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Motivation to Write: Redeemed Through A Collaborative Feedback Loop

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Submitted in partial fulfillment
Of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education
Moravian College
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
2017

Abstract

This qualitative research study reveals the effects of completing a writing unit where a collaborative feedback loop was implemented as a means of motivating students to write and revise two essays. The study was conducted in a small rural high school of approximately 450 students in northwestern New Jersey. The study was designed in order to promote self-efficacy when writing and revising essays. To encourage students to take on such responsibility, instruction was designed using collaborative and interactive teaching methods so as to promote the use of a feedback loop consisting of quality feedback where students were constantly reflecting on their writing with a teacher and their peers. Using the structure of mini-lessons to promote using mentor texts, students were able to interactively engage in discovering how to revise their writing based on genre-based expectations.

Data were collected throughout the study consisting of student surveys, student artifacts from formative assessment minilessons as well as two essays, and observations. Analysis of the data overall revealed students were more motivated to revise their writing as a result of engaging in a collaborative feedback loop among peers and the teacher. As a result of a co-constructivist environment, where students had time in class to engage in using quality feedback students were also more likely to be involved in taking ownership of what they needed to

revise in their writing in order to develop and improve; thus, illustrating their ability to be self-efficacious.

Given that students became more independent when making revisions to their writing since they felt more confident, it became apparent that scaffolding instruction with minilessons that highlighted the use of mentor texts motivated students to make essential revisions to their writing, placing emphasis on their abilities to be able to know how and what to revise in their writing.

Acknowledgements

For Adelyn and Noah...

Thank you for giving me a purpose...
My darling babies...
All I do, I do for you...

For Mom and Brian...

All that I am...
All that I have yet to be...
I owe it all to you...

For Dad...

No one else could withstand the rants...
Only you...

For Karlee and Kevin...

For taking me as I am...
Always...

For Robbie...

You've seen the best...
You've seen the worst...
And you still love me...

For Alyssa, Hailey, and Amanda...

You calmed and relaxed...
You supported...
You listened...

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Researcher Stance

Upon being given my first book in the Little House series as a gift from my Nana, I instantly became captivated and obsessed wanting to read every book I could get my hands on. Not only did I want to consume the words of Ingalls Wilder, but I wanted to be her, actually become her, so I began playing the role of teacher with my stuffed animals, where my best “roses are red, violets are blue” poetry was also showcased as student work. With each passing novel read, scribbled poem, or venture outside in the big woods, I realized I had fallen in love for the first time; a love that would never leave, but only evolve into something more profound...the discovery of self.

Discovering one’s self is hard enough for an adult, let alone a child. But for some reason, I allowed myself the discomfort of trying to figure out who I was at an early age. With someone like Laura Ingalls Wilder paving the way for me, I figured I was in good hands. With all the woes and pangs of growing up, with each passing day, I found myself more engrossed in comparing who I was to the characters that I would meet with each new read. Not only would I start to compare myself to them to test my limits and boundaries, but I would also find myself trying to write like the minds that created them. It was when I would read what I wrote later on, that I would discover even more about myself that I might have not been willing to admit otherwise. My first love truly was the written word and I found myself most exposed and vulnerable when I would write and

read the words that I had penned. That is when I realized that I not only had a love for writing, but that it had a way of breaking me down, yet building me up all at the same time. Painstakingly, with each word I wrote, I grew up. I was creating my life, my own story, and clearly one that I wanted to share. If only I had someone to listen.

As time passed and I grew older, I was able to notice how literature had truly made an impact on my life. I was sitting in tenth grade English and my classmates and I were slightly befuddled, for as the bell corralled us into our seats, our fearless leader, Mr. Weller, was not assuming his normal welcoming stance in the front of the room. Then, all of a sudden, something happened that as a student, I never saw before. There was Mr. Weller, dressed in Roman garb from head to toe, olive headdress and all, booming out the line, “I am constant as the northern star,” for he was Julius Caesar, inspiring us to follow him on a new adventure, which I immediately did, quite honestly marveling even today at how well my high school English teacher made the words of William Shakespeare come alive in a way that brought new meaning to my love for them.

My entire understanding of the written language changed for me that day. I found someone else in my life that loved words just as much as I did. I found someone else in my life that realized the soul-awakening potential of a well-penned line. I found someone else in my life that saw the beauty in how a story could come to life if one were to only listen to the voices within and learn from

what they had to say. I learned that day that everyone has a story to tell. I learned that day that my voice matters. I learned that day that no matter how much time passes, or how much the world around us changes, what binds us together as humans is the written word, and the stories of the voices speaking them. That day, I found someone who would listen to my voice, my story, and I never felt more alive or more myself than I did in that moment.

Mr. Weller eagerly volunteered to read everything that I wrote and could place in his hands. I recall feeling so proud of myself for what I had accomplished. Yet, I also remember how heart-broken and embarrassed I felt when I first received his constructive criticism. I thought that I was a good writer, but seeing the mixture of stars, question marks, and circles made me think otherwise. How would I ever get to be Laura Ingalls Wilder if my writing was this poor? How could my love of writing fail me? At first, I wanted nothing more than to throw my pen away forever, but Mr. Weller took me under his wing and began to make me realize that good writing takes time, hard work, and a lot of revision to make it the best it could be. In no way did he find me to be awful with words. I just needed to refine my craft, my voice. I remembered all of the hardships that Laura had faced, and it was then that I realized that I did have a story worth writing, and that one day I would tell it the way I wanted to.

Becoming a teacher, like Laura and Mr. Weller would lead me to further self-discovery, while at the same time providing me with the opportunity to

inspire students to discover who they were and their own love of the words. I knew that I had a plan, and that was to make learning fun, engaging and interesting, by bringing the words of the stories we read to life so as to help my students see that we all have our own stories to tell. Yet, as a new teacher, I realized that many of my students had not developed a similar love of words. Students shared so many reasons that had been unfamiliar to me: it takes too long to read: “there are more important things to do,” “I never understand what the author is trying to say,” “writing hurts my hand,” “I don’t have any good ideas,” “my papers always have too many red marks,” “reading hurts my head,” “books are for smart kids,” “writing is just too hard.”

After meeting that same reaction from most of my students within my first years of teaching, I began reflecting on how I was teaching reading, and more specifically, writing. How could my students not love reading and writing like I did? How could they not see that the stories characters were telling served as inspiration for them to tell their own stories in their personal writing? But then, I had a light bulb moment. My students were not me. They might not have had exposure to the same life experiences I had growing up. They might not have had the same influential figures in their lives as I did in mine that helped forge my path of self-discovery, helping me realize who I was and wanted to be. That’s when I realized the importance of teaching them one of the most valuable lessons they could ever learn: discovering one’s self through writing. From growing up

with the innate love of reading and writing, I knew that both had benefits to helping discover one's true self. I thought back to Laura and Mr. Weller, and contemplated how what they did shaped my love so I could help my students awaken their souls to their own first love, whatever that may be. That's when I realized that I would have to help them recognize their voices and embrace the stories they wanted to tell. I allowed for them to have a choice on what stories they wanted to tell and how they wanted to share it. All I had them do was write. My first love was redeemed.

However, as another year passed, I began to realize that time to write, alone, was not enough. Last year, I began my new endeavor to help students tell their stories, and I met similar roadblocks to that in my first years as a teacher. This time, I would hear: "I don't know how to make my writing better," "I don't know what to write about and even if I did my ideas are terrible," "there is not enough time to fix all of these mistakes...I don't even know how to fix most of them," "I've made so many mistakes because I'm a bad writer," "I don't have time to write so I write my papers the night before they're due," "I have always been a bad writer, ask my third grade teacher." Hearing these words brought me back to how I first felt when I received Mr. Weller's comments on my own writing. But then I thought, 'I am giving them the time to write in class, and they still feel this way? There has to be something more that I can do. Time is not enough.' Then, just as quickly as a dark room brightens with the flick of a switch,

I knew I had the secret weapon to help my students rid themselves of the negative emotions they harbored for writing...I had empathy. I knew exactly how they felt and why they were feeling as such. It was then I decided to allow for more time in class for students to write so that I could be there with them as they were encountering the scary and painful truths that arise when they write. Yet, even though I gave them more time and ways to improve, I was still encountering similar comments to those mentioned above. As I reflected on the year at its end, I became aware that I was not fully listening to my students. I was giving them time and feedback, but they needed more than that. How could I better help students use their voices to tell their stories to promote self-discovery?

As it goes, a new school year always approaches. Now more than ever, upon entering this new school year, I noticed that students just didn't care to spend the time writing, let alone rewrite, because it was a difficult and time-consuming task. Yet, here I was trying to use writing as the platform for my students to discover who they were by welding their voice swords with the fire of words because that is one of the most valuable lessons I could ever impart to them; for if they learn to be their own self-advocate and have confidence in voicing their beliefs, thoughts, feelings...they would be successful at whatever they chose to do given that they would become their own force of motivation. But if they continued to not be motivated to write or see the benefit to revision, how would I ever teach this valuable lesson? As I asked that question it dawned

on me that even I myself, while undergoing the writing of a Master's thesis, have found myself many times, feeling the same way my students felt about writing and I have been writing much longer than they have. But that's when it clicked. It clicked when I was again, relying on that of an influential writer and teacher, Dr. Shosh, for help, just like I did as a kid with Laura Ingalls Wilder and young adult with Mr. Weller. What if I created an environment where students were given the moral support needed to help them stay motivated and confident as they write and revise? That is when I decided to take the plunge and design my research to include collaborative support. Thus, I ask the question, *what are the observed behaviors and reported experiences of tenth grade English students when using the power of a collaborative feedback loop during the writing process to help them craft and refine their stories during the writing process?*

Under the guidance I received from my fellow action researchers and professors as I underwent my own writing to share my story, I have found the essential components to helping my students along the way to writing and sharing their own stories. The writing journey is not meant to be taken alone, but together in a collaborative setting for it is through the interaction with others, peers, classmates, characters in a novel, that we find out who we are. It was through my own experience of writing that I have now discovered the most effective ways to help empower my students to write so that they can discover their first love, by at first discovering who they are, and want to be.

Literature Review

Many students in schools today, struggle with finding the motivation to write; yet “Over 90% of white-collar workers and 80% of blue-collar workers must write while working” (Graham, Harris, & Santangelo, 2015, p. 499). If it is our responsibility as teachers to help prepare our students for life after school, then what can we do to motivate them to embrace writing? “In too many classrooms, we assign and assess writing without teaching the craft of it...it’s not surprising that many students come to writing reluctantly...instead of producing writing that’s alive with confidence, they will ask for teacher guidance on every paragraph. It’s time to stop scolding and start teaching” (Kittle, 2014, p. 36). If teachers can align their instruction of writing with practices that best support the student motivation to write, then we as teachers are fulfilling our role as educators who are preparing our students for life after school. So how do we do it? How do we motivate our students to write? At first, teachers must identify how to best teach writing.

Writing as a Process

In the face of the creation of the Common Core State Standards in 2009, which left how to instruct writing to meet benchmarks unclear (Graham, Harris, & Santangelo, 2015), teachers have been left with the task of deciding how to best teach writing given these new standards. However, we as teachers must remember that we are working with developing rather than mature writers. When

working with developing writers, we need to look at the standards as a guide to support our students in areas where they are most likely to struggle. When we can acknowledge where our students need help, we can begin to craft our instruction to best meet their needs. Therefore, how should we teach writing? Writing “is the process of discovery through language. It is the process of exploration of what we know and what we feel about what we know through language. It is the process using language to learn about our world, to evaluate what we learn about our world, to communicate what we learn about our world” (Murray, 1972, p. 4). Through crafting our instruction of writing by understanding it to be a process, we as teachers can engage our student writers to create their own writing in such a way to allow them to communicate with the larger world; for writing through the process approach supports student writers by providing them with extended opportunities to write, routines for them to plan, draft, revise, and edit, personalized and individual feedback as well as brief instructional lessons (Graham, Harris, & Santangelo, 2015).

The writing process “can be divided into three stages: prewriting, writing, and rewriting” (Murray, p. 4). Through segmenting our instruction via means of a process, we can help students develop their writing through learning by doing, allowing for students to become engaged in the process. Writing as process entails students examining their writing with classmates, students finding their own subject, students using their own language, students having the opportunity

to write many drafts to find what they have to say, students communicating with an audience, and teachers grading only a final paper at the end of the process (Murray, 1972). Writing through process promotes learning because writing becomes “active, engaged, personal – more specifically, self-rhythmed – in nature” (Emig, 1977, p. 10). Writing through process allows for writing to become heuristic where “students are individuals who must explore the writing process in their own way, some fast, some slow, whatever it takes for them, within the limits of the course deadlines, to find their own way to their truth” (Murray, 1972, p. 6). When students have the opportunity to explore writing through a process, they are given time to explore their language and how their language impacts the larger world to which they belong making learning more meaningful. Students find a place in their own terms and on their own time, and we, as teachers, are coaches supporting students as they discover their learning through the writing process. However, some students may be reluctant or less motivated to write. If students have a lack of desire to write, how can we expect them to be motivated to revise their writing, which can be quite rigorous and time consuming? If writing as process as outlined above can promote engagement of student writing by making the process a meaningful learning opportunity, how can we ensure that students retain the motivation to endure the lengthy revision process? We as teachers need to identify what motivates students to write and more importantly what motivates students to revise.

Keeping this in mind, Donald Murray (1972), one of the leaders of writing as process believes that something cannot be learned by simply talking about it, but instead learning comes from the act of doing. Furthermore, Murray claims, “all writing is experimental,” (p. 6) suggesting that the writing process can be indeterminate in terms of what students learn and how they learn. Therefore, the process approach to writing provides an experience for students to actively engage in writing where students learn through experimenting given diverse experiences. Therein, writing as process can be a social experience for students to learn how to write versus achieving mastery of writing. Emig (1977) posits, “If the most efficacious learning occurs when learning is re-inforced, then writing through its inherent reinforcing cycle involving hand, eye, and brain marks a uniquely powerful multi-representational mode for learning” (p. 10). Learning does not always indicate mastery, nor does the process of writing given that the process allows for students to develop their writing at their own pace and in their own time. The process approach does not teach a final product, but instead, promotes a process that allows for students to experience learning, for ultimately, “Instead of teaching finished writing, we should teach unfinished writing, and glory in its unfinishedness” (Murray, p. 4). Writing as process is not teaching mastery, but instead, it’s teaching students about their abilities to be a writer. It’s not about the final product, but instead the learning experience. Therefore, one of

the best ways to motivate students to write is by allowing them to experiment through the process of how to write.

Motivating Students to Write

For students to be able to benefit the most from our instruction of writing, we as teachers need to acknowledge what motivates students to write. Motivation is a key component of a student's ability to keep moving forward during the writing process (Mackiewicz & Thompson, 2013). Motivation is "the desire to achieve a goal, the willingness to engage and persist in specific subjects or activities," (Mackiewicz & Thompson, p. 43). As teachers, we need to identify what motivates our students as individuals to want to achieve a goal through engaging in the process of writing. Certainly, there are extrinsic motivators (external rewards) such as grades or praise from a teacher that help to motivate students and enhance learning, but they do not have long-term effects. On the contrary, intrinsic motivators (internal rewards) such as self-worth and confidence are linked with individual interest, which promotes learning, and student interest in writing over the long term (Mackiewicz & Thompson). Allowing students to recognize their own voices can spark individual interest in who they are. For after all, who we are shapes our voices ultimately determining what we pen onto a page (Romano, 2004) Therefore, to help students take a personal interest in their writing, we need to help them recognize that their voices are shaped from the world in which they live.

What is voice?

Voice—the sense we have while reading that someone occupies the middle of our mind, filling the space with the sound of a voice, the sense we have while writing that something is whispering in our ear. There is a human quality to writing, related to its sibling, the spoken word, which survived thousands of years before some distant ancestor made marks on sand or dirt or rock, marks that represented what came out of the mouth when the brain formulated thought, the voice box vibrated, and breath pushed out the vibrations (Romano, 2004, p. 6).

Our students have the power to write their story, if we only let them. We must allow them to tell their stories, to share their language; after all, it is an innate human instinct to communicate with others. We need to bring to the foreground what is truly important, and that is what our students have to say; “Helping students learn to unleash their expressive voices is sound practice in teaching writing...it helps students to prepare rich, composted seedbed from which much can grow” (Romano, 2000, p. 139). If we want to provide our students with the internal reward of growing their voices, we need to give them the opportunity of that freedom by allowing them to have choices.

Choice is also important when it comes to motivating students to write (Rose, 2011; Greene, 2013). Allowing students to choose topics or genres of

writing to craft is an effective way to reinforce that they have a voice and a story to tell. In addition, Penny Kittle (2014) includes student choice as one of her six traits of effective ways to teach the craft of writing: “Students who choose what they write about bring passion and focus to the task of writing...let them write about what captivates them” (p. 37). Not only will students be more engaged in the writing process, but they will also be motivated to share what they have to say because they have the opportunity to write about something that matters to them. By making personal choices students take more control of their learning and as a result become more confident (Kittle), furthering the process of writing to be associated with internal, intrinsic rewards. We as teachers can impact our students in the long term by motivating them to write by awakening their voices and giving them choices.

However, this is only the beginning...as teachers, we know that our voices don't always come through with the first draft and that we need to revise our writing to ensure that our words are telling our story the way we want. Students, though, struggle to revise their writing, for it can be quite challenging and “most students equate revision with failure rather than opportunity” (Heard, 2014, p. 5). So then, how do we motivate our students to revise?

Motivating Students to Revise

What is revision?

Revision involves making substantive changes to the meaning, content, structure, or style of a piece of writing rather than the more surface changes that editing demands. Revision means to have a vision of what we want our writing to be like. Real revision is inner work: clarifying what we really think and believe about an idea; getting at the heart of a story; distilling our sentences and words to best express how we feel and what we think. Revision is how writers write

(Heard, 2014, p. 1).

Revision is at the heart of the writing process. Therefore, we teachers need to illustrate to our students that there is passion in revision. One way to equip students with the motivation to revise with passion is by allowing them to revise writing that they are passionate about: “If our hearts are committed to writing about a topic we’re passionate about, revision comes easier” (Heard, p. 7). Heard believes that if a piece of writing has more personal meaning, then students will become more motivated and engaged during the revision process. Promoting motivation to revise increases a student’s desire to rework his or her meaningful writing. Teachers can fuel the desire of a student to revise by bringing in his or her own writing that as a teacher he or she is currently revising to show students

that even teachers struggle in the process of revision (Kittle, 2014; Bean, 2011).

While we, as teachers, are making difficult decisions of how to better represent our story, students can do the same with writing that is meaningful to them. This reinforces why we need to give students choices in what they write. If they find meaning in revising, they will be motivated and engaged to rework pieces of writing in such a way to best represent what they are trying to say. Students need to see that no matter how experienced someone is with writing, the struggle to revise is real and in no way indicative of failure.

The revision process is challenging and daunting, and at times, it can be hard for students to maintain the stamina it takes to revise their writing and they become frustrated (Fletcher, 1996). In addition to allowing students to revise with passion as a motivating factor to revision, “The goals of effective writing instruction should emphasize writing as a means for social engagement, as a way to do something with writing” (Zumbrunn & Krause, 2012, p. 348). All children inherently are social creatures who desire to be part of a larger community. As part of a larger entity, each individual has something to offer the whole, for when placed into an environment where there is a platform for social exchange individuals become responsible for their contributions in order to avoid social isolation (Dewey, 1938); therefore, we as teachers need to allow for students to revise in a social environment where they collaborate with their peers and teacher so as to have a meaningful experience with the revision process. Hence, it is

imperative that a teacher creates an atmosphere that promotes the co-constructivist approach to motivate students to revise: a co-constructivist approach as defined by Askew and Lodge (2000) is a relationship that is built between teachers and students where there is a mutual respect for the sharing of experiences and knowledge.

For teachers and students to share their knowledge with a common respect during the revision process, teachers must use techniques that will help students be able to revise in a social environment. Today, there are many ways students can engage in a social environment: blogs, wikis, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube (Demirbilek, 2015), and Google Docs (Zheng, Lawrence, Warschauer, & Lin, 2015). All of these social software tools allow for students to become actively engaged in collaboration. It is through this direct component of communication that teachers focus in on motivating students to revise, for “in the same way that knowledge is constructed through social interaction, motivation is constructed through ‘mutual reciprocity’ between students and their environment” (Mackiewicz & Thompson, 2013, p. 44). We as teachers have the opportunity to utilize the technology of today in order to help foster the motivation to revise writing through a co-constructivist environment formed upon mutual respect. With the increase in new digital technologies, the complex tasks of writing can be better taught versus using traditional word-processing tools (Zheng, Lawrence, Warschauser, and Lin, 2015). Zheng et al. found that students reported using

Google Docs most for revising and drafting of their work, and more for revising than drafting. In addition, students found themselves having an easier time revising their work, for students shared that working with Google Docs is more efficient, easier, and preferred than a word-processing tool. Not only does the use of Google Docs make the sharing of writing more efficient and effective, but it also allows for writing to become a collaborative and social experience where there is active participation in the writing and revising of student work, ultimately enhancing and enriching student motivation and learning (Zheng, Lawrence, Warschauser, and Lin, 2015).

Another way to motivate students to revise during the writing process is to ensure that instruction is collaborative (Zumbrunn & Krause, 2012). By allowing feedback to be used as formative assessment where there is an exchange between students and teachers, instruction can be collaborative (Chappuis, 2005). This may sound simple, yet the act of providing and receiving useful feedback is not that easy. Therefore, at first, it must be acknowledged that feedback is “Anything that might strengthen the students’ capacity to self-regulate their own performance” (Nicol and MacFarlane-Dick, 2006, p. 205). Therefore, feedback can be said to be a form of formative assessment. Formative assessment is “formal and informal processes teachers and students use to gather evidence for the purpose of improving learning” (Chappuis, 2010, p. 5). Not only is it essential for teachers to know the current performance of where their students are during

any stage of writing in terms of where they need to be at the end of the writing process, but students must also be aware of their current performance with respect to the end goals. Hence, by using feedback as a means of formative assessment during the revision process, students will be more motivated to rework their writing given that they have entered into a feedback loop where feedback becomes dialogue that promotes collaboration in a social environment between teachers and students and students and peers to improve writing (Hatzipanagos & Warburton, 2009; Parr & Timperley, 2010; Riddell, 2015). Once the desire and motivation for students to revise is present, time for the dialogue to occur so that students can gauge their current performance versus the end goal is essential. This is what will allow the feedback to become a formative assessment (Chappuis, 2005). Therefore, it is important to note that there are various types of feedback and ways to best implement feedback during the revision process to best motivate students to use feedback.

How to Use Feedback as Formative Assessment to Motivate Student Revision

Not only can students be inspired and motivated to revise by allowing them to revise with passion and with others in a collaborative environment using a medium of social software, but we can use timely feedback as a means of formative assessment as the glue of motivation during the revision process.

First, for feedback to be effective, the literature suggests that feedback must be of high quality where it does not focus on the evaluative qualities of

student writing in terms of right from wrong, but instead, on what and how students can improve (Dinnen & Collopy, 2009; Parr & Timperley, 2010, Hatzipanagos & Warburton, 2009, Fonseca, Carvalho, Conboy, Valente, & Gama, 2015). Therefore, teachers must use a combination of descriptive and improvement-oriented feedback to best motivate students to revise their work. Descriptive feedback is feedback “that tends to explain why something is incorrect and then explains how to improve” (Dinnen & Collopy, 2009, p. 241) and improvement- oriented feedback is feedback that “guides a student to improve” (Dinnen and Collopy, p. 244). When the dialogue between teachers and students focuses on the opportunity to improve versus failure at crafting a successful piece of writing, students will be more inspired to move forward with their writing through revision (Sommers, 2013) instead of seeing revision as failure. Sommers suggests that by developing a common language with our students, when commenting on papers, students are more likely to understand what our comments are asking them to do.

