 2b to indicate the two teachers in the team teaching classroom. As Table 4.1 shows, altogether the teachers had an average of 13.6 years of teaching experience and had been teaching at Lakeview Elementary School for an average of 5.6 years. In regards to academics, all third grade teachers were highly qualified teachers and all of them had received recent district level Six Traits of Writing inservices over the past four years. One of the five teachers had been trained as a Six Traits of Writing trainers and had also been involved with writing assessments at the district and state levels. Table 4.1 provides more information on each individual teacher.

Table 4.1

Description of Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Years of teaching experience</th>
<th>Years of experience at Lakeview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 2a</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 2b</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 4</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean/Median</td>
<td>13.6/16</td>
<td>5.6/3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Description of the Overall Sample

Out of 78 third grade students, 54, or 69%, returned consent/assent forms and were able to participate in the nine-week study. Most of the 54 students were enrolled in third grade for the first time and were between eight and nine years of age. As Table 4.2 indicates, the 54 students represented four classrooms: Teacher 1, Teacher 2a and 2b (team teachers), Teacher 3, and Teacher 4. Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 represented the comparison group with 31 students. Teacher 3 and Teacher 4 represented the treatment group with 23 students. Out of the 54 total students, no data were missing during the data collection process, as no students moved or dropped out of the study.

Table 4.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Group Assignment</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 1</td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 2a and 2b</td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 3</td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 4</td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample by Comparison and Treatment Groups

Tables 4.3 and 4.4 present the students’ demographics by comparison and treatment groups. Gender was a perfect match of males and females between the two groups; however, when it came to race and skill level, a majority of the sample was white and in the middle to high skill level range. Due to the low numbers of minorities (13% Black and 4% Other), race was not used as a variable in the study.
Table 4.3

Gender and Race of Comparison and Treatment Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Female #/%</th>
<th>Male #/%</th>
<th>White #/%</th>
<th>Black #/%</th>
<th>Other #/%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comparison Group (n=31)</td>
<td>14/45</td>
<td>17/55</td>
<td>26/84</td>
<td>4/13</td>
<td>1/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment Group (n=23)</td>
<td>13/57</td>
<td>10/43</td>
<td>19/83</td>
<td>3/13</td>
<td>1/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27/50</td>
<td>27/50</td>
<td>45/83</td>
<td>7/13</td>
<td>2/4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4

Skill Level of Comparison and Treatment Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Low #/%</th>
<th>Middle #/%</th>
<th>High #/%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comparison Group (n=31)</td>
<td>7/23</td>
<td>9/29</td>
<td>15/48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment Group (n=23)</td>
<td>2/9</td>
<td>11/48</td>
<td>10/43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9/16</td>
<td>20/36</td>
<td>25/46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pre-Test Self-Efficacy Results

At the beginning of the study, all 54 third grade students completed the eight item Writing Self-Efficacy Scale (Shell et al., 1995). Table 4.5 reports the means (M) and standard deviations (SD) of the pre-test survey results for both the comparison and treatment groups. Overall, the means of the two groups showed a 2.15 mean difference (p = .10), which was not significant. The highest rated statements for the comparison group, showing a rating of over 4.0, were statements 2 (I can correctly punctuate in an essay) and 4 (I can write a simple sentence
with proper punctuation and grammar). The treatment group was similar in that their highest rated statements were also 2 and 4, as well as 5 (I can correctly use plurals, prefixes, and suffixes). Although neither group had means under 3.0 on any statements, the comparison group’s lowest rated statements were 1 (I can correctly spell all the words in an essay) and 8 (I can write a paper with transitions and good overall organization), and the treatment group’s lowest rated statements were also 1 but instead of 8, they chose 7 (I can organize sentences into a paragraph so as to clearly express a main idea).

Table 4.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Efficacy Instrument</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I can correctly spell all the words in an essay.</td>
<td>3.03 1.17</td>
<td>3.43 1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I can correctly punctuate in an essay.</td>
<td>4.23 0.88</td>
<td>4.48 0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I can use strong verbs.</td>
<td>3.90 0.91</td>
<td>3.91 1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I can write a simple sentence with proper punctuation and grammar.</td>
<td>4.48 0.68</td>
<td>4.35 0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I can correctly use plurals, prefixes, and suffixes.</td>
<td>3.81 1.14</td>
<td>4.35 0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I can write a compound sentence with proper punctuation and grammar.</td>
<td>3.58 1.06</td>
<td>3.96 1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I can organize sentences into a paragraph so as to clearly express a main idea.</td>
<td>3.45 1.18</td>
<td>3.57 1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I can write a paper with transitions and good overall organization.</td>
<td>3.06 1.06</td>
<td>3.74 1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29.55 4.26</td>
<td>31.70 5.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to means, the Chi-Square test (Table 4.6) was reported to analyze differences in each individual statement of the self-efficacy scale. Only one statement, number 5 (I can correctly use plurals, prefixes, and suffixes) showed significant differences between the two groups ($p = 0.03$). All other statements showed $p$-values greater than 0.05, which shows no significant differences between the remaining seven statements of the self-efficacy pre-test of the comparison and treatment groups. Also, Table 4.7 uses a Contingency Table to show the frequency of answers for both groups on the Likert-style self-efficacy scale.

Finally, in regards to reliability, the eight items of the self-efficacy pre-test showed a Cronbach alpha rating of 0.73, which shows that the overall pre-test was acceptably reliable.

Table 4.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Efficacy Instrument</th>
<th>Chi-Square $(\alpha &lt; 0.05)$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.7

Pre-Test Self-Efficacy Contingency Table for Comparison and Treatment Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>1.00</th>
<th>2.00</th>
<th>3.00</th>
<th>4.00</th>
<th>5.00</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Pre-Test Disposition Results**

At the beginning of the study, all 54 third grade students also completed the eleven item Writing Dispositions Scale (Piazza & Siebert, 2008). Table 4.8 reports the means (M) and standard deviations (SD) of the pre-test survey results for both the comparison and treatment groups. Overall, the means of the two groups showed just a 4.23 mean difference (p = .05), which was not significant. The highest rated statement for the comparison group, showing a rating of over 4.0, was statement 5 (I am not a good writer). The treatment group was similar in that their highest rated statement was 5 but also 2 (Writing is fun for me) and 10 (I take time to solve problems in my writing). Unlike the self-efficacy scale, the dispositions scale did show statements rated under a 3.0. The comparison group’s lowest rated statements were 6 (Writing is my favorite subject in school) and 8 (If I have choices during free time, I usually select writing), and the treatment group’s statement under a 3.0 was also statement 8.

In addition to means, the Chi-Square test (Table 4.9) was reported to analyze differences in each individual statement of the dispositions scale. Only one statement, number 4 (I would like to write more in school) showed significant differences between the two groups (p = 0.03). All other statements showed p-values greater than 0.05, which shows no significant differences between the remaining ten dispositions statements on the pre-test for the comparison and treatment groups. Also, Table 4.10 uses a Contingency Table to show the frequency of answers for both groups on the Likert-style dispositions scale.

Finally, in regards to reliability, the eleven items of the dispositions pre-test showed an overall Cronbach alpha rating of 0.83, which shows that the overall pre-test was reliable. Because the dispositions scale may be further delineated into three themes, confidence, passion, and persistence, Cronbach alpha ratings may also be reported for these three categories. The alpha for “confidence”, which is composed of statements 1, 5, and 11, was found to be 0.75 and for “passion”, composed of statements 2, 6, 8, and 9, 0.73. However, “persistence”, which is composed of statements 3, 4, 7, and 10, had a lower reliability rating with a 0.43. It is also notable to report that the two pre-test, the self-efficacy and dispositions scale, together had a Cronbach alpha rating of 0.74, which shows reliability across the two instruments.
Table 4.8

Pre-Test Dispositions Results by Comparison and Treatment Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dispositions Instrument</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. My written work is among the best in the class.</td>
<td>3.19 0.95</td>
<td>3.52 0.95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Writing is fun for me.</td>
<td>3.48 1.39</td>
<td>4.00 1.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I take time to try different possibilities in my writing.</td>
<td>3.68 0.91</td>
<td>3.91 1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I would like to write more in school.</td>
<td>3.03 1.52</td>
<td>3.87 1.18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I am not a good writer.</td>
<td>4.03 0.98</td>
<td>4.00 0.85</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Writing is my favorite subject in school.</td>
<td>2.68 1.30</td>
<td>3.26 1.39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I am willing to spend time on long papers.</td>
<td>3.84 1.19</td>
<td>3.57 1.12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. If I have choices during free time, I usually select writing.</td>
<td>2.35 1.28</td>
<td>2.96 1.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I always look forward to writing class.</td>
<td>3.13 1.28</td>
<td>3.78 1.35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I take time to solve problems in my writing.</td>
<td>3.74 1.09</td>
<td>4.04 0.93</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Writing is easy.</td>
<td>3.52 0.85</td>
<td>3.91 0.85</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36.68 8.08</td>
<td>40.91 6.97</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.9

Pre-Test Dispositions Chi-Square Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dispositions Instrument</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>($\alpha &lt; 0.05$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.10

Pre-Test Dispositions Contingency Table for Comparison and Treatment Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>1.00</th>
<th>2.00</th>
<th>3.00</th>
<th>4.00</th>
<th>5.00</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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**Post-Test Self-Efficacy Results**

At the end of the study, all 54 third grade students once again completed the eight item Writing Self-Efficacy Scale (Shell et al., 1995). Table 4.11 reports the means (M) and standard deviations (SD) of the post-test survey results for both the comparison and treatment groups. Overall, the means of the two groups showed a 0.16 mean difference (p = 0.91), which was not significant. The highest rated statements, rating a 4.0 or higher, for the comparison group were again statement 2 and 4. The treatment group was similar in that their highest rated statement was also 4 but now 6 and 7 scored over a 4.0 as well. In regards to the lowest rated statements, the comparison group now had a statement that was rated under a 3.0, statement 1, which was also the treatment group’s lowest statement.

