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The Effect of Positive/Negative Feedback Awareness on Self-Efficacy and Writing Performance

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THE EFFECT OF POSITIVE/NEGATIVE FEEDBACK AWARENESS ON
SELF-EFFICACY AND WRITING PERFORMANCE

By

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ABSTRACT

Purpose. The main purpose of this study was to examine 50 fifth grade students’ response to positive/negative feedback in relation to their writing self-efficacy scores and writing performance by exploring the relationship between feedback and self-efficacy scores, writing performance scores, and motivation.

This study explored whether positive/negative feedback impacted students’ perceptions of themselves as writers and their writing performance scores. Additionally, it examined how endurance and persistence were impacted through the knowledge of feedback results.

Conclusions. On the basis of the statistical analyses performed, the following findings emerged: 1) positive feedback did not influence self-efficacy more than negative feedback; 2) students receiving any feedback wrote less during a second writing period than they did in the first; and 3) there was no statistical significance in the relationship between feedback and performance scores.

After further investigation, surprising results were observed in the relationships between feedback and self-efficacy as well as feedback and motivation. All analyses indicate that students in the no treatment group scored higher in self-efficacy and showed higher motivation than either treatment group. Statistical significance on a univariate f-test predicting direction in advance for the five sub-tests of the self-efficacy measure occurred on three out of five subscales. Statistical significance was also observed in correlations between students’ pre- and post-treatment time on task and word count.
CHAPTER 1
THE PROBLEM AND ITS EXPLICATION

Introduction

Educators throughout the nation have been working to prepare students with adequate knowledge and skills, presumably to assist them in performing to their highest potential. This seems to make sense, especially knowing that there is an emphasis on high-stakes testing, which test students’ knowledge and skills, throughout the nation as well. This testing produces performance feedback for students and teachers. This feedback, meant to be used as an assessment of how well a teacher is instructing, also provides feedback for students that states how well they have performed. Based upon their performance on these assessments, students will learn that they performed at specific levels. This performance feedback may in some way alter their future performance, but how? Is it possible to begin to identify how feedback on assessments affects a student’s perception of their abilities?

Social cognitive theory asserts that people’s judgments and beliefs about their capabilities to perform specific actions significantly influence their completion of tasks. Albert Bandura (1977) introduced the concept of self-efficacy as a way to summarize that idea, and defined it as “the conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce desired outcomes” (Bandura, 1977).

Bandura (1986) stated that there are no other cognitive factors that affect human behavior more than people’s judgment of their capabilities to achieve certain goals. Self-efficacy, as argued by Bandura (1982) is a mediator between knowledge and future action/behavior.

Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave. Such beliefs include cognitive, motivational, affective and selection processes (Bandura, 1994). Social cognitive theory states that behavior is best understood in terms of “triadic reciprocality” (Bandura, 1986) where behavior, cognition and the environment exist in a reciprocal relationship with each other.

Levels of self-efficacy are thought to be determined by variables such as previous experience (success and failure), vicarious experience (observing others’
successes and failures), social persuasion (from peers, colleagues, relatives) and affective state (emotional arousal e.g. anxiety). If students are receiving performance feedback each year on standardized tests, how does this knowledge of success or failure influence their self-efficacy for that subject area?

Research findings have shown that self-efficacy levels relate to choice of task, motivational level and effort, and task perseverance. Therefore, it is safe to assert that if students’ self-efficacy levels were being altered from performance feedback, their motivational level and effort and task perseverance on future assessments should be altered as well. Bandura (1986) suggests that the perception that one has the capabilities to perform a task increases the likelihood that the task will be completed successfully.

**Purpose of the Study**

This study adds to our knowledge about how feedback and self-efficacy affect elementary school students’ performance on writing assessments. Each year, Fourth, Eighth, and Tenth Grade students in Florida write a state-mandated essay. The results of these assessments are given back to students with grade-level norms, which allow for comparisons between themselves and their same grade peers throughout the State and Nation. The following year, students participate in another state-mandated assessment, which also includes a written portion. How does the knowledge of results, whether they did well or poorly, influence their self-efficacy, thus presumably impacting their next performance?

Students were asked to take a written assessment, and then treatment groups were given feedback that aligned with the type given for the Florida Writes! Test. Their results stated that they either did very well (incredible writing) in their written responses, or they did very poorly (incoherent writing). These two types of feedback are comparable to the type of results students receive after completing a Florida Writes! The only difference was that for the Florida Writes, they also receive a numerical score, 1-6, with 1= incoherent writing and 6=incredible writing. Following the two types of feedback given, students completed a self-efficacy measure, and then took a second written assessment.

Because self-efficacy has been found to affect persistence and motivation in completing tasks, it is vital to find how performance feedback, whether perceived as
positive or negative, impacted self-efficacy. Educators need greater knowledge about how self-efficacy, feedback, and student performance influence one another.

**Importance of the Study**

During the last decade, students’ performance on standardized tests has become a focused concern. In an attempt to establish accountability, standardized testing has emerged in the forefront of education, both in Florida and nationally.

These standardized tests can provide useful data and are a valuable resource for educators. Through these types of assessments, educators can identify students who are struggling with skills and concepts in particular content areas. They also provide indicators for which areas educators are not providing solid instruction.

Attached to these assessments are serious high-stakes, including state/federal money. The results of these assessments are not only used to provide accountability, but also allow states to “grade” schools. Schools that show continued improvement and marked gains from year to year receive bonus funding. Those that do not show marked gains and improvement become classified as a “D” or “F” school, and thus receive assistance in curriculum instruction.

These assessments, though meant to provide accountability for educators, also provide feedback for students on their performance ability. Students receive the results from the assessments that they take each year, which show them how they rank in percentile score among others of the same age, as well as grade level equivalency. In the state of Florida, students are classified based upon a “level” of success in math and reading, from Level 1 to Level 6. Level 1 and 2 students are placed in remedial courses the following school year.

Knowing that vicarious experiences and social persuasion impact levels of self-efficacy, it would seem intuitive to believe that the feedback (results) from standardized tests would impact self-efficacy. However, what impact does this feedback and others like it have on self-efficacy?

Have we as educators been creating cyclical situations for students? When students receive feedback one year classifying them as a level 1, then are assessed the next year with an altered self-efficacy due to the feedback from the previous year, are their performance scores, persistence, and motivation affected? In order for
assessments to be valid and reliable, it is imperative that we begin to assess how the feedback students receive impacts them in their future tasks.

**Research Questions**

The present study attempted to address the following questions:

1. How does knowledge of positive or negative feedback impact self-efficacy scores?
2. How does knowledge of positive or negative feedback impact motivation as seen through endurance and perseverance?
3. How does knowledge of positive or negative feedback impact performance scores on subsequent assessments?
4. What is the relationship between student self-efficacy scores and their performance scores?

In this study, the writing self-efficacy construct was operationalized in terms of students' scores on the Writing Self-Perception Scale (WSPS) (Bottomley, Henk, & Melnick, 1998) of which the details are presented in Chapter 3. The writing performance construct was operationalized in terms of students' scores on written assessments and their evaluations based upon the Florida Writes 6-point rubric for holistic scoring. Detailed information regarding this instrument will also be presented in Chapter 3.

**Limitations**

The following limitations were evident in this study:

1. The sample was limited to students enrolled in a specific school during April 2004.
2. The study sample was limited to students whose parents approved of their participation, and of whom agreed of their own free will to participate as documented through child assent forms.
3. At the time the data were collected (April 2004) none of the students had any previous experience in taking self-efficacy tests such as the WSPS.
Methodological Assumptions
The following methodological assumptions were made in this study:

1. The design and data collection procedures were presented before the Internal Review Board of The Florida State University Human Subjects’ Committee and approved on November 11, 2003.
2. The design and data processing procedures used in this study were appropriate to the purpose of the study.
3. The data were accurate within the scope that participants responded honestly and accurately. The data were accurately recorded and analyzed.
4. The reliability and validity of the instruments used were sufficient to permit accurate inferences.

Organization of the Remainder of the Thesis

Chapter 2 presents a literature review of relevant research focusing upon the following themes: (a) the mediating role of self-efficacy on academic performance, specifically writing; (b) the effect of positive and negative performance feedback on self-efficacy; and (c) the issue of utilization and validity of self-efficacy beliefs as predictors in academic outcomes.

Chapter 3 presents a description of the research design, sample, materials, procedure and controls to ensure internal/external validity.