Sommers posits that teachers should have a discussion with their students in which the language is clarified:

[Students] are equally confused if we use a separate language for responding, one they see for the first time in comments on their papers, a vocabulary that is unrelated to their classroom discussions and exercises. Responding is more effective when the

language of our comments comes from the classroom, rather than using a separate language with separate customs and conventions (2013, p. 7).

Hence, it is imperative for a teacher to create a dialogue with students about common terms used in writing such as “thesis,” for when a teacher comments on how to further develop or strengthen a “thesis” of a paper, using the “so what?” test, the student is aware of what the language means in order to make essential changes to improve (Sommers). A teacher can use this same way to approach helping students understand what feedback given on writing assignments will look like and what purpose it will serve. By familiarizing students with the common language that will be used during revision, students will feel more prepared and confident in using such feedback to revise their writing.

Once students understand the common language in terms of what feedback is and how and why it will be used, a second way to use feedback as a means of formative assessment is by making it social and collaborative by allowing not only teachers to provide feedback to students, but also, students providing feedback to peers. Teacher feedback is when the “Teacher communicates to students the difference between his or her actual level of performance with the standard or goal” (Dinnen and Collopy, 2009, p. 240), and peer feedback is when students communicate and enter into a dialogue through using rich details to comment about each other’s work (Liu and Carless, 2006). Both types of

feedback have benefits to helping and motivating students to revise, for both allow for students to self-reflect on where they are in terms of their current level of performance in working through the writing process to create a final product without impunity of receiving a grade. However, as stated above, it is important to restate that in order for this feedback to be effective from teachers and peers, there must be a common language in which both are communicating. Therefore, there are two ways in which to help students understand how to interpret feedback given, thereby, increasing their potential to provide effective feedback to their peers during the revision process to enhance the dialogue about their writing.

The first way teachers can help students to engage in understanding and using feedback provided by a teacher is by having them write a Dear Reader Letter: “One of the most effective methods for engaging students in a dialogue about their writing is to ask them to compose a Dear Reader Letter or a writer’s memo to accompany their drafts...students are [therefore] reminded that they are writing to live readers, and they are given the opportunity to ask for specific feedback” (Sommers, 2013, p. 12). Students can ask questions or pose any concerns that they have pertaining to their writing in which they want to receive feedback from the teacher to better enhance what they are trying to say. Sommers further suggests that Dear Letter Readers can change depending on where students are in the writing process. Dear Letter readers can be used to help students acknowledge what needs to be fixed with their writing while at the same

time, they can be used to reflect on what has changed in between drafts.

Ultimately, Dear Reader Letters allow for students to become active participants in the dialogue they have about their work (Sommers, 2013). Furthermore, Dear Reader Letters promote self-reflection: “During the self-reflection phase that occurs after performance, learners respond to their efforts by evaluating their goal process and adjusting strategies as needed” (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007, p. 12).

When students enter into the self-reflection stage, they have the opportunity to notice what works and what doesn’t in terms of their writing performance, which is imperative when promoting intrinsic motivation for students to revise.

In addition, to further self-reflection, Sommers suggests that teachers should prompt students to reread and analyze teacher comments and to give feedback about the comments to the teacher. She believes that through this exercise, students have the opportunity to comment on the extent to which the feedback given has been useful and beneficial or not. Before she expects the students to do this, she uses former student samples to illustrate to her students how other students have analyzed her comments. Students here can engage in a reflective dialogue with the teacher where they are becoming more engaged and aware of what feedback is effective and how it is used to enhancing writing. Through this opportunity to self-reflect in terms of evaluating their own performance with the help of feedback, students are gaining a glimpse of what it means to be able to not only understand quality feedback, but how to provide it.

A second way to help students understand how to engage in continuous dialogue about feedback, and in accordance with the aforementioned Sommers strategy, as per students questioning teacher feedback as a means of engaging in reflective dialogue about revisions, Parrott and Cherry (2014) similarly have noticed the benefits of engaging students with writing using what they call Process Memos. With the push to have writing across the curriculum incorporated in curricula today, attention has been focused on how to accomplish the task instructionally (Parrott and Cherry). In two secondary institutions, both private, one a mid-sized university and the other, a small liberal arts college, Parrott and Cherry conducted a study on using Process Memos in their Sociology courses in order to increase student engagement during the writing process: “process memos [are] tools [used] to both improve student writing and assess other available writing tools...process memos allow [educators] to tailor paper comments and class exercises to the specific needs of students, and they also provide ideas for how to accommodate students better in future semesters” (Parrott and Cherry, p.146-147). Even though both professors have used other means of best practices to teach writing, they noticed that the best practices such as scaffolding writing, using rubrics, and freewriting were just not sufficient in keeping students less anxious and involved in the writing process. Therefore, they hypothesized that through using Process Memos, students would be more

engaged during the writing process and less anxious when completing writing assignments.

The Process Memos specifically were designed to engage students in a dialogue about their writing increasing the amount of involvement with feedback from professors. Furthermore, students were required to directly address teacher comments by responding to the comments with how they have addressed them when making revisions to their writing. Additionally, students were able to address areas where they still questioned or did not understand the professors' feedback towards helping them improve their writing, clarifying the degree to which professor comments were helpful (Parrott and Cherry, 2014). Through using the Process Memos in the writing of drafts of a paper, students were able to ask questions and reflect on the writing process before a final paper was submitted for a grade. The interaction between professor and students therein created a dialogue where students actively participated in reflection of their writing.

Both Parrott and Cherry coded their own process memos seeking out emerging themes. To ensure accuracy and reliability of coding themes, Parrott and Cherry exchanged process memos with each other. “[They] found three main benefits to using process memos: addressing writing weaknesses, assessing teaching tools/resources, and helping future students” (p. 150). Through using process memos, students were able to reflect on their writing weaknesses while

the professors were able to identify that the students struggled on how to fix them, which allowed for professors to directly tailor their comments to the specific needs of each student. Furthermore, it allowed for the professors to direct students to further resources or provide them with the tools essential into strengthening their weaknesses creating a recurrent dialogue between students and professors. Not only were students engaged in their writing through self-reflection, but also the professors were able to discover common areas where students were struggling (Parrott and Cherry, 2014). These findings allowed for the professors to be able to revise their teaching methods so as to help current students and future students as well.

Parrott and Cherry conclude that process memos create meaningful dialogue between students and instructors about writing. Through the dialogue created, students can become better writers because they are actively engaged in self-reflection of their writing competencies and teachers can discover the best teaching practices to help improve their writing instruction. Ultimately the process memos become a tool that can be used to assess student needs and ways in which to help them improve.

A third way that teachers can engage students in their dialogue about their writing is through peer feedback via a means of a one-page revision plan where students write a one-page response to what they have learned from the feedback given by a peer as well as how they plan to use the comments when revising

(Sommers, 2013; Chappuis, 2005). Students can draft this one-page revision plan after the writing of any draft in which they received feedback. This revision-plan provides them with the opportunity to truly focus on the feedback given, noting what effective feedback is and how it can support them in the revision process, for they are prompted to reflect upon the comments they have received to clarify anything that they do not understand about what they are trying to say in their writing. Again, this allows for students to interact with feedback in a reflective manner. It challenges them to evaluate the effect feedback has on their revision, while at the same time, prompting for clarity if necessary from the peer providing the comment. Therefore, it is important to provide for the opportunity for students to engage in dialogue with their peers for when students realize that they have similar struggles with writing as their peers, they begin to see that they are a community of learners with similar problems (Gielen and De Wever, 2015). Through this social and collaborative environment provided by using feedback as formative assessment, students become engaged and motivated to revise their work for it becomes a group effort in discovering the most effective ways to shape and craft their stories in such a way that highlights their voice in a larger global world.

Once students have a firm understanding of what feedback is and its role in the process of revision, for teachers to reinforce and implement feedback as a means of formative assessment to motivate students to revise, one of the best

ways to integrate the feedback loop/dialogue is through multi-drafting: “multi-draft composing requires students to write successively improved drafts of a single composition between periods of feedback from peers, tutors, and/or teachers. It forces and mechanizes the act of revision a skill long associated with good writing” (Leki, Cumming, & Silva, 2008). In addition, one of the parts of the writing process is allowing for students to draft as many drafts as possible within course deadlines with each draft counting as a new paper (Murray, 1972). For teachers to fully embrace the writing process and the use of feedback as formative assessment to motivate kids to write and revise their writing, we need to provide time for students to partake in the act of drafting (Zumbrunn & Krause, 2012). Moreover, multi-drafting also allows for students and teachers to be able to engage in dialogue about their writing, as has been previously stated as being one of the major components of motivating students to revise. After all, Peter Elbow (1973) does argue that, “meaning is not what you start out with but what you end up with” (p. 15). Drafting and redrafting is a time-consuming and rigorous process (Bean, 2011). However, it provides the time and structure that students need in order to be motivated to want to revise their writing. As has been noted, teachers need to implement techniques in their instructional practice to not only motivate students to revise, but revise using feedback. Ultimately, for students to be able to do so, students need to enter into a collaborative dialogue about their writing through using feedback. Once they accomplish this, then they

can build self-reflection skills promoting their understanding of how and why feedback is an essential component of revision. Lastly, teachers need to provide time to use the feedback effectively through allowing students to comment and revise; this can be done through allowing students to multi-draft (Bean, 2011). In essence, when a teacher structures the process of writing in such a way that promotes the motivation of students to write and revise, they will be more engaged and open to learning how to revise (Zumbrunn & Krause, 2012).

How Teachers Can Scaffold Revision Instruction

Once students understand the benefit to revising, teachers must scaffold revision instruction through the use of minilessons. Instructional scaffolds are “short-term structures put in place to assist students as they build or learn new concepts. Once students are able to achieve the task, the scaffolding is taken away” (Falter and Sondergeld, 2015, p. 104). Minilessons can be used as structures that allow for teachers to model the particular revision behaviors that will aid students in making changes to their writing. According to Schunk (1987), “Modeling refers to the process in which observers pattern their thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors after those displayed by one or more models” (as seen in Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007, p. 11). By using minilessons to teach revision strategies, students become equipped with essential tools necessary for revision success. At first, teachers must identify what topics or aspects in particular they want their minilessons to be focused on. This will depend on the style or genre of writing

that is occurring within the classroom. Then, they must focus on one aspect at a time to break down learning into manageable chunks for students (Chappuis, 2005). Using the example of narrative and descriptive writing, listed below are some example topics that teachers can isolate during minilessons helping students to revise:

Rereading with Different Lenses: Rereading can take place anytime during the revision process. For example, students can reread after they have written their opening lead, several paragraphs, or entire drafts. When students reread, they must choose a lens of focus that will help look closely at what they have written. Use an example of a particular lens of focus, then ask the students to do the same with their own writing. They must choose particular lens of focus. Then they must ask relevant questions pertaining to the focus at hand that will be answered as a result of reread. A sample lens for narrative writing may be The Lens of Focus and Clarity where students reread parts of their narrative using questions that center on the heart of the story, character development, and the use of details or anecdotes that support the focus of the story (Heard, 2014).

The Lead or Introductions: The lead or introduction to a story is the “front door.” Therefore, it is important for writers to compel readers to want to stay. Teachers can provide examples of various ways for students to begin their lead or introductions. Examples of leads or introductions could include: questions, dialogue, interesting facts, images, compelling thought or idea, and a

quotation. Once teachers have gone over various examples, allow for students to write variations of a lead or introduction they might use allowing them to make a final choice (Heard, 2014).

Show, Don't Tell: Have students devise a list of clichés, or vague words and phrases such as *it was a nice day*. After the class has compiled a list, use the examples on the list to show that it was a nice day versus simply stating that it was. Afterwards, teachers can have students revisit their writing and make a Show, Not Tell T-chart where students extract simple tell phrases on one side of the T-chart and on the other side of the t-chart a revision of the phrase using descriptive details that show the act or emotions that are being portrayed in the narrative (Heard).

Living, Leaping Words: Have students bring five interesting words to class that they would like to infuse into their writing at some point. Put students into small groups where they have the chance to talk about why they are so interested or delighted in wanting to use the words. This will help students start a conversation about how words are the currency of writing and how the words they choose to use shape their writer's voice. Through their conversation with others, they will start to notice the effect the words they chose have on potential readers (Romano, 2003).

Share Sessions: In order to help students become more comfortable with sharing their work they can have share sessions with a real audience. In order to

illustrate the purpose of a share session, the first share session can be completed in small sessions of ten or fifteen minutes where only a few students share their work at a time. Students do not have to be finished with their writing to participate in a share session. A share session allows for students to become writing models for each other as well as provide encouragement for them to revise and continue writing. Additionally, it allows for teachers to model how to engage in the reading of model texts where the teacher can pose questions such as “What did you learn from this piece of writing?” or “What did this writer do well?” to illustrate to students how to improve writing from reading model texts (Fletcher & Portalupi, 2001).

Conference Corners: Have students role-play how to have successful and not-so-successful conferences. The teacher can model first how to enter into a discussion about responding to the writing of a student. The important thing to model is how the conversation to stray away from making judgments about the writer’s work. Comments like “Very good,” or “That was boring,” may prevent a writer from wanting to revise their work. It is important to role-play both types of interactions so that students can discuss how to have appropriate and useful conferences sessions that will promote revision. (Atwell, 1987)

In addition to using minilessons to model an essential focus or aspects of a particular genre of writing to help students understand how to revise their own writing, a teacher can also model revision strategies through providing a

minilesson(s) using mentor texts. Georgia Heard (2014) argues that “Mentor texts are used by a writing community to study craft, genre, and other aspects of writing, and they can give young writers a vision of the kind of quality writing that is possible” (p. 8). The use of mentor texts will enable students to “[increase] the complexity of [their own] text” (Graham, Harris, & Santangelo, 2015, p. 514). Furthermore, Kelly Gallagher (2014) posits that if we want our students to write in any particular genre, then we need to provide writing instruction where students examine good writing that they can use as models before they write and as they write and revise. Gallagher further suggests three ways in which teachers can craft their instruction of mentor texts to enhance student writing:

Prewriting: Discerning What to Imitate: Before students write in the particular genre of study, teachers can provide excerpts from that genre in which to show students how that particular writing style is crafted. Teachers can have students read the excerpts and then discuss certain techniques (sentence structure, description) that the author uses to build the writing. Next, teachers can pick one technique used by the author mentioned in the discussion and upon analysis of the sample(s), have students practice (p. 29-30).

Drafting: Keep Your Eyes on the Model: Teachers can have professional and student samples of the particular writing genre easily accessible to students throughout the writing process. When the model texts are readily accessible, as students are drafting, they can refer to the writing model so as to be able to

familiarize themselves with the techniques used so as to better emulate that particular style (p. 30-32).

Revision: Modeling Improvement: Teachers should juxtapose lower-quality texts with that of revised model texts to be able to provide students with insight on how to improve drafts. Using a low-quality sample text of the genre students are to emulate and a revised model text of the same piece, have students read both samples and have a discussion about which one is better given the particular aspects or techniques that are essential to that style of writing (p. 32-33).

By scaffolding instruction of revision strategies, teachers can provide reliable skills and techniques that students can use in which to revise and craft writing. Depending on the particular genre of writing, teachers can choose which techniques or aspects to which students will need instruction and provide minilessons to help students see how to make revisions to their own writing so as to emulate that particular style. In addition, teachers can use model texts to serve as exemplar samples to which students can analyze and refer to during the writing process to enhance their own writing (Gallagher, 2014.).

The Light at the end of the Process...Publishing Student Writing

After all the hard work students endure writing, drafting, and revising, a teacher should publish student work. Publishing student writing is one way to honor the work students complete (Fletcher & Portalupi, 2001). When we think

of publishing student writing, we do not have to always consider it to be formal. Publishing student work can be done informally as well as formally. Informal publishing could be as simple as putting up student work on the wall, and formal publishing exists when writing is displayed in such a way that proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation are included. Regardless, it is important to consider that writing is a way for students to communicate and to see how their words have an effect in the real world and not just their notebooks (Fletcher & Portalupi, 2001).

The way in which writing has more of an effect beyond the notebook is because “The essential human act at the heart of writing is the act of giving. There’s something implacable and irreducible about it: handing something to someone because you want her to have it; not asking for anything in return; and if it is a gift of yourself—as writing always is—risking that she won’t like it or even accept it” (Elbow, 1998, p. 20). Even if it is natural for humans to want to give, the act of giving can be a neglected aspect of any writing instruction because to just share what someone has written is rare (Elbow). The act of sharing writing sounds daunting, but in all reality, it can be quite simple. Elbow suggests that sharing writing could be completed if a small group meets regularly for the sole purpose of being heard for reading out loud is like doing push-ups for the muscle used to take responsibility for the words one writes. Similarly Fletcher & Portalupi (2001) suggest having sharing sessions where students share either

finished or unfinished writing with each other allowing them to become writing models for each other as well as to provide encouragement for them to revise and continue writing. When someone has the opportunity to listen to the writing of others as they share, the opportunity to improve writing based on listening to what others do well allows for growth on the part of writer too. Writing can be shared with friends or family members as well, not always in the case of receiving feedback, but instead acknowledgement that the words someone has written have been heard (Elbow, 1998). Building confidence as a writer starts by sharing writing. When students see the impact their writing has on an audience, the act of writing becomes more meaningful, because they are giving to others.

Writing is About the Process

Writing as a process provides a structure for discovery through language (Murray, 1972). Writing is the act of communication (Fletcher & Portalupi, 2001). Writing is the act of giving (Elbow). If students want to truly understand the effect their words have when they are heard out loud, they must start at the beginning. A student's internal reward to write can be sparked by allowing students to have a voice and a choice in what they want to write (Romano, 2004 & Kittle, 2014). Furthermore one major piece of writing as a process is revision. Most students find this to be a frustrating task (Fletcher, 1996). Therefore, to ensure that students have an educative learning experience, students need to be involved as an active participant in their learning (Dewey, 1938). In order to

motivate students to revise, teachers need to make the process meaningful and engaging. A teacher can provide a rich environment for students to revise by allowing them the opportunity to revise with a feedback loop where students and teachers create an open dialogue about the revision process using feedback (Hatzipanagos & Warburton, 2009; Parr & Timperley, 2010; Riddell, 2015). Whether it is through One-page revision plans, Dear Reader Letters or establishing a common language, students need to be active participants and engage in the act of collaboration and self-reflection in order to fully experience writing in a way that will most benefit them (Sommers, 2013). Hence, by making the act of revision one of formative assessment where students are not constantly penalized by a grade, students will be able to embrace learning through experience in such a way that will build their confidence as writers (Chappuis, 2005).

Writing is not about the product, but the process (Murray, 1972), and the act of writing must be one that is social and collaborative in order to motivate students to write and revise (Zumbrunn & Krause, 2012). If a teacher scaffolds writing instruction through providing minilessons (Heard, 2014) and by using mentor texts (Gallagher, 2014), not only will students embrace writing as a process, but they will also be able to revise writing with meaning creating light at the end of the process. And that light is the gift of giving words to an audience. “They [words] will come when students heed passion, push forward with

language, are brave on the page. And voice will come later, too, when students sculpt their identities through crafting their words" (Romano, 2003, p. 55).

Research Design and Methodology

Motivating students to write and revise is always a hard task for any teacher given that the experience is very unique and personal. By the time students get to high school, most of them have lost their love of writing because at some point in time they were robbed of having a choice in what to write about or lacked the support needed to be motivated to develop their writing. Additionally, students tend to lose sight of their writer's voice and try to appease teachers by writing papers that adhere to certain specifications and expectations, making the writing process dull, boring, and monotonous. Therefore, this research project was designed to determine the effects of using a collaborative feedback loop during the writing process as a means of promoting motivation of tenth grade English students to write and revise descriptive and narrative writing. Student participants wrote two stories focusing on using descriptive writing techniques as a means of bringing their voices and stories to life. For both essays, students were given free choice in topic, as well as time in class to be able to share and revise their own work as well as that of their peers in a collaborative and social way by using the comment feature in Google Docs. Instructional time was not only used as a platform where students provided support to each other to develop their writing, but also students received mini-lessons to help them understand how to revise their writing based on the feedback being given to them from their peers and teacher.

Setting

This action research study took place at a high school in New Jersey. The high school was comprised of approximately 450 students in total ranging from ninth to twelfth grade. The student population lacked diversity and most families were from middle class socioeconomic backgrounds.

Within the particular tenth grade classroom, students had daily access to Chromebooks and Google Classroom as a means of communicating with their teacher and peers inside and outside of the classroom. Students were seated in a square all facing each other, as well as seated next to their peer reviewers so as to optimize the collaborative setting.

Participants

There were thirty-five students who participated in the study. Two sophomore English classes were used. One class consisted of Honors students, while the other consisted of College Preparatory students, where one student had an IEP. The age of students within the study ranged from fourteen to sixteen years old.

Procedures

Prior to the beginning of the study, students were asked in a discussion format to share their personal opinions of writing in the school setting. Students were then given a Pre-Study Survey (Appendix A, section i) that focused on their attitudes towards writing and feedback. Both the discussion and survey provided

baseline data that allowed for a discussion to be had as to why their teacher decided to conduct a study using their writing. Students were then told of the research that their teacher would conduct over the course of the study.

Additionally, mid way through the study, students were given a Mid-Study Survey (Appendix A, section ii). The Mid-Study Survey focused on the perceptions and opinions of students as they participated in the study and how they felt about the feedback given, and more specifically, how they perceived themselves as writers now having gone through the first part of the study.

The classes rotated on a four-day schedule and met three to four days a week for a fifty-four minute period class session. During this time, mini-lessons were conducted as well as share and revisions sessions of student work to foster the collaborative feedback loop to motivate students to develop their writing.

Over the course of the ten-week study, the activities listed below took place:

- **Week 1**
 - Teacher gives students the pre-study survey on students' perceptions, emotions and experiences with feedback.
 - Teacher conducts a discussion about the uses of feedback and why feedback is important.
 - Teacher conducts a discussion on voice and choice in the writing process.
 - Teacher gives a mini-lesson on finding voice in writing through using model texts.
 - Students create a writing sample.
 - Teacher provides feedback on writing sample.
 - Students review their writing samples with teacher feedback and create a list of observations about the feedback given.

- **Week 2**
 - Teacher conducts a discussion about the common language that will be used during the writing process in terms of revision strategies and feedback terminology.
 - Students review the writing process using *Patterns for a Purpose* - Chapter 3. Teacher focuses on the various stages of writing as process such as prewriting, writing, revising, and publication.
 - Students are instructed on how to use the resources that will be used throughout the writing process (Google Docs, Purdue Owl, *Patterns for a Purpose*, Sample Model-Texts and where to find them).
- **Week 3**
 - Students are instructed on how they will be required to use the Feedback Chart and Reflective Feedback Chart (Process Memos) to prompt reflective thinking and engagement with revision.
 - Students are instructed on the first essay and review format and requirements of the first essay as per Chapter 5 in *Patterns for a Purpose*. (Descriptive)
 - Teacher gives a mini-lesson on introductions/leads for the required format and students practice with partners through using model texts.
 - Students create introduction of the first essay and post to Google Doc.
 - Each student provides feedback to a peer via the Google Doc and tracks their feedback given via the Feedback Reflection Chart (Process Memo).
- **Week 4**
 - Teacher reviews the feedback given by the students to their peers in a classroom discussion using the Feedback Reflection Chart (Process Memo). This discussion will ensure accuracy of the common language.
 - Students make changes to the introduction of their first essay and track their changes on their Feedback Charts.
 - Teacher gives a mini-lesson on Show, Don't Tell and students practice with partners through using model texts.
 - Students create body paragraphs of the first essay and post to Google Doc.
 - Teacher provides feedback to students on the body paragraphs via the Google Doc.