Table 4.11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Efficacy Instrument</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M  SD</td>
<td>M  SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I can correctly spell all the words in an essay.</td>
<td>2.98 1.28</td>
<td>3.09 1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I can correctly punctuate in an essay.</td>
<td>4.26 1.03</td>
<td>3.83 1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I can use strong verbs.</td>
<td>3.74 1.09</td>
<td>3.87 1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I can write a simple sentence with proper punctuation and grammar.</td>
<td>4.16 1.00</td>
<td>4.13 0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I can correctly use plurals, prefixes, and suffixes.</td>
<td>3.68 1.22</td>
<td>3.35 1.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I can write a compound sentence with proper punctuation and grammar.</td>
<td>3.61 1.28</td>
<td>4.09 0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I can organize sentences into a paragraph so as to clearly express a main idea.</td>
<td>3.84 0.97</td>
<td>4.09 1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I can write a paper with transitions and good overall organization.</td>
<td>3.77 0.99</td>
<td>3.70 0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29.97 5.46</td>
<td>30.13 4.90</td>
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</table>
In addition to means, the Chi-Square test (Table 4.12) was reported to analyze differences in each individual statement of the self-efficacy scale. In the post-test, no statements showed significant differences between the two groups. Also, Table 4.13 uses a Contingency Table to show the frequency of answers for both groups on the Likert-style self-efficacy scale.

Finally, in regards to reliability, a recheck of the reliability of the self-efficacy test as a post-test showed a Cronbach alpha rating of 0.75, which revealed a slight improvement over that of the pre-test.

Table 4.12

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Self-Efficacy Instrument</th>
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<td>($\alpha &lt; 0.05$)</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>0.06</td>
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<td>0.17</td>
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### Table 4.13

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<td>9</td>
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<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>44</td>
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</table>
Post-Test Disposition Results

At the end of the study, all 54 third grade students also completed the eleven item Writing Dispositions Scale (Piazza & Siebert, 2008). Table 4.14 reports the means and standard deviations of the post-test survey results for both the comparison and treatment groups. Overall, the means of the two groups showed a 3.13 mean difference ($p = 0.18$), which was not significant. The highest rated statement for the comparison group once again, showing a rating of over 4.0, was statement 5. The treatment group was similar in that their highest rated statement was 5 but 2 and 11 also scored the same high score. Statement 10 also scored above a 4.0 for the treatment group. The dispositions scale once again showed statements rated under a 3.0. The comparison group’s lowest rated statements were once again 6 and 8, and once again, the treatment group’s only statement under a 3.0 was statement 8.

In addition to means, the Chi-Square test (Table 4.15) was reported to analyze differences in each individual statement of the dispositions scale. Only one statement, number 11 (Writing is easy) showed significant differences between the two groups ($p = 0.04$). Comparisons between the groups of all other 10 questions showed no significant differences. Table 4.16 shows the frequency of answers in a Contingency Table for both groups on the Likert-style dispositions scale.

Finally, in regards to reliability, the eleven items of the dispositions post-test showed an overall Cronbach alpha rating of 0.83, which is consistent with the measurement when the scale was used as a pre-test. Again, the alphas for the subscales of the instrument were determined with the following results: “confidence” (statements 1, 5, and 11) 0.60 and “passion” (statements 2, 6, 8, and 9) 0.78. Again, “persistence,” which is composed of statements 3, 4, 7, and 10, had a lower reliability rating than the other two subscales with a 0.58. However, the latter was higher than found on the pre-test. It is also notable to report that the two pre-tests, the self-efficacy and dispositions scale, together had a Cronbach alpha rating of 0.86, which reflects the reliability of the two instruments.
Table 4.14

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Comparison</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. My written work is among the best in the class.</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Writing is fun for me.</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I take time to try different possibilities in my writing.</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I would like to write more in school.</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I am not a good writer.</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Writing is my favorite subject in school.</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>1.60</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. I am willing to spend time on long papers.</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>1.30</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. If I have choices during free time, I usually select writing.</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>1.43</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. I always look forward to writing class.</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>1.44</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. I take time to solve problems in my writing.</td>
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<td>1.17</td>
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<td>11. Writing is easy.</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>1.60</td>
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Table 4.15

Post-Test Dispositions Chi-Square Test

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Table 4.16

Post-Test Dispositions Contingency Table for Comparison and Treatment Groups

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</table>
Pearson Correlation Coefficients were also reported for all four tests, the pre- and post-self-efficacy test and the pre- and post-dispositions test. As Table 4.17 shows, all four tests have a moderate to strong correlation with the lowest correlation being a 0.47 and the highest a 0.67.

Table 4.17

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Self-Efficacy Pre-Test</th>
<th>Self-Efficacy Post-Test</th>
<th>Dispositions Pre-Test</th>
<th>Dispositions Post-Test</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Dispositions Post-Test</td>
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<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.50</td>
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* All significant: p<0.05.

Hypotheses Testing

The hypotheses were tested using the data collected in the study. As a reminder, all hypotheses were written in a non-directional form.

1. There will be a difference in the effect on third graders’ writing self-efficacy of teachers’ feedback when written directly on a students’ paper versus when written on a separate rubric form.
   a. There will be a difference in self-efficacy based on feedback by gender.
   b. There will be difference in self-efficacy based on feedback by skill level.

To look at mean differences, an ANCOVA (Analysis of Covariance) was conducted. In ANCOVA, one variable is controlled, or held constant, which is known as the covariate. In this analysis, the self-efficacy pre-test served as the covariate, and group, gender, and skill level were fixed factors. The model for ANCOVA that was used was:

\[
\text{Self-Efficacy post-test} = \text{Self-Efficacy pre-test} + \text{group} + \text{gender} + \text{skill level}.
\]

To begin, interaction tests were conducted to ensure that the variables did not interact. With the interactions, all p-values were greater than 0.05, so no variables interacted (Appendix Z).
Because there were no significant differences, the interactions were taken out of the model, and the model was run again without them. Testing the assumption of homogeneity, the Levene’s Test of Equality of Error of Variances was 1.74 and had a p-value of 0.10, which showed that the equal variance assumption was satisfied. The ANCOVA results, as presented in Table 4.18, also showed that there were no significant differences between the comparison and treatment groups, gender, and skill level in regards to the self-efficacy post-test. As Figure 4.1 and 4.2 report, even though the comparison group rated higher than the treatment group, males rated higher than females, and low students scored higher than middle and high students, none of these results were significant. The only significant difference shown was the covariate, the self-efficacy pre-test, which meant that the pre-test as a covariate was effective. Therefore, in regards to the hypothesis, there was no difference in the self-efficacy of the two groups, by gender, or by skill level.

Table 4.18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>15.93</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15.93</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>10.44</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.44</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill level</td>
<td>8.24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE Pre-test</td>
<td>569.41</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>569.41</td>
<td>33.98</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4.1 Estimated Marginal Means of Self-Efficacy Post-Test by Group and Gender
Figure 4.2 Estimated Marginal Means of Self-Efficacy Post-Test by Group and Skill Level

ANCOVA was completed again; however, this time the comparison and treatment groups were taken out of the equation and instead the individual teachers became part of the model. The new model for ANCOVA that was used was:

\[
\text{Self-Efficacy}_{\text{post-test}} = \text{Self-Efficacy}_{\text{pre-test}} + \text{teacher} + \text{gender} + \text{skill level}.
\]

Table 4.19 reports the new model. Gender and skill level remained the same showing no significant differences; whereas, individual teachers did show significant differences as well as the covariate, the self-efficacy pre-test. Figure 4.3 and 4.4 plot the differences among the four teachers, and Table 4.20 contrasts the teachers, which shows a significant difference between Teacher 1 and 2. Testing the assumption of homogeneity, the Levene’s Test of Equality of Error of Variances was 1.22 and had a p-value of 0.30, which showed that the equal variances assumption was satisfied.
Table 4.19

Self-Efficacy ANCOVA Results by Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>152.77</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50.92</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>19.46</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19.46</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill level</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE Pre-test</td>
<td>383.56</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>383.56</td>
<td>26.43</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.3 Estimated Marginal Means of Self-Efficacy Post-Test by Teacher and Gender
Figure 4.4 Estimated Marginal Means of Self-Efficacy Post-Test by Teacher and Skill Level

Table 4.20

Self-Efficacy Post-Test: Teacher Contrasts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Contrast</th>
<th>Contrast Estimate</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 2 vs. Teacher 1</td>
<td>-4.48</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 3 vs. Previous</td>
<td>-1.68</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 4 vs. Previous</td>
<td>-1.15</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The second hypothesis was then tested using the same procedures as described above.

2. There will be a difference on the effect of third graders’ writing dispositions of teachers’ feedback when written directly on a students’ paper versus when written on a separate rubric form.

   a. There will be a difference in dispositions based on feedback by gender.
   b. There will be difference in dispositions based on feedback by skill level.

The ANCOVA model for dispositions was:

\[
\text{Dispositions post-test} = \text{Dispositions pre-test} + \text{group} + \text{gender} + \text{skill level}.
\]

The dispositions pre-test served as the covariate in the model, and group, gender, and skill level were fixed factors. To begin, tests were conducted to ensure that the variables did not interact. With the interactions, all p-values were greater than 0.05, so there were no variables that interacted (Appendix Z).

Because there were no significant differences, the interactions were taken out of the model, and the model was run again without them. Testing the assumption of homogeneity, the Levene’s Test of Equality of Error of Variances was 3.20 and had a p-value of 0.00, which shows that the assumption of equal variances was not satisfied. The variances were not equal due to the unbalanced sample size, specifically among males with low skill levels. Even so, the ANCOVA results, as presented in Table 4.21, showed that there were no significant differences between the comparison and treatment group, gender, and skill level in regards to the dispositions post-test. As Figure 4.5 and 4.6 report, even though the treatment group rated higher than the comparison group, males rated higher than females, and low students scored higher than middle and high students, the results were not significant. However, the dispositions pre-test, as shown in Table 4.21, did show significant differences, which meant that the pre-test as a covariate was effective. Therefore, in regards to the hypothesis, there was no difference in the dispositions of the two groups, by gender, or by skill level.
Table 4.21

Dispositions ANCOVA Results by Comparison and Treatment Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>18.69</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18.69</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill level</td>
<td>30.58</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.29</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Pre-test</td>
<td>810.75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>810.75</td>
<td>14.04</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.5 Estimated Marginal Means of Dispositions Post-Test by Group and Gender
ANCOVA was completed again; however, this time the comparison and treatment groups were taken out of the equation and instead the individual teachers became part of the model. The new ANCOVA model for dispositions was:

\[
\text{Dispositions post-test} = \text{Dispositions pre-test} + \text{teacher} + \text{gender} + \text{skill level}.
\]

Table 4.22 reports the new model. Gender and skill level remained the same showing no significant differences; whereas, individual teachers did show significant differences as well as the covariate, the dispositions pre-test. Figure 4.7 and 4.8 plot the differences among the four teachers, and Table 4.23 contrasts the teachers, which shows, much like the self-efficacy results, a significant difference between Teacher 1 and 2. Testing the assumption of homogeneity, the Levene’s Test of Equality of Error of Variances was 1.20 and had a p-value of 0.31, which showed that the assumption of equal variances was satisfied.
Table 4.22

Dispositions ANCOVA Results by Teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>497.73</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>165.91</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>18.91</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18.91</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill level</td>
<td>14.87</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.43</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Pre-test</td>
<td>519.26</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>519.26</td>
<td>10.41</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.7 Estimated Marginal Means of Dispositions Post-Test by Teacher and Gender
Figure 4.8 Estimated Marginal Means of Dispositions Post-Test by Teacher and Skill Level

Table 4.23

Dispositions Post-Test: Teacher Contrasts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Contrast</th>
<th>Contrast Estimate</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 2 vs. Teacher 1</td>
<td>-7.64</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 3 vs. Previous</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 4 vs. Previous</td>
<td>-0.77</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because the pre- and post- tests are moderately correlated (see Table 4.17), MANCOVA (Multivariate Analysis of Covariate), an analysis used when there is more than one dependent
variable and when the dependent variables cannot simply be combined, was also conducted. In this study, MANCOVA, which controls for Type I Error rates, showed similar results to ANCOVA except for one difference. As Table 4.24 shows, although the teacher was a significant variable in ANCOVA, MANCOVA showed that the teacher was only significant for the self-efficacy post-test, not the dispositions post-test.