Chapter 4 presents the statistical analyses and findings of the study within the framework of the five research questions posed in Chapter 1. Chapter 5 provides general implications of the study and recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

This chapter provides a brief review of the literature on writing self-efficacy and performance feedback. This chapter is organized around the following main themes: (a) the mediating role of self-efficacy on academic performance, specifically in writing; (b) the effect of positive and negative performance feedback on self-efficacy; and (c) the issue of utilization and validity of self-efficacy beliefs as predictors in academic outcomes.

The Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy on Academic Performance, Specifically Writing

Social cognitive theory states that self-efficacy perceptions, whether accurate or faulty, are based on four sources of information: past performance attainments, vicarious experiences from observing the performances of others, feedback from others, and physiological indices (Bandura, 1986). Past achievement, success or failure is the most powerful source of information influencing self-efficacy because it is based upon real experiences. However, the feedback students receive from others about their success or failure plays an important role in their confidence to achieve specific tasks.

The two key components that directly impact the current research study are past performance and feedback from others. During the course of this research, students completed tasks and received performance feedback. The feedback had either positive connotations stating that the student had incredible writing skills or negative connotations stating that the student had incoherent writing skills, lacking focus and organization.

Several studies have found that performance feedback can impact self-efficacy beliefs. Relich, Debus, and Walker (1986) studied the mediating role of attribution retraining using feedback (four effort/ability attribution statements) and self-efficacy variables on achievement outcomes. In their study, 564 sixth grade students were tested on their division skills, self-efficacy scores, Arithmetic Specific Attribution Scale, learned helplessness, and persistence. From these scores, 84 students were selected who showed learned helplessness tendencies.
On the initial day of the Relich, et al. (1986) study with the 84 students, two pretests were given: a readministration of the self-efficacy measure and the measure of persistence. The students were then randomly stratified into four treatment groups; modeling, self-instructional practice, modeling with attribution, and self-instructional practice with attribution.

In both of Relich, et al. treatment groups with attribution retraining, the procedures were the same as the modeling and self-practice groups, with the exception that the last 10-15 minute session was devoted to attribution retraining using four effort/ability attribution statements. Through the attribution retraining, students gradually elevated from 64% success rate for division skills on the first day to 92% success rate on the last day.

Of most importance to the current research study, it is imperative to discuss the impact that the attribution feedback had on self-efficacy measures (Relich, et al.). In the two treatment groups with attribution, there was a significant gain in self-efficacy measures. There was evidence of significant superiority of self-efficacy gains over the control group in the modeling with attribution treatment group. This research is helpful in understanding that feedback, though not a direct influence on performance is a factor as it impacts self-efficacy beliefs that alter performance.

In another study, a meta-analysis of the relations of self-efficacy beliefs to academic performance and persistence (Multon, Brown, Lent, 1989) has revealed positive and statistically significant relationships between self-efficacy beliefs and academic performance as well as persistence outcomes across a wide variety of subjects, experimental designs, and assessment methods. The effect size difference in their study from pretreatment/post treatment and correlational data suggests that self-efficacy enhancing manipulations (guided mastery, modeling, and feedback) may not only be associated with changes in efficacy beliefs but also may serve to enhance self-efficacy/performance relationships. They concluded that it would be valuable to directly study intervention components for their impact on self-efficacy-outcome congruence as well as on self-efficacy belief changes.

Wachholz and Etheridge (1996) did complete another study that supports the relationship between self-efficacy and performance. They attempted to measure the differences in writing self-efficacy beliefs among high and low-apprehensive writers.
The purpose was to identify how inexperienced writing students perceive their own writing competence and what they define as sources for those perceptions. It also examined the effects of writing self-efficacy beliefs on writing behaviors.

Wachholz and Etheridge (1996) had forty-three college freshman developmental writers in composition courses complete the Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test. Then the students scoring +/- 1 Standard Deviation from the mean were selected for further study, thus creating the high vs. low apprehensive writers. Content analysis of writing samples identified categories students perceived as influencing their writing confidence and then interviews were conducted with five high and five low-apprehensive writers. The results provided a valid means of collecting specific information about students' perceived sources of writing self-efficacy. The most frequently mentioned sources were previous success/failure in writing, previous preparation, prior writing assessments, and current level of writing skills.

This study provided insight into the sources of students' writing self-efficacy beliefs and how these beliefs affect written products. Previous success or failure in writing was the most often cited source of students' self-efficacy beliefs (Wachhols & Etheridge, 1996). Though the students in this study were college freshman, and the current study is looking at relationships amongst elementary students, these findings are valuable because they support social cognitive theory, which suggests a relationship between self-efficacy and performance. They also provide support for analyzing how the knowledge of positive/negative feedback will alter student self-efficacy beliefs about their writing abilities.

Research by Pajares and Valiante (1997) has also supported Bandura's hypothesized role of self-efficacy on students' writing performance. Using path analysis with a model containing variables related to writing competence (writing apprehension, perceived usefulness of writing, and writing aptitude on an essay performance), 218 fifth-grade students were participants in a study to test the predictive and mediational role of writing self-efficacy. From this research, they found that self-efficacy beliefs made an independent contribution to prediction of performance, despite the expected powerful effect of writing aptitude. Self-efficacy had a direct effect on apprehension and perceived usefulness (Pajares & Valiente, 1997).

These results (Pajares & Valiente, 1997) demonstrate that elementary students'
self-efficacy perceptions do predict their writing performance and play the mediational role that social cognitive theory hypothesized. Therefore, it is imperative that educators gain insight on how the performance feedback students are receiving is impacting self-efficacy.

Additionally, Pajares (2003) has completed a review of literature to synthesize the research findings that address the relationship between writing self-efficacy, other motivation constructs related to writing, and writing outcomes in academic settings. The current interest and research on the influence of self-beliefs in school contexts has become so prevalent that Graham and Weiner (1996) observed that this line of questioning is on the threshold of dominating the field of motivation. The focus on students’ self-beliefs is grounded on the assumption that such beliefs are essential forces in their success or failure in school.

Because judgments of personal efficacy impact what students do by influencing choices, effort, persistence, perseverance, and thought processes while completing tasks, Bandura (1986) described self-efficacy as the mediating mechanism between prior influences that are sources of its creating and subsequent behavior. The most influential source of efficacy is the interpreted result of one’s performance (Pajares, 2003), or mastery experience. Outcomes interpreted as successful raise self-efficacy, whereas those interpreted as failures lower it. Vicarious experiences, watching others perform tasks, and social comparisons also influence efficacy. Individuals also develop efficacy beliefs as a result of verbal messages and social persuasions they receive from others. Physiological states, such as anxiety and stress also contribute to efficacy beliefs.

Pajares (2003) highlights that within the last decade; research has increased in the area of self-efficacy and writing. Research has focused upon the assessment of writing self-efficacy, the relationship between writing self-efficacy and writing outcomes, writing self-efficacy and other motivation constructs, gender differences in writing self-efficacy, writing self-efficacy and race/ethnicity, and developmental influence on writing self-efficacy. Through all of these realms of research, more and more support is being given to Bandura’s theory that self-efficacy is a mediating role in performance, especially in writing performance.

Pajares (2003) points out that educators should pay as much attention to
students’ perceptions of competence as to actual competence; because it is the perception that will more accurately predict motivation and future academic choices. If this is the case, then it is crucial for educators to understand and identify what influences students’ perceptions. Performance feedback, whether positive or negative, influences students’ perceptions of their writing ability.

The Effect of Positive and Negative Performance Feedback on Self-Efficacy

Karl, O'Leary-Kelly, and Martocchio (1993) examined the main and interactive effects of self-efficacy and feedback on performance in a speed reading class. 122 juniors and seniors at a large midwestern university participated in this study. Throughout the course of the study, students were given a pre-test measure to identify demographic data, self-efficacy, and pre-training reading speed.

Following the pre-test measures (Karl, O'Leary, & Martocchio, 1993), students were instructed to use the techniques discussed in a lecture to read in practice trials. During the practice trials, the feedback treatment group (received feedback) was asked to record the time required to read each article, thus creating immediate performance feedback. In addition, the times recorded were placed on a flip chart at the front of the room. After reading the articles and recording their times, students completed a three-item comprehension measure.