- Teacher reviews the feedback given with the students in a classroom discussion.
 - Students make changes to the body paragraphs of their first essay and track their changes on their Feedback Charts.
- **Week 5**
 - Students create the conclusion of their first essay and post to Google Doc. Students are to write a Dear Reader Letter to address the reader to focus on elements of the writing that the writer is still concerned about so that the writer receives more specific feedback.
 - Each student provides feedback to a peer via the Google Doc and tracks their feedback given via the Feedback Reflection Chart (Process Memo).
 - Teacher reviews the feedback given by the students to their peers in a classroom discussion using the Feedback Reflection Chart (Process Memo).
 - Teacher gives a mini-lesson on revising using different lenses to prompt student reflective thinking to enhance their writing focus.
 - Students make changes to the conclusion of their first essay and track their changes on their Feedback Charts (Process Memo).
 - Students review and make final changes to their paper and submit the first essay to be graded according to the assigned rubric.
- **Week 6**
 - Teacher grades the final drafts of the first essays and returns them to the students.
 - Teacher gives a mid-study survey to see what students think about the process of giving and receiving feedback.
 - Teacher reviews and discusses the survey with the students to ensure accuracy of the common language.
 - Students are instructed on the second essay and review format and requirements of the second essay as per Chapter 6 in *Patterns for a Purpose*. (Narrative)
 - Teacher gives a mini-lesson on quality narratives and allows students to practice using model texts.
- **Week 7**
 - Students create introduction of the second essay and post to Google Doc.

- Each student provides feedback to a peer via the Google Doc and tracks their feedback given via the Feedback Reflection Chart (Process Memo).
- Teacher reviews the feedback given by the students to their peers in a classroom discussion using the Feedback Reflection Chart (Process Memo).
- Students make changes to the introduction of their second essay and track their changes on their Feedback Charts (Process Memo).
- **Week 8**
 - Students create body paragraphs of the second essay and post to Google Doc.
 - Teacher provides feedback to students on the body paragraphs.
 - Teacher reviews the feedback given with the students in a classroom discussion.
 - Students are to write a Dear Reader Letter to address the reader to focus on elements of the writing that the writer is still concerned about so that the writer receives more specific feedback. This will be done in small groups.
 - Students have a share session prompted by the Dear Reader Letter.
 - Students write a one-page revision plan to prompt reflection of what they have learned as a result of the feedback given in the Dear Reader Letter and how they plan to use it.
 - Students make changes to the body paragraphs of their second essay and track their changes on their Feedback Charts (Process Memo).
- **Week 9**
 - Students create the conclusion of their second essay and post to Google Doc.
 - Each student provides feedback to a peer via the Google Doc and tracks their feedback given via the Feedback Reflection Chart (Process Memo).
 - Teacher reviews the feedback given by the students to their peers in a classroom discussion using the Feedback Reflection Chart.
 - Students make changes to the conclusion of their second essay and track their changes on their Feedback Charts (Process Memo).

- Students review and make final changes to their paper and submit the second essay to be graded according to the assigned rubric.
- **Week 10**
 - Teacher grades the final drafts of the second essays and returns them to the students.
 - Teacher leads a discussion on students' perceptions, emotions and experiences with feedback now having completed the study.

Data Gathering Methods

Student Surveys

Prior to commencing and mid way through the study pertaining to using feedback during the writing process to motivate revision, students were asked to complete an anonymous survey (Appendix A, section i) used to gauge their perceptions, emotions and experiences pertaining to feedback given during the writing process. The survey students asked questions pertaining to their prior experiences with feedback during the writing process in any class in which a teacher has used feedback as a means of formative assessment. This survey allowed them to answer the questions through a likert scale system, so as to not receive answers that may be too vague.

Additionally, mid way through the study, students were given a Mid-Study Survey (Appendix A, section ii). The Mid-Study Survey focused on the perceptions and opinions of students as they participated in the study and how they felt about the feedback given, and more specifically, how they perceived themselves as writers now having gone through the first part of the study.

Checklist Check-Ins

Various Checklist Check-Ins (Appendix B) were used as a means of formative assessment throughout the study. These Checklist Check-Ins were used after each minilesson to gauge student performance. The first minilesson was on Creating Engaging Leads where students were given a Checklist Check-In (Appendix B, section i), to determine whether or not they understood the components of an engaging lead. The second minilesson was on Show, Not Tell where students were given a Checklist Check-In (Appendix B, section ii), to determine whether or not they could use figurative and descriptive language in their writing. The third minilesson was about the aspects of a quality narrative where students were given a Checklist Check-In (Appendix B, section iii), to determine whether or not they understood the components of a quality narrative.

Student Artifacts

Students were asked to create a writing sample in which they illustrate their current level of writing skills used as a baseline for what type of mini-lessons would be needed throughout the study.

In addition, throughout the course of the study, students were prompted to write two essays in which were used as a means of showing a development of skills and increase of motivation to revise as a result of the feedback loop and mini-lessons over the course of the study. Each essay was drafted in the same manner, in sections (introduction, body, and conclusion), and given peer and

teacher feedback via Google Classroom in order to improve each section before moving on to the next sections where students would finalize any changes and turn in a final draft of each paper to be graded. Furthermore, two rubrics (Appendix C) were used in which to grade the level of performance of each essay so as to be able to compare and contrast if students made any gains over the course of the study in terms of their writing skill. The first essay was the Descriptive Essay where students were to describe an object or an event using descriptive details and figurative language and this was graded using a rubric (Appendix C, section i). The second essay was the Narrative Essay where students were to use descriptive details and figurative language to tell a story and this was graded using a rubric (Appendix C, section ii).

In order to keep track of the feedback students give and receive, students were required to use a Feedback Chart (Appendix D, section i) created in order to keep track of the changes students made so as to help them become more aware of their growth throughout the process. Students used this feedback chart while revising their writing so as to help them keep track of suggested changes prompted by the feedback loop. In addition, the use of this feedback chart prompted the students to understand that change does not mean improvement. Students were prompted in this chart to reflect upon the changes made to their essays with respect to the expectations outlined in the rubrics.

Not only did students keep track of the feedback they were given and the changes that were made as a result of using the feedback, students were prompted to use a Feedback Reflection Chart (Appendix D, section ii) in which they were to reflect on how their ability to give feedback progressed over the course of the study. They were asked to focus on what type of feedback they gave and how it was useful to helping a peer make changes that will prompt improvement as per the expectations outlined in the rubrics.

Participant Observations

During the times in which students were prompted to make changes on drafts of the essays, a double entry journal was kept noting what was observed while at the same time attempting to gather how students were using the feedback chart to track their performance as well as their level of engagement and motivation to complete the work, given that if students were more motivated, desire to revise and develop writing will be present.

Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness, accuracy, and validity of my study, I have followed certain ethical guidelines. The appropriate consents were granted as it pertained to my study so as to ensure the protection of all student participants: Moravian College's Human Subjects Internal Review Board (Appendix E, section i), my building administrator (Appendix E, section ii), and lastly, parents/guardians (Appendix E, section iii) and students participants (Appendix E,

section iii) signed a consent/assent form to acknowledge student participation in the study. The consent forms acknowledged that all students had the opportunity to participate or not participate in the study. Additionally, the consent forms outlined that any student wishing to withdraw from the study could do so at any time without penalty. Any important contact information for myself, my principal, and my professor also appeared on the consent forms to allow students or parents/guardians the opportunity to seek further information if necessary. Furthermore, in order to ensure ethical guidelines were met, pseudonyms were assigned (Hendricks, 2009) and all written data was stored on my personal password-protected computer where only I had access. Any student work collected that I kept, as hard copies for my data collection during the study, were stored in my classroom in a locked closet until the completion of the study, wherein all hardcopies of the work were destroyed.

Before beginning my study, to ensure the validity of research, I engaged in reflecting on any possible biases held as the researcher (Hendricks). It would not be ethical of me to assume that my students harbored the same sentiments of writing and learning that I had coming into my study. Learning is a wonderful and important opportunity and it should be readily enjoyed. Also, having a diligent work ethic is a key element to achieving success within any learning environment. This was imperative to acknowledge prior to the beginning of my study so that I could be aware and address the biases through my study as needed

for they may have affected the choices I made throughout the study. This also helped me as a researcher when having discussions with my peers in peer debriefing sessions for I was able to acknowledge their opinions in juxtaposition with my own. In addition, I also made sure that my students were aware of the research being conducted so that they understood the purpose and goals of the study.

As per trustworthiness strategies, I used data triangulation in order to ensure the validity of my research through crosschecks of data (Hendricks, 2009). Whether I was involved as a participant or non-participant observer throughout my study, I collected multiple data sources so as to engage in prolonged observation so as to gather sufficient data to enhance the analysis of my research (Hendricks). First, I used student artifacts created over the course of the study in the form of essays, feedback charts, and checklist check-ins. The student artifacts allowed for me to have formative assessment with which to compare to the observational data I was collecting in order to analyze for any patterns or themes that would emerge as a result of my study. In a like manner, observational data was collected by double entry journals and member check ins with participants (participant feedback) to ensure that my observations and interpretations of student work, feelings, and opinions were valid and accurate by speaking with students to whom I observed directly (Hendricks). Lastly, inquiry data from surveys and group discussions that answered questions pertaining to their

opinions, feelings and experiences with feedback during the writing process were collected. The inquiry surveys were given at two times during the study (before and during) so as to be able to analyze for changes in the perceptions of the students beliefs, opinions, or feelings throughout the course of the study. I used low inference descriptors when having whole class discussions during the study to review feedback given. I kept a running record of all comments that students make during this time so as to enhance my observations and analysis of the study.

For the benefit of my readers, I have provided a thick description of the participants, setting, and methods used throughout my study to be able to ascertain its effectiveness for a general or more personal use. Additionally, throughout my study, I engaged in multiple peer debriefing sessions (Hendricks, 2009) where I discussed my research and analysis of research with colleagues and other peers. These discussions had numerous benefits to my study for they helped me refine and build my own interpretations through a different perspective. At this time, I was able to discover any negative case analysis that was present within my study so as to provide my reader with the utmost of accurate representation given the context and background of my study. Lastly, throughout my study, I presented any findings of my research with my colleagues so as to be able to engage in reflect continually throughout my study to maintain ethical, valid, and accurate research (Hendricks, 2009). Through continual reflection prompted largely in part to these discussions I was able to identify the effectiveness of my

interventions and methods of data collection so as to be able to make any essential modifications to my study so as to collect the most accurate data.

My Story

You're Using Us for Your Homework?

As the students were filtering into the room, they noticed the different arrangement of the desks, as the desks were situated in a square rather than in small groups scattered around the room. Right away, they became curious as to why the desks were in a large square. Upon the ringing of the bell, students began with the barrage of questions:

“Why are we all facing each other?”

“This is strange, why are we sitting like this?”

“Why did you put the desks like this? I don’t like it.”

Soaking up every ounce of the inquisitiveness, I explained, “Well, we are going to have an awesome discussion today about something that I am really excited about!”

“Wait, do you mean we are going to be excited or is this your definition of excited?” inquired Peter.

Chuckling, “What do you mean my definition of excited?”

“Well some teachers always say that we are going to have fun or like something that we are going to be doing, but usually that’s not the case,” Peter commented.

“Oh, I see,” I replied, “I think you’re going to be excited too. You’ll see.”

“Okay...let’s do it!” Peter exclaimed.

After this initial conversation with Peter, the students in the room began to imperceptibly shift in their seats, almost as if they were trying to hide their curiosity.

“Let’s do it! Here is what I want to know. I want to know what you guys think about writing. I want to know what experiences you have had with writing up until now, and how you feel about those experiences. I want your opinions.

“What do you mean you want our opinions?” question Peter from the side of the classroom.

“Just that! I want to know how you feel and what you think about your experiences with writing,” I excitedly responded.

“You mean you care about what we have to say?” he replied, quite bewildered.

At this point in time, some of the other students began to realize where he was going with this question. They soon began to stop their chatter to listen for my response.

“Of course I do,” I replied.

“Wow, no other teacher has really ever cared about what we thought before,” offered Peter.

“Well that’s about to change right now!”

“How?” some of the other students simultaneously questioned.

“Well, I want to know what you guys think about writing and more specifically about what has helped or frustrated you when writing so that I can modify how I teach writing to help you to be successful. I am going to try something new with you guys for my Master’s Thesis that I have been working on.”

“What’s a Master’s Thesis?” Jill questioned.

“Well, as a teacher, I want to be the best that I can be at what I do. So that means that I am going to conduct a study where I try to use the best teaching methods to help motivate you guys to want to create and revise your writing.”

“So you mean it’s like a project or something,” Jill added.

“Exactly, it’s like homework. Just like you are a student, I am a student and I have homework just like you guys.”

Flabbergasted, Jill replied, “So you trust us and like us enough to use us for your homework?”

Smiling, I acknowledged, “Of course, why wouldn’t I?”

“I’m just saying, that’s huge. That’s pretty cool.”

“We must be her favorite,” chimed Peter.

“Of course!” I replied with a wink.

I then began firing out questions to which students eagerly and honestly replied (see Figure 4.1).

Do you think you are a good writer? Why?

Kate: "Yea. It depends on the topic though. I have to either choose it or see a connection to it."

Max: "Eh. It's time consuming, so there has to be a point, it has to have meaning. I'm good then."

Do you think you are a bad writer? Why?

Peter: "I'm not creative, so yea."

Ally: "When I have to write a narrative, I'm a bad writer because I'm not good at using details."

Peter: "I procrastinate a lot. So I rush to get things done."

Ally: "I have terrible time management skills."

What has been helpful to you in terms of how a teacher has taught writing?

Max: "When a teacher published my work."

Jill: "When the teacher is receptive and will help you fix it."

Ally: "When a teacher provides examples of how to write."

What has been least helpful to you in terms of how a teacher has taught writing?

Donald: "When teachers are full of pride and are too stuck in their ways, they can't accept change."

Max: "When a teacher does not help you. Or when there is a lack of communication or respect."

Figure 4.1: Student responses to our discussion about writing.

As kids were answering the questions, I jotted down notes with their responses. Using their responses helped me to ask more specific questions to students in which I was able to get more detailed answers. What interested me most in the conversation was that overall, a majority of students responded that they liked when a teacher helped them with what they could be better at or what they didn't understand. I used this comment as a way to transition into introducing my study. I explained, "Just like you like help to become better, I like it too. I need your help to become a better teacher. Just like you, I need your help and feedback to be able to become better at teaching writing. Teaching writing is

challenging given that all students have a different voice and a story to tell. Help me encourage you to reveal your stories.”

“Are you sure you want our help to do this?” questioned Peter. “I’m really not creative.”

“Yes, Peter, I’m sure. And I would like to think that you are. Just give it some time. I think you are going to surprise yourself. I think you are all going to surprise yourselves.”

“Okay, let’s do it!” Peter exclaimed. “What do we do first?”

As I began to pass out the pre-study survey (Appendix A, section i) I heard the chattering of students that sounded like bees in a beehive. They seemed to be really excited to help me. I was certainly ready and quite elated that they were on board with helping me. As I described to them how to complete the pre-study survey, I eagerly walked around the room watching them as they attentively answered the survey questions. Yet, I thought to myself, ‘how am I going to convince students like Peter and Jill that I believe in them?’ As students were handing in the surveys, the bell rang.

Filing out of the room, Peter exclaimed, “Have a good day, Ms. Teeling!”

“You too, Peter!” I replied. I certainly was excited and eager to read through the responses on the pre-study survey.

Later that day, when I sat down to sift through the surveys, I discovered something enlightening. The purpose of the survey was to provide insight into the

attitudes, beliefs, and experiences students had with feedback on their schoolwork. Students were willing and optimistic to receive feedback. They were positive in thinking that feedback would help them to improve their work versus making them feel incompetent. They also do not receive as much feedback as they would like from their teachers, nor do they get time in class to use the feedback to the extent that they would like to use it. Knowing what I had planned to do throughout the course of my study, I became hopeful, believing that my stars aligned and as fate would have it, what I planned to do seemed like it would be a good fit. I felt that I had everything that I needed in this moment, and that the world was mine. I was ready to conquer my study.

If a Food Could Be My Voice...I'd Sound Like...

To spark the intensity of my students' voices like Peter and Jill, to convince and reinforce to them that I do care about what they have to say, I decided to complete a mini-lesson on how powerful our voices can be, if we only take the time to express them. When deciding which model text to use, I had to be careful because I wanted to use something that the students could resonate with, but at the same time, something that showed intensity and passion. I decided to use a speech by Frederick Douglass that he addressed on the Fourth of July in 1852. The excerpt of the speech chosen illustrated Douglass' command of using descriptive and vivid language to convey his emotions. His use of figurative language to express how Blacks should be able to be free and enjoy the country's

independence just as equally as the Whites allows for a reader to not only visualize his words, but also feel them. This was important for my students to understand and experience given that when it comes to using their voices, they are novices.

Upon my reading of the speech once out loud and then again silently to themselves, I began to ask students to consider what they liked about the speech. As students started to become engaged in conversations with their peers, I expressed to students that we were going to discuss as a class what we liked about the speech. Students were encouraged to write their responses on the collaborative group document that all students had access to (see Figure 4.2)

- **Patty and Traci:** We liked the author's figurative language, his very descriptive point of view, and the first sentence because there was a plot twist within the sentence. In addition, his bold language stood out against the harsh realization to his words.
- **Addison and Ina:** We liked the word variety and vocabulary, and the last sentence "I do not hesitate to declare with all my soul that the character and conduct of this nation as never looked blacker to me than on this Fourth of July." We enjoyed how his passion showed within his writing.
- **Naomi and Kelly:** We like how he seemed to speak right to the readers in addressing his stance on American Slavery. His description of the suffering the slaves endure, even on a holiday of celebration, really forces one to realize the reality of the situation. Especially his use of powerful word choice such as 'tumultuous,' 'mournful,' and 'grievous.' This also includes his figurative language in his interpretation of their chains that they were burdened with metaphorically and literally.
- **Taylor, Courtney, & Kristina:** We like how he is so passionate about the plight among the Black slaves. Since he was once a slave, he obviously feels this issue on a personal level. The use of powerful metaphors and descriptive words helps us connect with him about the subject.

Figure 4.2: Student responses to what they liked about Douglass' Speech

It became quite evident that most students enjoyed the use of word choice, figurative language, and emotion that Douglass employed to convey his message. Upon collectively synthesizing the student responses, I transitioned into the idea that usually what we like about a piece of writing is directly related to the voice an author uses to convey his message. In particular, with Douglass it became evident that he was writing from the heart. I took a moment to then relay to my students that this is why voice is so important. Voice allows for the words on a page to transcend the mind and enter deep into the reader's emotional core.

I wanted then to be able to truly connect with my students in this vulnerable moment. So I read the words of one of the greats, Tom Romano (2004) to them so as to stress what voice really is: "Voice—the sense we have while reading that someone occupies the middle of our mind, filling the space with the sound of a voice, the sense we have while writing that something is whispering in our ear" (p. 6). Silence. As I finished reading the last word, I looked around the room and students seemed to be in a trance of some sort almost as if the words of Romano spoke to them, calming them, soothing them.

"So what do you think?" I quietly questioned, breaking the silence.

"That it sounds great, but I can't do that," Peter stated dubiously.

"Sure you can, it just takes time," I confidently expressed. "Let's do this."

How about you guys define what voice means to you, and we will go from there!"

Students collaboratively resumed working on the shared document where we were previously working with the words of Frederick Douglass to contribute what their definitions of voice were: *James: I think voice is the story being told from the author's point of view and expressing their thoughts and feelings.* *Peter: How someone puts what they are thinking into their own words and shows their feelings.* *Donald: How the author writes his or her story.* *Ally: What YOU think or believe about something.* Making a collective agreement, that voice is unique, students seemed to become a little more comfortable with the idea of what voice in writing really is.

Peter even offered to end the discussion, “So we get to sound like us.”

“Exactly!” I responded quite ecstatically.

The next morning, students seemed eager to begin writing. Not wanting the excitement to diminish, I ran with it and decided to postpone students completing an activity to have them recognize their writers’ voices and instead, have students write a sample piece of writing so as to provide a baseline check. Given that we were going to focus on descriptive writing specifically, I wanted students to just tell me a story. As I began to pass out paper I bellowed, “Alright guys. Tell me a story!”

“What do you mean, tell you a story?” Ally questioned.

“Just that. Tell me a story,” I repeated.

“How long is it supposed to be?” added Peter.

“That’s up to you. I just want to see what you think a story is. So all you have to do is write a story. Tell me a story.”

Walking around, I heard students making side comments: “I am not good at writing stories;” “I’m not creative;” “I don’t have any good ideas;” “Just tell me what to write;” “My teachers always give me bad grades on anything I write;” “I always wait until the last minute to write anything because I hate it;” “Ooh, I love writing stories;” and “My friends tell me that I am a good writer, this should be fun,” I had to try to keep my laughter hidden. Students constantly wanted to be told exactly what to do and how to specifically complete a task. However, that was directly opposite of what I wanted for my students.

As students began writing, I became increasingly excited to work with students on the activity I had planned for them during our next session. Despite some of the befuddled faces at the lack of the minimal directions for that day’s task, most students diligently and intently wrote for the entire period. I’m glad that I took this moment to allow time for them to just write. Allowing for them to experience a moment where they could embrace the awkwardness of minimal directions and simply just make their own choices hopefully made them start to realize how what they are going to be doing throughout the study would largely depend upon what they felt and believed.

When students entered the classroom the next morning, I excitedly began to relay, “Hey guys! Today, you are going to figure out what kind of voice you

have. It may be a little silly, but give it a chance because in order for you to get better at using your voice in your writing, you have to deliberately practice it, and that is just what we are going to do today. You are going to create a Writer's Voice Toolbox that will help you to discover just what kind of voice you have.”

“What do you mean?” chimed Peter.

“Well, there are a few different ways you are going to explore your voice. One is by choosing three foods that you think represent your voice.”

“Food? How can food do that?”

“Soup makes everyone feel better, right? Well I would say soup defines my voice because I have a way of making people feel better when I talk.”

“Ooh, so like I can be a hot tamale because I can be rather spicy at times!” eagerly contributed Olive.

“Exactly! We all have unique voices. I want you guys to begin thinking about how you sound, and I don’t mean literally, I mean in the sense of how you say things in order to communicate with others.”

“Kinda like the way an author communicates with the reader?” questioned Max.

“Yes! Now you are getting it!”

Students were very enthusiastic to complete the assignment. What I noticed most of all about the assignments was that students were very honest in choosing images and words that described who they really were. Students were

able to represent their voices in such a way that allowed for me to see who they were as people and writers. Some choices were very bold, while others were clever and creative. This toolbox could become a resource for students and myself who were going to be revising the writing of their peers.

Tone and Mood...What's the Difference?