Table 4.24

MANCOVA Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>SE post-test</td>
<td>19.65</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19.65</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D post-test</td>
<td>11.99</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.99</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill Level</td>
<td>SE post-test</td>
<td>4.93</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D post-test</td>
<td>16.37</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.19</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>SE post-test</td>
<td>149.93</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>49.98</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D post-test</td>
<td>391.85</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>130.62</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE pre-test</td>
<td>SE post-test</td>
<td>195.55</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>195.55</td>
<td>13.25</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D post-test</td>
<td>78.76</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>78.76</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D pre-test</td>
<td>SE post-test</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D post-test</td>
<td>145.17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>145.17</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other Data Analysis**

Because there were no significant differences in self-efficacy and dispositions between the two groups, the researcher wanted to confirm that it was not due to differences in teacher feedback. Therefore, although an analysis of feedback was not a focus of this study, feedback
was examined to establish that the type of feedback was similar between the two groups. To do so, the researcher also examined the length, categories, and students’ revisions in relation to their teachers’ written feedback. The first step was to pull a random sample of all the students’ writings. Because the teachers supplied feedback on four of the five students’ writings (the last writing did not receive teacher feedback), the researcher pulled five sample student writings from each of the four classrooms for each of the four writing assignments that were completed. The total sample consisted of 80 examples of students’ writings.

To examine the teacher feedback in detail, the researcher first counted the number of words written by each teacher in both the comparison and treatment groups for each of the six traits (see Table 4.25).

Table 4.25

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Six Traits of Writing</th>
<th>Comparison Mean</th>
<th>Treatment Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideas</td>
<td>15.74</td>
<td>8.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>13.13</td>
<td>7.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice</td>
<td>15.54</td>
<td>4.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence Fluency</td>
<td>20.18</td>
<td>7.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Choice</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>7.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventions</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to examining length of feedback, using the same random sample as described above, the different types of feedback provided by the teachers were categorized by each of the six traits. If feedback were written five times or more in the sample of 80 papers, it is reported in Table 4.26.
Table 4.26

Popular Types of Feedback Provided by Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Six Traits</th>
<th>Examples (number of times written by the teacher)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideas</td>
<td>Providing more support/details (30), staying on topic (22), adding a title (12), taking time to brainstorm before writing (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Writing a stronger ending (25); indenting paragraphs (18); grabbing the audience at the beginning (7); rearranging the essay (6); having a beginning, middle, and end (6); writing within the margins (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice</td>
<td>Writing more like you talk (21), using sensory words (15), adding similes (9), showing more enthusiasm (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence Fluency</td>
<td>Correcting run-ons (29), combining sentences (14), using sentence variety through different types of punctuation (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Choice</td>
<td>Substituting synonyms for overused words (23), being more specific (15), telling more details (12), using stronger verbs (12), adding a mini-story (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventions</td>
<td>Correcting misspelled words (40), modeling the differences among homophones (9), modeling correct punctuation (6), capitalizing the first letter in a sentence (6), capitalizing proper nouns (5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, in regards to teacher feedback, the researcher examined whether the students actually followed their teachers’ recommendations. To examine if revisions were taking place, the researcher compared first drafts to second drafts to find trends. The researcher wanted to see if the students were revising or correcting their papers as their teachers had advised either on their rubric forms or directly on their papers. Overall, it was found that when the teachers, in both the comparison and treatment groups, completed the feedback as explained in the initial training for the study, the students did revise or edit their papers to reflect their teachers’ feedback. For instance, if the teacher indicated a sentence fluency problem and modeled how to correct a specific run-on sentence in the students’ papers, then the students corrected that problem during the revision process. However, there were a few instances when the teachers only wrote on the rubric form a general statement, such as, “You have a lot of run-on sentences.”
In those few cases, the students did not appear to know which sentences to correct, so the revisions were not made.

**Summary**

Using both ANCOVA and MANCOVA, the results showed no significant differences between the comparison and treatment groups, gender, and skill level in regards to writing self-efficacy and dispositions. The only significant difference occurred among teachers, specifically Teachers 1 and 2, on the self-efficacy post-test.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Recent reports suggest deficiencies at virtually every educational level as well as concerns in the business sector in regards to writing (Gray et al., 2005; Hart, 2005; National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2007; National Commission of Writing, 2003, 2004; Quible & Griffin, 2007). It is apparent that writing is an important subject that should be both improved upon and further researched, especially in the area of improving student writing.

In an attempt to examine how to improve students’ writings, many studies analyze what teachers do to provide support and feedback to young writers (Harris, 1977; Searle & Dillon, 1980). Studies of writing have been conducted that examine the different types (Connors & Lunsford, 1993; Feng & Powers, 2005; Gee, 1972; Matsumura et al., 2002; Patthey-Chavez et al., 2004; Olson & Raffeld, 1987), amount (Hillocks, 1982), quality (Robinson, 1985), and sometimes the results of feedback (Fazio, 2001; Feng & Powers, 2005; Gee, 1972; Matsumura et al., 2002; Olson & Raffeld, 1987; Robinson, 1985; Scardamalia et al., n.d.). Very few studies have examined how students feel about feedback (Bardine et al., 2000; Reed & Burton, 1985; Ziv, 1980, 1982), and even fewer have examined how students feel about the different delivery methods of feedback (Smith, 1989). Researchers Searle and Dillon (1980) argued that this is an important missing link in writing research.

This quasi-experimental study, which extended over a nine-week period, was an effort to help reduce this gap in the research on writing. The study examined possible differences in the effects of two different delivery methods of teachers’ feedback on third graders’ writing self-efficacy and dispositions. In one method, teacher feedback was written on a separate rubric form, and in another feedback method, teacher feedback was written directly on a student’s paper.

The construct of self-efficacy, a component of Bandura’s social learning theory (1977), provided the theoretical framework of this study. Specifically, self-efficacy was chosen because it is a strong predictor of writing performance (Lackey et al., 1997; Pajares, 2003; Pajares & Johnson, 1998; Pajares & Valiante, 1997, 1999; Shell et al., 1995). Self-efficacy is a person’s belief about one’s capabilities to carry out an action that requires him to achieve a confident level
of achievement (Bandura, 1997). Dispositions, or habits of the mind, were also chosen, because in some studies, dispositional tendencies have accounted for additional variance in intellectual performances beyond that explained by ability measures (Perkins et al., 2000). Both of these affective domains were targeted, and they were targeted at the elementary level where writing, self-efficacy, and dispositions are beginning to take shape.

The independent variables in this study were the type of feedback provided in the comparison and treatment groups, as well as gender, and skill level. In the comparison group, teachers provided feedback to students’ independent writing through the use of a separate rubric form. In the treatment group, teachers provided feedback about students’ independent writing directly on the students’ papers. For both groups, students wrote independently every other week after receiving instruction and after viewing model writings by the teacher. When providing feedback, the teachers did so in a one-on-one student conference in which they provided one item of feedback per the Six Traits of Writing, and they also provided praise orally. In regards to gender, students were classified as either male or female, and in regards to skill level, students were classified as high, medium, or low based on previous year’s standardized test scores in reading.

The dependent variables in this study were the students’ self-efficacy and writing dispositions as measured by two previously published instruments, the Writing Self-Efficacy Scale (Shell et al., 1995) and a Writing Dispositions Scale (Piazza & Siebert, 2008). Students in the study completed both scales in the form of pre- and post-test at the beginning and end of the study.

In total, 54 students took part in the study. There were 31 students in the comparison group, who were in classes taught by Teacher 1 and Teachers 2a and 2b (team teachers), and there were 23 students in the treatment group, who were classes taught by Teacher 3 and Teacher 4. The pre- and post-test scores of all 54 students were analyzed to identify differences between the comparison and treatment groups, between genders, and among skill levels; however, none of the comparisons examined using ANCOVA and MANCOVA revealed significant differences in regards to writing self-efficacy and dispositions. The only significant differences identified were by teacher, specifically between children in classes of Teachers 1 and 2 on the self-efficacy post-test.
Conclusions

The findings of this study are based upon the data analyses as described in Chapter Four. Results are subject to the limitations and assumptions as described in Chapter One.

Hypotheses of Interest

Reviews of research on writing have painted a mixed view of the impact of teacher feedback. Some researchers have shown that content level feedback (Olson & Raffeld, 1987; Patthey-Chavez et al., 2004) surface level or mechanics feedback (Feng & Powers, 2005), or a mix of both styles of feedback (Matsumura et al., 2002) can be positive for students in that students improve or revise their papers, and when asked in a study if they wanted feedback, students said yes, that they wanted explicit content feedback from their teachers (Ziv, 1980). However, on the flip side, other studies showed that whether feedback was in the form of praise (Gee, 1972), negative feedback (Gee, 1972), questions or suggestions (Fazio, 2001) or in the form of nothing at all (Gee, 1972), there was no difference in the quality of students’ scores based on the teacher feedback they received. In some cases, students also declared that they did not even read their teacher’s feedback (Ziv, 1982) or spent just moments reading it (Bardine et al., 2000).

However, specifically for this study, the researcher’s goal was to discover how students felt about teacher feedback given in two specific forms. The delivery method of teacher feedback was in question, and how students felt was defined as self-efficacy and disposition levels. The results of this study showed no significant differences in the self-efficacy and dispositions between the comparison and treatment groups, those who had teacher feedback written on a separate rubric form and those who had feedback written directly on their papers. No significant main effects or interactions were observed.

