

Sponsoring Committee: Dr. Richard Grove, Moravian College
Mrs. Doris Correll, Moravian College
Mrs. Kelly Meyer, Bethlehem Area School District

The Write Stuff!: Improving Narrative Writing Through Interventions

Kristina Fontanez

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

2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
LIST OF FIGURES.....	vii
LIST OF TABLES.....	vi
RESEARCHER STANCE.....	1
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	6
Reason for Study.....	6
The Writing Process.....	9
Other important Processes.....	10
Modeling.....	12
Motivation.....	14
Engagement.....	15
Student Choice.....	16
Best Practices for Interventions.....	19
Summary.....	20
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.....	21
Setting.....	21
Participants.....	21
Data Sources.....	22
Questionnaires.....	22
Surveys.....	22
Interviews.....	23
Student Work.....	23
Field Log.....	23
Procedures.....	24
Trustworthiness.....	26
RESEARCH NARRATIVE.....	28
How Did I Get Here?.....	28
Getting Started.....	30
Planting Seeds.....	32
The Start of Interventions.....	34
Dialogue.....	35
Similes and Metaphors.....	36

	Onomatopoeia.....	37
	Personification and Idioms.....	39
	Alliteration and Exaggeration.....	42
	R.I.P. “Said”.....	43
	The Finale.....	44
DATA ANALYSIS.....		45
	Surveys.....	45
	Writing Rubrics.....	45
	Field Log.....	50
	Bins.....	51
THEME STATEMENTS.....		53
	Engagement and Successful Intervention Strategies.....	53
	Struggles and Intervention Plans.....	54
	Engagement and Intervention Plans.....	55
NEXT STEPS.....		57
REFERENCES.....		75
RESOURCES.....		79
APENDIXES		
A	HSIRB Approval Form.....	59
B	Principal Consent Form.....	60
C	Parent Consent Form English.....	61
D	Parent Consent Form Spanish.....	62
E	Student Assent Form.....	63
F	Asking Questions Graphic Organizer.....	64
G	Figurative Language Graphic Organizer.....	65
H	Questionnaire: Google Forms.....	66
I	Pre and Post Writing Survey.....	67
J	Interview Questions and Responses Snapshot.....	69
K	Field Log Snapshot.....	70
L	Student Work.....	71
M	Narrative Writing Rubric.....	74

ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study observed the behaviors and reported experiences of 15 fourth grade students' motivation to write personal narrative stories. The study was conducted in an urban elementary school on the Southside of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. To motivate the students and encourage their desire to improve their narratives, the students worked in small intervention groups each day with their classmates for approximately 8 weeks. The students were instructed through mini-lessons once a week with the teacher and collaborated in their small groups on the other days. The students were given the opportunity to choose an event in their lives that they wanted to develop into a personal narrative. The students worked together to help each other throughout the writing process as they edited and created new drafts of their narratives. Before this study, the students lacked motivation in writing.

Data were collected throughout the study through many different methods. These methods included student surveys, observations, student interviews, and the students' narrative drafts. Through analyzing the data, it became evident that the Intervention groups were successfully implemented to create a motivating learning environment. The students narrative stories improved tremendously from the begin stages to their final drafts. Student engagement through interventions was exemplified in student surveys.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Students:

I would first like to thank my students who participated in this research study. Without their struggles and successes, I would not have been able to complete this study productively.

Moravian:

Thank you Dr. Grove for always believing in me, and helping me find my way when I felt very lost in my study. To my colleagues at school, I want to thank them for the countless conversations and support. On days where things seemed impossible, they were there to brainstorm and to be a sounding board. And a special thanks to Kelly Meyer and Doris Corell for your help and support in the final steps of completing my thesis.

Family:

Thank you to my parents who have always been there to love and support me throughout my life's journey. Thank you my husband who has loved and supported me at home and was there to watch our daughter Liana so I could go to class and get my work done. Thank you to Liana who was so patiently waiting for mommy to finish her work so I could play with her.