Entering into the second week of the study, I wanted to keep the excitement high. Coming off of the week about voice, I knew that students were finally starting to see where we were going, but we still had some things to do before we began writing their first story. When I reviewed the writing samples that they wrote during the first week of the study, I noticed that students were struggling with the following concepts: organization, use of figurative language, adding dialogue, use of details (show versus tell), and description of emotions/setting (tone and mood). Given that the description essay was the first story students were going to write, I decided that it was important that students be able to understand how to use their voices in the sense of establishing the tone and mood of their stories.

I opened class in such a way that made me feel like I was an actor reciting a soliloquy: “Voice is like Sherman Alexie: the best kids’ books are written in blood. Voice is like Tom Romano: trust the gush. Deliberately practicing your voice is like riding your bike for the first time without training wheels or testing your parents’ boundaries by breaking rules...you have to do it to discover who

you are. You are the makers of meaning. Put yourself into a time where you felt the emotion...how can you say it in such a way as to make your reader feel it.”

“I think I’m finally getting what you’re saying. I really see it now,” Ally added, breaking the silence.

“Great, because we are going to isolate our emotions today and try to figure out the difference between tone and mood.” Students were to choose an emotion to convey in a paragraph. They were not allowed to use the emotion or any synonym in the paragraph. To do this, students had to heavily rely on their tone, word choice, and language to be able to convey the desired emotion or mood to the readers.

Students were able to view a model text that I wrote as an example. The emotion being conveyed in the description was *nervous*. The tone being used to describe the emotion was *anxious*. As students finished reading the example silently at their seats, we then discussed what made the example a good paragraph. Students then wrote their own paragraphs to eventually share with the class. Classmates had to guess the emotions of the author, and explain how and why they knew the certain emotion being described. We focused on what they author did well at captivating the particular emotion of choice.

“Tone and mood seem really similar, how can we tell them apart?”
inquired Bert.

“The difference between tone and mood is that tone is how you want to say it and mood is how you want your readers to feel,” I responded.

Even though some students were nodding their heads, Bert still seemed bewildered. “Tone is delivery. For instance, tone is like how a motivational speaker delivers his speech. He is not going to use a monotone tone or a subdued tone. His listeners will not be enticed to listen or be inspired to change. How should the motivational speaker deliver his speech?

“Energetic, enthusiastic, inspirational,” were a few I heard over the various responses offered.

“Right. Great job. So, how would someone deliver the news of the death of a goldfish to his friend?”

“Somber, sorrow, sadness,” again, were responses that stood out.

“Right again. How about getting takeout food delivered? If the delivery driver is polite or rude, that may affect how we feel about the process of getting takeout food.”

After providing these few real world scenarios, students began to understand how one’s tone affects the mood of the reader/audience. We were then able to discuss how tone changes given the purpose and audience. The light bulb went off in my students’ heads!

As students worked on writing their paragraphs, I walked around the room to see what students were creating. There were a few students who I decided to

work with in order to be able to use them as an example when it came time to share out to the class. I read Addison's paragraph and asked her if she was trying to convey self-disappointment (see Figure 4.3). Her response was, "Kinda, I'm actually combining anger and self-disappointment."

I slammed my hand into the touchpad with all the strength I had left. My arms felt as though they were going to fall off, my head rose above the water. I gasped for air and looked up at the clock. My heart sunk. I felt as though the weight of the world had come crashing down on my shoulders. Three years of work wasted, washed down the drain as though they had done nothing for me at all. All I wanted to do was go under 2:10 in my 200 free. I fought back hot tears as the realization of crippling failure rolled over me. Three years. Three years. All I could think was "maybe if I tried harder," "Maybe if I had relaxed, or stressed over something else" "Maybe if Shawn never died." And that was it. Ever since Shawn had left there was only a few occasions I had gotten faster. But I swore it would be different this year, however some things never seem to change. Maybe the swimmer I thought I could be was not me at all.

Figure 4.3: Addison's Emotion Paragraph

I asked her if I could use her paragraph as an example to help the class distinguish the difference between tone and mood. She was describing self-disappointment, but her tone was angry. This would be a perfect example to help the students understand the difference between tone and mood because there is a difference between how something is said and how it is described.

I used Addison's paragraph as an example to stress to the class that tone and mood must go hand in hand for it to have the desired effect on the reader. As her paragraph was read out loud, the class was able to pick up on the fact that Addison sounded angry but was feeling self-disappointment. I posed the question, "Could someone use a pleased tone to express self-disappointment?" The class unanimously answered that it would not be conveyed properly and it

would be quite confusing if someone decided to sound satisfied, while describing being disappointed.

I decided to additionally ask Courtney if I could use her paragraph as an example as well (see Figure 4.4).

The skin all around my face turns bright red and feels about 104 degrees. I stutter as I read my book report to the class.
“Th-The Ma-Main Characters A-Are uh..” I stumble and forget what I was saying.
In the distance, I can hear the obnoxious laughter of my classmates as they say, “She’s so stupid! She can’t even read! HAHA!”
I close my eyes to try to get the noise out of my head. When I open them, I feel wetness surround my eyes. Soon after, a tear trickles down my face. This causes more laughter and remarks from everyone around me. I race back to my seat and put my head down on my desk in an attempt to hide from everything. I just wish this day was over already.

Figure 4.4: Courtney’s Emotion Paragraph

I remembered that as I was walking around the room, I suggested to Courtney to add some dialogue to her paragraph to see if that would better help her emotion of embarrassment be fully conveyed to the reader. She did decide to add dialogue and it more intensely illustrated her emotion. I wanted my students to be able to see how by using even a minor addition or deduction the entire meaning of a paragraph could change. I asked her to read her paragraph with dialogue, then without. We then had a discussion about how her dialogue added to the emphasis of her emotion in such a way that helped her to reinforce her tone as well as convey the mood effectively.

As other students volunteered to read out loud, I decided to take a moment at the end of class to commend those who volunteered. I took a moment to

discuss the benefits of sharing saying that we can learn from the writings of our peers. When we share, we are not only giving more meaning to our words, but that others are provided with the opportunity to find meaning in those words. I further shared that our voices have an impact on those we communicate with. That we can make someone's day simply by saying, I love you, or make someone sad simply by saying, I hate you. Whether written or spoken our words have a profound effect on the people who read or listen to them. Sharing is a big step, and an important step. Students seemed to agree and appreciate the positive comment and impact that they have on others.

When Are We Going to Write?

Even though it seemed like my study was well underway, I felt frustrated at the fact that my study focused on using a feedback loop to motivate students to revise their writing, but we were three weeks into the study and we were not even ready to write the first essay. As I reflected on how I was implementing my study, I realized that even though we did not write yet, students were still getting what they needed. In order for students to be motivated to want to write, the feeling of empowerment had to be a present force fueling their desires. Through the various mini lessons used to inspire students to discover their voices and acknowledge the power their voices have students gained the empowerment and self-confidence essential for creating compelling writing.

“When are we going to start writing?” eagerly questioned Kate.

“Soon, Kate.”

“Yea, we want to start writing,” sang a multitude of voices.

“Wow! I love the enthusiasm and motivation that you guys have right now. You guys have done such great work so far, but there is still a few more things we need to do before we write so that you guys feel confident and have the skills to be successful.”

As always, the voice of contagious enthusiasm bellowed, “Wow, you really want us to do well, don’t you?” asked Peter.

“Of course.”

“Alright then, what’s next?” Peter responded.

Now that the foundation was established, it became apparent that students were eager and excited to want to write. Using such scaffolding to promote student interest, confidence, and success had allowed for my students to realize my genuine interest in wanting to help them, and in return, they have shown that they want to help me. This act of reciprocation truly made me realize how students enjoy having choices and a voice in their learning experiences.

The Power of Listening

As students entered the classroom during the fourth week of the study, excitement was high. Students were truly eager to want to write, but first, we had to discover the qualities of effective feedback so that when students were to

provide feedback to their peers, they would feel confident and qualified to do so. Given the pre-study survey (Appendix A, section i), I knew that students enjoyed getting feedback, but given our discussion about how to give feedback, I knew that they were slightly hesitant in their abilities to provide feedback for lack of knowing how or what to provide feedback on when reviewing peer writing. Pondering this discovery, I questioned why these sentiments of my students existed. I realized that students needed to realize the purpose of feedback and how to give quality feedback to their peers during the writing process. In addition, students needed to understand the elements of the particular genre of writing so that they could therein provide quality feedback to help each other revise their essays in terms of the expected elements essential to that specific essay.

So today, students were to begin analyzing the qualities of effective feedback. Students were asked to revisit an assignment that they had completed earlier in the year. To assess where students were currently performing in terms of interacting with text using annotating, I assigned students to read “The Cask of Amontillado” by Edgar Allan Poe and while reading, students had to make annotations. I provided feedback on these annotations in order to help students begin to analyze the qualities of effective feedback.

For this particular lesson today, students were to revisit the annotations they made, more specifically, the annotations that I left feedback on. Students

were to view the feedback given and choose two annotations to which I left feedback and then enter the feedback into the collaborative document that I was using to compile the feedback examples (see Figure 4.5).

Name	Annotation	Feedback
Jax	At this point he is planning to give Fortunato some more wine to get him a little more drunk so he has the opportunity to get the revenge he has been waiting for.	What do you think about this?
Jax	This is giving me the feeling that he brought him into the basement and buried him alive under the human remains	What do you think of this action? What does this reveal about Montresor?
Donald	Generally a strong man gains much power in a society because no one lesser than him will want to oppose him.	Good point.
Donald	I think it's clever how reverse, physiology is being used to make Fortunato think that he'll be weak if he didn't go to the cellar.	Yes! What does that tell you about Montresor?
Jill	So am i	Why? What makes you this way?
Jill	this is a fake friend or person in which everyone hates	Interesting connection. What do you mean by this?
Peter	What has fortunato done to Montresor that so horrible to make him deserve a death like this	What do you think? Reread the intro and take a guess!
Ally	He is being very smart about how he is going to get back at him and not just reacting to the situation right away.	Good point.
Ally	I hate this feeling, because when I first step into pure darkness, my eyes feel odd and I start seeing almost static, like on a TV. But then your eyes fully convert and you see absolutely nothing, like a black hole	Interesting connection. You could develop this further to elaborate on how the author develops the plot to illustrate a theme.
James	Yeah thinking about killing him. It's sad how he is really going through with this without any signs of him wanting to do it.	Haha. Good job picking up on the irony.
James	He should be uncertain i mean he is basically walking himself to his grave, and he doesn't even know it yet. It is sad how Montresor still has to put on this two face personality to kill him instead of just manning up and murdering him or poisoning him.	Interesting perspective you take here.

Figure 4.5: Student Annotations and Teacher Feedback

Once students were finished, I had them work with a partner to complete a think-pair-share. In this think-pair-share, students had to analyze the qualities of the feedback given, looking for patterns or themes that described the feedback. After giving students time to discuss with partners, we had a whole class discussion about what the pairs discovered. Just from viewing the document as students were working, it became apparent that students were able to differentiate among the various qualities that determine effective feedback. Students began to share that the feedback given was vague, positive, too short, lacked direction, and negative. While students were sharing these qualities with the class, others who were listening were offering, “Yea,” “I agree,” or “I noticed that too,” as responses.

Donald even posed the question, “Why does feedback always have to be questions?”

Where Jax offered the response, “It can just be a comment.” “Questions can help form new ideas or details,” stated Jill. “Yes, exactly. Questions can prompt further thinking to prompt change and statements can also help to prompt change.”

When focusing more specifically on the feedback given when discussing what about the feedback is positive but vague Peter offered an interesting statement about the feedback of “Good job,” stating that “Good job is positive but vague.”

I responded, “Oh really? What makes you say that?”

He replied, “Well even though it was positive, it did not really tell me much. If I saw feedback like that, I honestly would not do anything with it. I would think that you thought it was good and that since you are giving me a grade I would leave it alone. But, it does not help me because it does not tell me what I did good so that I could do it again.”

After being amazed and most likely appearing to my students that with his comment I became frozen, I smiled and happily responded, “Yea! You’ve got it! You’re so right! Thank you for being honest!”

This was yet another awesome moment that occurred in my study as a result of having a class discussion. Peter was one of the first students to be honest about the quality of my feedback. Most students usually hesitated at first when asked to critique my work, yet he boldly chimed his response into the discussion.

In general, most students appeared to take a sigh of relief after they saw how happy I was, contemplating for a moment that I might reprimand him for speaking to me that way. This truly was a moment that embodied how well students could learn from each other and not just from me!

Curious, knowing that we were going to complete another lesson just like this one to show the difference between types of feedback, we began to discuss the effectiveness of the chart used to collect the feedback.

“So what do you guys think of this chart? If you are going to use this chart as a resource to help remind you what quality feedback is, would this chart be effective as it is?”

“Well, we had the discussion, but how are we going to remember what we discussed?” asked Anna.

“Good question,” I replied.

“Well, why don’t you add another column where we put our responses about the feedback,” suggested Peter.

“Yea, I like that idea,” agreed Jill.

“Me too...done!”

“What do you mean, done?” Peter inquired.

“Just that. I will change it for next time. I liked the idea. It makes sense.”

“So just like that you are going to listen to us?” Peter questioned dubiously.

“Yea, kiddo.”

“Wow, you really do want to hear what we have to say, and you actually care by actually doing it,” stated Peter.

For a moment I sat there in awe. It baffled me that students have been robbed of opportunities such as these. This very moment ignited within me the drive and motivation I needed to keep going forward with my study. I was

providing students with a foreign platform to which they were full-heartedly embracing only because I listened.

That Wouldn't Sound Like Me

To again assess where students were currently performing in terms of understanding the effectiveness of quality feedback, I designed another lesson where students would complete the same activity they completed prior with the annotations they made to the story, "Cask of Amontillado." This time, they would be using writing that was more personal to them, because in order to best motivate students to revise Georgia Heard (2014), a leader in the field of teaching writing, shares that when students care about a piece of writing and find a personal connection with it they are more inclined to want to revise.

I decided to use their baseline writing assessment that they completed earlier in the study. The only directions they were given in order to complete this was "Tell me a story." Most students wrote creative stories that they were excited to pen to paper. Therefore, I thought that by using these stories to help them ascertain the qualities of effective feedback, they would be more motivated to do so given that they would be using their own writing. In addition, given the feedback from my students in the previous lesson, I altered the chart to better help them use the chart as a resource later on if they need to see examples or refresh their memories as to what quality, effective feedback looks like. This time, they

were to copy down in the collaborative chart (see Figure 4.6) the feedback, as well as to what extent the feedback was helpful or not helpful and why.

Name	Feedback 1	Helpful/ Not Helpful	Feedback 2	Helpful/Not Helpful
James	Show, not tell, use figurative language	Helpful, because it helps me see that I don't show much fig lang	Show, not tell- maybe describe the mood, like we did the emotion activity	Helpful, see other one
Anna	Very vivid imagery. I like how you can describe what you want your reader to see.	Helpful, because it tells me what I did good so I can do it again.	Can you further develop this moment through description versus inner thoughts? Think about the emotion activity we did. How can you set the mood here by describing the emotion the narrator is feeling?	Helpful, because it is very specific and gives me an alternative that can help me.
Peter	show,, not tell- do you remember when we isolated an emotion and described it? Try doing that here	Helpful it allows me to work towards a specific direction with my detailing not just saying more detail	I like how you convey the extent of how tired you are using the detail about eyelashes	Helpful it explained why you thought it was a good detail
Sam	Why? Maybe develop using a small side story.	Helpful/ This helped because the feedback is helping me make my story better by making a side story.	Your use of figurative language dialogue here helps reinforce your tone.	Helpful/ This helped me because the feedback says how i'm using good dialogue.
Donald	Awesome phrase! It helps add to your description to your character.	Helpful because it gave me a sense of self confidence.	Could you enhance this interaction by adding dialogue	Helpful/ This response allows me to improve my writing.
Jax	Could you add the dialogue here to emphasize at a deeper level this character's voice/passion for what he does?	It's helpful because it told me what I need to add.	Could you help your reader visualize this by describing the scene?	This is helpful because it tells me what I need to add to the story to make it more descriptive.

Figure 4.6: Teacher Feedback on Student Baseline Writing Samples

Students right away began to notice the vast difference of the quality of feedback given versus that on the “Cask of Amontillado” assignment. I heard

them chatting as they were entering their feedback into the chart, “This feedback is so detailed,” or “It tells me what I can do to get better.” After students finished putting their responses into the chart, we had a whole group discussion about the differences between the types of feedback given on this assignment versus the last. Students were able to offer the following characteristics of the new feedback, “positive reinforcement of what was done well,” “clear,” “specific,” “gives direction on what needs to be developed,” “provides a resource,” “motivates change in a useful or helpful manner,” and “suggestive/not forceful.”

When asking what they noticed most about the feedback, students picked up on the use of the word “could” or “maybe.” When we discussed this students offered that I phrased the feedback as such because they had the final decision on what changes to make to their writing. I then posed the question, “Well what if I were to cross out a sentence that you wrote and rewrote it with a new sentence?”

Peter responded, “But then that would not be my words and it most likely would not sound like me either.”

The class began to chime in a unanimous, “Yea, you’re right.”

Jill even offered, “I wouldn’t like that.”

I then took the opportunity to address the class and reinforce the idea that we are here to help each other revise our own writing to ensure that we are saying what we want to say, how we want to say it as effectively as we can to ensure that our readers will benefit most from what we have to say. This conversation

revealed to my students that I can't write for them or tell them what to write. It also illustrated to them that when we share our thoughts with others, it makes what we think and feel more real to the world in which we live. It reinforces that voices are heard and that others have the responsibility to act or not act in terms of what we have to offer. This experience created the opportunity for my students to see that what they have to say is important, as well as who they are is important, because other people took the time to listen.

Lastly, as I began to transition into the idea that students could be entrusted with providing feedback to their peers, hence why we were spending time on analyzing the qualities of effective feedback, Ally offered, "I'm scared. I don't know when to comment."

I replied, "It's no different than your annotations when you read and you picture something. When you're confused and you ask a question, or when you get scared or excited. When you listen to what you think and how you feel when you read, that usually will be a hint to you to leave feedback to the writer."

"Oh, I think I get it. I can do that," confidently replied Ally.

We've Got This

To ensure the accuracy of the common language of what quality feedback looks like, I wanted the students to compile a chart (see Figure 4.7) with examples that illustrated the components of quality feedback.

Effective Feedback Must Have/Be...	
<p>Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very vivid imagery. I like how you can describe what you want your reader to see. Your use of figurative language dialogue here helps reinforce your tone. Good inference. Interesting connection. Good point. Interesting perspective. Haha. Good job picking up on the irony. Well said. Interesting perspective you take here. 	<p>Clear</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You need to use more detail throughout your story, not just in your first paragraph. You want to keep your reader's attention. Show how the character feels versus just telling how they feel.
<p>Specific</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show, not tell- maybe describe the mood, like we did the emotion activity. Can you further develop this moment through description versus inner thoughts? Think about the emotion activity we did. How can you set the mood here by describing the emotion the narrator is feeling? 	
<p>Gives Direction on What to Improve and How to Improve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show, not just tell. Use more details and figurative language. Try adding more descriptive wording in order to help the reader envision what you are saying. Can you further develop this moment through description versus inner thoughts? Think about the emotion activity we did. How can you set the mood here by describing the emotion the narrator is feeling? 	
<p>Provides a Resource</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I think your story needs more detail here to describe how the character feels. You should go back to the emotion activity we completed and see if you can describe how the character is feeling just like we did in that activity. Your tone and mood do not match. You should revisit the tone and mood activity we did with the witch so that you can see how the tone and mood go hand in hand. 	<p>Motivates change (useful/helpful)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mood and tone does not match, try using different words or phrases that will get your mood across. Time lapse becomes confusing. Develop more with signal phrases to show time elapsed.

Figure 4.7: Student Definitions and Examples of Quality Feedback

Given that this study was going to be their first real exposure to providing quality feedback to their peers, I wanted students to be able to have easy access to a chart

that would help them if they were to get stuck when peer reviewing a peer's writing. It was my hope that with creating the chart, two things would happen: students would begin to take ownership of their abilities to provide feedback to their peers, as well as providing the opportunity for students to realize how what they have to say, matters. Their voices count.

"What are we up to day Ms. Teeling?" inquired Peter.

"I'm glad you asked," I responded.

"Why is that? Are we going to write today?" Peter asked excitedly.

"Ehhh, not quite yet. Almost! We have only a few more things to do."

"Like what?" curiously added Jill.

"Well, I want to make sure that you guys understand the components of what makes quality feedback so that when you guys provide feedback to each other, you feel confident in doing so."

"Why do you care so much about how we feel?" questioned Jill, slightly irritated.

A little taken back, considering Jill has always seemed to be interested in what we were doing in class, I responded, "I like to care. I want you guys to be successful, and I want you guys to realize your capabilities."

Shrugging, "Okay," she replied.

I thought to myself that maybe she was just having a bad day and decided that I would speak with her tomorrow.

After providing students with the directions to the day's activity I walked around the room watching the students work together to accomplish the task at hand. Students were to provide statements as to what components created quality feedback as well as provide examples of such feedback. As I walked past Peter and James, I listened to what they were saying.

"Hey, Ms. Teeling," chimed Peter.

"Hi Peter."

"Whatcha doing?" said James.

"I'm just looking to see what you guys are writing down and seeing if you needed any help," I replied.

"Don't worry Ms. Teeling. We've got this," confidently stated Peter.

"Yea!" agreed James.

"Well alright then!"

As I walked away, the two began chatting again, exchanging and sharing ideas. Listening to the two of them discuss the content at hand, brought a smile to my face. Watching the two work together, collaboratively where there was a give and take of information truly made me realize how important it is to have been able to provide students with a platform and an environment where they could expand their knowledge through the interaction with others.

Upon regaining the collective attention of the class in order to review the chart that they created (see Figure 4.7), I took the moment to explain to them that

I was very proud of all that they had accomplished thus far. Through creating the chart, it became apparent that students were able to not only justify the components that create effective feedback, but they were able to collaboratively work together to establish a common language to which they could then utilize throughout the revision of their writing. This would enable them to be able to engage effectively in the feedback loop.

“It is not easy trying something new. In fact, it is risky. But I am very proud of you guys for taking the risks you have taken to help me with my homework.”

“No worries, Ms. Teeling. Like I said before, we’ve got this!” bellowed Peter.

“You’re right, you do!” I confidently replied back.

It’s Time? We Can Write?

It was finally time. My students were ready to write. Even though it seemed like it was taking longer than expected to begin writing, I realized how important it was to scaffold all of the information of what we had already accomplished. Students were eager and excited, and they felt prepared to undergo the writing of two essays where they would be able to engage in a feedback loop to help motivate them to write and revise throughout the lengthy writing process.

“Today is the day!” I sang as students entered into the room.

“It’s time? We can write today?” eagerly questioned Peter.

“Yea!” I shouted.

“You know, even though I usually procrastinate and wait until the last minute to write my essays, I’m in,” Peter stated. “Let’s do this!”

All other students unanimously began chatting with excitement. They were ready to write.

“Let’s get to it! Let’s brainstorm!” I cheerily announced.

The first essay students wrote was a descriptive essay. For the descriptive essay, they could choose what they wanted to describe as long as they could meet the requirements as outlined in the rubric. After beginning the writing process by allowing students to brainstorm, I provided students with a minilesson on how to create an engaging lead.

I broke the class up into small groups. The groups had a choice as to which model text of an engaging lead they wanted to read. The model texts consisted of various first chapters of novels where the authors chose to use specific details and figurative language to describe the setting or characters of the novels in a way that hooked the reader. Each group had to read their selected text and then create reasons as to what the author had done well to hook them as readers. Students had to cite specific examples from the model texts as to what the author did well to hook them or make the beginning of the read interesting to prompt further reading.