Although there were no studies that could be found at this time that mirror this study’s design or results, there was one study that was similar. In 1989, Smith set out to discover how students felt about teacher feedback. Smith found that a majority of students liked teacher comments directly on their papers. One student explained that a separate response sheet was difficult because it broke the writer’s concentration (having to look back and forth) during the revision process.

Smith’s (1989) study and the current study are different in that Smith’s study was conducted at the college level and his students’ attitudes were measured qualitatively through
interviews; however, both Smith’s study and this study showed that students’ attitudes/self-efficacy were not negatively affected by written teacher feedback directly on their paper.

These findings regarding the impact on students’ affective qualities of ‘how/where’ feedback if given are important. While research literature has established that receiving feedback is important, there appears to be a continuing difference of opinion about the issue of ‘how/where’ that is seen in some instructional textbooks and in what some teachers are doing in the field in regards to assessing writing. For example, even though no studies could be found that show ill effects of teacher feedback written directly on a student’s paper, in opinion pieces, both Hillerich (1985) and Bolker (1978) in their books explained that teacher feedback written on a student’s paper takes ownership of the writing away from the student and concluded that in fact a teacher could harm a student by providing written feedback on the student’s paper. The results of this study showed differently. In this study, the effects on students’ self-efficacy and dispositions of teacher feedback being written on the students’ papers were not significantly different from the effects of teachers providing feedback by writing on a separate sheet of paper.

So an interesting question becomes why does this issue of ownership come up in the area of writing? In regards to other academic subjects, teacher written feedback on a student’s paper is common place and in many studies, has shown to be effective. Studies on written teacher feedback have shown effectiveness in mathematics (Brosvic & Epstein, 2006; Elawar & Corno, 1985), reading (McLaughlin, 1992), and spelling instruction (Lesner, 1967) with no issue or mention of harming a student. Why is writing so different? Although this study did not examine the effect of writing on a student’s paper on student achievement, the review of literature for this study did identify several researchers who have found that providing teacher feedback does increase students’ holistic writing scores. Matsumura et al. (2002) found that content level feedback helped increase elementary students’ writing scores, and Feng & Powers (2005) found that editing elementary students’ writings produced better writing scores as well. If we know that providing feedback on both content and surface errors helps improve writing scores at the elementary level, this study can give teachers confidence to provide that feedback directly on students’ papers knowing that it does not affect the student negatively.

As previously noted, specifically in regards to self-efficacy and dispositions, this study showed no significant main effects or interactions related to method of delivering feedback, gender, and skill level. And once again, there are few studies that show that similar findings
related to affective variables. Many of the previously published self-efficacy studies have searched to find a link between self-efficacy and writing performance (Pajares & Johnson, 1998; Pajares & Valiante, 1997, 1999; Shell et al., 1995), and some have even deemed self-efficacy to be the best predictor of writing performance (Lackey et al., 1997). Dispositions have also been linked with writing scores (Wilson, 2000); however, this study did not track writing performance or writing scores. Attempts to locate studies that paired self-efficacy and dispositions with the delivery method of teacher feedback were unsuccessful.

Regarding gender, this study found no significant differences between females and males in regards to self-efficacy and dispositions despite whether they were in the comparison or treatment group. These results are similar to previous studies; however, gender differences in self-efficacy have received mixed reports. Much like this study, researchers have found that there is no difference between females and males on self-efficacy scores at the elementary (Pajares et al., 1999), middle (Pajares & Valiante, 1999), or college level (Gee, 1972); however, some studies have suggested that females may score higher than boys (Graham et al., 2007; Pajares et al., 2007; Pajares & Valiante, 1997;). This has been found to occur at least through middle school where girls’ self-efficacy begins to shift. As students get older, it is found that the differences diminish or even reverse (Pajares & Johnson, 1998). In regard to dispositions, there were two studies at the college level that showed no significant differences in the dispositions between females and males (Facione et al., 1995; Giancarlo & Facione, 2001). Even though those results match the findings in this study, previous dispositions studies in which gender was compared related to critical thinking dispositions and not writing dispositions.

With skill level, Gee (1972) found that the high and low students acted more strongly towards negative feedback, and several studies found that high achievers had higher self-efficacy, and low achievers had lower self-efficacy (Graham et al., 2007; Shell et al., 1995). This was not the case in this study. This study found no significant differences among skill levels. In regards to dispositions, Giancarlo & Facione (2001) found no differences among skill levels in regards to dispositions. Once again, even though this study’s findings match Giancarlo & Facione (2001), their study revolved around critical thinking dispositions and not writing dispositions.

In summary, even though the findings were not significant or generalizable, this study showed that feedback is important, and it also provided a missing link in the research and
provided important implications for the classroom. Given that no one has looked at these research questions before this study, it suggests a more tightly controlled experimental design would be warranted in future research.

**Other Findings**

Although all of the tests of the hypotheses showed no significant differences, main effects, or interactions, one area where a significant difference did occur was between teachers, specifically as related to students’ post-test self-efficacy scores in classes of Teachers 1 and 2a/2b. As a reminder, all of the students in the study were given both the self-efficacy and dispositions scales by the researcher, not the individual teachers. This was in hopes of maintaining consistency among the administrations of the scales. In addition to the instruments, all of the teachers met weekly with the researcher and received the same lesson plans, worksheets on mini-lessons, and writing prompts.

Even though the researcher strived for consistency in implementation of treatments, there could be many different variables affecting the differences among the teachers. As stated in Chapter One, teacher personality and/or experience could have played a role in the differences. It is interesting to note that Teacher 1 had the most experience, 28 years; had numerous years teaching writing at the elementary, middle, and high school level; and was the teacher who was a trainer in the area of the Six Traits of Writing.

Along with the affective outcomes of the study, the researcher also reported the length, categories, and students’ revisions in relation to their teachers’ written feedback. In regards to length (see Table 4.25), the results showed that in most cases the teachers utilizing the rubric form wrote twice as many words as the teachers writing on the students’ papers. In terms of the specific traits of sentence fluency and conventions, the teachers implementing the comparison treatment, i.e., writing on the rubric form, wrote almost three times as many words as the teachers who wrote directly on the students’ papers. These findings may easily be an indirect result of the specific types of delivery method of feedback. For instance, in regards to sentence fluency, the teachers using the rubric form had to first write the sentence the student wrote wrong on the rubric form. Along with the problematic sentence, the teacher then had to name the mistake the student made, such as run-on sentence or sentence fragment, and then correctly model the correct way to write the sentence. On the other hand, the teachers providing feedback directly on the student’s paper could simply identify a run-on sentence by labeling it as such, and then add a
comma and conjunction to correct it. The same thing applied to conventions. The comparison group teachers had to copy the entire sentence from the paper where the student misspelled a word or left out punctuation, label the problem, and then model the correction; whereas, the teachers in the treatment group labeled the convention problem directly above the sentence in question on the child’s paper and corrected it by correctly spelling a word or adding a comma or period. Thus, the number of words of feedback provided by the comparison teachers is artificially inflated and not necessarily indicative of superior quality.

In regards to the types of feedback written by teachers, overall, teachers in the comparison and treatment groups provided the same types of comments to their students. No comments were found that were provided only by teachers in the comparison group or only by teachers in the treatment group. All the teachers touched on many different aspects of writing skills and craft and most appeared to focus on the different types of mini-lessons that were taught during the study. In some cases, teachers even wrote on the rubric forms or on the students’ papers, “Remember what we talked about in class this week” when they modeled the correction.

Finally, the researcher also examined if the students followed their teachers written feedback recommendations. The researcher found that when teachers wrote specific comments then the students followed those comments by revising or editing their papers. This suggested that young students need specific feedback in order to revise or edit because if they did not see the connection between teacher feedback and the specific error(s) on their papers, they did not know what or how to do what their teacher was asking.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

The results of this study are limited by factors discussed in Chapter One. First, the generalizability of results of this study are limited by the use of pre-existing classes rather than a simple random sample. It would have also extended the interpretation and generalizability of the study had more classes of students from different schools been available. These limitations are common in classroom research.

Another finding was the differences between the two writing scales that were completed by the students. It is interesting to note that students rated writing skills high on the Writing Self-Efficacy Scale (Shell et al., 1995); however, the same students rated affective statements low on the Writing Dispositions Scale (Piazza & Siebert, 2008). For instance, several statements on the Writing Self-Efficacy Scale had a mean score above a 4, which indicated that most
students agreed, or felt positive about the skill statements. Statement 2 (I can correctly punctuate an essay), Statement 4 (I can write a simple sentence with proper punctuation and grammar), Statement 5 (I can correctly use plurals, prefixes, and suffixes), Statement 6 (I can write a compound sentence with proper punctuation and grammar), and Statement 7 (I can organize sentences into a paragraph so as to clearly express a main idea) all had mean scores above a 4 rating on either or both the pre- and/or post-test. The remainder of the Self-Efficacy Scale showed statements rated on average a rating of 3, which showed neutrality, and no statements showed a mean of 2 or under, which would have shown disagreement, or negative feelings. When it came to writing skills, the students appeared to feel confident about their writing abilities.

However, the ratings showed a contrast in regards to the affective statements provided on the Writing Dispositions Scale (Piazza & Siebert, 2008). Even though the students showed confidence in regards to writing skills, several statements on the Writing Dispositions Scale had a mean score of 2. A majority of students rated Statement 6 (Writing is my favorite subject in school) and Statement 8 (If I have choices during free time, I usually select writing) on average 2, which showed that they disagreed, or felt negative towards those statements. In addition, students also showed that they agreed with the scale’s only negative statement, Statement 5 (I am not a good writer). An interesting question arises from these findings. If students felt confident in their writing skills, then why did they feel like they were not good writers? Or why is writing not their favorite subject? This would be an interesting topic to further explore, perhaps by including student interviews.

Finally, because so many studies touch upon holistic scoring and revising of students’ writings, it is recommended that this study be expanded to include an examination of the two types of teacher feedback and how students scored holistically. In anticipation of a follow up study, the researcher made copies of all five of the students’ independent writings. These data sources will provide an opportunity to compare the impact of teacher feedback in the comparison or treatment groups on writing scores or perhaps on differences in revisions from first to second draft papers. Specifically, it would be interesting to investigate which group of students, ones in the comparison or treatment groups, followed their teachers’ feedback more closely. In addition to having the students’ writings, the researcher also has the teachers’ feedback copied with the separate rubric forms or on the actual writings. With that, it might also be illuminating to
conduct a follow up study examining just the teacher feedback in regards to quality, length, and frequency as previous studies have examined.