The no-feedback condition group in Karl et al.’s study (1993) read each of the four practice articles and completed four comprehension measures. They did not receive any feedback regarding their reading speeds, nor were they timed. To monitor changes in self-efficacy among the reading trials and two groups, in both conditions students completed a five-item self-efficacy measure after the first and third practice trials.

Karl et al.’s (1993) findings show that performance feedback did not have a significant impact on an absolute change in self-efficacy. However, further investigation suggested the existence of an interaction. Another finding suggests that the sign of feedback (positive or negative) did have a substantial impact on change in self-efficacy perceptions because those with more positive feedback (those who saw greater increase in reading speed) had greater increases in self-efficacy.

This study by Karl et al. has very practical implications that performance feedback does have a positive impact on the performance of individuals. In this study
though, feedback was all perceived positive, as all subjects saw an increase in their reading speeds. What then would have happened if subjects began to see decreases in their reading speeds? Would the implementation of negative feedback then create negative changes in self-efficacy? Though this study was completed in reading training performance, it sheds a light on the question asked through the present study regarding how negative and positive feedback impact performance.

Kim, Diekmann, and Tenbrunsel (2003) did examine the strategic implications of providing positive vs. negative feedback about ability vs. ethicality to one’s negotiating partner. Seventy-two graduate students participated in this study. They were given materials that described an upcoming negotiation deal. In all conditions, participants were asked to take on the role of a used-car seller. Participants were to negotiate with a buyer. Through the study, the participants were informed that the buyer responded to their negotiations by claiming that the negotiator (participant) was either: skilled negotiator, unskilled negotiator, ethical negotiator, or unethical negotiator. The study found that negotiators were least competitive and achieved worst individual performance when they received negative ability feedback, were most honest when they received negative-ethicality feedback, and were most cooperative when they received positive-ethicality feedback. This study supports the present investigator’s hypothesis that negative feedback will impede ability-based performance.
The Issue of Validity and Utilization of Self-Efficacy Beliefs as Predictors in Academic Outcomes

Studies have been completed to evaluate the predictability and validity of assessing student self-efficacy when it comes to writing. Meier, McCarthy, and Schmeck (1984) examined Bandura's self-efficacy model to determine how well efficacy expectations predicted writing performance. Students in a freshman composition class were used for this study, through assessing their written essays and completing instruments to assess efficacy expectations for writing, locus of control, and anxiety about writing and cognitive processing ability. The study demonstrated that efficacy expectations can predict writing performance and that cognitive and affective variables and outcome expectations are related to both the amount and accuracy of efficacy expectations to behavior. The findings suggest that cognitive and affective variables should be considered in situations involving the information and use of efficacy expectations. This study indicated that the more efficacious the student felt, the better they wrote.

Bottomley, Henk, and Melnick (1997) assessed the accuracy of the Writer Self-Perception Scale (WSPS) for children's views about themselves as writers. The WSPS is grounded in Bandura's theory of perceived self-efficacy. When applied to writing, the basic self-efficacy model suggests that individuals take into account performance, observational comparison, social feedback, and physiological states when estimating their ability to express themselves in written form. The WSPS is rooted in an inclusive theory of motivation that is supported by the inclusive theory of motivation in self-efficacy.

The norming of this instrument was quite extensive, and proves to provide teachers, administrators and parents with vital information regarding their children's views of themselves as writers. They state that from a research perspective, the WSPS can be used in several ways, including as a pretest/posttest. It can also be utilized to classify groups of students as high, average, and low writing self-perceivers for other experimental studies. In all applications, the five-scale design of this instrument can provide data that would indicate contributing factors to negative or positive orientations toward writing.
CHAPTER 3

METHOD

This chapter describes the following themes: (a) research design; (b) subject groups; (c) materials; (d) procedure; and (e) a summary of the controls for internal/external validity.

Research Design

(TG₁) O₁  X₁  SE  O₂
(TG₂) O₁  X₂  SE  O₂
(CG)      SE  O₂

Independent Variables:
- Feedback given after first assessment (O₁)
  - Positive (X₁) Feedback stating student had incredible writing skills
  - Negative (X₂) Feedback stating student had incoherent writing skills

Dependent Variables:
- Writing Self-Efficacy (SE), measured by Writer’s Self Perception Scale (Bottomley, Henk, & Melnick, 1998)
- Motivation for Written Task, measured by time-on-task and word count
  - Motivation Variables:
    - Endurance
    - Perseverance
- Performance Scores, measured using 6-point rubric for writing

Subjects

The study was conducted using a sample of fifty 5th grade students at a Developmental Research School in northwestern Florida. The student population of the school is designed to be representative of the youth population in the state of Florida. Throughout the course of the study, two students from the treatment groups did not complete the study due to absences. The sample included a total of forty-eight students from three classrooms. From those forty-eight, sixteen were placed into two
separate treatment groups; while eighteen were placed in the control group through stratified random sampling.

Materials

Measure of Writing Performance:

Two different indicators of writing performance were obtained through the course of this study for Treatment Groups, and one indicator was collected for the Control Group. These were:

Writing Sample #1 (Appendix B):

Students were asked to respond to a narrative writing prompt for a 45-minute timed session. The investigator and three trained writing teachers scored the essays independently using the Florida Writes! holistic six-point scoring method.

Writing Sample #2 (Appendix B):

Following the introduction of treatment, the two treatment groups and the one control group (without treatment), were asked to respond to a narrative writing prompt for a 45-minute timed session. The investigator and three other trained writing teachers scored the essays independently using the Florida Writes! holistic scoring method (appendix C). The raters scored the papers within one point of each other on a six-point scale 83.75% of the time. All scores for individual papers were averaged together, just as Florida Writes’ scores are tallied.

Measure of Writing Self-Efficacy

The Writer Self-Perception Scale (WSPS)

The Writer Self-Perception Scale (WSPS) (Bottomley, Henk & Melnick, 1998) was used to measure students’ beliefs of their writing abilities following treatment. This instrument consists of 38 items, which measure five major dimensions of writing self-efficacy based upon Bandura’s social cognitive theory. The five dimensions are: General Progress (GPR), Specific Progress (SPR), Observational Comparison (OC), Social Feedback (SF) and Physiological State (PS). Each item of the WSPS is rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. Presented below is a detailed description of each dimension.

General Progress (GPR): Through the validation process of the WSPS, Bottomley et al. (1998) found that the proposed “Progress Scale” could actually be divided into two categories: the General Progress and Specific Progress. Students are
asked to compare their present vs. past writing performance. The General Progress scale, with possible score ranges from 8-40, is made up of eight items that assess students’ perceptions of their progress in writing. Bottomley et al. (1998) reported an Alpha reliability for this scale at .90. An example item of this scale is: “Writing is easier for me than it used to be.”

Specific Progress (SPR): The Specific Progress dimension of this scale ranges with scores from 7-35 and addresses more explicit areas of writing, such as the focus, content, organization, style, and coherence. There are seven items on this section, and Bottomley et al. (1998) reported Alpha reliability .89. An example item of the SPR is: “The words I use in my writing are better than the ones I used before.”

Observational Comparison: Nine items are used on this scale to assess how students perceive their writing skills and performance in relation to their peers’. Scores will range from 9-45 and Bottomley et al. (1998) found a reliability coefficient of .90. A sample item from this scale is: “I put my sentences in a better order than the other kids do.”

Social Feedback: Students’ perceptions about the writing performance feedback that they receive from teachers, classmates, and family members are assessed on this seven-item sub-test. Students’ scores will range from 7-35 on this subtest. Bottomley et al.’s Alpha reliability was .87. An example item of the SF is: “People in my family think I write pretty well.”

Physiological State: “I feel comfortable when I write” is a sample statement from the PS scale on the WSPS, which consists of six items. These six items result in score ranges from 6-30 and were designed to assess students’ attitudes towards writing. Bottomley et al. reported a .91 reliability coefficient for this scale.
Measure of Motivation and Persistence

Word Count: In order to assess motivation and persistence, every writing sample was analyzed not only for quality, but quantity. A simple word count was completed to evaluate any changes between first and second assessments, after treatment had been introduced. More words written would indicate higher motivation than those with less written words.

Writing Time: In order to assess persistence and motivation, students were timed on how long they wrote for each assessment. Though it was a timed assessment, with 45-minutes allotted for completion, the actual amount of time spent writing varied per student. Actual time spent writing was recorded for each individual student. These recordings allowed for a comparison to be completed on the pre-treatment and post-treatment assessments. More time spent writing would indicate higher perseverance and motivation.