Students were able to identify common techniques the various author's used to hook them into the reading. In particular, students mentioned in one excerpt that the author's humorous tone was effective in addressing a serious issue with humor, which was slightly peculiar to them. They were able to laugh which prompted them to want to read more about what the narrator was talking about. Students suggested that if the author chose to begin the novel by using too many medical terms or specific descriptions about the medical issue of the narrator, they would most likely not understand what was going on and it would deter them to want to read more.

Additionally, students liked the use of figurative language the various authors used to capture their attention. Students also offered that the details were very vivid and some of the details used were even a strong use of sensory details to help them feel exactly what the author was describing.

"Awesome guys! You all noticed what the authors have done well in these mentor texts to capture your attention and hook you into wanting to read more. This is exactly what you guys are going to do, now that you are going to begin writing your introduction."

Students then began to write their introductions. I noticed that many students found it easy and enjoyable to begin writing having brainstormed and viewed mentor texts. However, There were some students who chose not to brainstorm given that they wanted to just begin writing, yet I noticed that they

struggled more with creating their introduction versus the students who did brainstorm.

As students were writing, Jill questioned, “I don’t know what to say about eating pizza. I want to describe what it is like to eat pizza. But I do not think it is going to work. Can I change my essay topic?”

“Of course!” I replied. In this moment, I realized two things. The first was that it seemed like Jill was back on track, eager and ready to write. Second, students were beginning to realize that writing is a process and that they needed to write about what they were most comfortable with and not to fear abandoning an idea or sentence that was not working.

It became quite clear that in a way, Jill inspired others to realize that over the course of the next class period that it was okay to not continue writing about something that wasn’t working, for a few other students decided to change their topics for something more interesting or important to them.

This is Too Confusing! What Are We Supposed to Do Again?

As the time came for students to make their first attempt at providing feedback to each other, it became clear that confusion began early. Students eagerly were able to provide feedback to each other, but issues began when they had to begin reflecting on the feedback provided to them by a peer as well as the feedback they provided to a peer.

In order to promote self-efficacy through reflection, it was imperative for students to realize that change through revising did not necessarily mean that their writing would improve. They had to reflect on how and why the revisions they made showed improvement. Therefore, I created Feedback Charts (Appendix D) to be able to help them become interactively engaged with the feedback they were giving to others in addition to the feedback they were provided with from their peers. One chart prompted student reflection on the feedback they received from a peer, while the other chart prompted student reflection on the feedback they provided to a peer.

For this day's activity, students were to begin using the feedback charts to peer revise each other's introductions. Since I previously exposed them to the charts, I was hoping that it would help them to understand the tasks associated with the charts, but students instantly became overwhelmed with the charts.

“Wait, I’m confused. What are we supposed to do again?” Peter questioned.

I decided to slow down and reinforce to them what the charts were designed for and why they were actually going to use the charts. Once I explained a rationale for the charts, the students seemed to be more at ease.

“I know that this is all new, but I am here to help and I just want you to try. If something doesn’t work, we can always fix it.”

“Okay. We’ll try!” Peter exclaimed, representing the one voice of many.

They seemed to be more at ease with completing the charts once I was able to assuage their concerns. Once students began to revise I noticed that some students were using the resources that we built in terms of what quality feedback looked like to aid them in providing useful feedback to their peers.

Additionally, I noticed that I had time to help individuals that needed more individual attention. I was able to help them figure out how to revise important aspects of the descriptive essay, like the dominant impression. Students were able to discuss with me aspects of their writing that needed to be strengthened due to the feedback that they had just received from a peer. Students felt more confident to engage in a feedback loop with either myself or a peer that gave them feedback because they had something tangible to work with. They had a starting point.

Furthermore, as students were filling out the feedback charts, some students began to notice the difference between editing and revising, as some students were noting spelling or grammatical errors in the writing of their peers: *Peter commented to James: You spelled honey wrong.* Given the chart prompted students to reflect on what type of feedback they were giving to a peer (surface or content), when either they or myself realized that they were writing “surface” in the column, they began to see that they were not giving proper feedback to help their peer revise because the revision process focuses on content versus mechanics, which then allowed for them to change the way they were providing feedback to better help their peers revise their essays.

Some students were even curious as to how their feedback helped their peers. “How do I help her improve if I wrote great use of a metaphor?” asked Traci, when trying to reflect on whether or not her feedback helped her peer to improve.

I responded, “Why do you think it is great? Is it because the comparison between dirt, ‘rumors,’ and a garden is descriptive and powerfully imaginative because a reader can begin to associate rumors as something that are not clean like dirt in a garden?”

“Ooooh, I see now,” Traci replied and began to type away.

Show, Not Tell!

After students revised their introductions based on the feedback they were given, it was time to draft the body paragraphs. Upon completion of the students drafting their body paragraphs, I had the responsibility of providing feedback to them on their body paragraphs. I wanted to share the responsibility of providing feedback with my students because given that it was their first time providing quality feedback, I did not want them to feel overwhelmed and lose motivation to revise their writing. Additionally, I wanted to ensure that they still had model examples of how to provide quality feedback, hoping that it would motivate them to revise their work.

Upon reflecting on the feedback I provided to my students, I noticed that students were still struggling with adding descriptive details to show and not tell

what it is they were describing. Some of the feedback I provided students with consisted of the following: *Could you use the sense of smell here to allow your reader to smell the food as you walk in the room? Could you describe the sound here by using a sensory detail or figurative language to allow your reader to hear what the crash sounded like? Could you describe the emotion of being angry versus telling the reader you were angry...refer back to the activity we completed on describing our emotions to help you convey this emotion more precisely for your reader.* Most still needed to add sensory details or figurative language to convey their descriptions so as to help the reader feel what is being described. In my feedback, I referred students back to the student examples or model texts in order to have an example about how to revise their writing.

Taking note of what I discovered as a result of providing feedback, I decided to give a minilesson on how to Show, Not Tell in writing. Even though I provided them with mentor texts, I wanted to offer students the opportunity to complete an activity that would allow for them to notice the benefits of using descriptive language in a way that was engaging while providing them with a chance to practice.

Students were given the choice between a Hershey Kiss and a Starburst. They had to choose one.

“You are to pretend like you have no idea what the piece of candy is. You are not allowed to call it by its name, Hershey Kiss or Starburst, or use the word chocolate.”

“How are we supposed to do that?” interjected Jill.

“Well, be creative. Think of how else you could describe the object to give it a name.”

“Whatever,” retorted Jill.

“This is going to be fun!” Donald stated, instantly drowning out Jill’s negative tone.

“Yea, what else do we do?” curiously inquired Peter.

“Once you create a new name for your object, you are to create two sentences for each of the five senses (touch, taste, sound, smell, sight) using poetic devices. Then with a partner, you are to create a five-lined poem using a mixture of the lines that you and a partner have created. The title of the poem will be one of the object names you or your partner assigned to the candy. We will then share out the poems and discuss what students have done well to create the representation of the candy using poetic devices to show versus tell about the qualities of the unknown object.”

“Great! Where’s the chocolate?” Peter humorously demanded.

Students were excited to be able to be creative and have fun with showing details, even while following the rules. Overall, students were very engaged and

enthusiastic when creating sensory details to describe the candy of their choice because following the rules became a pleasurable experience that allowed for them to act upon their own creative whims. They were eager to share their responses with a partner as well as share out with the rest of the class, which allowed for the rules to become desirable given that others would be judging their work and they wanted to be the best. Students were very inventive and creative in concocting poems (see Figure 4.8) to describe these objects in such a way as to show versus tell about the qualities and aspects to which the unknown objects were comprised.

“See, you guys are capable of doing exactly what you need to do in your descriptive writing,” I chimed in just before the end of class.

“Yea, I guess we are,” replied Peter. “We had some pretty clever responses, huh?”

“Agreed,” I responded with a big grin on my face, feeling as if I looked like the Cheshire cat from Alice in Wonderland.

Tinfoil Volcano

The rocky mountainous look of the tinfoil appears like a volcano.

The feel of the tinfoil is as rough and scratchy as a cat's tongue.

The paper shooting from the top makes a crinkley sound like
unwrapping wrapping paper.

The smell is so sickenly sweet, it's as if it was injected directly with
sugar.

Super Squashy Squishy Square

It looks like a wrapped gift.
It's as smooth as a newly waxed
car.

It sounds like cups hitting
together

It smells like chapstick.

Berry Block

Like rosy cheeks and
pink lemonade.

It's folded like a present
with smooth wax paper.

Crinkling and popping
like bubble wrap.

It smells sweet like
something straight from
the candy shop.

Releasing a juice of
abundant flavors.

Christmas Rock

It is small like a pebble.

Feels plasticly like a
cookie baking sheet.

Sounds like a rolling dice.

Smells sweet like a fruit
pie.

Tastes like a fruit
popsicle.

Figure 4.8: Student Poems when practicing Show, Not Tell using candy.

We Need to Be on the Same Page

After having had the opportunity to review both feedback charts students were using to give and receive feedback during the drafting of their essays, I noticed that there was still a discrepancy between the quality of feedback students were giving each other versus the quality of feedback I was providing to them. Since students had to provide feedback again to each other once the conclusion of their essays were drafted, I decided to take some class time before they were to provide feedback again, to ensure that our common language was the same and that students were understanding the components of quality feedback and how to provide it.

“Good Morning!!” I chimed. “I want to take some time today to make sure that we are on the same page with providing each other with quality feedback. I was reviewing your feedback charts and it appears that we need to work on providing each other with some more quality feedback.”

“Yea, I’m sure mine wasn’t the greatest,” Ally offered to begin the discussion.

“That’s alright, Ally. That is why we are having the conversation. We can make it better,” I stated.

“How?” she questioned.

“Well let’s talk about it,” I replied.

I then began to ask the students a series of questions to which they were able to offer responses where we could then discuss specific feedback that they offered to each other (see Figure 4.9).

- **What are some examples of quality feedback given by your teacher or peer?**
 - Madalyn: "Ms. Teeling said that I was using strong figurative language to help describe my dominant impression of the beach."
 - Me: "Great Ally, why was that quality feedback?"
 - Madalyn: "Because it helped me realize what I was doing well to make my writing good."
- **What are some examples of confusing feedback?**
 - Peter: "My peer reviewer made the comment that he did not get it, and that statement was confusing."
 - Me: "Okay, Peter. Why was it confusing?"
 - Peter: "Well since he highlighted my sentence about the Thanksgiving table, I knew he was talking about that, but I was not sure what he did not get about my Thanksgiving table."
 - Me: "That's a good point. How could we have changed this feedback to better help Peter revise his description about his Thanksgiving table?"
 - James: "Well, since it was my feedback, I guess I could have stated that the way he was talking about the food made it sound like it was not ready to eat, but it was on the table. So I did not get what he was saying in his sentence. I could have been more specific."
 - Me: "Great revision there to your feedback, James! That is exactly how you could have said it. Being specific with our feedback is important so that the person receiving the feedback fully understands what may need to be revised and why."
- **What is different about teacher feedback versus peer feedback?**
 - Donald: "Your feedback is very detailed and very specific. My peer reviewer only said that I should add more detail. I am not sure where or why I need more details, and he did not really tell me."
 - Me: "So what do you think your peer reviewer should have said?"
 - Donald: "Well I want to know where I need them and why? I know that I have my dominant impression, so where do I need to add more details to support it? That is what I would want to know."
 - Me: "Awesome. So then if he described more about adding details to support your dominant impression in a particular paragraph, would that have been better?"
 - Donald: "Yea."
- **At this time, what feedback has been more useful, teacher or peer, and why?**
 - Ally: "Yours, because it is so specific and explains how or why we need to revise something. My peer's feedback does not do that."
 - Me: "Where do you think we can look to make sure we are giving quality feedback to our peers?"
 - "The chart that we created where we put examples of good feedback."
 - Me: "Yes! Exactly! Take time to look over the chart to make sure your feedback will help your peer revise!"

Figure 4.9: Teacher questions and student responses to questions about the discrepancies between teacher and student feedback.

Through this discussion, it became apparent that students desired feedback that was of quality to help them revise. Students did not shy away from being honest in expressing to not only myself, but their peers as well what they wanted to see with the feedback being given.

When having this discussion with the students, those in particular that offered examples of feedback provided, helped to provide examples of what quality feedback looks like in addition to looking how to modify feedback that is not of high quality. Through this lesson students were exposed to how to improve their feedback. This discussion allowed students to be on the same page with ensuring our common language in terms of what defines quality feedback.

Feedback Loop in Progress

The next day, students were required to provide feedback to their peers on the conclusion of the essay.

“Alright guys! Today, let’s see what kind of feedback you can provide to each other for your conclusions. Remember yesterday’s discussion about quality feedback. Also, think about the type of feedback that you have received that has helped you. Remember why it has helped you and try to do the same for your peer. Are you ready? You guys can do this!”

“Yes we can!” agreed Peter.

As students began working, it became apparent by the end of the class that students were more engaged and interactive when providing each other with

feedback now versus how they performed in the introduction. Given that they were able to choose their own peer to work with, I considered that the comfort the students had with one another was beneficial in promoting collaboration. There were a few pairs of students who truly began to display the benefits of the feedback loop to help motivate them to continue revising their essays.

I noticed that these few pairs of students would speak with each other verbally about the feedback given, asking for clarification or to further ideas, engaging in a conversation about their writings. Additionally, I noticed students using the comment feature used to provide comments within a Google Doc were enacting the feedback loop silently within the Doc itself to seek further clarification or development of the feedback (see Figure 4.10) This exchange of information allowed for the motivation to want to revise to become present with the writing process.

Naomi: How will you add supporting details to this because it will be hard to describe this. Maybe change it to the sky has limitless colors... or something along the lines as beautiful in certain times of day.

Kelly: Yeah I need to reword it to incorporate the color aspect of it being limitless, and I was planning to organize my writing through like morning afternoon and evening and how the color changes.

Naomi: Oh, nice. That would be a good way to organize your paper since then your reader can naturally pick up on it because of the natural progression of the day.

Donald: “What do you mean by ‘it felt great’? I would explain it further. Use a simile or metaphor so that your reader can feel just how great your feeling is.”

Jax: “So you mean I should say ‘It felt as great as Christmas morning when we won our lacrosse tournament’...something like that?”

Donald: “Yea, because then your reader can feel what you are describing.”

Jax: “Yea, you’re right.”

Figure 4.10: Student Feedback Loop in Progress (within Doc and verbal)

The feedback loop being present in the first essay of the study, helped me realize that students were not only becoming more confident with expressing their voices through providing feedback, but they were also more confident in expressing their voices when it came to revising their own writing in the way that made the most sense to them.

Not only did the feedback loop exist among and between students, but also among and between myself and the students. After they received feedback from their peers about the conclusion, students became more motivated to want to revise their essays. By this time in the process, students appeared to not be taking this time to revise for granted, for some of the individual conferences that I had with students during this revision time period enacted the feedback loop in such a way that students were able to make revisions to their essays through our exchange of ideas. This continued into the next day's class.

The next day in class was allotted for students to make revisions to their essays. At this time, I always made myself available to help them if they wanted further assistance on revising their essays. Madalyn was the first student at my desk that day.

"Here is what I wrote, 'You can hear happy shouting and chatter from every spot on the beach from various people and accents around the country. You can also hear different languages.' My peer told me to show this versus tell. How can I do that?" inquired Madalyn.

“Well, I want to hear this. I want to be able to understand how the laughing makes this such a unique experience to you. If your dominant impression is that Belmar provides a unique experience, then I want to feel just that...a unique experience. So how does the laughing or the chatter become unique? How can you develop this to become a rare moment to add details that develop this sense? For me, I would compare it to laughter I hear at the table at Christmas,” I suggested.

“Oh, I really get what you are saying now. I see how I can fix it...What do you think about this? ‘You can hear happy shouting and chatter from every spot on the beach from various people and accents around the country, it sounds like various birds chirping into a beautiful blue sky.’” Madalyn offered as a revision.

“Wonderful. Your addition of ‘happy’ as well as the simile ‘like various bird chirping into a beautiful blue sky’ allows me to hear the unique quality of what you are hearing that helps me to feel why Belmar is a unique experience for you.”

“Thanks, Ms. Teeling!” shouted Madalyn.

“You’re most welcome, Madalyn!” I responded.

This idea of being able to continually enter into a feedback loop as formative assessment was allowing students to continually see their own development. Students were fully embracing the writing process and were no

longer overwhelmed with the process. Generally, most students when taking the time to revise were quite enthusiastic and talkative. When walking around the room when students were making revisions to their conclusions or other parts of their essay, I noticed that the chatter was about what students were revising in their essays. Additionally, during this time, I noticed that students were referring back to the mentor texts provided throughout the writing process to better help them revise their essays which also prompted an exchange of ideas through the feedback loop.

“Hey James, what are you up to?” I asked.

“I’m looking at a sample essay you provided as a mentor text to see how this student used figurative language in his essay. I know that using it helps support our dominant impression, but I am still struggling with using it. So I thought I would look at what this student did,” James expressed.

“Well that is a good idea. Good thinking. What have you noticed about the figurative language you are finding?” I inquired.

“Well he does not use it too much, but when he does use it, it really helps to make me feel what he is describing. So I am trying to figure out how to do that when describing my dog,” he stated.

“Good. I’m sure you will be able to do it. You are on the right track.”

“I can help him if he needs it too,” offered Peter.

“Yes, that is true Peter. That is nice of you,” I acknowledged.

“You know Ms. Teeling, I usually procrastinate and wait until the last minute to write my essays, but for you, for this, I am enjoying writing this way because I definitely would not have written what I have here in one sitting,” Peter revealed honestly.

“What did you write that you are proud about?” I eagerly asked.

He pointed to the following on his computer screen and I read it to myself:

The smell of garlic, salt, sage, and rosemary rushes to my face and I can all but help to take a deep breath and just breath in the turkey because it smells so good. The moment of truth has arrived I snag the perfect piece a turkey and slam it down on my plate and drown it in thick dark brown gravy. I bite into the immaculate piece of meat and my taste buds explode with joy as I savor every second of it.

“Wow. Why are you proud of it?” I questioned.

“I would never have been that descriptive if I procrastinated and wrote this the night before it was due. When I wrote this the first time, I did not have the names of what I smelled. I also did not have the last sentence about my taste buds. But James mentioned to me to add more description to add to the senses of smell and taste because that is what Thanksgiving is about. So I did.”

“Yes, you did. Your descriptive word choice and use of figurative language makes me hungry for sure!” I exclaimed.

Thinking about these conversations with James and Peter made me realize the extent to which students were truly demonstrating their own voices within their writing. They were revising using feedback suggestions, but ultimately they had the final say as to what went into their essays.

It also made me take notice of how providing mentor texts helped students who were more unlikely to ask for help because they wanted to try to figure out something on their own. Yet, I could still interact with those students and enter into a feedback loop using those texts if they needed more help. Students were taking ownership of their writing and feeling confident in doing so.

As class came to a close that day, Peter made a suggestion that made me think about changing something within my study.

“Ms. Teeling, I like reading James’ essay, and I like helping him, but I’m kinda curious about what other people are writing about,” Peter stated.

“Oh yea? So you would want to read other people’s essay?” I responded.

“Well not everyone’s,” he giggled, “you know what I mean.”

“I think I do,” I smiled in return.

Dear Reader: Sharing is Fun...but Revision with Lenses? That's Confusing!

Based on Peter’s comment at the close of a class, I decided to provide an opportunity for my students to receive feedback from another peer. In this class period, students were to write a Dear Reader Letter. In this Dear Reader Letter, students had the chance to address a reader with remaining concerns, issues, or

fears that they had regarding their essays. Given that the feedback loop had been successful thus far to motivate students to revise, I wanted to provide one more chance for students to receive more feedback on their entire essay before submission.

“Today, we are going to write a Dear Reader Letter. You are going to write a letter to a new reader, someone who had not yet read your essay. In this letter you are going to address any fears, concerns, or issues you still think you have with your writing that you would like to receive feedback on. Once you are done drafting this letter, you are to exchange your letter with someone who has not yet read your essay. Then, you are going to read each other’s Dear Reader Letter and respond directly to what the author of the essay addressed,” I explained.

“That sounds like fun!” Peter stated.

Students then had the opportunity to draft the letter, exchange the letter, answer the letter and review what the reader had to say about their essays to be able to make final revisions to their essays.

Upon reading through the Dear Reader Letters, I noticed that students were eager to get more feedback now that they had made changes to their essays to ensure that they have developed their writing as a result of revising. Some of the concerns that were addressed in the Dear Reader Letters were: "Please check to make sure my dominant impression is clear." "Do I stay on topic?" "Do I focus

on my dominant impression?" "Do I include enough details that show how I feel?" "Am I being too repetitive?" "Is my conclusion too much of a summary?" "If I have correct/adequate details to support my dominant impression." "I think my thoughts are really scattered." "Can you picture what I am describing?" "I changed my dominant impression, is it more clear?" "I changed my essay because I was writing a narrative, am I describing now?"

Students were appreciative of the opportunity to get more feedback given the revisions made to their essays. Using the Dear Reader Letter not only allowed for them to receive specific feedback to help prompt further revision from a peer, but this formative assessment helped me see with what students were still struggling the most and who still really needed help improving their writing. Also, this formative assessment allowed for students to be more accountable for where they felt they currently were with their writing performance as well as focused as to where they wanted to go, which helped to promote their self-efficacy.

To maintain the motivation for students to be independent, I assigned students with one more task to help them revise their essays. The students were assigned the activity entitled Revision with a Different Lens where students were challenged to reread their essay one more time through various lenses (The Lens of a Stranger, The Lens of Feeling, The Lens of So What?). To aid students in completing this, each lens had a series of questions associated with it to help

prompt further thinking to promote reflection: *What would a reader think about my writing? What might he or she want to change? Can the reader tell how I feel about my topic? How can I get my readers to care as much about my topic as I do?* In addition to answering the questions, students had to provide text evidence from their essays to prove the validity of their answers.

This activity that was designed to promote the motivation to revise only caused mass confusion. Most students found it too overwhelming to complete, especially with the due date for the essay being so close to the activity itself. Students completed the activity, yet before I could even ask them their thoughts, they were ready to tell me.

“That was really confusing, Ms. Teeling,” revealed Max.

“Yea, I honestly had no idea what to do,” agreed Jax.

“It wasn’t that bad,” contrasted Naomi. “You just had to think differently.”

“But trying to do that and finish revising and editing the essay was a lot. I felt like we had more time over the course of the entire essay to get stuff done versus feeling rushed at the end,” added Kelly.

“What does it matter, we had to do it anyway,” stated Jill

“It really did not help me revise. Can we not do that next time?” asked Donald.

“Okay, guys. I can see where you are coming from. Thank you for being honest. For the next essay, I would like to have you complete a follow up activity to the Dear Reader Letters so that you can reflect one more time on your revisions, so I will think about how I can change it for next time to make it better,” I offered.

“That sounds good,” agreed Peter.

I was certainly excited to see that students were being honest with me. Thinking about the discussion reinforced two things: that students were comfortable and confident in speaking up and using their voices to engage in the writing process, and that students were taking ownership of their work in terms of wanting to make it better. Their honesty was perfectly timed, too, considering the next part of the study was to give them the mid-study survey (Appendix A, section ii).