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1 Overview of findings from Literature.....	8
Figure 2.2 Purpose of the Studies.....	18
Figure 4.1: Popplet example of my “seeds”.....	33
Figure 4.2: Student Interviews.....	35
Figure 4.3: Student Interview Responses.....	37
Figure 4.4: Google Classroom Survey Responses.....	38
Figure 4.5: Students responses to Google Classroom Questionnaire.....	41
Figure 5.1: Post-Survey Responses.....	48
Figure 5.2 Bins.....	52

LIST OF TABLES

Table 5.1 Pre Writing Survey Results.....	46
Table 5.2 Post Writing Survey Results.....	46
Table 5.3: Writing Rubric Rough Draft/Final Draft Scores.....	50

RESEARCHERS STANCE

Adulthood. It all started when I began my freshman year of high school and my parents told me that I had to get a summer job. I applied for a position at my town's summer day camp. That summer, I began working as a camp counselor for summer Rec-n-Crew camp at the public park for the 3rd and 4th graders. That is when I realized how much I liked working with kids. I could play all day with them, and they loved to hang out with me. They looked up to me like an older sibling, and to them I was a rock star. I loved when they asked me questions about my life, and my opinions about things in life. I made a real connection with the kids that summer, and a passion for teaching arose. Every summer after that for six years, I went back to working at the camp. I mostly stayed with the secondary kids and eventually moved up to 5th and 6th graders, which I enjoyed just as much! As I continued to work there, year after year, I moved up from being a counselor, to a site supervisor, and eventually the camp director. I loved my time working at summer camp because it did not feel like "work" to me.

It was not until the summer going into my senior year of college that it dawned on me that I should change my major to do something I was passionate about. That is when I decided to become a teacher (a little late in the game, but I did not care). During the spring semester of my senior year in college, I decided

to fill my schedule with two education courses to see if I enjoyed the teaching field better than that of my current major, business management.

The spring of 2007, I walked into my first education course and I knew in an instant that I was where I belonged. Everyone around me seemed to have the same interests and similar personalities as me. My fellow classmates and I bonded right away. For one of my classes, I had to complete observation hours in an elementary school during the semester. On the first day of my observations, I walked in and met the little kindergarteners and immediately felt compelled to pursue teaching. After observing the teacher on the first day, I realized that it was the place where I could actually be myself. The kids were so innocent and as a teacher you could make jokes and act silly, but at the same time, the students knew when it was time to be serious. Once the students had left, I told the teacher my situation and how I was graduating in a few short months in a different field. She sat down to talk with me to tell me that it was never too late to follow your dream and that teaching is such an amazing job to have. After that, I took her advice and went back to college in the fall, to complete my Elementary Certification, post baccalaureate.

I wanted to become an educator to help kids see that learning can be fun. I wanted to make school fun for them so that they would enjoy coming every day. I really enjoyed school when I was a child, so I wanted to give other kids that same experience that I had. I also didn't want to have a cubicle job where I sat at my

desk all day. I wanted to do something where I was on my feet and could be me without hesitation. Teaching allows me to have fun and gives me the opportunity to show my personality through my classroom environment and instruction.

It is now my fifth year teaching and fourth year at a Title 1 school. Working in a high poverty school is hard and comes with many adversities. Teaching in these conditions has really opened my eyes to the way of life that my students encounter everyday. Talking with students and families has given me a perspective of how different their lives are, given my background of growing up in a rural town in NJ. My students face many curricular challenges regarding curriculum and I believe that poverty has a lot to do with that. Many of my students do not perform at grade level and have difficulty “keeping up” with the fourth grade curriculum. Because of this, I face many challenges in modifying the curriculum to their instructional level. In addition, I feel that I am constantly building background knowledge which many of my students lack. Several of my students have high-needs when it comes to learning and I have found that I connect best with them through small group instruction.

From my experiences in the classroom, small groups have helped students learn multiple learning strategies. Formulating groups in my classroom allows me to scaffold lessons across multiple subjects. During reading, I am able to instruct my students on their independent reading levels by grouping them with other

students who are on a similar reading level. In my reading groups I can help students understand the text and prompt them to apply different reading strategies that will help them become independent readers. I have found that small group instruction and cooperative learning opportunities have had a significant impact on student achievement in my classroom. When I utilized small group instruction across multiple subjects, such as math, I found that when the lesson was implemented effectively my students were able to work independently. However, the stamina for this type of independent work doesn't happen immediately. It takes time at the beginning of the school year to build student stamina through progressively increasing the amount of time they spend in small group instruction. The students working at grade level need less instruction from me, and are able to work more independently or with peers.