Procedure

Forty-eight 5th grade students were selected for this study after obtaining parent permission and child assent. In order to evaluate how knowledge of performance feedback, being either positive or negative would impact performance, a modified, randomized pre-test/post-test design was implemented with three separate groups for testing.

Two Treatment Groups and one Control Group were established in order to identify the impact of feedback knowledge on self-efficacy, motivation, and writing performance. All groups participated in the completion of the Writers' Self-Perception Scale (WSPS) during the course of the study.

Treatment Group₁ (n=16) completed a timed first writing assessment in which their individual times were recorded. Four days later they were handed an enclosed envelope that included positive performance feedback. This feedback was created to give a perceived positive view of their performance, stating “Wow! Incredible writing performance.” Four days after they received the feedback, the students (n=15) completed the WSPS. Immediately following the completion of the scales, students completed a second timed-writing assessment.

Treatment Group₂ (n=16) completed a timed first writing assessment in which their individual times were recorded and four days later were given feedback that would
be perceived negatively. This “negative” feedback stated “Incoherent. Lacks focus, organization, and poor conventions.” Four days after they had received feedback, they (n=15) completed the WSPS, then immediately took a second writing assessment.

The Control Group (n=18) completed the WSPS and then completed a writing assessment. The same measures were collected for the control group, with writing time and word count being recorded. The Control Group allowed for the researcher to delineate what effect, if any, the positive/negative feedback generated on self-efficacy scores, writing performance, and motivation/endurance.

Following the completion of the second writing assessment, all students involved in the research study were debriefed with the intent, purpose, and plan for the study. Knowing that some students received feedback that did not accurately reflect their performance ability, it was imperative to debrief them and inform them of the false feedback. Dr. Diana Baumrind has researched deception, and based upon her findings, this deception should have an initial effect on students’ self-beliefs. The use of a debriefing session has been found to alleviate any possible risk of long-term impact (The Belmont Report, 1979).

When all of the data were collected, trained evaluators assessed the written pieces using the Florida Writes! Rubric. The researcher independently calculated the WSPS scores, word count, and time count.

**Controls for Internal/External Validity**

Possible threats to Internal Validity included:

**Subject Characteristics:** Due to the nature of this study, there was the possibility of subject characteristic threat dealing with differences in intelligence, vocabulary, reading ability, and fluency due to identified Learning Disabilities or Giftedness. However, because students are not “pulled-out” of the regular education classroom and put into resource classes, it was believed that their beliefs about themselves would not be altered due to identification.

**Data Collector Bias:** There were three different data collectors, who were all trained with standardized procedures for administering and evaluating the assessments. These collectors scored the essays without knowing the name of the student or the treatment they were assigned to. This eliminated bias of teacher expectations and the student anxieties of having a teacher see test scores, etc.
Attitude of Subjects: The way in which the students view this research and their participation could have created a threat to internal validity. The students in this sample were all part of a Development Research School, and as such, they were aware that they would be part of research to improve education. In order to eliminate threat to the attitude of subjects, all students were addressed prior to the study, and were informed that their assistance helps in making school and testing better for them and all students.

All of these threats were addressed and eliminated by standardizing conditions and choosing the appropriate design for the study.

Possible Threats to External Validity:

Due to the nature of the study being conducted with fifth grade students in Northwestern Florida, generalization of results probably can be made for late elementary/early middle school in medium sized southern cities. This could easily be changed through further studies of the same nature, in different areas of the United States. At this point in research, the investigator was more interested in understanding the relationship between the feedbacks received from one assessment impacting performance on a second assessment than in generalizing the results to other venues.

Manipulation Check: In order to verify that the positive/negative feedback manipulation truly had an impact, anecdotal records were taken during the testing. The time it took students to complete the essays was recorded and a word count of both essays was completed. This acted as a behavioral measure of persistence. The effect of feedback was also measured against the Observational Comparison Feedback sub-test of the WSPS, and the Pre/Post-Treatment Performance Scores.
CHAPTER 4
ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS AND LIMITATIONS

In this chapter, the statistical outcomes corresponding to each of the five research questions stated in Chapter 1 are reported.

Analysis of Findings

Relationship Between Feedback & Efficacy

A multivariate, one-way analysis was run on the total scores for the Writer Self-Perception Scale and treatment in order to address the first research question, (How does the knowledge of positive or negative feedback impact self-efficacy scores?). The ANOVA using two treatment groups and the control group resulted in no statistical significance to support that there is a relationship between student knowledge of feedback and their writing self-efficacy. In essence, treatment, or the assignment of positive versus negative feedback, did not significantly impact the treatment groups.

However, in order to assess the validity of the self-efficacy measure within this study, Pearson Correlations were gathered between the five sub-tests of the Self-Efficacy Measure (WSPS). Table 1 displays the results.

Table 1. Pearson Correlations Between Five Sub-Tests of Self-Efficacy Measure (N=48)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GPR</th>
<th>SPR</th>
<th>OC</th>
<th>SF</th>
<th>PS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GPR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPR</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OC</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SF</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: GPR=General Progress, SPR=Specific Progress, OC=Observational Comparison, SF=Social Feedback, PS=Physiological State

Utilizing the students’ scores on the self-efficacy measure, ranges, means and standard deviations were calculated for the three groups as seen in Table 2. These results, though not identifying any statistical significance it does suggest a depression in
scores based upon any type of feedback whatsoever. Students who received either positive or negative feedback show lower means for all five sub-tests in comparison with the control group. The only sub-test that differed was that of the Physiological State sub-test and the negative feedback group.

Table 2. Range, Mean and Standard Deviation Scores Across Five Sub-Tests Within Self-Efficacy Measure in Three Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TREATMENT</th>
<th>GPR (40)</th>
<th>SPR (35)</th>
<th>OC (45)</th>
<th>SF (35)</th>
<th>PS (30)</th>
<th>TOTAL (185)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ranges</td>
<td>13-40</td>
<td>16-35</td>
<td>17-42</td>
<td>9-35</td>
<td>8-30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment Group 1- Positive Feedback N=15</td>
<td>32 (4.7)</td>
<td>28 (4.5)</td>
<td>27 (5.9)</td>
<td>25 (6.0)</td>
<td>21 (6.4)</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment Group 2- Negative Feedback N=15</td>
<td>29 (6.6)</td>
<td>25 (5.6)</td>
<td>27 (5.8)</td>
<td>25 (5.2)</td>
<td>22 (7.0)</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Group- No Feedback N=18</td>
<td>34 (3.7)</td>
<td>29 (3.4)</td>
<td>30 (5.3)</td>
<td>27 (4.2)</td>
<td>21 (6.3)</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: GPR=General Progress, SPR=Specific Progress, OC=Observational Comparison, SF=Social Feedback, PS=Physiological State

Means were calculated for the students who received any treatment at all, positive or negative, and the control group as seen in Table 2a. This table illustrates that those who received no treatment whatsoever averaged scores on the self-efficacy measure similar to the normed sampling. However, those who received any treatment at all show a depression in scores in comparison to the normed sampling group.

During the norming of the WSPS, (Bottomley, Henk, & Melnick, 1997) sub-test score averages were generated. These sub-test averages are shown on Table 2a. and further illustrate the effect of treatment on self-efficacy scores. Students who received any type of feedback had lower scores than the normed averages would suggest.

To further analyze the data regarding the self-efficacy scores, an independent t-test for equality of means test was run on the five sub-test scores between the any treatment groups and the control group. Table 2a. also illustrates that there is statistical significance for probability for the general progress and specific progress sub-tests. A result at the .058 levels is noted for the social feedback sub-test.
Table 2a. Combined observed Means for Self-Efficacy Scores Across Five Sub-Tests Between Any Treatment and No Treatment Groups (with normed averages) and Independent T-Test for Probability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TREATMENT</th>
<th>GPR</th>
<th>SPR</th>
<th>OC</th>
<th>SF</th>
<th>PS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Treatment</td>
<td>33.56</td>
<td>29.06</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>27.44</td>
<td>20.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=18)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Treatment</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>26.37</td>
<td>27.08</td>
<td>25.15</td>
<td>21.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=30)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normed Averages</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-Test for Probability</td>
<td>.026*</td>
<td>.038*</td>
<td>.04*</td>
<td>.058**</td>
<td>.408</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant
**Significant at trend level

Note: GPR=General Progress, SPR=Specific Progress, OC=Observational Comparison, SF=Social Feedback, PS=Physiological State

A univariate f-test was completed to predict direction in advance for the scores. Table 2b. identifies the 1-tail significance for univariate f-tests across the five sub-tests. These results predict direction for the self-efficacy measure based upon having any type of treatment or no treatment at all. Once again, we see statistical significance for predicting direction based upon the presentation of feedback with the General Progress Score, Specific Progress Score, and Observational Comparison Score.