The More than Half Way Mid-Study

Even though we were technically more than half way through the study, I gave a mid-study survey to the students to assess their perceptions of the feedback loop and the writing process thus far, given that we had finished the first essay and were approaching the writing of the second essay.

Overall, students found the feedback from both teacher and peers to be useful; however, feedback from the teacher was more useful. Additionally, most students enjoyed and valued their experience of participating in the study. On

average, students agreed that using feedback and giving feedback could sometimes be challenging, but they felt that their writing had improved as a result of being able to use the feedback when making revisions.

With these findings, I felt that going into the second essay would be more of a rewarding experience for my students given the positive sentiments and perceptions they had upon completion of the first essay. With the confidence and motivation to move forward, I realized that all of what we have done to get to this point was meaningful and worthwhile in the sense that students truly gained self-efficacy and motivation to want to revise their writing.

When I conducted a brief discussion with the students about the results of the survey, some insight that was further brought to the table from the students that I took note of as things to change from the first essay to the second was that students enjoyed the Dear Reader Letter and wanted to do it again. Furthermore, on a larger scale, students wanted to complete the letter with more people because they valued getting feedback from multiple perspectives versus just the one main peer reviewer they had more consistently throughout the drafting of the entire essay. When creating the Dear Reader Letter Activity the second time around, students were placed into small groups of four, where they were given feedback from those various group members. This group session acted as a Share Session where students took turns reading specific parts of their writing out loud to their peers that they wanted feedback on as addressed in their Dear Reader Letters.

Students who assigned feedback to the peer reading out loud provided the feedback in a collaborative document where the reader could view all feedback given to him/her by his/her peers.

Secondly, given the successful use of integrating minilessons and mentor texts, I decided to utilize the mentor texts again as well as provide minilessons when relevant to student needs. The mentor texts were available to students during the entire drafting of the essay, and minilessons were given based upon the feedback that was provided during the drafting stages as well.

Lastly, given the unsuccessful use of the Revision with a Different Lens Activity, I decided to replace it with the One-Page Revision Plan. With a One-Page Revision Plan, students were able to directly address the feedback provided to them from the Dear Reader Letter Share Session Activity. In this revision plan, students had to address how they were going to change and develop their essays based upon the feedback given, while at the same time, students had to note why they were going to make those changes in terms of to what extent the revisions would improve their writing.

This Is Going to Be a Piece of Cake...The Second Essay

At the start of the second essay, most students were excited to write the narrative. Similarly with the first essay, students had the choice of what topic to write about as long as they adhered to the requirements outlined in the rubric (Appendix C, section ii). The rubric focused on determining student use of

descriptive and vivid details within their stories as well as their ability to create a unifying message that would be consistently developed throughout the story.

Given the freedom to have a choice, noting how well it worked the first time, students were overjoyed with having another opportunity to write about with whatever they were comfortable.

The same structure and scaffolding that was used in the first essay was again used in the writing process of the second. Students were responsible for providing feedback to their peers for the introduction and conclusion, while I was responsible for providing feedback to students regarding their body paragraphs.

“Hey guys, are you ready to write your narrative essays?” I eagerly questioned.

“Yea, Ms. Teeling. This is going to be a piece of cake!” Peter jubilantly stated.

“Yea, we have been waiting for this moment for what seems like forever,” contributed Donald. “I am super excited to write this story. You’re going to love it.”

“I’m sure I will, and that goes for all of you as well!” I warmly announced.

As students went through the stages of brainstorming and drafting their introductions and body paragraphs, I noted how much more quickly the pace of their writing progressed. As I reflected on why that might be, I realized that when

we began the narrative essay, I provided students with excerpts of model texts that were written by previous students juxtaposed with excerpts of sample narratives that I would not use as model texts. This worked so well in the first essay, I decided to try it sooner with the second essay.

When discussing these texts in a minilesson, students were to focus on the aspects of the excerpts that illustrated quality components of a narrative or, on the other hand, what could have been done better if an excerpt fell short of the quality components of a narrative. Students were to read the excerpts silently to themselves then confer with partners as to what their thoughts were. We then had a whole class discussion on the sample excerpts.

Students were able to identify that the excerpt of sample narratives that were of higher quality possessed the same attributes: figurative language, vivid descriptive details that conveyed emotion, organization, strong word choice, and good use of dialogue.

Upon the completion of this minilesson, I could tell that students were eager to begin writing. With this insight, combined with the fact that this was the students' second attempt at writing descriptively, it was not shocking that the drafting of this second essay progressed more quickly.

"Wow, we are flying through this essay this time, huh guys?" I asked.
"Yea, it does seem like it is going so much faster than the first essay," responded Ally. "I like writing this one so much more."

“Why is that?” I inquired.

“The ideas seem to be coming faster, and I am talking more with Lucy about my essay now than I was the first time,” Ally added.

With this comment made by Ally, I remembered back to the beginning of the study when she stated that she was a bad writer when it came to writing narratives because she was not good at using details (see Figure 4.1). Yet, here she was confidently expressing that she was enjoying writing.

As students began to chatter away as they were continuing drafting their essays, I walked over to Ally’s desk. When looking at her essay, I read a paragraph of hers to myself: *On our way home the car was silent but filled with anxiety, stress, and millions of questions streaming through our minds. As soon as we crossed the curb, barely into our driveway, my doctor was calling and it sounded urgent because my mom's voice instantly changed in tone, she stared at the steering wheel and just listened. “We got the results back and she has Type 1 Diabetes you need to bring her into the hospital right away....,” my heart dropped and I couldn't even bare to listen. I finally realized that this was real life and this was happening to me, my life was about to change forever, and it all happened within the matter of seconds.*

Upon reading this paragraph, I felt inspired to build on Ally’s prior comment. I remembered sentences she added to her descriptive essay upon revising by using my feedback. She described the beach in her first essay and

when referring to seeing the ocean for the first time again in what seemed like forever, at first, I could not imagine or feel her emotion. She wrote: *As we approached the water my heart beat faster and faster, passing chairs, sandcastles and the lifeguard stand. I've been counting down the days till I would be able to swim in this beautiful ocean again.*

I asked her to add some figurative language to follow this sentence to truly show what she felt, and this is what she added: *The shallow water crept up to my ankles, sending chills shooting up my spine, and goosebumps from head to toe. But the sun beating down kept us warm as each wave trampled us, tattooing smiles on our faces.*

With this memory, I asked Ally if I could share what I was thinking about her writing with the class.

“Hey guys, remember how Ally just made a comment about enjoying writing this essay more than the first one?” Students nodded in agreement. “Ally, do you remember what you said at the beginning of this entire process about how you felt about yourself as a writer if you had to write a narrative?” I asked Ally.

“Yea, I said I was a bad writer, especially at writing narratives,” she replied.

“Right, yet now listen to these paragraphs that Ally wrote,” I asked of my students.

As I read her two paragraphs from both of her essays, students silently listened. Upon finishing reading them, some students quietly expressed, "Wow," "That was pretty," and "I wish I could write like that."

I asked Ally, "Do you think you are a bad writer now?"

Slightly shy she responded, "No?" questioningly.

"Was that a question or an answer?" I chortled.

As she laughed she said, "No, I guess not."

"How many of you guys feel that you are better at writing now having written almost this entire second essay?" I inquired.

Almost every hand in the classroom went up.

"Why do you think that is?" I asked.

"Because we got to use feedback to make our writing better," stated Donald.

"We had time and help in class to revise and rework what we wrote," added Peter.

"Yea, I would never have done any of this at home," interjected Jax.

"Because you care," smiled Peter.

At that moment, I bet someone as far away as New York City was blinded by the radiance of my smile.

Feedback Loop – Round Two

Upon completion of the second essay, not only did students start to become better writers, but also I noticed during the process of writing the second essay, that students were more confident to provide each other with feedback as well as use the feedback to revise their writing (see Figures 4.11 and 4.12).

Feedback Chart – Descriptive Essay

Date	Feedback from Peer or Teacher	Changes made by Student	Here is how the changes helped me to improve...(use checklist)
11/7/16	Needs to make dominant impression more eminent	i said that i love thanksgiving	i made my dominant impression clear
11/16/16	I like your paragraph here. It sounds like your voice. The only thing that I think could help enhance your paragraph would be to incorporate the sensory detail of smell. I feel that when you describe the turkey you should also address the aroma of it and the rest of the food. It will help your reader make a stronger connection to your table.	i added in some spices that would be on the turkey to give you a sense of smell	
11/27/16	Like what? Could you use figurative language here to help you?	i say i pounce like a cheetah to its prey instead of i pounce	
11/27/16	How does the food smell as you wait for it? How does waiting for the food build up your love for the holiday? Remember the details need to describe your dominant impression.	The smell of garlic, salt, sage, and rosemary rushes to my face and I can all but help to take a deep breath and just breath in the turkey because it smells so good.	
11/27/16	Name more deserts	pumpkin pie, apple pie, pecan pie and fudge brownies	
Learner Reflection: For my next writing assessment, I could improve...(use checklist)			

Figure 4.11: Peter's First Feedback Chart (Descriptive Essay)

When reviewing all of the students Feedback Charts, I noticed that students were taking more time to reflect on their writing over the course of completing the charts between both essays. With this ability to become more self-efficacious, I realized that students were more self-aware and responsible of their

own learning; therein, they were able to develop their writing skills but also their ability to be learners.

Looking at the differences between the students charts, helped me to determine that students were not only having an easier time filling out the charts, but also were adding more focused, descriptive, revisions to their writing, in addition to reflecting on how and why those revisions improved their writing. More specifically, in Peter's first chart, he was not very diligent in reflecting on how the revisions he made to his writing helped him to improve as made apparent from the blank spaces within his chart (see Figure 4.11). However, in the second chart (see Figure 4.12), he was direct and clear on providing reflective commentary on how his revisions improved his writing.

Peer/Teacher Feedback Chart – Narrative Essay			
Use this chart to reflect on the feedback you get from your peers or teacher.			
Date	Feedback from Peer or Teacher	Changes made by Student	Here is how the changes helped me to improve...(use checklist)
12-12-16	Where is this taking place	i said it takes place in brooklyn	so now the reader knows where the story is taking place
12-12-16	Give your character more of a description (name, age, family, why they're homeless)	i described how he looked and what he was wearing	it help me really give a sense of what my character is going through so that the message of my story is stronger
12-21-16	This is confusing. I am not sure that I am getting your intended meaning. Please revise for clarity.	i explained that my life choices that lead to his undoing	it make my story more clear so people could tell that the story was about doing the wrong thing and its results which helped my message become more clear
12-22-16	Cut this sentence in half and add a little more details	i made the sentence into four sentences and added something	it made my last paragraph clearer and not a run on so that the reader can better understand what I wanted to say
12-22-16	Why did you love it	i explained why i like having a home and family	this shows versus tells what having a family really meant to him
Learner Reflection: For my next writing assessment, I could improve...(use checklist) I could improve on making sure that I add enough detail to show and not tell.			

Figure 4.12: Peter's Second Feedback Chart (Narrative Essay)

Not only was he able to be aware of and acknowledge how his writing improved, but he was also aware of something that he needed to improve in future writing assignments, which like all of the students were required to note in the Learner Reflection Box. When I asked Peter about a noticeable difference between his charts, he offered, “Well, with the second one, I felt that I knew what I was doing, and I realized why I had to do it, to get better.”

Additionally, another aspect of the feedback loop required students to reflect on the feedback they provided to their peers so that with the improvement of the feedback they provided it would better help their peers to improve (see Figures 4.13 and 4.14); furthermore, in doing so, students were themselves defining what needed to be done in the writing to become better, placing meaning to the action for it became personalized. Given the engagement and connection with the task, it became apparent that not only did the quality feedback provided to their peers help the development of their essays, but individually, they were helping themselves, for they were becoming more aware of how to better improve their own writing by determining what would improve the writing of others.

When reviewing all of the students’ charts, it became clear that students improved with their ability to provide quality feedback to each other during the revision process as a result of the feedback loop. The second time engaging in the feedback loop promoted not only student confidences, but student abilities to

provide meaningful feedback to their peers to better help motivate them to revise their essays.

Feedback Reflection Chart – Descriptive Essay

Feedback Comment	Positive or Negative	Surface Comment or Content Comment	Does the feedback prompt improvement? (State YES or NO, then explain WHY)
describe the ride to the hospital. ex. how you felt	positive	content	yes because it tells that she needs to explain more and add in description.
describe the room more like what was surrounding you besides the nurses	positive	content	Yes because tells the writer that they need to add more detail, and describe what it was like.
good ending	positive	Content	no it was a compliment.
use more descriptive words to make the reader imagine what it was like. What else was horrible about the room?	positive	Content	Yes I was telling the writer to show not just tell.
expand on how this day helped/changed you. more description	positive	content	yes because this writer needed to add more description.
Overall Reflection of Feedback: My feedback is useful towards helping the improvement of a peer's paper by explaining what needs to be changed and how to change it. I think I could have expanded more on some of my feedback so it is more clear to the writer.			

Figure 4.13: Ally's First Feedback Reflection Chart (Descriptive Essay)

More specifically, looking at Ally's first chart (see Figure 4.13), at times she would leave general and non-descriptive feedback to her peer. Yet in her second chart (see Figure 4.14), Ally provided more descriptive and specific feedback to her peer that also defined for her peer why making the revisions would improve her essay. Ally even noted in the Overall Reflection of Feedback

Box that she became more aware that her feedback was more specific for her peer during the feedback loop within the second essay versus the first. In this sense, Ally not only was able to show her peer how and why to improve her writing, concurrently, Ally became aware of what constituted a strong essay in terms of what she could or needed to do in her own writing. Here, the feedback loop provided a means of a dialogical relationship where students were collaborating on their own terms to help each other develop.

Your Feedback Reflection Chart – Narrative Essay
Use this chart to reflect on the feedback you give to a peer.

Your Feedback Comment	Positive or Negative	Surface Comment or Content Comment	Does the feedback prompt improvement? (State YES or NO, then explain WHY)
This sounds choppy. combine these thoughts with detail to make it flow better	positive	Content	yes it does because I told what was the issue and suggested what the writer could do.
great way to end the paragraph. Breathtaking is good word choice	positive	content	Yes it could in the future because I told what was done well.
describe how the sunset looked so that your reader can see it	positive	content	yes because it was bland so i told her to add to the sentence.
where was this? was it after you came down the mountain or on top?	positive	Content	I was confused so I told her what i was thinking so she could make changes.
these are very strong sentences with good detail. I can really see the setting.	positive	Content	yes telling her that she had strong word choice and the sentence fit together well.
describe what they looked like, the surroundings to add more detail that I can picture	positive	Content	I couldn't picture what she was telling so i told her how she could add so that the picture was more clear.
these sentences tell a lot about what you saw but are crammed together. Try putting some together with some more description.	positive	Content	Yes, because I told her what didn't sound right and suggested what she could do to fix it.
Overall Reflection of Feedback: My feedback useful towards helping the improvement of a peer's paper...My feedback was more specific this time and more clear to the writer. I also explained how or why to change something better.			

Figure 4.14: Ally's Second Feedback Reflection Chart (Narrative Essay)

The Light at the End of the Process

The final day arrived. On the last day of the study, I returned rubrics to the students for their second essay. As students were chatting about their grades, I began to hand out the end of the study survey to assess the change in students' perceptions about feedback and writing. Yet, as I started circling the room, I noted something peculiar about what students were talking about. Students were surprisingly and without prompting, discussing with each other how they felt about the study. It was then that I decided to recollect the few surveys that I already handed out, and instead, have a whole class discussion to reflect on the study.

"So guys! I was going to give you a survey to bring some closure to the study, but as I was passing it out, I heard you guys already talking about what I wanted to hear in terms of your responses from the surveys...so why don't we just have a discussion instead?"

"Okay, what do you want to know?" Peter posed, with a smile of excitement upon his face.

"How do you guys think you did with using the feedback from your peer and teacher the second time around?" I asked.

"I can honestly say that I improved," offered Peter right off the bat.

"Why do you think that is?" I questioned in return.

“It was easier this time because I felt more confident doing it because I felt like I knew what I was doing,” he answered.

“I agree. The second time was easier. Also, I focused more this time on giving better feedback because I realized how much good feedback helped me revise my essay,” added Donald.

“Yea, I did too,” agreed Ally.

“So what I’m hearing you say is that not only did you get better at using feedback to revise your writing so that it could improve, but that you also gave better feedback to your peers because you realized how helpful it was when you got it to better help you revise and strengthen your writing,” I rephrased.

“Yea, that’s pretty much it,” Peter stated.

“So then overall, did you enjoy this experience?”

A multitude of voices all chimed in simultaneously, and one of the only comments I could decipher was, “Yea, it was cool. I so became a better writer,” concluded Madalyn.

At that moment, I bet another person from New York City was blinded by the radiance of my smile, or better yet, it rivaled the luminosity of the brightest star in the universe.

Data Analysis

While conducting my action research study, I collected different forms of data. Whether I was involved as a participant or non-participant observer throughout my study, I collected multiple data sources so as to engage in prolonged observation so as to gather sufficient data to enhance the analysis of my research (Hendricks, 2009). To begin the study, students took surveys (Appendix A), completed various activities that yielded student artifacts as a means of formative assessment, and wrote two essays which were assessed by rubrics (Appendix C). In addition, to ensure accuracy of data collection, I kept a double-entry journal that contained daily notes about what transpired throughout my study as well as my reflective thinking given student actions, behaviors, and performance. Analysis of all data points was conducted throughout my entire study.

Analysis of Students' Opinions and Perceptions of Writing and Feedback through Surveys

After having a discussion introducing the study, students were asked to complete the Pre-Study Survey: Using Feedback to Improve Self-Growth (Appendix A, section i). The data collected from this survey proved useful with regard to discovering student perceptions and opinions of their use of feedback to revise schoolwork. Ninety percent of students were willing and optimistic to be receiving feedback, especially if they agreed that it helped them improve their

schoolwork. Additionally, approximately 95% were positive in thinking that feedback would help them to improve their work versus making them feel incompetent. Eighty-nine percent also agreed that they did not receive as much feedback as they would like from their teachers or peers. Lastly, 95% of students agreed that they did not get time in class to use the feedback to the extent that they would like to use it to revise their work.

After completing the first essay required of students to write during the study, students were asked to complete a Mid-Study Survey: Using Feedback to Improve Self-Growth (Appendix A, section ii) regarding their opinions and perceptions of feedback and how useful it was to motivate them to revise their essays. In this survey, approximately 60% of students agreed that feedback from their peers was useful to help them revise their essays, while more notably 95% of students agreed that teacher feedback was very useful in helping them revise their essays. Even though some students stated that the process of giving and receiving feedback could be challenging, 89% of students felt that our discussions pertaining to the feedback loop was very helpful. Furthermore, 94% of students agreed not only that their participation in the study was valuable, but also that they felt that their writing skills have improved as a result of participating in the study.

Analysis of Observations of Student Artifacts through Formative Assessment

Throughout the course of the study, the use of minilessons yielded student artifacts in the form of formative assessment checklist check-ins. The student artifacts consisted of performance-based activities that allowed students to illustrate their understanding of certain genre-based writing expectations so as to emulate those expectations within the required essays throughout the study. These formative assessment check-ins allowed students to practice the essential skills with impunity from receiving a grade when still developing the desired skills.

For the various student artifacts collected upon completion of each minilesson, it became apparent that students were improving in their abilities to utilize the genre-based expectations desired of the essays. Eighty-five percent of students were able to illustrate the qualities of creating a strong lead when given the checklist check-in (Appendix B, section i) that distinguished the components to which strong leads are comprised, while student poems about candy guided by the checklist check-in (Appendix B, section ii) proved that 95% of students can create and use properly figurative language to describe. Lastly, upon given the checklist check-in (Appendix B, section iii) noting the components that created a quality narrative, 97% of students were able to contribute and differentiate between the components of strong and weak narratives. Through utilizing such

check-ins, it became apparent that more students were transferring the desired skills into their writing.

Analysis of Student Artifacts Through Essays Using Rubrics

Throughout the study, students were required to complete two essays: a descriptive essay and a narrative essay. Both essays required students to develop genre-based expectations of both essays, such as use of descriptive and vivid details that emphasize the thesis of the essay, and sophisticated vocabulary and dialogue that help develop the characters or plot of the essay. The study utilized two similar genre-based essays so as to provide a means of comparison between essays that did not focus so much on grade, but instead on how students moved along the scale of performance in terms of the usage of the required components.

In both rubrics (Appendix C), students were scored based on four categories: Introduction, Body, Conclusion, and Mechanics. The scoring categories comprised the following ratings: Above Average, Average, Proficient, and Below Proficient. From the first essay pertaining to the introduction, 70% of students scored in the average rating for that category. In terms of the above average rating, only 20% of students achieved this rating. However, upon completion of the second essay, pertaining to the introduction, 40% of students scored in the average rating whereas 50% of students scored in the above average rating.

A similar increase was noted in the body paragraphs as well. For the first essay, 87% of students scored in the average rating, while only 5% scored in the above average rating in regards to the body paragraphs. However, in the second essay, 40% scored in the above average rating whereas 45% scored in the average rating.

Noting the decreases in the percentages for the average rating while concurrently noting the increase in percentages for the above average rating suggests that students did improve in their writing as a result of the use of minilessons using mentor texts as well as the collaborative feedback loop. Given that the expectations for both essays were similar, noting the increase in ratings proved to be a sufficient way to assess how the study improved the writing skills of my students.

Analysis of Observations through Analytical Memos

During the course of the study, I kept a double-entry journal in which I was able to note my thoughts and beliefs about what was occurring in my classroom throughout the study. I reflected upon the information that I collected through writing analytical memos. The analytical memos challenged me to analyze and reflect on my data using the educational theories of Dewey, Feire, Delpit, and Vygotsky. Each memo required me to use salient quotes to support how each theorist's educational theory connected to my study.

Upon crafting these memos, it became quite clear that much of what I was implementing in my study and most of my reflections pertaining to what I was discovering aligned with many of the schemes presented by each theorist. Dewey (1938) posited, that all children inherently are social creatures who desire to be part of a larger community. As part of a larger entity, each individual has something to offer the whole, for when placed into an environment where there is a platform for social exchange, individuals become responsible for their contribution in order to avoid social isolation. His thesis supported the validity of my study in terms of allowing students to collaborate in an environment where they could exchange information in order to fulfill their natural desire and tendency to want to be a part of the larger community. Furthermore, Dewey's view of social connectedness aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) view of intrinsic value being prominent in a child's learning environment. Writing should have meaning, intrinsic value, and a relevant purpose and connection to a child's life. If these factors are met, the development of writing exists not out of habit, but as a means of creating the importance of the written word as a form of speech. Dewey and Vygotsky's theories reinforce the use of a collaborative feedback loop to promote student motivation to revise writing through the need of acceptance. Additionally, both theorist's views supported the students' interest in the material while promoting confidence and power of their voices. This confidence elevated their motivation from the extrinsic need to complete a requirement to the intrinsic

desire to place meaning to action. When writing became meaningful to my students, their desire to want to express that meaning in order to belong to the larger part of the community became apparent through their engagement and social interactions during the feedback loop.

Analysis of Codes and Bins

Upon the completion of my study, coding the data became quite a valuable experience for me. Through going back through my field log and other forms of data collected over the course of my study, I was able to discover certain connections and related occurrences that developed over the course of my study.

In order to code the data collected, I began assigning specific words or phrases that connected to the various aspects of my researcher question or sub-questions. Codes such as “empowerment,” or “feedback loop” were created based on my observations and reflections of student work and behaviors during the study. While assigning these codes to the particular data points, I began noticing patterns or themes that became prominent to the findings within my study.