**Practical Recommendations for Teachers**

As noted, some teachers in the field ascribe to the idea that writing on a child’s paper takes away the child’s ownership of the paper and instead gives ownership of the paper to the teacher. Using that line of thinking, teachers describe a transfer of ownership during the writing process as harmful and providing ill effects to the student. Some teachers have these ideas because these ideas can be found in textbooks on how to teach writing. In his textbook, “Teaching Children to Write, K-8: A Complete Guide to Developing Writing Skills” Hillerich (1985) wrote:

> No matter what the problem is, it is absolutely essential that you never put a mark on the writer’s paper in the process of your conferencing about that paper. The minute you do so it becomes your paper. You may – and should – offer help and make suggestions, but the writer must retain ownership of the paper. (p. 150)

Teachers need to understand that authors like Hillerich (1985) did not accompany any empirical studies with their remarks about ownership. He simply made an assumption.

The current study showed that there were no significant differences between those students who had teacher feedback written directly on their papers and feedback written on a separate rubric form. This study did not examine if the two different styles of feedback affected students’ writing scores, instead, this researcher was more concerned about statements like those made by Hillerich (1985). Thus, the study was designed to uncover evidence one way or the other regarding whether writing on a student’s paper would cause harm to students. That is the reason the study focused on the self-efficacy and writing dispositions of students, not on holistic writing scores.

Knowing the results of this study, teachers need to ask themselves why they would still use a separate rubric sheet to provide written feedback to students. Smith (1989) reported that college students found it difficult to look back and forth at a separate response sheet. If college students found it difficult, what does that mean for elementary students? The teacher also wrote more on the rubric form, so it probably took the teacher longer to write her comments than the teacher who wrote directly on the paper.
Another difficulty in using the separate rubric form was observed during collection of students’ papers every other week for the purposes of copying the papers for a potential follow up study. Many times, students specifically in the comparison group would have lost their teacher’s separate rubric form by the end of the week after they had revised their papers. Knowing that, how did the students revise and edit their papers with their teacher’s feedback if they had lost their teacher’s comments? Were the students actually using those sheets?

Finally, as schools today are strapped with hard financial times, if there is no significant difference in using a separate rubric form and writing directly on a student’s paper, then why go the extra mile to make that additional copy of paper? If it does not matter where you write the feedback, why waste paper when copying has become a big budget item in today’s schools?

All of these questions are for teachers to consider in the field. As all teachers are striving to improve their students’ writings at every level, it seems the first step they can take is to begin to feel confident again about providing feedback directly on their students’ papers. While subject to stated limitations, the results of this study combined with the research literature suggest that the benefits of providing feedback on the students’ writing papers could outweigh the detriments for both students and teachers.
APPENDIX A

WRITING SAMPLE FROM THE COMPARISON GROUP

Teacher 1
Student 10

Date 4/26/10

Six Traits Rubric Form

Ideas: Boy do I like the games at P.E. P.E. games are my favorite games.

Organization:
Zinger- Getting to play my favorite games at P.E. makes coming to school fun.

Voice: paragraph
With kickball you can have a blast!

Sentence Fluency: choppy
You have to pull so hard it feels like your guts will get pulled right out of you!

Word Choice: fun - exciting, cool, awesome, extreme

Next, jail ball is so exciting because you have to run to the otherside of the field.

Conventions:
|lavai - hot lava|
Prompt:

There are many different games. 
Think about your favorite game. 
Now, explain why you like a particular game.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Game</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Tug war | • It’s fun.  
   • It hurts your hands.  
   • You have to pull. |
| Jailball | • You run to the others.  
   • You get pulled.  
   • You have to go to the jail. |
| Kick ball | • You kick the ball  
   • You run to the bases  
   • And if the other person catches the ball you go to the jail. |
Boy do I like the games at P.E. P.E. games are my favorite games. Tug o' war, Jail ball and Kickball are so cool! So let's talk more about P.E.

First, Tug o' war is so hard sometimes because you can hurt your hands. It feels like you just put your hands in hot lava! You have to pull so hard it feels like your guts will get pulled right out of you! You can fall down and scrape your knees.

Next, Jail ball is so awesome because you have to run to the other side of the field. Without getting pulled. When they pull you have to go to jail. But when coach say, "clear the jail," you get to go it all over again.

Finally, Kickball is so exciting because you can kick the ball really hard and it will go so high in the air. You get to run to the bases. If the other person catches the ball then you have to go to the jail. With Kickball you can have a blast!

In closing, P.E. at school is so much fun. Kickball, Jail ball and Tug o' war is so extreme at P.E. It is so much fun at Sneads Elementary school. It is off the chain here at school. Getting to play my favorite games at P.E. makes coming to school so much fun. I can come to school and have a whole lot of fun here. P.E. is the best part of the school day.
APPENDIX B

COMPARISON GROUP’S SEPARATE RUBRIC FORM

Student Name ________________________________  Date ___________________

Six Traits Rubric Form

Ideas:

Organization:

Voice:

Sentence Fluency:

Word Choice:

Conventions:
APPENDIX C

WRITING SAMPLE FROM THE TREATMENT GROUP

Reference Number 4-11
Date April 23, 2010

Prompt:

There are many different games. Think about your favorite game. Now explain why you like a particular game.

- Why is it fun?
  - win
  - hit ball

- What do you do?
  - hit ball
  - catch the ball
  - throw the ball

- Sometimes
  - hit the ball
  - get an out
 softball first. softball is fun because you win but you steel go against tuff team or when you go against tuff team you get real mad. my team lucked to hit the ball because you get for hitting the ball my mom said that everytime you hit the ball you run to 1st base and you get points.

next in softball you have to hit that ball real hard so it would go way out in the field so you can make a home run. when you in defense you have to catch the ball and if someone is in front of you tag them. and they get in out, that another way to get an out is to throw the ball to the base before they get to the base.

sentence fluency run-ons.

at final count sometimes you can't hit the ball because if it's over your head or below your waist it would be ball one. they got ball four so I had to walk to a base that wasn't bad though and you cant get
A out every time because if your fastest runner you can get to the base before the ball does. In closing, At the end of the game all our catchers talk to us about the game and we all line up and say good game to every player on the other team and the say it back. Smash the ball just went out of the park.

Organization:
Don't forget a "Zinger"
APPENDIX D

CONFERENCING SCRIPT

Script for Teachers during Conferences

* Sit at a table with the child. Your chairs should be next to each other (not across), and you should be sitting close in height. Maintain eye contact with the child. Instead of taking the paper from the student and placing it in front of you (the teacher), share the paper with the student. Conferences should last between five to ten minutes.

1. Opening Question
   How is it going, Sally?
   What did you write about, Billy?

2. Let the student lead the discussion
   Did you have any problems?
   Do you have any burning questions?
   How do you think you did?
   What makes you say that?

3. If the child points out problems…
   What trait does that problem surround?
   How do you think we could correct that?
   Model a way to correct the problem.

4. Start the conference with positives.
   You wrote a much longer paper this time!
   You wrote in the margins this time!
   I instantly see you wrote a title!

5. Beginning trait questions
   What was the main idea of your essay?
   How did you organize your paper?

6. Read through paper with child
   Point out strengths. Praise student.

7. Remainder trait questions
   How could we improve word choice? Model.
   How could we improve voice? Model.
   How could we improve sentence fluency? Model.
   How could we improve conventions? Model.

8. Reflection
   What do you think you did really well?
   Where do you think you need to improve?

9. Next Step
   What are you going to do next?
APPENDIX E

STUDENT SURVEYS: WRITING SELF-EFFICACY SCALE (1-8) AND THE WRITING DISPOSITIONS SCALE (1-11)

Teacher _________________________  Date _________________________

Student _________________________  Pre-Test    Post-Test

Directions: This is a survey to gather information about how you feel about writing. Take your time and answer each question truthfully. You can use a pencil to take the survey. Be sure to mark your answers clearly. You will circle only ONE choice for each statement. There are five choices. When choosing an answer, please consider all the choices. When everyone is finished, I will collect the surveys.

1. I can correctly spell all the words in an essay.

   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

2. I can correctly punctuate in an essay.

   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

3. I can use strong verbs.

   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree

4. I can write a simple sentence with proper punctuation and grammar.

   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Neutral  Agree  Strongly Agree
5. I can correctly use plurals, prefixes, and suffixes.

6. I can write a compound sentence with proper punctuation and grammar.

7. I can organize sentences into a paragraph so as to clearly express a main idea.

8. I can write a paper with transitions and good overall organization.
1. My written work is among the best in class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

2. Writing is fun for me.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

3. I take time to try different possibilities in my writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4. I would like to write more in school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

5. I am not a good writer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
6. Writing is my favorite subject in school.

7. I am willing to spend time on long papers.

8. If I have choices during free time, I usually select writing.

9. I always look forward to writing class.

10. I take time to solve problems in my writing.
11. Writing is easy to do.
APPENDIX F

RESEARCHER’S SCRIPT FOR SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

(C. L. Piazza, personal communication, October 21, 2009)

The following directions will be read to students before distribution of the two surveys:

These two surveys are to gather information about how you feel about writing. On the cover page of the survey, please write your name and today’s date. Also, check the box if you are a boy or a girl. Take your time and answer each and every question truthfully. You can use a pencil or pen to take the survey. Just be sure to mark your answers clearly. You will circle only ONE choice for each statement. There are five choices.

SA means strongly agree
A means agree
N means that you neither agree nor disagree
D means disagree
SD means strongly disagree

I will explain the choices on the survey with this example.

I think potato chips are the best snack food. SA A N D SD

If you REALLY think that potato chips are the BEST snack, circle SA (strongly agree).

If you think that potato chips are GOOD but maybe NOT THE BEST snack, circle A (agree).

If you NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE that potato chips are the best snack, circle N (Neither agree nor disagree).

If you think potato chips are NOT the best snack, circle D (disagree).

If you REALLY think that potato chips are NOT the best snack, circle SD (strongly disagree).

When choosing an answer, please consider all the choices. When everyone is finished, I will collect the surveys.
APPENDIX G

ORIGINAL SELF-EFFICACY SCALE

Shell, Colvin, & Bruning’s Self-Efficacy Scale (1995)

I can correctly spell all words in a one page passage.

I can correctly punctuate a one page passage.

I can correctly use parts of speech (i.e. nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.).

I can write a simple sentence with proper punctuation and grammatical structure.

I can correctly use plurals, verb tenses, prefixes, and suffixes.

I can write compound and complex sentences with proper punctuation and grammatical structure.