Table 2b. Univariate F-Tests Across Five Sub-tests Predicting Direction in Advance (1-tailed significance)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TREATMENT</th>
<th>GPR</th>
<th>SPR</th>
<th>OC</th>
<th>SF</th>
<th>PS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any Treatment</td>
<td>.0399 **</td>
<td>.028 **</td>
<td>.043 **</td>
<td>.699</td>
<td>.407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=30)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Significant at the 1-tailed probability

Note: GPR=General Progress, SPR=Specific Progress, OC=Observational Comparison, SF=Social Feedback, PS=Physiological State

Relationship Between Feedback & Motivation

In order to address the second research question (How does knowledge of positive or negative feedback impact motivation as seen through endurance and perseverance?), a one-way, multivariate analysis was completed on the word count, time count, and feedback. Motivation and perseverance were measured through recording time spent writing and word counts on essays. These scores resulted in no statistical significance of treatment impact.

After visual inspection, surprising results were seen from the means and standard deviations (Table 3) for writing time and word count across all groups through
pre- and post-treatment. The control group tended to spend more time writing than either feedback group, which leads to higher word counts and time spent on the assessment. Both treatment groups spent more time writing on the first assessment than the control group, but the control group wrote more in quantity than either treatment group on the pre- or post-treatment assessments.

Table 3. Range, Mean and Standard Deviation Scores for Writing Time, Word Count, and Performance Score Pre- and Post-Treatment Across All Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-Treatment</th>
<th>Post-Treatment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Word Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>25-45 mins.</td>
<td>111-463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment Group 1- Positive Feedback n=15</td>
<td>37 (6.6)</td>
<td>260 (102.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment Group 2- Negative Feedback n=15</td>
<td>32 (6.5)</td>
<td>259 (107.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Group- No Feedback n=18</td>
<td></td>
<td>30 (9.4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All means are significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

These results led to further analysis, seen in Table 3a. A paired samples t-test was run for the time on the first assessment/time on second assessment and word count on first assessment/word count on second assessment for the two feedback groups combined together. The mean difference for the time on pre- and post-assessments was 9.6 minutes. The mean difference in word count was 34.77 words. This analysis showed statistical significance for both paired differences. It was seen at the .000 levels for time, and .006 for word count.
Table 3a. Paired Samples T-Tests for Time on One/Time on Two and Word Count One/Word Count Two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences Time on One/Time on Two</th>
<th>Paired Differences Word on One/Word on Two</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.60</td>
<td>6.049</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further investigation led to a comparison in word count and time spent writing for two groups, those who received any treatment and those who received none. Based upon the analysis, statistical significance was found at the .039 (1-tailed) level for time spent writing and at the .06 levels for word count between the two groups.

Table 3b. Mean Comparisons for Time and Word Count between Pre- and Post-Assessment and Any Treatment vs. No Treatment

| | Time on One | Time on Two | Word Count One | Word Count Two |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| No Treatment (n=18) Means   | 29.78 | 312.11 |
| Any Treatment (n=30) Means  | 34.33 | 24.73 (.039)* | 259.6 | 224.83 (.06)* |

*1-tail significance

Relationship Between Feedback & Performance Scores

In order to address the third research question (How does knowledge of positive or negative feedback impact performance scores on subsequent assessments?), a one-way, multivariate analysis was completed. Once again, no statistical significance was observed. A direct impact of treatment on performance scores was not identified. For further investigation, Pearson Correlations were run to identify relationships between pre- and post-treatment time, word count, and score.
Table 4. Pearson Correlations (and p-values) Between Pre- and Post-Treatment for Time, Word Count, and Performance Scores (n=30)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-Treatment Time</th>
<th>Post-Treatment Time</th>
<th>Pre-Treatment Word Count</th>
<th>Post-Treatment Word Count</th>
<th>Pre-Treatment Performance Score</th>
<th>Post-Treatment Performance Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Treatment Time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Treatment Time</td>
<td>.64 (.000)**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Treatment Word Count</td>
<td>.38 (.033)*</td>
<td>.08 (.657)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Treatment Word Count</td>
<td>.33 (.077)</td>
<td>.28 (.138)</td>
<td>.79 (.000)**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Treatment Performance Score</td>
<td>.21 (.255)</td>
<td>.24 (.202)</td>
<td>.34 (.057)</td>
<td>.41 (.025)*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Treatment Performance Score</td>
<td>.40 (.031)*</td>
<td>.28 (.141)</td>
<td>.37 (.045)*</td>
<td>.51 (.004)**</td>
<td>.35 (.060)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).
**Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 displays the findings of the correlations among pre- and post-treatment time, word count, and score. Significant correlations are seen among pre- and post-treatment time, pre- and post-treatment word count, pre-treatment time and word count, and post-treatment word count and score.

**Relationship Between Self-Efficacy and Performance Scores**

To facilitate answering the question about the relationship between student self-efficacy scores and their performance scores, Pearson Correlations were run to identify the relationship between self-efficacy and performance scores. These results indicate statistically significant correlations in the Social Feedback sub-test at the .002 levels for Post-Treatment and a trend for the pre-treatment performance. This relationship between the score of post-performance and Social Feedback indicates that when one is elevated, the other will rise with it.
Table 5. Pearson Correlations (and p-value) Between Five Sub-Tests of Self-Efficacy Measure and Performance Scores Pre- and Post-Treatment (n=30)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GPR</th>
<th>SPR</th>
<th>OC</th>
<th>SF</th>
<th>PS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Treatment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Score</td>
<td>.28 (.132)</td>
<td>.20 (.288)</td>
<td>.28 (.139)</td>
<td>.33 (.073)</td>
<td>.16 (.387)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Treatment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Score</td>
<td>.04 (.852)</td>
<td>.25 (.189)</td>
<td>.31 (.100)</td>
<td>.55 (.002)**</td>
<td>.14 (.478)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Note: GPR=General Progress, SPR=Specific Progress, OC=Observational Comparison, SF=Social Feedback, PS=Physiological State

Limitations

The following limitations were evident in this study:

1. The sample was limited to students enrolled in a specific school during April 2004.
2. The study sample was limited to students whose parents approved of their participation, and of whom agreed of their own free will to participate as documented through child assent forms.
3. At the time the data were collected (April 2004) none of the students had any previous experience in taking self-efficacy tests such as the WSPS.

In order to verify that the positive/negative feedback manipulation truly had an impact, anecdotal records were taken during the testing. The time it took for students to complete the essays were recorded and a word count of both essays was completed. This acted as a behavioral measure of persistence. The effect of feedback was also measured against the Observational Comparison Feedback sub-test of the WSPS, and the Pre/Post-Treatment Performance Scores. It is noted that the Observational Comparison scores for the treatment groups is identical, whereas the no-treatment group had higher scores. Because observational comparison deals with what others have said about ability as well as how you see yourself in comparison with others, it appears that the feedback did have an impact.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS, AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Discussion of Findings

This study was designed to address the issue of students’ knowledge of assessment results, either positive or negative, and the impact of that knowledge on subsequent performance assessments. Specifically, this study addressed the relationship between knowledge of feedback and self-efficacy, motivation, and performance scores, as well as the relationship between self-efficacy and performance scores.

The above results demonstrate how the standard feedback on standardized assessments impact students’ beliefs in themselves, as well as motivation and performance. With respect to the relationship between knowledge of positive or negative feedback and self-efficacy, the ANOVA indicated no statistically significant relationship between self-efficacy scores based upon the presentation of feedback. However, upon further investigation, the results suggest that the presentation of any feedback might have suppressed self-efficacy scores for the treatment groups.

When compared with the national norm scores for the WSPS, it becomes evident that any treatment whatsoever, meaning any type of standardized feedback, suppressed the self-efficacy scores. Students who did not receive any feedback scored close to identical scores for the normed group scores. Those who received any type of feedback scored between two and four points lower on each measure, with the exception of the Physiological State.