Another important characteristic of small group instruction that I have come to learn is how to use assessments appropriately. Giving summative assessments is one of the greatest assets to differentiating instruction strategies. Offering these assessments in small groups helps to find out what students have mastered and what they are still struggling with. It also provides information on how I can adapt configurations to best meet the needs of all learners. Smaller learning groups and one-on-one instruction can promote this targeted type of learning environment where students can gain more confidence and I can tackle specific needs.

My experience as a teacher has pointed me in the direction of researching about the ways my students feel about learning and how I can engage them in school. My students face many challenges particularly in writing and much of it comes from their lack of grammar knowledge and vocabulary exposure. In addition, my students also lack the motivation to write. When students are given writing prompts or topics to write about, they struggle to come up with ideas. Surprisingly, they even struggle with writing about events that have happened in their own lives! This struggle leads to discouragement in their writing because my students do not know how to begin a story or how to write about their own life.

My past experience with small groups has led me to my research question which is, How can I motivate my students in writing while helping them enhance their narrative stories by using small group interventions? The intervention topics included: dialogue, conventions, grammar usage, punctuation, spelling and figurative language. As Jesus-Nicasio Garcia and Ana Maria de Caso state, “Low-achieving students and/or students with disabilities can learn strategies to produce high-quality written work. Also, by motivating students they will produce better quality work and have a greater self-esteem.” (de Caso, A. M., Garcia, J. N., Diez, C., Robledo, P., & Alvarez, M. L., 2010, p. 195). Using the proposed intervention topics for students, which includes using a positive emotional environment and supportive context for writing, will show an increase in motivation towards writing, greater than that of students who receive traditional instruction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reason For The Study

There is a lot of research that has been conducted to prove that students from low-income families experience difficulties in performing adequately in school. In addition, limited vocabulary development is also related to social-economic demographics as well as the overall school performance (Dunn & Finley, 2010). The use of effective strategies and overall knowledge play a significant role in the outcomes of elementary writers. The instruction should be explicitly taught in the specific strategy, and should promote creativity as well as self-regulation. Targeting the aforementioned challenges will help the students become better writers in general (Graham, Kiuvara, McKeown, & Harris, 2012).

“Writing is such a valuable tool for communication, learning, and self expression, therefore students who do not have adequate writing skills will be at a great disadvantage and will face restricted opportunities for education and even for employment” (Robinson & Feng, 2016, p. 2). Writing is a very important skill that will benefit students for the rest of their lives. It is present in all subjects from math to reading to science and social studies.

The writing process is the essential way to teach students the backbone of writing. Many research-based instructional strategies have been found to be effective in encouraging students in the writing process, therefore resulting in the improvement of overall writing performance. Some of these strategies include

scaffolding, student-choice, modeling, and motivation. All of these strategies are focused around self-efficacy. Introducing writing by including engaging activities can promote confidence and a life-long love of writing. As Fraser, (2006) put it, “For children, there is the freedom to express themselves through the narratives they construct” (p. 107). The more motivated and engaged the students are to learn, the better their writing will be. Writing skills are important for all elementary students’ continued learning in all academic areas, communication and self-expression. After thoroughly analyzing a vast number of peer reviewed research articles and journals, I have found many studies that relate to my research question: How can I motivate my students in writing, while helping them enhance their narrative stories by using small group interventions?

Figure 2.1 shows many different common themes and terms that I discovered when I researched a variety of studies based on writing. Motivation, self-efficacy and attraction to writing were all considered using different strategies. These include, small group interventions, the use of attractive materials, thinking maps, multimodal expressions and relevant material.

Student engagement is proven through use of computers, creating a friendly environment, encouragement and open-ended activities for students to express themselves. Student choice in topics was proven to give them a sense of ownership. Lastly, providing organized writing processes for students to follow helps them edit, revise and finalize their writing.