I can organize sentences into a paragraph so as to clearly express a theme.

I can write a paper with good overall organization (e.g. ideas in order, effective transitions, etc.).
APPENDIX H

LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

October 21, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the writing research project to be conducted by Jennifer Hawthorne. I have been in the field of education for 21 years, and principal at Elementary School for 7 years. Jennifer has been a fourth grade teacher at my school for 4 years and has proven herself to be a specialist in the area of writing. She has served on the County District Writing Team and has conducted professional development in the area of writing extensively in the district schools. Under her leadership, the Writing Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test scores at our school have risen significantly, as she has served as a mentor for other fourth grade teachers in the area of writing and served as our school-wide writing coach. Her understanding of the writing process and use of modeled writing and coaching give her an outstanding platform to conduct this research on students’ attitudes toward writing. The results of this study will be useful in evaluating writing instruction with students and I feel assured that Jennifer will conduct this study with competence.

Sincerely,

Principal
APPENDIX I

LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF County

Superintendent of Schools

November 18, 2009

Memorandum

To: Jennifer Hawthorne, Teacher
   Elementary School

From: [Redacted], Deputy Superintendent

Subject: Approval of Dissertation Study by the County School Board

Good Morning Mrs. Hawthorne,

On behalf of Superintendent [Redacted], it is my pleasure to inform you that the County School Board unanimously approved your proposed dissertation study at their regular meeting held November 17th at 4:00 PM.

I wish you the best as you prepare for this phase of your educational career.

If I can be of assistance let me know.
APPENDIX J

LETTER OF APPROVAL FROM THE HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE AT THE

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

Office of the Vice President For Research
Human Subjects Committee
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2742
(850) 644-8673 · FAX (850) 644-4392

APPROVAL MEMORANDUM

Date: 1/20/2010

To: Jennifer Hawthorne

Address: XXXXXXXXX
Dept.: EDUCATION

From: Thomas L. Jacobson, Chair

Re: Use of Human Subjects in Research
The Effect of Two Different Styles of Constructive Content Feedback and Error Correction on the Self-Efficacy and Writing Disposition of Young Children

The application that you submitted to this office in regard to the use of human subjects in the research proposal referenced above has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Committee at its meeting on 01/13/2010. Your project was approved by the Committee.

The Human Subjects Committee has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals, which may be required.

If you submitted a proposed consent form with your application, the approved stamped consent form is attached to this approval notice. Only the stamped version of the consent form may be used in recruiting research subjects.

If the project has not been completed by 1/12/2011 you must request a renewal of approval for continuation of the project. As a courtesy, a renewal notice will be sent to you prior to your expiration date; however, it is your responsibility as the Principal Investigator to timely request renewal of your approval from the Committee.

You are advised that any change in protocol for this project must be reviewed and approved by the Committee prior to implementation of the proposed change in the protocol. A protocol
change/amendment form is required to be submitted for approval by the Committee. In addition, federal regulations require that the Principal Investigator promptly report, in writing any unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risks to research subjects or others.

By copy of this memorandum, the Chair of your department and/or your major professor is reminded that he/she is responsible for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in the department, and should review protocols as often as needed to insure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

This institution has an Assurance on file with the Office for Human Research Protection. The Assurance Number is IRB00000446.

Cc: Diana Rice, Advisor
HSC No. 2009.3684
APPENDIX K

TEACHER CONSENT FORM

January 2010

Dear Teacher:

My name is Jennifer Hawthorne, and I am a doctoral candidate in the Elementary Education Department at Florida State University. I am writing to invite you to be in a research study that I am conducting about children’s attitudes towards writing this spring. I am asking that you take part in this project because you teach the age group that I want to study. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in this study.

The study: The purpose of the project is to find out if children’s attitudes towards writing changes depending on how you give them written feedback – whether directly on the child’s paper or on a separate sheet of paper. If you agree to take part in the study, you will continue writing classes as usual with your third grade classroom; however, the data, students’ papers from May to June 2010 will be shared with me. In addition, students will be asked to complete two surveys both in March and in June. In the surveys, the students will be asked how they feel about writing. Examples of the types of questions, which will be rated agree or disagree, include I am a good writer and Writing is my favorite subject. The questionnaires will take about thirty minutes to complete. The results will help provide strategies for better feedback methods in the area of writing.

Risks and benefits: The risk in this study deals with the giving of your time. If you participate, you will be asked to attend a mandatory training session in which the entire scope of the study will be explained. You will also be asked to meet with me on a weekly basis from March to July 2010 to ensure consistency, share data, and clarify any problems or questions. There are no benefits to you if you take part in the study.

Compensation: You will not receive compensation for participation in the study.

Confidentiality: All of the information obtained during the course of this study will remain confidential to the extent permitted by law. Students’ names, your name, and the name of your school will not be identified. In all publications, pseudonyms will be used and any identifiers will be removed. Surveys, consent forms, and students’ papers will be kept securely for one year after this study ends in a locked cabinet and password protected computer in my home.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to take part will not affect your current or future relationship with Florida State University or the XXXX County School Board/XXXX Elementary. If you decide to participate, you are free to stop at any time. Stopping early will not affect your relationship with the University or with the XXXX County School Board/XXXX Elementary.

FSU Human Subjects Committee approved on 1/20/2010 VOID after 1/12/2011 HSC#2009.3684
If you have any questions about this study, please contact me at XXXXXXX or XXXXXXX. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the FSU Institutional Review Board at 850.644.8633 or access their website at http://www.fsu.research.edu. You will be given a copy of this consent form for your records.

Please enter your name and sign below if you give consent for your participate in this study.

Name of teacher (please print): ____________________________________________

_________________________________   ______________________
Your Signature      Date

FSU Human Subjects Committee approved on 1/20/2010 VOID after 1/12/2011 HSC#2009.3684
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Grow and Glow” Form</th>
<th>“Grow and Glow” Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>3 things you did well:</strong></td>
<td><strong>3 things you did well:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. ____________________________</td>
<td>1. ____________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ____________________________</td>
<td>2. ____________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. ____________________________</td>
<td>3. ____________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 thing you need to work on:</strong></td>
<td><strong>1 thing you need to work on:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. ____________________________</td>
<td>1. ____________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX M

SCRIPT FOR RECRUITING STUDENTS FOR THE STUDY

Good morning boys and girls! You may know me as Mrs. Hawthorne – a fourth grade teacher, but you may not know that I am also a student at Florida State University. At FSU, I am learning how to be a student researcher.

I am here in your class today, because I will be conducting research right here in third grade over the coming months in March, April, and May. My project is going to be focused on writing. I am going to work with you and your teachers to find out how you really feel about writing. I am also working with your teachers to find out the best ways to teach writing. At the end of my study, I will be able to learn from all of you about how you feel about writing. And the good thing about that is that I will be able to tell your teachers how they will be able to help you even more in the area of writing.

My study is strictly voluntary, that means that you do not have to do it. It is up to you and your parents if you participate. No one, including me, your teacher, or Mrs. XXXXXX will be upset if you choose not to participate. It just depends on how you feel.

If you do participate, this is what is going to happen. In March, you will complete two surveys about how you feel about writing. The surveys will ask you to agree or disagree with questions, such as I am a good writer or I enjoy writing time during class. You may find some of the questions hard, but I will give you plenty of time to think about your answers. From March to May, you will continue writing class as usual, then in May, you will take the two surveys again. Between those months, your teachers may change some of the ways they instruct you in the area of writing, and I will be giving you the surveys again to see if their changes affected
you. Please know that your teachers will also share your writing papers with me during this time.

So, if you want to participate, here is what you need to do. I have two forms that each of you need to take home. One form is for you to fill out, and the other form is for your mom or dad to fill out. If you do not want to participate in this study, you do not have to bring the forms back, but if you do want to participate in this study, you must bring both forms back signed by February 1st.

If you choose to participate and bring back both forms signed, you still can quit the study at any time, or if you do not feel comfortable when taking any of the surveys, you may stop or skip a question. Once again, if this happens, no one will be upset with you.

Now, let’s see what good listeners you are! Raise your hand if you can answer these questions:

Do you have to participate in this study?
Will your teacher be upset if you choose not to participate?
If you want to participate in the study, what should you do?
When are the forms due back?
If you don’t want to participate in the study, what should you do?
What might be the hard parts about the study?
What might be the good parts about the study?
Do you have any other questions or concerns?
January 2010

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s):

My name is Jennifer Hawthorne, and I am a fourth grade teacher at XXXX Elementary as well as a doctoral candidate in the Elementary Education Department at Florida State University. I am writing to invite your child to be in a research study that I am conducting about children’s attitudes towards writing. I am asking that your child take part in this project because he or she is in the age group that I want to study. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to allow your child to take part in this study.

**The study:** The purpose of the project is to find out if children’s attitudes towards writing changes depending on how their teacher gives them written feedback – whether directly on the child’s paper or on a separate sheet of paper. If you agree to allow your child to take part, he or she will continue writing classes as usual with their third grade teacher; however, the data during that time will be shared with me. When your child writes, their papers will be shared with me over a three month period from March to June 2010. In addition, your child will be asked to complete two surveys both in March and in June. In the surveys, your child will be asked how they feel about writing. Examples of the types of questions, which will be rated agree or disagree, include I am a good writer and I enjoy class writing time. The questionnaires will take about thirty minutes to complete. The results will help teachers better instruct students in the area of writing.

**Risks and benefits:** The risks in this study are that questions about your child’s feelings towards writing may be somewhat sensitive. There are no benefits to your or your child if they take part in the study.

**Compensation:** You and your child will not receive compensation for participation in the study.

**Confidentiality:** All of the information obtained during the course of this study will remain confidential to the extent permitted by law. Your child’s name, the teachers’ names, and the name of your school will not be identified. In all publications, pseudonyms will be used and any identifiers will be removed. Surveys, consent forms, and students’ papers will be kept securely for one year after this study ends in a locked cabinet and password protected computer in my home.

FSU Human Subjects Committee approved on 1/20/2010 VOID after 1/12/2011 HSC#2009.3684
Voluntary Participation: Your child’s participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to allow your child to take part will not affect your current or future relationship with Florida State University or the XXXX County School Board/XXXX Elementary. If you decide to allow your child to take part, your child is free to not do the survey, skip questions, or stop at any time. You are free to withdraw your child at any time without affecting your relationship with the University or with the XXXX County School Board/XXXX Elementary.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact me at XXXXXXX or XXXXXXX. If you have any questions or concerns about your child’s rights as a research subject, you may contact the FSU Institutional Review Board at 850.644.8633 or access their website at http://www.fsu.research.edu. You will be given a copy of this consent form for your records.