Concerning the relationship between knowledge of feedback and motivation, once again, the ANOVA indicated no statistically significant relationship among the presentation of positive versus negative feedback and motivation measures (word count and time spent writing). Once again, the means and standard deviations suggest that the presentation of feedback suppresses motivation. The control group wrote longer after treatment, which led to more quantity. The treatment groups initially wrote more. As a result, the control group seemed to persist more than either of the treatment groups after treatment.
The statistical significance identified through the mean comparisons between the no-treatment and any treatment groups illustrated that students would have the same results only six times out of 100 by chance for the differences in word count, and only 3 times out of 100 by chance for time spent writing. These results are too plain to be ignored, as it continues to support the reasoning that the mere presence of feedback does indeed impact motivation.

One possible explanation for the decrease in time spent writing and word count could be experimental fatigue, however, at this point in the study, students had only completed one other written assessment, which was only one week prior to the second assessment. Experimental fatigue is not likely in this situation.

Regarding the relationship between knowledge of feedback and performance scores, statistically significant correlations were found between pre-treatment/post-treatment time, pre-treatment time/word count, pre-treatment/post-treatment word count, and post-treatment score/word count. These results would indicate that there is a relationship between the time students spent writing on the pre-treatment assessment and the time they spent on the second. It also indicates a relationship between the times spent writing and the amount of written words they completed.

However, there were no statistically significant results found that illustrated a relationship between the knowledge of feedback and performance scores. The presence of one set of standard feedback may not impact students’ performance scores, but one set did impact self-efficacy and motivation. With constant feedback, it is possible that students’ self-efficacy and motivation will be affected. All of the previous research on self-efficacy and motivation link the two with performance scores. In time, the performance scores on assessments would begin to show effects of the decline in self-efficacy and motivation.

In regard to the relationship between self-efficacy scores and performance scores, the Pearson Correlation indicates a significant relationship between students’ Social Feedback score and their post-treatment performance score. This correlation indicates that the better a student scored on the Social Feedback sub-test, the higher they scored on the post-treatment assessment and vice-versa. Though this does not indicate a cause and effect relationship, it does illustrate a correlation.
This correlation could be explained through further study, looking at the types of feedback students have received from peers, family, friends, and teachers. It would seem that students who consistently write well would be receiving more positive feedback and comments from peers, family, etc., therefore, they would naturally have higher Social Feedback scores.

**Implications**

Research examining the effect of students’ knowledge of feedback on performance, specifically in writing, has obvious instructional implications. The aforementioned research findings as a whole provide insight for education and assessment.

The fact that any feedback at all seemed to suppress self-efficacy scores and motivation should raise concern. How are we as educators affecting our students by giving them constant feedback? It is vital to begin to evaluate the types of feedback we are giving our students. Rather than just giving feedback that states how well a student has performed, such as the type given on standardized assessments, it may prove beneficial to always provide comments to assist students in performing better the next time. Educators can also begin to provide consistent feedback throughout the course of a year, rather than just commenting on final products and handed-in assignments.

Just as Wachholz and Etheridge (1996) illustrated, students’ writing self-efficacy beliefs are most often influenced by previous success or failure in writing. Students generate their opinions of success or failure based upon results of written assessments. As educators, it is important to make sure students know the areas of success in their writing skills. If more general feedback on students’ writing progress is provided through the course of a year, there are more opportunities to provide positive responses on a variety of areas. This steady flow of positive feedback throughout the course of a year could decrease the impact of results from standardized assessments.

Though not included in the statistical analysis, one student’s response illustrated a dramatic impact from the results received from the first assessment. Following the first assessment, students were presented with feedback. A week later, students were gathered together to complete the WSPS and a second assessment. At the end of this student’s second assessment was written,
“Dear reader, since you thought my last paper stunk so bad, I decided that I won’t do any more writing research things again.”

Since this student was impacted to the point that writing for research was no longer an option, how would that student feel during the real standardized assessments? This student represents one response out of 48, and we are testing millions of students every year and giving them the exact same feedback that this student received. How many more students are feeling like this each year as they sit down to take the standardized tests based upon the previous year’s feedback?

Further research, examining the impact of feedback on self-efficacy and performance in standardized test situations would prove beneficial.

**Directions for Future Research**

Although there has been significant research on writing self-efficacy, there are still questions related to the construct that have remained unanswered. Based upon the findings of this research study, there are more studies that would be beneficial to design.

What impact might multiple feedback scores create? A study could be completed looking at how students are affected when they receive multiple feedback scores. Throughout the course of the year, students could be given self-efficacy measures early in the year, take multiple written assessments and receive feedback through the year, and then complete a self-efficacy measure at the end of the year. If all of the types of feedback for every student were recorded through the course of the year, it would be possible to evaluate how the feedback impacts the self-efficacy score by comparing the beginning of the year score with the end of year.

Another type of study could be completed to evaluate how different types of feedback impact self-efficacy. Rather than just evaluating positive or negative feedback, students could be given commentary feedback, with suggestions on how to improve writing as well as what they have done well. It would be beneficial to assess how the different types of feedback impact self-efficacy scores.

Completing the current study design a second time, with a larger sample-size and an anxiety measure would be valuable. The results indicating a suppression of self-efficacy scores from treatment groups and the lower motivation and persistence scores need to be studied further. If these results were identified with a small sample
size, having a larger sample would prove advantageous. It would be beneficial to identify how test anxiety fits into the current study in relationship to positive/negative feedback and performance.

As Pajares (2003) pointed out in his review of research, the influence of self-beliefs in school contexts has become a popular topic to research. Students are consistently bombarded with performance assessments. These assessments, whether they are positive or negative, have an impact on students’ self-beliefs. With more research, educators will have more direction for how to provide feedback to students that will increase their self-efficacy, as well as help them build skills for success.
APPENDIX A
THE WRITER SELF-PERCEPTION SCALE

Listed below are statements about writing. Please read each statement carefully. The circle the letters that show how much you agree or disagree with the statement. Use the following scale:

SA=Strongly Agree  A=Agree   U=Undecided   D=Disagree   SD=Strongly Disagree

Example: **I think Batman is the greatest super hero.**

If you are **really positive** that Batman is the greatest, circle SA (Strongly Agree).
If you **think** that Batman is good but maybe not great, circle A (Agree).
If you **can’t decide** whether or not Batman is the greatest, circle U (Undecided).
If you **think** that Batman is not all that great, circle D (Disagree).
If you are **really positive** that Batman is not the greatest, circle SD (Strongly Disagree).

(OC) 1. I write better than other kids in the class. SA A U D SD
(PS) 2. I like how writing makes me feel inside. SA A U D SD
(GPR) 3. Writing is easier for me than it used to be. SA A U D SD
(OC) 4. When I write, the organization is better than the other kids in my class. SA A U D SD
(SF) 5. People in my family think I am a good writer. SA A U D SD
(GPR) 6. I am getting better at writing SA A U D SD
(PS) 7. When I write, I feel calm. SA A U D SD
(OC) 8. My writing is more interesting than my classmates’ writing. SA A U D SD
(SF) 9. My teacher thinks my writing is fine. SA A U D SD
(SF) 10. Other kids think I am a good writer. SA A U D SD
(OC) 11. My sentences and paragraphs fit together as well as my classmates’ sentences and paragraphs. SA A U D SD
(GPR) 12. I need less help to write well than I used to. SA A U D SD
(SF) 13. People in my family think I write pretty well. SA A U D SD
(GPR) 14. I write better now than I could before. SA A U D SD
(GEN) 15. I think I am a good writer. SA A U D SD
(OC) 16. I put my sentences in a better order than the other kids. SA A U D SD
(GPR) 17. My writing has improved. SA A U D SD
(GPR) 18. My writing is better than before. SA A U D SD
(GPR) 19. It’s easier to write well now than it used to be. SA A U D SD
(GPR) 20. The organization of my writing has really improved. SA A U D SD
(OC) 21. The sentences I use in my writing stick to the topic more than the ones the other kids use. SA A U D SD
22. The words I use in my writing are better than the ones I used before.
23. I write more often than other kids.
24. I am relaxed when I write.
25. My descriptions are more interesting than before.
26. The words I use in my writing are better than the ones other kids use.
27. I feel comfortable when I write.
28. My teacher thinks I am a good writer.
29. My sentences stick to the topic better now.
30. My writing seems to be more clear than my classmates’ writing.
31. When I write, the sentences and paragraphs fit together better than they used to.
32. Writing makes me feel good.
33. I can tell that my teacher thinks my writing is fine.
34. The order of my sentences makes better sense now.
35. I enjoy writing.
36. My writing is more clear than it used to be.
37. My classmates say I would write well.
38. I choose the words I use in my writing more carefully now.
THE WRITER SELF-PERCEPTION SCALE SCORING SHEET