Once I finished coding, I began to analyze and determine the interconnectedness of the codes in order to create bins. At the end, I found six prominent categories. In order to assign a title to each bin, I looked closely at how many overlaps I had amongst and between the codes. The six prominent categories of Empowerment, Feedback Loop, Minilessons, Fear of Freedom,

Questioning, and Rationale, were established given that many of the codes relied on these categories to be the umbrella that unified all of the related codes together (Figure 4.15). Even though some of the codes are used within multiple bins, this representation illustrates how what I observed and in turn what students did in addition to my reflections and ultimate changes throughout the course of my study, were connected and interdependent of each other.

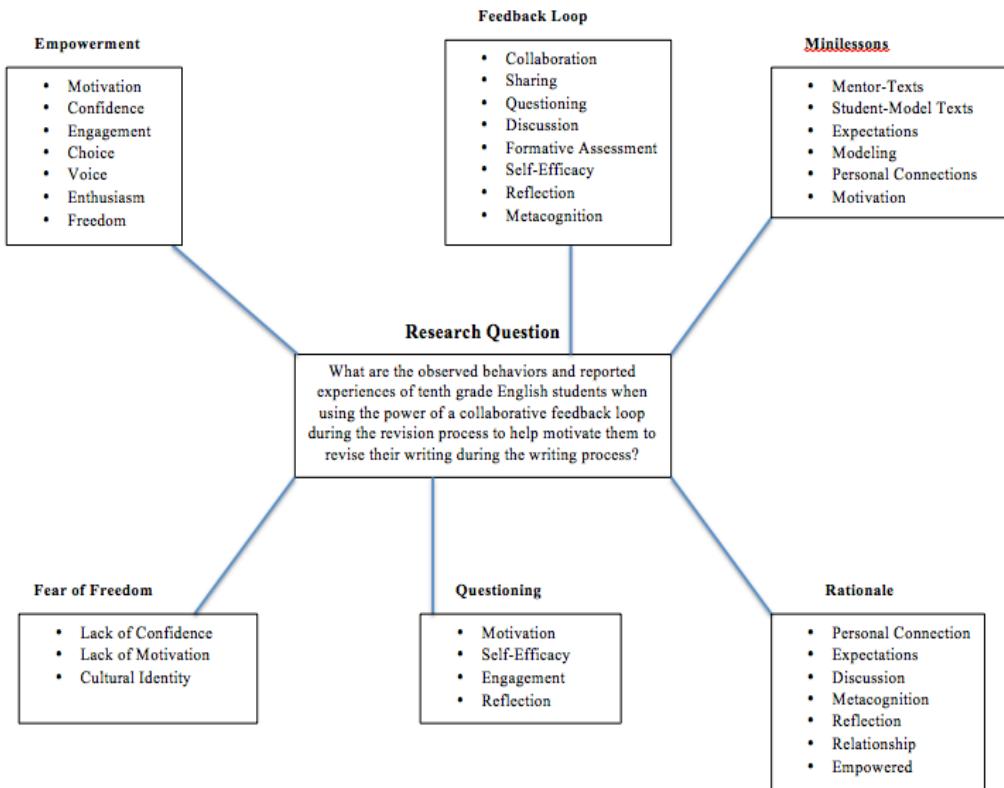


Figure 4.15: Codes and Bins

Research Findings

Upon completion of the study, when taking the findings into account, first it must be noted that the purpose of the study was to answer the question: *What are the observed behaviors and reported experiences of tenth grade English students when using the power of a collaborative feedback loop during the writing process to help them craft and refine their stories during the writing process?* I wanted to discover if collaboration and a constant exchange of feedback would motivate students to want to improve their writing not just to get a better grade, but to find and promote the power of their unique voices. Through finding their voices, I also wanted to notice how if by increasing their confidences, in turn would their self-efficacy increase. To help organize findings, I created several theme statements to express the findings of the study.

The Effects of Choice and Voice on Student Empowerment

When students have freedom of choice in what they write and how they want to represent their voices in writing, they have more motivation and confidence while maintaining their level of engagement during the writing process.

When designing my study I noted that it has become more apparent each year that students feel more imprisoned when coming to school versus seeing it as an opportunity for growth. In addition, with each new school year, students understand less and less the sacrifices that other people make for them to have the freedom to have an education. In turn, this creates the attitude of taking the

freedom of an education for granted, versus being appreciative. For my particular study, I wanted to change this attitude of my students by inspiring them to notice the freedoms that they are so readily given and in turn develop a confidence and gratitude for what they have. One of the only ways I envisioned this occurring is through allowing them to explore who they are given the context of the world they live. Allowing them to write freely helped my students to acknowledge the power that they had as individuals. Channeling Donald Murray (1973), by allowing students to see the benefit to reveling in the glory of unfinished writing, students began to see that there is room for growth, and that this growth exists because of the freedom of speech. According to Paulo Freire (2000), freedom is not something that is given, but instead, it is earned through constant diligence and awareness of one's own actions. Freedom is not something that is beyond a man's reach or a figment of his imagination, but instead, a vital component on a man's journey to discovering what makes him fully human.

When I instructed my students on the power of voice in writing, students began to see that what they have to say and how they say it matters. Freedom allows us to grow and transform into the persons we are meant to be. But unless we work diligently, constantly, and responsibly, we will miss the opportunity to grow and abuse the freedoms that we take for granted. If I did not give my students the choice on what to write about nor the opportunity to discover their voices, their ability to become empowered through their writing would not have

occurred within my study. However, by allowing them the particular freedoms of choice and voice, students were more engaged and confident to write even if it meant diving into unknown waters. The confidence within my students was able to exist given what Lev Vygotsky (1978) coins as placing meaning to writing. Vygotsky posits that writing should have meaning, intrinsic value, and a relevant purpose and connection to a child's life. If these factors are met, the development of writing exists not out of habit, but as a means of creating the importance of the written word as a form of speech. It is with this acknowledgement that writing is a form of speech where my students were able to place a significance and value to their written words.

The Effects of a Collaborative Feedback Loop on Student Self-Efficacy

Through creating a collaborative learning environment where a continuous dialogue exists between and among teacher and students through questioning, sharing, and discussing, students engage in formative assessment to promote self-efficacy through reflection and metacognition to develop writing skills during the writing process.

The act of communicating with others was central to my study. We learn and grow from the interactions that we have with other people, thereby strengthening the idea that we write from what we know best, our own experiences. According to Freire (1970), human life becomes meaningful through the act of communication. Therefore, the genuine thinking of a teacher and students can

only be validated through the act of communicating thoughts, for neither can think for the other. It then becomes true that through communication, thinking becomes authentic and real, since another acknowledged the thought.

Hence, I chose the revision process of writing as the main focus of my study. When students were writing and offering each other feedback through the feedback loop, in addition to receiving feedback from myself, they began to see see how their words have an effect on others fueling their meaning for existing which becomes more powerful through the communication of the written word. Without revising through teacher and peer feedback, students would not have been able to see how what they said and how they said it had an important impact upon the intended reader.

Additionally, students began to see how no one else could tell them what to think or what to say because we all experience life differently given many different factors. In using the Feedback Charts (Appendix D) when revising writing, students had to ultimately decide whether or not to make the suggested change or changes prompted by the feedback. This illustrated to them that when we shared our thoughts with others, it makes what we thought and felt more real to the world in which we live because it reinforced that we are heard and that others have the responsibility to act or not act in terms of what we have to offer (see Figure 4.10). This experience created the opportunity for my students to see

that what they have to say and who they are is important because other people took the time to listen.

The Effects of Scaffolding Instruction with Minilessons and Student Motivation

Using the structure of mentor texts and student texts as models for developing writing, students better comprehend genre-based expectations such as the use of sensory and descriptive details and figurative language. Through modeling, expectations become clear and allow students to make personal connections between the model texts and their own writing and are more motivated to revise their writing.

Just like a parent would never give the keys to a newly licensed teenage driver without some guidance, nor should a teacher just allow her students to their own devices without guidance. Therefore, according to John Dewey (1938), individual freedom is based upon observations and judgments that individuals make, in turn establishing a purpose. Therefore, to enhance and not restrict students' intellectual freedoms and desires to establish a purpose, a teacher should provide suggestions to guide students' abilities to observe and make judgments. However, it also would not behoove a parent to place too many restrictions upon the new driver for it would impede the freedom of intellectual growth, nor would it behoove a teacher to completely take control of her students' intellectual growth by inhibiting the development of their own observations and judgments.

For my particular study, I could not just simply tell my students to write and write about whatever they wanted. Nor could I tell them exactly what to write and how to write it. Instead, I allowed my students to have choices in what they wrote and how they wanted to refine their voices, but I scaffolded them along in the experience by having them undergo writing as a process. It was my goal, that by taking them through the entire writing process from drafting to publication, students would have the intellectual freedom to hone their observations and judgments with my guidance given my use of minilessons and mentor texts. With the scaffold of minilessons and formative assessment check-ins, students were not too controlled or too leniently supervised. Instead, they were able to have the proper balance of a learning experience where they were contextualizing their own observations and judgments with that of one more experienced in the mentor text. It was within this experience that students were able to establish a purpose for what they knew, what they have learned, and what they wanted to learn, for they were able to have a learning experience where they could freely test their intellectual abilities through multiple and continuous interactions with myself and their peers through the scaffolding of minilessons with mentor texts.

The Effects of the Fear of Freedom on Student Motivation and Cultural Identity

When given the freedom to illustrate their writing abilities, students can lack the motivation to write and the confidence in what they can produce due to their cultural identity and how they perceive themselves as inferior to others.

According to Lisa Delpit (2012), if a teacher does not become familiar with students' lives outside of school and how they chooses to spend their time, then the teacher cannot nor will not be able to accurately determine students' competency and therefore may misinterpret or misdiagnose the reasons as to why the students may be resisting their educational opportunity, lending then to perpetuating stereotypes about those students.

By designing my entire study to focus on student choice and voice, I have learned so much about my students in such a short amount of time. Given this unpredicted, but wonderful circumstance, I have come to realize that I myself am guilty of misunderstanding or misdiagnosing the behaviors or competencies of students using a stereotype. I have discovered that in particular with this study, I misdiagnosed Jill.

Jill, in particular focused way too much on playing her choice of game-of-the-day on her phone or goofing off with a friend versus completing the work that needed to get done. Naturally, I first thought it was because she could not do the work. Additionally, I found this to be odd given that in the first week of the year

she was very vocal and talkative with me, almost as if she wanted me to know all about her and that she was eager to be there and ready to learn. Her behavior in class did not match the demeanor to which she exuded. Even at times throughout the course of the study, she seemed to be on board with what we were doing, or even one of the voices on influence to motivate or encourage others to become animated and engaged with the study.

So when I began to notice that she wanted to be something of the “voice heard” but would not do the work that went along with the image, I chalked it up to her being the kid that wanted to be cool and liked because she was talkative and easy to talk to. I automatically assumed that his behavior and personality were a façade for the fact that he should not be in the class not because she didn’t want to be, but because she didn’t know how to do the work required.

Yet after discovering Jill’s voice and the purpose of it in my narrative, I wanted to look deeper into her situation. At times she seemed eager and ready to go, but that at others she seemed filled with disbelief in the study and harbored a negative attitude and would begin an essay, but then not finish it. I came to find out Jill is an adopted girl, along with all of her other siblings of parents that are a different race. Her home life with her biological mother was not a very nurturing environment, and when pairing that with her writing and noticing the personal content involved (she spoke of being bullied), now her behavior and demeanor made sense.

She wanted to escape life or reality and she found that in playing games on her phone, and she also wanted to feel liked or appreciated, and that may be why she was a vocal influence, but did not produce writing, for maybe it was just too painful to admit or discover a truth. Now knowing this circumstance, I could only imagine what her home life must be like. Now knowing this circumstance, I am no longer chalking up her façade to the fact that she wasn't smart enough to be in the class.

According to Delpit (2012), the children we teach come to school with their own cultural identity and if they do not see a positive connection to the curriculum that they are to learn, then no learning of the curriculum will occur. Writing is a very personal activity. In a way, it forces a writer to rely on his or her own experiences to help shape and form whatever it is that he or she is creating. This can be a fearful activity for some students, especially those like Jill. Writing about personal emotions and feelings can scare someone, especially if those feelings evoke sentiments or memories that someone is trying to suppress. So even though Jill was a vocal participant within my study, the sense of freedom within the study hit too close to home in a way that decreased her motivation to want to write.

The Effects of Questioning on Student Motivation and Self-Efficacy

When students have the opportunity to continually question the writing performance of themselves and others, students are more motivated to take

ownership of their current levels of performance by engaging in reflection of the areas of their writing that they can further develop and strengthen during the revision process.

When it comes to teaching writing, it is impossible to consider that all students possess the same level of writing skill, nor have all students acquired the same sentiments or values of writing as they have progressed throughout school. Therefore, when designing my study, keeping the idea of the zone of proximal development within mind, it became obvious to me that by using the writing process to help my students develop their writing, I would be able to individualize and differentiate my instruction to best meet all students' unique level to which they are currently performing while also guiding them towards maturing in the future.

According to Lev Vygotsky (1978), the zone of proximal development allows for one to determine a child's ability to mature in the future as well as the level to which she develops by establishing what the child has already achieved in terms of her developmental state and the rate to which he will mature. Given the use of minilessons using mentor texts, I was able to scaffold instruction as well as give students examples to refer back to regarding particular areas of study where some students still needed further assistance in understanding or developing the particular writing concepts that were expected such as voice, the use of sensory details, supporting details, and figurative language.

In addition, by making the mentor texts and formative assessment check-ins easily accessible to students, students who were more advanced in their skills, but still needed a refresher or an example of how to complete something just beyond their comfort zone, were more willing to look at any of these documents on their own to help them develop their writing (see Figure 4.8). Students would ask questions of either myself or another peer to elicit further feedback to ensure that they were able to gauge their performance accurately, which in turn would help them to not only develop their own writing, but the writing of their peers when asked to provide feedback on a peer's writing.

I had some students who were more skilled and independent look at these documents first to try to develop their writing without my help, then once they tried to revise and strengthen their work, they asked for me to review and give further feedback to establish the level to which their writing progressed having utilized the mentor text or formative assessment check in. These resources provide them with the assistance they needed so as to challenge them without frustrating them.

The Effects of a Purpose and Rationale on Building A Dialogical Relationship with Students

For students to understand the purpose of completing a writing assessment, they first need to see a personal connection to the expectations of the piece of writing which are made relevant given the building of a dialogical relationship between

teachers and students. Students become more motivated, engaged, and empowered to participate in discussions and activities or assessments that promote metacognition and reflection of desired writing expectations.

According to Freire (2000), by entering into dialogue, the role of students having a teacher and a teacher having students changes. When teacher and students enter into dialogical relations, both teacher and student roles are interchangeable where the teacher and students can all assume the role of the one who teaches.

During my study, whole class discussion was a propelling force and important component to ensuring that my students were motivated and engaged in reflective thinking. Upon completing minilessons on voice and the qualities of effective feedback, my students began to see how important they were in terms of being advocates for their own learning. Additionally, they realized how they could learn from one another versus learning just from me. Two wonderful things occurred during my study as a result of class discussions that reinforced how dialogue changed the roles of myself and my students within my classroom.

After students were given a minilesson on tone and mood in writing, they had to practice using tone and mood by writing a paragraph in which they had to convey an emotion without saying the emotion or a synonym for it in their paragraph. Students then were asked to share their paragraphs with the class and the class had to guess the emotion the author chose based upon the tone and mood

conveyed in the paragraph. Through this sharing session, students I had noticed to be more quiet and shy volunteered to read and participate in the activity. Not only did more students participate, but students were commenting on how well their classmates conveyed the emotion of choice. They used comments such as, “I like how your details really put a vivid image in my mind.” I took this opportunity to address the class and say that we all have the opportunity to learn from each other. I reinforced that the reason I like sharing sessions is because students have the opportunity to help learn from each other. Students realized that they could recreate what their classmates did well in their own writing by just listening to what others have written. This was truly an authentic, organic and powerful moment for my students for they not only began to see that their voices matter, but that they had the power to help others.

Another awesome moment that occurred in my study as a result of having a class discussion was when we were discussing the qualities of effective feedback (see page 74, paragraph 2). Peter was one of the first students to be honest about the quality of my feedback. Most students were hesitant at first when I asked them to critique my work, yet he boldly chimed his honest response into the discussion. Most students appeared almost to take a sigh of relief after they saw how happy I was. This truly was a moment that embodied how well students can learn from each other and not just from me! Having that comment come from Peter made it all the more better because the impact that it had coming from Peter

was greater than it would have been coming from me. Students were able to begin to realize that I am not the sole teacher in the classroom, but instead, that we all learn from each other through the powerful effect of having a dialogical relationship where the role of the teacher was taken upon by not only myself, but my students as well which helped them to become more engaged and reflective throughout the study.

The Next Action Research Cycle

Now that my research study has ended, I will continue to implement the collaborative feedback loop within my classroom. While most students were motivated to write and revise within the specific narrative and descriptive genres, there were some students who struggled to write within those specific genres. Therefore, I plan to allow for students to choose the genre they would be more interested in writing, since topic choice worked so well within the study. This will allow students a greater opportunity to embrace their voices and write within a genre that meets their specific needs or desires. This freedom will cause more intrinsic motivation.

In addition to this, I became aware that it took more time than I expected for students to begin the actual writing portion of my study. There were some students who were bursting at the seams to write. Yet I denied them the opportunity and postponed the writing until I “thought” they were ready. Next time, I would like to integrate writing into the study sooner, which will also increase the amount of writing students will be doing. This will allow for students to become more exposed to writing; therefore, students will have more time and opportunity to develop their skills. By simply integrating something like quick writes, and exchanging them with peers, students will learn how to become collaborative writers through the act of using their own writing as the text for minilessons that instruct them on how to best provide feedback to their peers to

prompt improvement. Since scaffolding my instruction throughout the entire study through using minilessons and mentor texts was so successful, completing quick writes will also expose students to writing in a step by step platform which only reinforces writing as a process.

When I thought about some of the other positive responses to writing that students exhibited, it made me realize how I would like to incorporate this idea of using collaborative feedback to promote motivation to revise in other areas of my curriculum. I would like to continue using this idea when students are completing inquiry projects or summative assessments since students truly found a benefit to using quality feedback to improve and develop their writing. The same concept can be applied to any type of assignment that students will complete.

Furthermore, I found that the crux of the success gained from my study was due to showing the students my own motivation to revise my writing to develop as a writer. Generally, students lack the exposure to the idea that a teacher can also be a student who is still learning. Through my example and continued support, students realized their own abilities to be learners. With this empowerment, students began to realize the responsibilities that came with such freedoms as making choices and expressing their voices. Students acted as co-creators of their learning. Throughout the study I allowed for them to express their voices, while in turn, listening and acting upon their opinions and beliefs, wherein, I became the designer of what it is they felt motivated or placed meaning

upon to learn. Within this co-constructivist environment students began to see the benefit of taking the ownership of learning. Through this, students were able to recognize the development of their skills and abilities to the point where they correlated that development with empowerment and success.

The exposure to having a part in co-creating their learning allowed for students to embrace a mindset that they traditionally shy away from or are deprived. As a result of schools promoting the system over the learner, students have adopted a fixed mindset where they perceive traditional forms of learning as the only way of being taught. When I first began my study, students were shocked and quite confused as to why I was asking them what they wanted to do and what worked best for them. When I actually listened, the shock turned to an elevated stunned. In that moment where they began to see my role shift from “the teacher” to a facilitator of learning, a new mindset became part of their sphere of learning, the growth mindset. Throughout my study students were placed into an environment where nontraditional forms of learning were taking place. Students were exposed to a mindset where they saw the potential of embracing something new and different as a means of gleaning new information; a role to which not only would need my involvement to be successful, but theirs as well. As a result, a desire was sparked in which learning became more authentic; for students were able to associate their own connections and value upon what learning they wanted to gain as a result of engaging in the environment to which they were immersed.

When it came time to write the research papers a few months after the completion of my study, students immediately and eagerly asked, “Are we going to write this paper the way we wrote the other ones?”

Without even contemplating if this was even possible, or if I had the time to allow such an undertaking, I emphatically responded, “Yes!” In this moment, students showed me that they not only felt confident in expressing their voices, but that they were embracing a growth mindset by assuming the responsibility of being a facilitator of their own learning.

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Appendices

A. Surveys

i. Pre-Study Survey

Pre-Study Survey Using Feedback to Improve Self-Growth

Directions: Based upon your previous experiences with teachers giving feedback on schoolwork, answer each group of questions using the appropriate scale provided.

1. How often do you receive feedback from teachers on your schoolwork?

1	2	3	4	5
Never		Sometimes		Consistently

2. How often do you use feedback to make changes to your schoolwork?

1	2	3	4	5
Never		Sometimes		Consistently

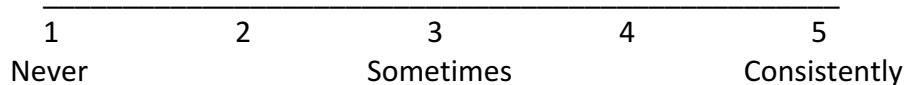
3. How often do you see a benefit to using feedback to improve your grade?

1	2	3	4	5
Never		Sometimes		Consistently

4. How often do you understand feedback?

1	2	3	4	5
Never		Sometimes		Consistently

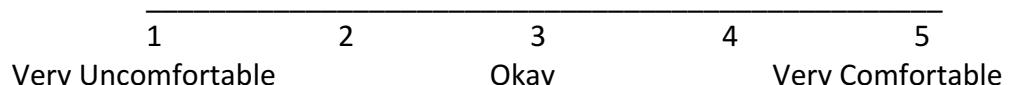
5. How often do you misunderstand feedback?



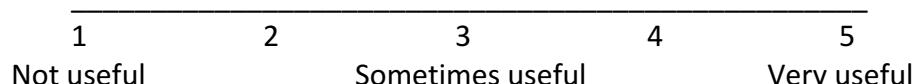
6. How often are you given time to use feedback to make changes to your schoolwork during school/class time?



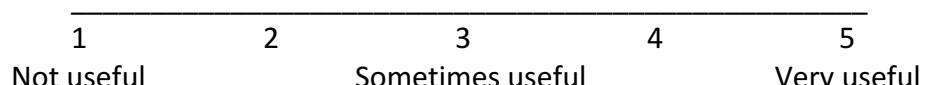
7. How do you feel about using feedback?



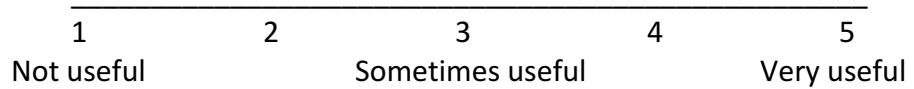
8. How useful do you find feedback from teachers to be in improving your schoolwork?



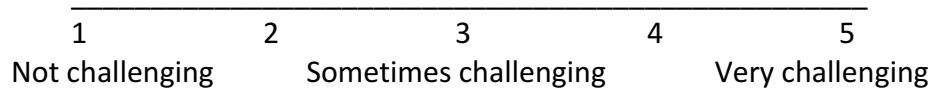
9. How useful do you find feedback from peers to be in improving your schoolwork?



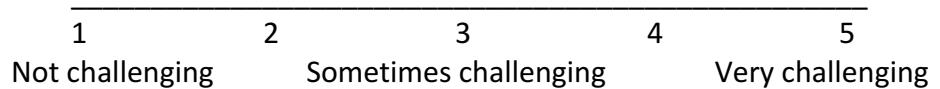
10. How useful is feedback in improving your performance on schoolwork?