Please enter your child’s name and sign below if you give consent for your child to participate in this study.

Name of child (please print): ________________________________________

_________________________________   ______________________
Parent/Guardian Signature     Date

FSU Human Subjects Committee approved on 1/20/2010 VOID after 1/12/2011 HSC#2009.3684
APPENDIX O

STUDENT ASSENT FORM

January 2010

Dear Student:

My name is Mrs. Hawthorne. I am a fourth grade teacher here at XXXX Elementary, but I am also a student researcher from Florida State University. I am asking if you would like to take part in a research study about writing, specifically about how you feel towards writing.

If you agree to be in this study, you will take two surveys in both March and June that will ask you to rate how you feel in regards to writing. The surveys will take about thirty minutes to do.

During this study, you will continue to do Wednesday Writes every other week in class; however, your teachers will begin to use different instructional techniques during this time. This study may help teachers learn better ways of teaching writing.

Please talk this over with your parents before you decide whether or not to participate. We have asked your parents to give their permission for you to take part in this study. But even if your parents say “yes” to the study, you can still decide to not take part in this study and that will be fine.

If you do not want to be in the study, then you do not have to participate. This study is voluntary, which means that you decide whether or not to take part in the study. Being in this study is up to you, and no one will be upset if any way if you do not want to participate or even if you change your mind later and want to stop.

You can ask any questions that you have about this study. If you have a question later that you did not think of now, you can call me at XXXXXXX, or ask me the next time you see me.

Signing your name at the bottom means that you agree to be in this study. You and your parents will be given a copy of this form after you have signed it.

Name of child (please print): ________________________________________

_______________________________   _________________________
Signature of Child      Date

FSU Human Subjects Committee approved on 1/20/2010 VOID after 1/12/2011 HSC#2009.3684
APPENDIX P

AGENDA FOR TEACHER TRAINING

AGENDA
Third Grade Training for Writing Study
Friday, March 11, 2010 from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

I. Overview
   a. Purpose of Training
   b. Introduction in Variables – Open Court Story
   c. Variables of Writing Study

II. Expository Writing Unit
    a. Prompts (Wednesday Writes)
    b. Posters that teach format (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

III. Writing Lessons
    a. Time of Day decided
    b. Amount of Time decided
    c. Observations
    d. Lesson Plans
       i. Mini Lesson (15 minutes)
          1. Melissa Forney
          2. Copies
          3. Do you need folders for students?
       ii. Modeling (30 minutes)
           1. Chart paper/pens
           2. Breaking it down in parts
           3. What it might look like - example
           4. Hang up – do you need tape?
       iii. Conferencing (30 minutes)
           1. Knee-to-knee
           2. Table
           3. Script – example
           4. Revising
           5. Publishing/Sharing
IV. Teacher Feedback
   a. Assign groups next week – anyone want to pick?
   b. Feedback on rubric form - example
   c. Feedback directly on student form - example
   d. 1 item of feedback on each of the 6 traits (reference sheet)
   e. Praise only verbal
   f. Blue ink pen

V. Student Data
   a. Consent forms – copies sent home
   b. Surveys and Writings – reference numbers (Teacher A, Student 1)

VI. Surveys
   a. Monday morning
   b. Everyone or just consent forms?

VII. Weekly Meetings
   a. Which day works best?
   b. Move data, copies, go over next week’s lessons
   c. What if you miss a meeting?

VIII. Questions/Concerns
**APPENDIX Q**

**WORKSHEET USED TO EXPLAIN VARIABLES DURING TEACHER TRAINING**

**Writing Study’s Variables**

Consistency among these variables:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
<th>Treatment Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Students</td>
<td>Same grade level in each group</td>
<td>Same grade level in each group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Same number in each group</td>
<td>Same number in each group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Same gender in each group</td>
<td>Same gender in each group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Same skill level in each group</td>
<td>Same skill level in each group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Writing Unit</td>
<td>Same expository prompts 12345 posters</td>
<td>Same expository prompts 12345 posters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9 weeks</td>
<td>9 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Writing Lessons</td>
<td>Same time of day</td>
<td>Same time of day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Same amount per day</td>
<td>Same amount per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Same curriculum (Melissa Forney)</td>
<td>Same curriculum (Melissa Forney)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Same modeling</td>
<td>Same modeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Same conferencing</td>
<td>Same conferencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Same teacher energy level</td>
<td>Same teacher energy level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Feedback</td>
<td>Same number of items of feedback (6)</td>
<td>Same number of items of feedback (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers use same blue pens</td>
<td>Teacher use same blue pens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Praise is only verbal</td>
<td>Praise is only verbal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Criticism is said as a way to improve</td>
<td>Criticism is said as a way to improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Surveys</td>
<td>Both take surveys on writing self-efficacy and dispositions</td>
<td>Both take surveys on writing self-efficacy and dispositions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Differences are only in one variable:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
<th>Treatment Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Teacher Feedback</td>
<td>Written on a separate rubric form</td>
<td>Written directly on students’ papers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX R