Student Name _________________________________________________________

Grade _____________________________  Date _____________________________

Teacher ______________________________________________________________

Scoring Key:  
5 = Strongly Agree (SA)  
4 = Agree (A)  
3 = Undecided (U)  
2 = Disagree (D)  
1 = Strongly Disagree (SD)

Scales

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<th>General Progress (GPR)</th>
<th>Specific Progress (SPR)</th>
<th>Observational Comparison (OC)</th>
<th>Social Feedback (SF)</th>
<th>Physiological State (PS)</th>
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Raw Scores

**Raw Score**

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<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>16</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

THE WRITER SELF-PERCEPTION SCALE

DIRECTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATION, SCORING AND INTERPRETATION

The Writer Self-perception Scale (WSPS) provides an estimate of how children feel about themselves as writers. The scale consists of 38 items that assess self-perception along five dimensions of self-efficacy (General Progress, Specific Progress, Observational Comparison, Social Feedback, and Physiological State). Children are asked to indicate how strongly they agree or disagree with each statement using a 5-point scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1). The information yielded by this scale can be used to devise ways of enhancing children’s view of themselves as writers, and, ideally, to increase their motivation for writing. The following directions explain specifically what you are to do.

**Administration**

To ensure useful results the children must (a) understand exactly what they are to do, (b) have sufficient time to complete all items, and (c) respond honestly and thoughtfully. Briefly explain to the children that they are being asked to complete a questionnaire about writing. Emphasize that this is not a test and that there are no right or wrong answers. Tell them that they should be as honest as possible because their responses will be confidential. Ask the children to fill in their names, grade levels, and classrooms as appropriate. Read the directions aloud and work through the example with the students as a group. Discuss the response options and make sure that all children understand the rating scale before moving on. The children should be instructed to raise their hands to ask questions about any words or ideas that are unfamiliar.

The children should then read each item and circle their response to the statement. They should work at their own pace. Remind the children that they should be sure to respond to all items. When all items are completed, the children should stop, put their pencils down, and wait for further instructions. Care should be taken that children who work more slowly are not disturbed by classmates who have already finished.
Scoring
To score the WSPS, enter the following point values for each response on the WSPS scoring sheet (Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, Undecided = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree = 1) for each item number under the appropriate scale. Sum each column to obtain a raw score for each of the five specific scales.

Interpretation
Each scale is interpreted in relation to its total possible score. For example, because the WSPS uses a 5-point scale and the General Progress (GP) scale consists of 8 items, the highest total score is 40 (8 X 5 = 40). Therefore, a score that would fall approximately at the average or mean score (35) would indicate that the child’s perception of her/himself as a writer falls in the average range with respect to General Progress. Note that each remaining scale has a different possible maximum raw score (Specific Progress = 35, Observation Comparison = 45, Social Feedback = 35, and Physiological State = 30) and should be interpreted accordingly using the high, average, and low designations on the scoring sheet.
APPENDIX B

Writing Prompts for Written Assessments

Writing Prompts

#1—
Writing Situation:
Everyone loves receiving presents over the holidays.

Directions for Writing:
Before you begin writing, think about some presents that you might like to receive.

Now explain to the reader of your paper what presents you would like to receive as gifts.

#2—
Writing Situation:
You have just won a playground from the Jump-and-Shout Playground Company. You can choose anything you want in your playground.

Directions for Writing:
Before you begin writing, think about what types of playground materials you would like in your playground.

Now explain to the reader of your paper what you would choose to have in your playground.
APPENDIX C

Florida Writes! 6 Point Writing Rubric

The rubric used to score papers is shown below.

6 Points
The writing is focused on the topic, has a logical organizational pattern (including beginning, middle, conclusion, and transitional devices), and has ample development of the supporting ideas. The paper demonstrates a sense of completeness or wholeness. The writing demonstrates a mature command of language including precision in word choice. Subject/verb agreement and verb and noun forms are generally correct. With few exceptions, the sentences are complete, except when fragments are used purposefully. Various sentence structures are used.

5 Points
The writing is focused on the topic with adequate development of the supporting ideas. There is an organizational pattern, although a few lapses may occur. The paper demonstrates a sense of completeness or wholeness. Word choice is adequate but may lack precision. Most sentences are complete, although a few fragments may occur. There may be occasional errors in subject/verb agreement and in standard forms of verbs and nouns, but not enough to impede communication. The conventions of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling are generally followed. Various sentence structures are used.

4 Points
The writing is generally focused on the topic, although it may contain some extraneous or loosely related information. An organizational pattern is evident, although lapses may occur. The paper demonstrates a sense of completeness or wholeness. In some areas of the response, the supporting ideas may contain specifics and details, while in other areas; the supporting ideas may not be developed. Word choice is generally adequate. Knowledge of the conventions of punctuation and capitalization is demonstrated, and commonly used words are usually spelled correctly. There has been an attempt to use a variety of sentence structures, although most are simple constructions.
3 Points
The writing is generally focused on the topic, although it may contain some extraneous or loosely related information. Although an organizational pattern has been attempted and some transitional devices have been used, lapses may occur. The paper may lack a sense of completeness or wholeness. Some of the supporting ideas may not be developed with specifics and details. Word choice is adequate, but limited, predictable, and occasionally vague. Knowledge of the conventions of punctuation and capitalization is demonstrated, and commonly used words are usually spelled correctly. There has been an attempt to use a variety of sentence structures, although most are simple constructions.

2 Points
The writing may be slightly related to the topic or may offer little relevant information and few supporting ideas or examples. The writing that is relevant to the topic exhibits little evidence of an organizational pattern or use of transitional devices. Development of the supporting ideas may be inadequate or illogical. Word choice may be limited or immature. Frequent errors may occur in basic punctuation and capitalization, and commonly used words may frequently be misspelled. The sentence structure may be limited to simple constructions.

1 Point
The writing may only minimally address the topic because there is little, if any, development of supporting ideas, and unrelated information may be included. The writing that is relevant to the topic does not exhibit an organizational pattern; few, if any, transitional devices are used to signal movement in the text. Supporting ideas may be sparse, and they are usually provided through lists, clichés, and limited or immature word choice. Frequent errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and sentence structure may impede communication. The sentence structure may be limited to simple constructions.
APPENDIX E

Florida State
UNIVERSITY

Office of the Vice President
for Research
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2763
(850) 644-5260 • FAX (850) 644-4392

APPROVAL MEMORANDUM
from the Human Subjects Committee

Date: November 20, 2003
From: David Quadagno, Chair

To: Darcie L. Rudsinski
2009 Gardenbrook Lane
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Dept: Educational Psychology and Learning Systems
Re: Use of Human subjects in Research
    Project entitled: Positive/Negative Feedback and Writing Performance

The forms that you submitted to this office in regard to the use of human subjects in the proposal referenced above have been reviewed by the Human Subjects Committee at its meeting on November 12, 2003. 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 the project has not been completed by November 11, 2004, you must request renewed approval for continuation of the project.

You are advised that any change in protocol in this project must be approved by resubmission of the project to the Committee for approval. Also, the principal investigator must promptly report, in writing, any unexpected problems causing risks to research subjects or others.

By copy of this memorandum, the chairman 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 of such investigations 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 Protection from Research Risks. The Assurance Number is IRB00000446.

APPLICATION NO. 03.651 Co. S.
Losh
April 9, 2004

Dear Parent or Guardian:

In addition to being the K-8 Gifted Educator at Florida State University School (FSUS), I am also a graduate student under the direction of Dr. Susan Carol Losh in the Educational Psychology Department of the College of Education at Florida State University. I am completing my Master’s of Science in Educational Psychology, Learning and Cognition in Summer 2004. I am conducting a research study to see how feedback on assessments affects student performance on future assessments.

I am requesting your permission to ask your child to participate in my master’s thesis project. Your child’s participation will involve taking writing assessments and receiving feedback on them. Although these are very similar to Florida WRITES, they are not connected to the Florida standardized tests in any way.