Findings: Key terms, Concepts, Theories	Studies
Motivation, Self-efficacy, Attraction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small group interventions • Attractive material • Thinking maps • Multimodal expressions • Relevant Material 	Garcia & Caso, 2004; Fan, 2016; Darrington & Dousay, 2015; Fraser, 2006
Student Expression <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metaphors 	Darrington & Dousay, 2015
Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computers • Friendly Environment • Encouragement • Open-ended activities 	Carver & Todd, 2016; Garcia & Caso, 2004; Fraser, 2006,
Student Choice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multimodal Choice • Topics • Instructional Choice 	Darrington & Dousay, 2015; Johnson, 2004; Lane, Royer, Messenger, Common, Ennis & Swogger, 2015; Lane, 2015
Writing Stages/Processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing process • Gradual release process • Green's six-stage process 	Garcia & Caso, 2004; Read, Landon-Hays & Martin-Rivas, 2014; Algozzine & Diliberto, 2004
Self Efficacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility • Effort 	Darrington & Dousay, 2015; Garcia & Caso, 2004

Figure 2.1 Overview of findings from studies of literature categorized around writing.

The Writing Process

It all begins with the writing process. “One promising approach to enhancing the writing skills of students is to directly teach them strategies for carrying out basic writing processes such as planning, drafting, and revising” (Robinson & Feng, 2016). Writing is a subject that often seems to be one of the most challenging for students to excel at (De la Paz & Graham, 2002). Minimal research has been conducted on the writing process combined with motivation. Combining the writing process with student motivation will help improve the content of their writing (Garcia, de Caso, 2004). Teachers normally introduce the writing process around student choice of topics and instruct the students commensurate to individual needs (Lewin, 1992). This could mean instructing them in a whole group or in small groups based on their writing skills. On the contrary, students struggling with the writing process seem to develop a negative view of writing as well as a negative image of their own abilities to write effectively (Robinson & Feng). In addition, students develop a form of “learned helplessness” (Gair, 2015). Students who do not believe they can write, do not write well. They do not know how to grow and motivate themselves to write independently. These same students rely on the teacher to motivate and encourage them to write, rather than writing from within themselves.

Calkins and Ehrenworth (2016) argue that students need to be taught the way professional writers write. The writing process is just as important to young

writers as it is to advanced professionals. All types of writers should be doing some sort of collecting or planning; then drafting, followed by revising and editing before writing another draft (Calkins & Ehrenworth). These researchers state, “The writing process is a learned skill. It comes from many hours spent writing a lot” (p.8). If kids learn the writing process when they are young, it will be more automatic as they grow older. In order to teach the writing process, they further argue that writers need time given to them to write, student choice of topics to write about and responses from peers or other writers about their writing (Calkins & Ehrenworth). In addition, students giving feedback to each other through a peer response strategy brings positive benefits to the writing process (Gair, 2015).

Other Important Processes

Along with the writing process, Jennifer Dilberto (2004) has done research on combining *Green's Masterpiece Sentences Six-Stage Process* in conjunction with the writing process to improve descriptive sentences for students who struggle with writing. The six-step process begins with a simple sentence with a base subject and predicate. In the second step, the students dissemble the predicate. They do this by answering, How? When? And Where? After answering the questions, the students create a new sentence with the newfound information. The third step of the process is to rearrange the new description words to replace the original predicate until the writer finds the perfect order of the words. The

fourth step in the process is to generate more detail about the subject. The questions that should be answered are, which? What kind? And how many? The students then add these new details to the reworked sentence to create a new one. In the fifth step, the students find synonyms for the descriptive words chosen, to see if there are words that would give the reader even more detail. Finally, the finishing touches to the sentence is to correct any grammar, spelling or punctuation mistakes. *Green's Masterpiece Sentence Six-stage Process* can be used in conjunction with the writing process (Algozzine & Diliberto, 2004). It can definitely be incorporated into the editing and revising stages of the writing process.