11. How challenging is the process of giving feedback?



12. How challenging is the process of using feedback?

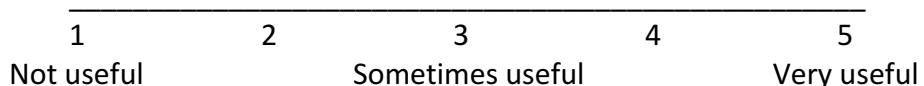


ii. Mid-Study Survey

Mid-Study Survey Using Feedback to Improve Self-Growth

Directions: Based upon completing Essay 1 (mid-study), answer each group of questions using the appropriate scale provided.

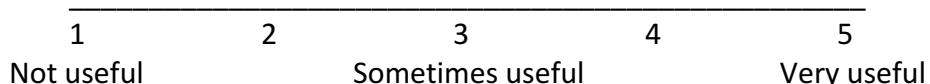
1. How useful was the feedback from your peers?



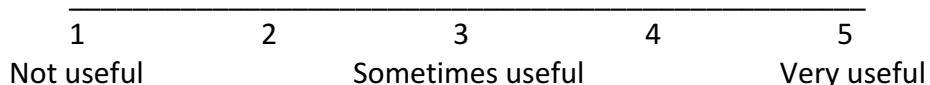
2. How useful was the feedback from your teacher?



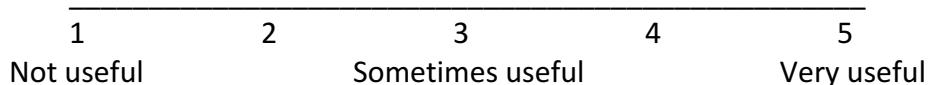
3. How useful was the feedback in terms of helping you understand what to improve in your essay?



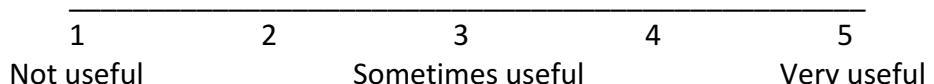
4. How useful was the feedback in terms of helping you understand how to improve your essay?



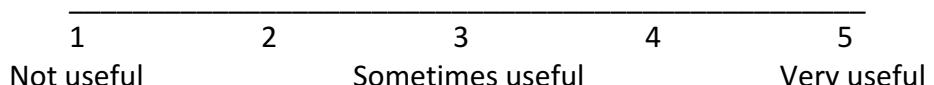
5. How useful was the feedback in terms of helping you locate resources to help you improve your essay?



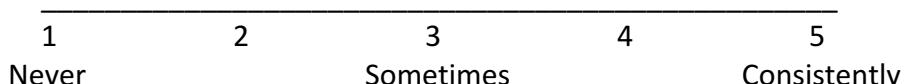
6. How useful is the feedback chart in helping you to keep track of feedback given and changes made?



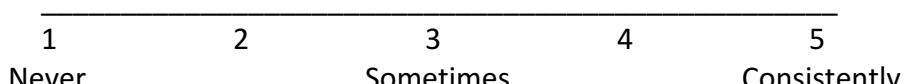
7. How useful do you think using feedback is to the writing process to improve your skills?



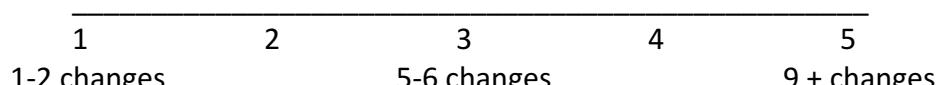
8. How often did you understand the feedback given?



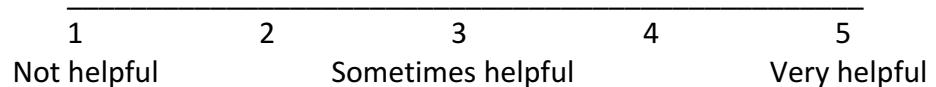
9. How often did you misunderstand the feedback given?



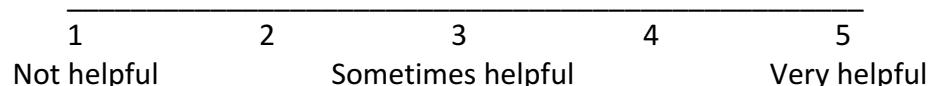
10. On average, how many changes did you make to your essay?



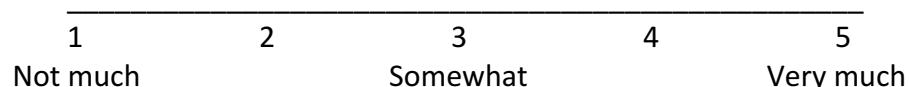
11. How helpful were the discussions about the feedback given during the writing process in terms of improving your own achievement?



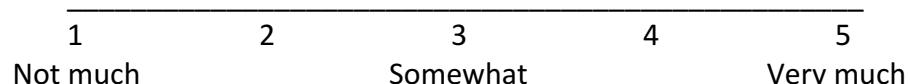
12. How helpful were the discussions when reviewing the class performance as a whole in terms of improving your own achievement?



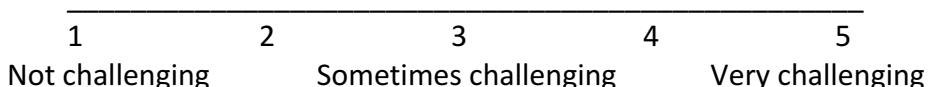
13. Do you think your writing has improved as a result of using the feedback given?



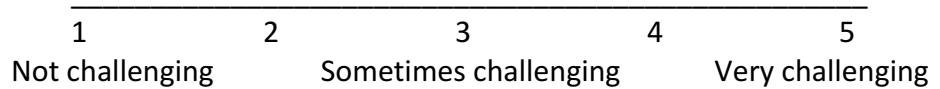
14. Do you think your writing has improved as a result of providing feedback to peers?



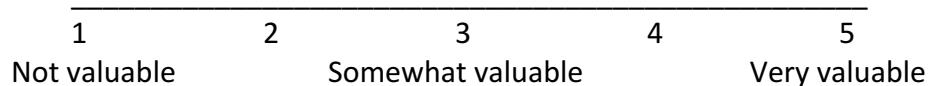
15. How challenging is the process of giving feedback?



16. How challenging is the process of using feedback?



17. How valuable was your experience as a participant in the study?



B. Checklists

i. Strong Lead Checklist Check-In

Qualities of a Strong Lead Minilesson Check-In Checklist

Does your chart distinguish the qualities of a Strong Lead?

- Notes the author's use of a hook to increase reader engagement
- Notes the author's use of descriptive details of setting or location to increase reader engagement
- Notes the author's use of revealing important background information/narrator's inner thoughts to increase reader engagement
- Notes the author's use of descriptive details of characters or narrator to increase reader engagement
- Notes the author's use of figurative language to engage the reader to increase reader engagement
- Notes the tone and mood to increase reader engagement

ii. Show, Not Tell Checklist Check-In

Show, Not Tell Minilesson Check-In Checklist

Do you include the following in your candy poem?

- Use of figurative language to reveal smell
- Use of figurative language to reveal touch
- Use of figurative language to reveal taste
- Use of figurative language to reveal sight
- Use of figurative language to reveal sound

iii. Quality Narrative Checklist Check-In

Qualities of a Strong Narrative Minilesson Check-In Checklist

Does your chart distinguish the qualities of a Strong Narrative?

- Author uses strong word choice to convey tone and mood
- Author uses descriptive language and vivid details to create the setting
- Author uses figurative language to create an image of characters and setting
- Author uses dialogue to enhance character interactions to reveal unifying thread
- Author uses description without repetition to maintain reader

C. Rubrics

i. Descriptive Essay Rubric

	Description Essay Rubric			
	Above Average (4)	Average (3)	Proficient (2)	Below Proficient (1)
Introduction	Uses a hook to create interest in description Introduces topic of description Describes dominant impression Uses vivid and descriptive language	Attempts to use a hook to create interest in description Introduces topic of description Describes dominant impression Uses vivid and descriptive language	Attempts to use a hook to create interest in description Vaguely introduces topic of description Describes dominant impression Lacks vivid and descriptive language	Lacks a hook to create interest in description Vaguely introduces topic of description Describes dominant impression Does not include vivid and descriptive language
Body Paragraphs	Uses objective or expressive details to develop dominant impression Consistently uses sensory details/ figurative language to develop description Consistently uses specific and vivid word choice Arranges details in cohesive manner to emphasize dominant impression Consistently uses strong topic and transition	Attempts to use objective or expressive details to develop dominant impression Mostly uses sensory details/ figurative language to develop description Mostly uses specific and vivid words Arranges details in cohesive manner to emphasize dominant impression Mostly uses strong topic and transition sentences to improve fluidity	Attempts to use objective or expressive details to develop dominant impression Attempts to use sensory details/ figurative language to develop description Lacks specific and vivid word choice Arranges details in cohesive manner to emphasize dominant impression Lacks the use of strong topic and transition sentences to improve fluidity	Does not use objective or expressive details to develop dominant impression Attempts to use sensory details/ figurative language to develop description Lacks specific and vivid word choice Does not arrange details in a cohesive manner to emphasize dominant impression Does not use topic or transitions sentences; fluidity is impeded

	sentences to improve fluidity			
Conclusion	<p>Provides a clear description of dominant impression</p> <p>Consistently uses vivid details and descriptive language</p> <p>Leaves a lasting impression that emphasizes dominant impression</p>	<p>Provides a clear description of dominant impression</p> <p>Attempts to use vivid details and descriptive language</p> <p>Attempts to leave a lasting impression that emphasizes dominant impression</p>	<p>Provides a vague description of dominant impression</p> <p>Lacks vivid details and descriptive language</p> <p>Attempts to leave a lasting impression that emphasizes dominant impression</p>	<p>No description of dominant impression</p> <p>Lacks vivid details and descriptive language</p> <p>No lasting impression that emphasizes dominant impression</p>
Mechanics	<p>Few grammatical errors that do not impede coherence</p> <p>Relevant and sophisticated vocabulary that enhances description</p> <p>Few awkward or unclear sentences that do not impede coherence</p>	<p>Some grammatical errors that impede coherence</p> <p>Relevant and sophisticated vocabulary that enhances description</p> <p>Some awkward or unclear sentences that impede coherence</p>	<p>Many grammatical errors that impede coherence</p> <p>Lacks relevant and sophisticated vocabulary to enhance description</p> <p>Many awkward or unclear sentences that impede coherence</p>	<p>Many grammatical errors that impede coherence</p> <p>Irrelevant and not sophisticated vocabulary</p> <p>Many awkward or unclear sentences that impede coherence</p>

ii. Narrative Essay Rubric

Narrative Essay Rubric

	Above Average (4)	Average (3)	Proficient (2)	Below Proficient (1)
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses a hook to engage the reader Introduces character(s), setting, and conflict Describes character(s) in detail Uses vivid and descriptive language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempts to create a hook to engage the reader Introduces character(s), setting, and conflict Describes character(s) in detail Attempts to use vivid and descriptive language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempts to create a hook to engage the reader Introduces character(s), setting, and conflict Lacks description of character(s), uses vague details Lacks vivid and descriptive language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lacks a hook to engage the reader Vaguely introduces character(s), setting, and conflict Does not describe, has no details Lacks vivid and descriptive language
Body Paragraphs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses vivid details and descriptive language to develop the plot Uses dialogue to show direct or indirect characterization Plot progression is clear and cohesive Shows the development of author's purpose or message Consistently uses topic and transition sentences to control organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempts to use vivid details and descriptive language to develop the plot Uses some dialogue to show direct or indirect characterization Plot progression is clear and cohesive Shows the development of author's purpose or message Mostly uses topic and transition sentences to control organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempts to use vivid details and descriptive language to develop the plot Lacks dialogue to show direct or indirect characterization Plot progression is vague Attempts to show the development of author's purpose or message Lacks the use of topic and transition sentences to control organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lacks the use of vivid details and descriptive language to develop the plot Lacks dialogue to show direct or indirect characterization Lacks plot progression Does not show the development of author's purpose or message Does not include transition or topic sentences; organization is weak

Conclusion	<p>Character(s) resolve the conflict</p> <p>Consistently uses vivid and descriptive language</p> <p>Reveals the author's purpose or message</p> <p>Ties loose ends - leaves lasting impression</p>	<p>Character(s) resolve the conflict</p> <p>Attempts to use vivid and descriptive language</p> <p>Reveals the author's purpose or message</p> <p>Ties loose ends - leaves lasting impression</p>	<p>Character(s) resolve the conflict</p> <p>Attempts to use vivid and descriptive language</p> <p>Vaguely reveals the author's purpose or message</p> <p>Ties loose ends - leaves lasting impression</p>	<p>Character(s) resolve the conflict</p> <p>Lacks the use of vivid and descriptive language</p> <p>Does not reveal the author's purpose or message</p> <p>Story abruptly ends - no lasting impression</p>
Mechanics	<p>Few grammatical errors that do not impede coherence</p> <p>Relevant and sophisticated vocabulary</p> <p>Sophisticated integration of dialogue</p> <p>Few awkward or unclear sentences that do not impede coherence</p>	<p>Some grammatical errors that impede coherence</p> <p>Relevant and sophisticated vocabulary</p> <p>Attempts to integrate dialogue</p> <p>Some awkward or unclear sentences that impede coherence</p>	<p>Many grammatical errors that impede coherence</p> <p>Relevant and sophisticated vocabulary</p> <p>Ineffectively integrates dialogue</p> <p>Many awkward or unclear sentences that impede coherence</p>	<p>Many grammatical errors that impede coherence</p> <p>Irrelevant and not sophisticated vocabulary</p> <p>Does not include dialogue or integration is ineffective</p> <p>Many awkward or unclear sentences that impede coherence</p>

D. Charts

i. Feedback Chart

Peer/Teacher Feedback Chart

Use this chart to reflect on the feedback you get from your peers or teacher.

Date	Feedback from Peer or Teacher	Changes made by Student	Here is how the changes helped me to improve (use checklist)
Learner Reflection: For my next writing assessment, I could improve...(use checklist)			
Checklist of things that you can improve based upon rubric: Intro <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interesting hook• Establishes dominant impression/thread• Vivid and descriptive language – precise word choice Body <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Details that develop the dominant impression/thread• Vivid and descriptive language – precise word choice• Cohesive organization through topic/transition sentences Conclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ties loose ends with connection of dominant impression/thread• Vivid and descriptive language – precise word choice• Lasting impression or ultimate conclusion		Checklist of things that you can improve based upon rubric: Mechanics <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sophisticated and descriptive vocabulary• Spelling and punctuation• Correct paragraph formation• No fragments or awkward phrases	

ii. Feedback Reflection Chart

Your Feedback Reflection Chart

Use this chart to reflect on the feedback you give to a peer.

Feedback Comment	Positive or Negative	Surface Comment or Content Comment	Does the feedback prompt improvement? (State YES or NO, then explain WHY)
Overall Reflection of Feedback: My feedback is useful towards helping the improvement of a peer's paper...			

E. Consent Forms

i. HSIRB

The screenshot shows an email interface. In the top left is a small user icon. Next to it, the text reads "Account, HSIRB <hsirb@moravian.edu>" followed by "to me, Richard". To the right of the recipient is the date "8/23/16" and a star icon. On the far right are three small gray icons: a double arrow, a left arrow, and a down arrow.

Dear Ms. Kayla Teeling,

Thank you for submitting your revisions. You have addressed all of the concerns listed in your conditional approval. The HSIRB has completed its final review of your proposal, "Feedback – A Student's Best Friend: Using Quality Feedback During the Writing Process to Increase Student Achievement," and is granting approval of this proposal.

Please note that if you intend on venturing into topics other than the ones indicated in your proposal, you must inform the HSIRB about what those topics will be. Should any other aspect of your research change or extend past one year of the date of this email notification, you will need to file those changes or extensions with the HSIRB and receive approval of the changes before implementation. If you need a hard copy letter indicating your approval status for record keeping purposes, please let me know.

One last step. We need to collect your electronic signature and that of your research advisor. If each of you could respond to this email with your own name and the project title in the subject line, that will serve as your electronic signatures. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Good luck with your research!

[Redacted signature box]

Chair, Human Subjects Institutional Review Board
Moravian College
hsirb@moravian.edu
sjohnson@moravian.edu
[610-625-7013](tel:610-625-7013)

ii. Principal Consent Form

Principal Consent Form

Moravian College
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

September 28, 2016

Mr. [REDACTED]:

I, Kayla Teeling, am currently pursuing my Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Moravian College. The courses that I am taking, challenge me to critically look at my professional practice and make necessary changes in order to provide the best educational environment for my students. For this fall semester, I am taking the course that requires me to complete my Action Research Study. As part of this course, I am required to complete a research project that focuses on an area of my professional practice.

The area that I would like to focus on as part of my research project is the use of feedback during the writing process to improve student achievement. In order to improve the writing skills of my students, I would like to create diverse and challenging assessments that allow students to see the benefits of writing. At the conclusion of my research, I would like to find that through using feedback, that students will be more engaged in the writing process for they will see a benefit to using quality feedback, for their achievement will improve.

I would like to start collecting data throughout the months of September to November. I would like to begin through providing students with the opportunity to provide insight into how they feel about feedback and their thoughts on what would help them to utilize feedback more to become better writers through completing surveys. Upon reviewing the surveys, I would then like to administer a writing sample that will allow students to interpret and understand quality feedback. They will be using their own writing sample to create a Question and Comment Paper that will prompt them to make sense of given feedback. Then I would like to assign their first essay of the study. During the course of the process of writing the essay, students will have the opportunity to provide and receive feedback from their peers and myself. Students will be keeping track of the feedback given and received via our Google Classroom page, as well as through the use of a feedback chart that I designed. Upon segmenting the essay, students are to write multiple drafts of each paragraph in order to then turn in a final product. Upon completion of this first essay, I will provide students with the opportunity to look at their collective class performance through a pie chart, wherein; I will conduct a discourse on what feedback was provided and how that compares with the class performance. At this time, I will also administer a mid-study survey to see if perceptions of the use of feedback have changed in order to have more comparison with how perceptions may have changed at the end of the study. I will then repeat this same process with a second essay. Both essays will be graded as per a rubric that both the curriculum and standards support. Lastly, upon completion of both essays, students will be give a post-study survey in order to determine their final impressions of the use of feedback through the writing process.

I will maintain student confidentiality and will be the only person to view the data. All students will be given pseudonyms. All data will be locked and secured during the duration of the study, and all data will be destroyed upon completion of the study. I need permission to use student data; therefore, if students do not wish to have their data used as a participant in the study, they will not be required to do so, and no penalty will be issued. All students will be fully engaged in the curriculum whether or not they opt to serve as participants in my teacher action research study.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at kteeling@belvideresd.org. You may also contact my professor, Dr. Joseph Shosh, at shoshj@moravian.edu. Thank you.

By signing below, I attest that I am the principal of the high school where the above-named student researcher is employed and will allow her to conduct her study in her tenth grade English classroom.

Principal, [REDACTED]

Date

iii. Parent/Guardian

Parent/Guardian Consent Form

Moravian College
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

September 28, 2016

Dear Parents/Guardians:

I, Kayla Teeling, am currently pursuing my Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Moravian College. The courses that I am taking, challenge me to critically look at my professional practice and make necessary changes in order to provide the best educational environment for my students. For this fall semester, I am taking the course that requires me to complete my Action Research Study. As part of this course, I am required to complete a research project that focuses on an area of my professional practice.

The area that I would like to focus on as part of my research project is improving my students' use of feedback during the writing process to improve their motivation to write and academic achievement. At the end of my research study, I would like to find that through using feedback, my students will be more engaged in the writing process for they will see a benefit to using quality feedback, for their achievement will improve.

All students will be working with me to improve their writing skills; however, participation in this study is entirely voluntary and will not affect a students' grade in any way. Those who participate in the study also have the option to withdraw from the study at any time, in which case none of their information will be used in my study. All names used in the study – including students' and the school – will be kept confidential by using pseudonyms in the final report. Only my name will appear in the study. All research materials will be secured in a protected location. The assessments will include two essays as well as student participation in providing feedback to their peers. In addition, students will be required to reflect on their feedback given through tracking their usage of the feedback as a means of improving student achievement. Lastly, students will be given three surveys (before, during, and after) throughout the study. Each survey focuses on student attitudes and perceptions of the writing process, with more focus specifically on making revisions to writing through using peer and teacher feedback. Additionally, the surveys will explore and measure student motivation, confidence, and ability to self-regulate learning while going through the writing process.

I will maintain student confidentiality and will be the only person to view the data. I need your permission to use data that I will collect throughout my study; therefore, if you do not wish to have your child's data used as a participant in the study, you will not be required to do so, and no penalty will be issued. All students will be fully engaged in the curriculum whether or not they opt to serve as participants in my teacher action research study.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at kteeling@belvideresd.org. You may also contact our principal, [REDACTED], or you may also contact my professor, Dr. Joseph Shosh, at shoshj@moravian.edu. Thank you.

By signing below, I attest that I am the parent/guardian of the student named below and that I have received a copy, read, and understand this consent form. Please check one.

Yes, I am willing to have my child participate in the action research study.

No, I am not willing to have my child participate in the action research study.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Student Name: _____

Date

iv. Participant Assent

Student Assent Form

Moravian College
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

September 28, 2016

Dear Student:

Just like you, I am also in school. I am currently pursuing my Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Moravian College. The courses that I am taking, challenge me to critically look at my professional practice and make necessary changes in order to provide the best educational environment for my students. For this fall semester, I am taking the course that requires me to complete my Action Research Study. As part of this course, I am required to complete a research project that focuses on an area of my professional practice.

The area that I would like to focus on as part of my research project is improving your use of feedback during the writing process to improve your motivation to write and academic achievement. At the end of my research study, I would like to find that through using feedback, that students will be more engaged in the writing process for they will see a benefit to using quality feedback, for their achievement will improve.

All of you will be working with me to improve your writing skills; however, participation in this study is entirely voluntary and will not affect your grade in any way. Those who participate in the study also have the option to withdraw from the study at any time, in which case none of your information will be used in my study. All names used in the study – including students' and the school – will be kept confidential by using pseudonyms in the final report. Only my name will appear in the study. All research materials will be secured in a protected location. The assessments will include two essays as well as your participation in providing feedback to your peers. In addition, you will be required to reflect on the feedback given through tracking your usage of the feedback as a means of improving your achievement. Lastly, students will be given three surveys (before, during, and after) throughout the study. Each survey focuses on student attitudes and perceptions of the writing process, with more focus specifically on making revisions to writing through using peer and teacher feedback. Additionally, the surveys will explore and measure student motivation, confidence, and ability to self-regulate learning while going through the writing process.

I will maintain student confidentiality and will be the only person to view the data. I need permission to use your data; therefore, if you do not wish to have your data used as a participant in the study, you will not be required to do so, and no penalty will be issued. All of you will be fully engaged in the curriculum whether or not you opt to serve as participants in my teacher action research study.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me, Kayla Teeling, at kteeling@belvideresd.org. You may also contact our principal, [REDACTED], or your guidance counselor [REDACTED].

By signing below, I attest that I am the student named below and that I have received a copy, read, and understand this consent form. Please check one.

Yes, I am willing to participate in the action research study.

No, I am not willing to participate in the action research study.

Student Signature

Date

Printed Student Name: _____