After students have completed the writing assessments they will receive a complete explanation of the study. At that time, students will learn about the research process. I will discuss with the students the purpose of the study and the type of feedback that they received. I will also explain to them that the purpose of the study was to find out how feedback influences their performance. The students will understand that their participation in this study will help teachers have a better sense of how to encourage and prepare them for standardized tests, such as the FLORIDA WRITES. This debriefing process will ensure that children gain insight into the purpose for the writing assessments, feedback, and the research process.

Your participation, as well as that of your child, in this study is voluntary. If you choose or your child chooses not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. They will not need to prepare ahead of time for these writing exercises, as there is no bearing on the standardized tests administered by the State of Florida. It will not affect your child’s grade or promotion in any way. The results of this research study may be published, but the results will be presented in grouped form and never so that any student could be identified. The only people to see the written pieces will be the three reviewers, none of who are your child’s teachers. At all times through the study, a number will only identify your child. His/her name will never be used and
all written documents, stored in a locked cabinet, will be destroyed a year after the study’s completion.

In addition to the opportunity to introduce your child to the research process, your child’s participation in this project will benefit future classroom instruction. This research has the potential to change the focus of writing instruction in preparation for standardized and high-stakes testing.

If you have any questions concerning this research study or your child’s participation in the study, please call me at (850) 245-3727. I can also be reached via e-mail at drudsins@fsu.edu. You may also contact Dr. Susan Carol Losh at (850) 644-8778 or email her at slosh@garnet.acns.fsu.edu, or the Human Subject Committee at (850) 644-8836.

Sincerely,

Darcie L. Rudsinski

Please sign and return this portion of the form to your child’s teacher by Friday, April 23, 2004.
I give consent for my child, ________________________________________, to participate in this feedback and writing performance research study.

_________________________________________  __________________________________________
Parent and/or Guardian’s Name/Relationship to child Parent and/or Guardian’s Signature/ Date  

If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Committee, Institutional Review Board, through the Vice President for the Office of Research at (850) 644-8633.
CHILD ASSENT

Hello, __________________________, my name is Ms. Rudsinski. I am not only a teacher here at FSUS, but I am also a student at FSU. I have been studying for a year and a half, and am finishing up my Master’s degree. I would like your help in a study that I am conducting to complete my degree program.

In January, you will be asked to respond to two separate writing prompts over the course of 2 weeks. These writing prompts are very similar to the FLORIDA WRITES, and should be very familiar to you.

If you choose not to participate, it will not affect your grade, promotion or other schoolwork in any way. Your classroom teacher will not see your written work at all. You will be assigned a number to use on your essay, so your name will never be used, and all work will be kept in a locked drawer. Ms. Rudsinski’s results will only be presented in group form and no individual essay will ever be singled out.

Please feel free to contact Ms. Rudsinski at (850) 245-3824 or email drudsins@fsu.edu, or you can contact Dr. Susan Carol Losh at (850) 644-8778 or email her at slosh@garnet.acns.fsu.edu.

Please fill out the bottom of this page if you agree to participate in this research study.

_____________________________________________________________________

I have been have been given the opportunity to participate, if I want to, in a project about writing performance on standardized tests.

My participation in this project is completely voluntary, and I have been told that I may stop my participation in this study at any time. If I choose not to participate, it will not affect my grade, promotion, or class work in any way.

Name:

_____________________________________________________________________

Date: _______________
REFERENCES


Relich, J.D., Debus, R.L., & Walker, R. (1986). The mediating role of attribution and
self-efficacy variables for treatment effects on achievement outcomes. 
*Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 11, 195-216.


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Darcie Lynne Sivyer

Office: Florida State University School
3000 School House Road
Tallahassee, FL  32308
850-245-3725
drudsins@mailer.fsu.edu

Academic Preparation

M.S. Candidate, College of Education, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL, 2005
• Major: Educational Psychology—Learning and Cognition
• Concentration: Self-efficacy, writing performance
• Thesis: The Effect of Positive/Negative Feedback Awareness on Writing Performance
• Selected for Graduate Assistantship with the Dean of the College of Education
• 12 hours emphasis in Educational Leadership and Administration
• Major Professor: Dr. Susan Carol Losh

B.S. in Education, Illinois State University, Normal, IL, 1997
• Illinois Teaching Certificate (K-8); Middle Grades Social Studies and Language Arts endorsements
• Florida Teaching Certificate (1-6), Middle Grades English (5-9)
• Teacher Education Representative for National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)

B.S. in Bible, Lincoln Christian College, Lincoln, IL, 1997
• Recipient of Presidential Scholarship
• Selected Spokesperson for Teacher Education Program Graduation Exercises

Professional Experience

Gifted and Talented Program Coordinator and Educator; Middle School Language Arts & Reading, Spring 2004-Present
• Florida State University School, Tallahassee, FL
• Curriculum Instructor/Designer for Gifted Education K-8
• Curriculum Instructor/Designer for Intensive Reading & Advanced Language Arts
• Facilitated challenging and enhancement programs for Gifted and Talented students
• Elementary School representative on Florida State University, College of Education Faculty Advisory Council Board

Graduate Teaching Assistant/Instructor, Summer 2004
• College of Education, The Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL
• Course: Educational Psychology

Intermediate Elementary Educator, Fall 2003
Florida State University School, Tallahassee, FL
• Florida State University School, Tallahassee, FL
• Writing instructor for grades 3-5
• Implemented Project CHILD (Changing How Instruction for Learning is Delivered)
• Elementary School representative on Florida State University, College of Education Faculty Advisory Council Board

Graduate Research Assistant, 2002-2003
• College of Education, The Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL
• Assisted the Dean of the COE in developing multi-media presentations
• Research assistant for collecting data and developing Professional Development School Partnerships statewide and internationally
• Research assistant and writer for national and state grant proposals
• Graduate instructor for undergraduate Educational Psychology

Middle Grades English Educator, 1998-2002
• Celebration School, Celebration, FL
• Developed middle grades’ English curriculum to meet The Sunshine State Standards
• Coordinated field trips, ranging from one-day experiences to overnight Outdoor Education programs
• Multi-age Language Arts’ Specialist with focus on 6-8th grade education in a team teaching environment
• Language Arts’ Department Chairperson serving 6-12th Grade
• Assisted with curriculum planning for Middle and High School through Academic Council
• Professional Development Task Force member to assist in development of school curriculum, policies, and educator renewal plans
• Varsity Girls’ Softball and Volleyball coach

Director of Youth Ministry, 2001-2002
• Community Presbyterian Church, Celebration, FL
• Programmed and facilitated 6-12th grade youth programs including outreach, discipleship, and worship opportunities
• Maintain church partnership with YoungLife of Celebration
**Education Consultant/Content Designer**, 2001-2002
- The Learning Priority, Inc., Westlake Village, CA
- Designed curriculum for the Edulink website for use in classroom situations
- Provided content for parent/student activities, as well as teacher/student activities to be completed on-line

**Youth Education Series (Y.E.S.) Program Facilitator**, 1998-2000
- The Walt Disney Company, Lake Buena Vista, FL
- Instructed educational programs with Preschool-High School students in a field-based program
- Taught programs in language arts, cultural studies, history, film and science, and entertainment

**Professional Qualifications**
Utilization of the following:
SPSS, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Word Perfect, Netscape, Explorer, MAC, Office 2000, Microsoft Picture It!

**Honors**
Nominated for “Who’s Who Among America’s Teachers”, 2005
Nominated for Disney’s American Teacher Award, 2000-2002
Celebration School Coach of the Year, 2000
Selected as Celebration Faculty Representative for the Holmes Partnership Conference, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 2000
Metropolitan Opera Guild, Integrating Opera into the Classroom Instructor Certified, 1999-2001
Selected speaker representing the Teacher Education department at graduation, Lincoln, IL, 1997

**Conference Presentations**

*Go Light Your World*. Presented for Teacher Education Symposium, Lincoln Christian College, Lincoln, IL, 1998

**Professional Memberships**
National Educator Association
References
The following persons have written letters of recommendation on my behalf:

Susan Martelli, Principal
Florida State University School
Tallahassee, FL
850-245-3710

Dr. Fanchon Funk
The Florida State University
College of Education
Tallahassee, FL 32306

Marlene West, Assistant Principal
Florida State University School
Tallahassee, FL
850-245-3807