### LESSON PLANS FOR THE STUDY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Writing Mini-Lesson with page numbers from Melissa Forney (15 minutes per day)</th>
<th>Writing Activity (30 minutes per day)</th>
<th>Prompt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 15</td>
<td>Ideas - how to read an expository prompt and brainstorm with a graphic organizer p. 11-12 Thinking of What to Write p. 15 Reading a Prompt</td>
<td>Teacher will introduce prompt. Teacher will brainstorm prompt with students with a graphic organizer. Teacher will write the introduction with students on chart paper. (Poster 1)</td>
<td>Explain what makes a particular outside activity fun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 16</td>
<td>Ideas - how to read an expository prompt and brainstorm with a graphic organizer p. 18 Expository Prompts, p. 60 Jotting</td>
<td>Teacher will write the body with students on chart paper. (Poster 2)</td>
<td>Explain what makes a particular outside activity fun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 17</td>
<td>Organization – indenting and transitions p. 96 Readability (indenting)</td>
<td>Teacher will write the body with students on chart paper. (Poster 3 and 4)</td>
<td>Explain what makes a particular outside activity fun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 18</td>
<td>Organization – indenting, transitions, and conclusions, no tacky statements p. 82 Tacky Expressions</td>
<td>Teacher will write the ending with students on chart paper. (Poster 5) Teacher will review and proofread writing. Teacher will wrap up week, answer any questions, and hang writing on wall.</td>
<td>Explain what makes a particular outside activity fun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 19</td>
<td>Ideas - how to read an expository prompt and brainstorm with a graphic organizer Organization – grabbers p. 31-32 Writing a Grabber</td>
<td>Students write independently during a 45 minute timed writing assessment.</td>
<td>Explain why something is special to you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Writing Mini-Lesson with page numbers from Melissa Forney (15 minutes per day)</td>
<td>Writing Activity (30 minutes per day)</td>
<td>Prompt</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 22</td>
<td>Organization – beginnings with grabbers (not tacky statements) and a thesis statement p. 33 Types of Grabbers</td>
<td>Teacher will meet with ¼ of students for individual writing conferences. Once the student receives feedback, they will revise their papers.</td>
<td>Explain why something is special to you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 23</td>
<td>Organization – beginnings with grabbers (not tacky statements) and a thesis statement p. 34-35 Grabber Play</td>
<td>Teacher will meet with ¼ of students for individual writing conferences. Once the student receives feedback, they will revise their papers.</td>
<td>Explain why something is special to you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 24</td>
<td>Organization – beginnings with grabbers (not tacky statements) and a thesis statement p. 36 Grabber Practice</td>
<td>Teacher will meet with ¼ of students for individual writing conferences. Once the student receives feedback, they will revise their papers.</td>
<td>Explain why something is special to you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 25</td>
<td>Organization – beginnings with grabbers (not tacky statements) and a thesis statement Mini-Stories Show examples</td>
<td>Teacher will meet with ¼ of students for individual writing conferences. Once the student receives feedback, they will revise their papers.</td>
<td>Explain why something is special to you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 26</td>
<td>Organization – conclusions Mini-Stories Show examples</td>
<td>Teacher will wrap up the week, and students will share their writings with their peers. Writings will be added to the students’ writing portfolios.</td>
<td>Explain why something is special to you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Writing Mini-Lesson with page numbers from Melissa Forney (15 minutes per day)</td>
<td>Writing Activity (30 minutes per day)</td>
<td>Prompt</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 5</td>
<td>Ideas - how to read an expository prompt and brainstorm with a graphic organizer Organization – grabbers Review – 12345 posters, graphic organizer, p. 36 Grabber Practice</td>
<td>Teacher will introduce prompt. Teacher will brainstorm prompt with students with a graphic organizer. Teacher will write the introduction with students on chart paper. (Poster 1)</td>
<td>Explain your favorite day of the week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 6</td>
<td>Word Choice – vocabulary p. 92 Sizzling Vocabulary</td>
<td>Teacher will write the body with students on chart paper. (Poster 2)</td>
<td>Explain your favorite day of the week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 7</td>
<td>Word Choice – similes p. 70 Similes</td>
<td>Teacher will write the body with students on chart paper. (Poster 3 and 4)</td>
<td>Explain your favorite day of the week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 8</td>
<td>Word Choice – similes p. 70 Similes</td>
<td>Teacher will write the ending with students on chart paper. (Poster 5) Teacher will review and proofread writing. Teacher will wrap up week, answer any questions, and hang writing on wall.</td>
<td>Explain your favorite day of the week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 9</td>
<td>Word Choice – onomatopoeia p. 88 Onomatopoeia</td>
<td>Students write independently during a 45 minute timed writing assessment.</td>
<td>Explain why rules are important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 12</td>
<td>Review past word choice Word Choice – metaphors, idioms p. 71-72 Metaphors and Idioms</td>
<td>Teacher will meet with ¼ of students for individual writing conferences. Once the student receives feedback, they will revise their papers.</td>
<td>Explain why rules are important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Writing Mini-Lesson with page numbers from Melissa Forney (15 minutes per day)</td>
<td>Writing Activity (30 minutes per day)</td>
<td>Prompt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 13</td>
<td>Word Choice – metaphors, idioms p. 71-72 Metaphors and Idioms</td>
<td>Teacher will meet with ¼ of students for individual writing conferences. Once the student receives feedback, they will revise their papers.</td>
<td>Explain why rules are important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 14</td>
<td>Word Choice – color words Make a classroom chart: red, orange, yellow, blue</td>
<td>Teacher will meet with ¼ of students for individual writing conferences. Once the student receives feedback, they will revise their papers.</td>
<td>Explain why rules are important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 15</td>
<td>Word Choice – color words Make a classroom chart: purple, brown, black, white</td>
<td>Teacher will meet with ¼ of students for individual writing conferences. Once the student receives feedback, they will revise their papers.</td>
<td>Explain why rules are important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 16</td>
<td>Word Choice – strong verbs p. 86 Strong Verbs</td>
<td>Teacher will wrap up the week, and students will share their writings with their peers. Writings will be added to the students’ writing portfolios.</td>
<td>Explain why rules are important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 19</td>
<td>Word Choice – strong verbs Examples of board: walked, ate, said</td>
<td>Teacher will introduce prompt. Teacher will brainstorm prompt with students with a graphic organizer. Teacher will write the introduction with students on chart paper. (Poster 1)</td>
<td>Explain who you would pick to be teacher for the day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 20</td>
<td>Word Choice – synonyms Examples on board: frog, teacher, friend</td>
<td>Teacher will write the body with students on chart paper. (Poster 2)</td>
<td>Explain who you would pick to be teacher for the day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 21</td>
<td>Word Choice – synonyms Examples on board: school, pizza, jacket</td>
<td>Teacher will write the body with students on chart paper. (Poster 3 and 4)</td>
<td>Explain who you would pick to be teacher for the day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Writing Mini-Lesson with page numbers from Melissa Forney (15 minutes per day)</td>
<td>Writing Activity (30 minutes per day)</td>
<td>Prompt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 22</td>
<td>Voice – write like you talk p. 89 Voice and Passion</td>
<td>Teacher will write the ending with students on chart paper. (Poster 5) Teacher will review and proofread writing. Teacher will wrap up week, answer any questions, and hang writing on wall.</td>
<td>Explain who you would pick to be teacher for the day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 23</td>
<td>Voice – write like you talk p. 37 Mind Movies p. 69 Style</td>
<td>Students write independently during a 45 minute timed writing assessment.</td>
<td>Explain why you like a particular game.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 26</td>
<td>Voice – sense words p. 73 Sense Words</td>
<td>Teacher will meet with ¼ of students for individual writing conferences. Once the student receives feedback, they will revise their papers.</td>
<td>Explain why you like a particular game.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 27</td>
<td>Voice – sense words p. 75-76 Sense Words</td>
<td>Teacher will meet with ¼ of students for individual writing conferences. Once the student receives feedback, they will revise their papers.</td>
<td>Explain why you like a particular game.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 28</td>
<td>Sentence Fluency – choppy versus flowing sentences Example on board</td>
<td>Teacher will meet with ¼ of students for individual writing conferences. Once the student receives feedback, they will revise their papers.</td>
<td>Explain why you like a particular game.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 29</td>
<td>Sentence Fluency – choppy versus flowing sentences Example on board</td>
<td>Teacher will meet with ¼ of students for individual writing conferences. Once the student receives feedback, they will revise their papers.</td>
<td>Explain why you like a particular game.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 30</td>
<td>Sentence Fluency – combining sentences p. 63-64 Combining Sentences</td>
<td>Teacher will wrap up the week, and students will share their writings with their peers. Writings will be added to the students’ writing portfolios.</td>
<td>Explain why you like a particular game.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Writing Mini-Lesson with page numbers from Melissa Forney (15 minutes per day)</td>
<td>Writing Activity (30 minutes per day)</td>
<td>Prompt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 3</td>
<td>Sentence Fluency – combining sentences p. 63-64 Combining Sentences</td>
<td>Teacher will introduce prompt. Teacher will brainstorm prompt with students with a graphic organizer. Teacher will write the introduction with students on chart paper. (Poster 1)</td>
<td>Explain who you love and why.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 4</td>
<td>Sentence Fluency – beginning sentences in different ways p. 61-62 Starting sentences differently</td>
<td>Teacher will write the body with students on chart paper. (Poster 2)</td>
<td>Explain who you love and why.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 5</td>
<td>Sentence Fluency – beginning sentences in different ways p. 61-62 Starting sentences differently</td>
<td>Teacher will write the body with students on chart paper. (Poster 3 and 4)</td>
<td>Explain who you love and why.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 6</td>
<td>Sentence Fluency – dialogue p. 77-78 Dialogue</td>
<td>Teacher will write the ending with students on chart paper. (Poster 5) Teacher will review and proofread writing. Teacher will wrap up week, answer any questions, and hang writing on wall.</td>
<td>Explain who you love and why.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 7</td>
<td>Sentence Fluency – dialogue p. 77-78 Dialogue</td>
<td>Students write independently during a 45 minute timed writing assessment.</td>
<td>Explain your favorite classroom job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 10</td>
<td>Conventions – capitalization p. 102 Capitalization</td>
<td>Teacher will meet with ¼ of students for individual writing conferences. Once the student receives feedback, they will revise their papers.</td>
<td>Explain your favorite classroom job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Writing Activity (30 minutes per day)</td>
<td>Prompt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 11</td>
<td>Teacher will meet with ¼ of students for individual writing conferences. Once the student receives feedback, they will revise their papers.</td>
<td>Explain your favorite classroom job.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>May 12</td>
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<td>Explain your favorite classroom job.</td>
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<td>Teacher will meet with ¼ of students for individual writing conferences. Once the student receives feedback, they will revise their papers.</td>
<td>Explain your favorite classroom job.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>May 14</td>
<td>Teacher will wrap up the week, and students will share their writings with their peers. Writings will be added to the students’ writing portfolios.</td>
<td>Explain your favorite classroom job.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>May 17</td>
<td>Teacher will introduce prompt. Teacher will brainstorm prompt with students with a graphic organizer. Teacher will write the introduction with students on chart paper. (Poster 1)</td>
<td>Explain what activity you like to do when you get home from school.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 18</td>
<td>Teacher will write the body with students on chart paper. (Poster 2)</td>
<td>Explain what activity you like to do when you get home from school.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 19</td>
<td>Teacher will write the body with students on chart paper. (Poster 3 and 4)</td>
<td>Explain what activity you like to do when you get home from school.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Writing Mini-Lesson with page numbers from Melissa Forney (15 minutes per day)</td>
<td>Writing Activity (30 minutes per day)</td>
<td>Prompt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 20</td>
<td>Examples of holistic scoring Center provided</td>
<td>Teacher will write the ending with students on chart paper. (Poster 5) Teacher will review and proofread writing. Teacher will wrap up week, answer any questions, and hang writing on wall.</td>
<td>Explain what activity you like to do when you get home from school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 21</td>
<td>Examples of holistic scoring Center provided</td>
<td>Students write independently during a 45 minute timed writing assessment.</td>
<td>Explain your favorite holiday.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX S

WORKSHEET USED TO REVIEW SIX TRAITS DURING TEACHER TRAINING

Six Traits Reference Sheet for Expository Writing

Ideas:  
Is the writing on topic?  
Is the topic chosen interesting and unique?  
Do the three reasons support the topic?  
Are the three reasons not redundant?  
Is there a title?

Organization:  
Are there 5 paragraphs?  
Is the format correct?  
Did the writer indent?  
Did the writer write margin to margin?  
Are there transitions? Are there commas behind the transitions?  
Is there a grabber?  
Is there a strong ending?  
Is there a zinger?

Word Choice:  
Were there enough details?  
Could the writer have included a mini-story?  
Were there strong verbs?  
Did the writer use strong vocabulary words?  
Did the writer use synonyms for repeated words?  
Are there examples of figurative language?

Voice:  
Does the writing sound like the writer?  
Does the writer use sensory words?  
Does the reader want to keep reading?  
Can you hear the writer’s enthusiasm?

Sentence Fluency:  
Are the sentences choppy?  
Does the same word start every sentence?  
Are there run-on sentences?  
Are there fragments?  
Are there many different types of punctuation being used?  
Are there long and short sentences?  
Could the writer combine sentences?  
Could the sentences start in a different way?

Conventions:  
Are there spelling problems?  
Are there homophone problems?  
Are there capitalization problems?  
Are there punctuation problems?
Prompt:

Everyone has something that is special to them. Think about something that is special to you. Now, explain why a particular item is special to you.
APPENDIX V

STUDENT INDEPENDENT WRITING PROMPT 2

Reference Number ______________________________________

Date ___________________________________________________

Prompt:

Rules are made for a reason.
Think about places where there are rules.
Now, explain why rules are important.
APPENDIX W

STUDENT INDEPENDENT WRITING PROMPT 3

Reference Number ________________________________

Date _____________________________________________

Prompt:

There are many different games. Think about your favorite game. Now, explain why you like a particular game.
Prompt:

Many students have a classroom job. Think about a classroom job that you like. Now, explain what a certain classroom job is your favorite.
APPENDIX Y

STUDENT INDEPENDENT WRITING PROMPT 5

Reference Number _______________________________________
Date ___________________________________________________

Prompt:

Everyone has a favorite holiday.
Think about your favorite holiday.
Now, explain which holiday is your favorite.
APPENDIX Z

INTERACTION EFFECTS TABLES

As stated in Chapter Four, there were no interaction effects for self-efficacy and dispositions in ANCOVA. The charts below show the statistics.

Table A.1

Self-Efficacy ANCOVA Interaction Effects by Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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<td>15.93</td>
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<td>10.44</td>
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### Table A.2

**Self-Efficacy ANCOVA Interaction Effects by Teacher**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
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<td>Skill level</td>
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<td>Gender * Skill Level</td>
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<td>1.95</td>
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<td>Group * Skill Level</td>
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<td>27.53</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27.53</td>
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Table A.4

Dispositions ANCOVA Interaction Effects by Teacher

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<td>Gender</td>
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<td>Teacher * Gender</td>
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<td>26.59</td>
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REFERENCES


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Hoffman, J.V., Paris, S.G., Patterson, E., Salas, R., & Assaf, L. (2003). High-stakes assessment in the language arts: the piper plays, the players dance, but who pays the price? In J. Flood, D. Lapp, J.R. Squire, & J.M. Jensen (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teaching the


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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jennifer Hawthorne

Jennifer Hawthorne was born in 1975 in Jacksonville, Florida and raised in nearby St. Marys, Georgia, where she completed her K-12 education, graduating from Camden County High School. After getting married and moving to Florida, Jennifer received her Associates of Arts degree from Gulf Coast Community College in Panama City, Florida and her Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education from The Florida State University Panama City Campus. After teaching a few years in public schools in Florida, Jennifer completed her Masters of Arts in Educational Leadership from The Florida State University. Today, Jennifer is an assistant principal in an elementary school in Florida and is currently completing her Doctorate Degree from The Florida State University.