Read, Landon-Hays, and Martin-Rivas (2014) introduced a process that can be used in place of the writing process, this is known as the *Gradual Release* strategy. Effective teaching should involve teachers inquiring with students about a topic then, modeling writing and thinking to the students. Afterward, writing with students through shared writing, then giving them the chance to write collaboratively before writing on their own. This process of Inquire, Model, Share, Collaborate and Independent work is known as the IMSCI model. This model has been very successful in scaffolding the writing process of persuasive texts. Research has demonstrated that modeling writing can be influential to scaffold for students. The process is described as the following:

- First, teachers need to decide which curriculum topics would be the most engaging for the students to learn about.
- Next, they need to plan for the inquiry, based on the type of writing the students will compose. They need to decide when and how the students will write, whether collaboratively, independently or both.
- After that, the teacher will model each step in the writing process for the students, “thinking” aloud while she/he writes.
- Lastly, the students will write, edit, revise and complete their final draft independently.

The IMSCI model has proven to help improve the writing instruction for teachers, which will lead to more proficient writers in their classrooms (Read, Landon-Hays, & Martin-Rivas, 2014).

Modeling

Modeling (Calkins & Ehrenworth, 2016) is a technique used to teach students how to do something such as writing. Modeling includes demonstrating behaviors, language usage and expectations that sets the rules to day-to-day experiences. When a teacher performs modeling, it sets boundaries and expectations within the lesson that is being taught. Modeling writing is a way of demonstrating the behaviors that are expected by showing what writing looks like as a writer completes the text.

Calkins (2016) points out, “The objective of composing before children is to make explicit what children ordinarily can’t see: how words go down on paper, and the thoughts that go with the decision made in the writing” (Read, Landon-

Hays, & Martin-Rivas, 2014, p. 470). Students need to see modeling of writing in order to learn how to think as they write. Modeling is helpful in showing students how to think like a writer (Read, 2014). In their research, Calkins & Ehrenworth have proven that when teachers model what they are thinking aloud, as they are writing stories, or essays, students do better when they have to write on their own. Watching the teacher model gives students the spatial and auditory learning strategies that many students need in order to perform well.

Both modeling texts by reading aloud, and the teacher modeling writing, together, have proven to be influential scaffolds for students. The more exposure to this technique means more chances that students will succeed in writing independently (Read, 2014). All writers need to understand how to write. Teachers will not understand the difficulties of writing for their students if they are not writers themselves. They will not experience the hopes or fears of writing first hand, if they are not independent writers on their own (Gair, 2015). This is why modeling for students is necessary for them to reflect on their own writing to know how to help students.

In addition to modeling, students need the time and the tools to create good writing. This should not be about narrowing the responsibility to teach writing, but rather space for students to think (Fraser, 2006). Students benefit from multiple examples of strategies, extended practice, and ongoing feedback (Dunn & Finley, 2010).

Motivation

In 2016, Fan (2016) discusses *Thinking Maps* as a way to “attract” the students that struggle in writing. It helps them organize their thoughts, timing and skills. The attraction of the students to writing is what motivates them to be on task and write well. Another theory on motivation that is brought up by Garcia and Caso (2004) is that “...if we motivate students and make the context in which they learn attractive, they will learn to produce better texts than would have been the case using typical classroom teaching” (p. 142). Teachers should create writing lessons around relevant learning material for the students in addition to making it about topics they like. Keeping the topics authentic, and incorporating real-life topics can be engaging for students because it gives their writing a sense of meaning. Challenging tasks can also be motivating for the students as well as creating environments for independent work (Darrington & Dousay, 2015).

Fraser (2006) states that using metaphors in their writing gives students the chance to express themselves through powerful descriptions. Metaphoric writing draws the imagination out of the writer with expressive thought through the use of common or uncommon phrases. Another way to motivate students in writing is using multimodal writing to increase motivation for struggling students to write. Darrington and Dousay (2015) agree that “Overall, multimodal works were found to be motivating to students as compared to traditional, paper-based

writing assignments” (p.29). This can easily be applied to any type of writing.

Giving the students a computer to type a story or piece of writing has proven to be more engaging than the traditional pencil and paper.

Encouragement is also motivating for young writers. Students who get stuck or mentally shut down, need a little encouragement to keep going. All students get frustrated at some point, especially students with learning disabilities. When students with learning disabilities were encouraged to write more or use outlines to help organize their thoughts in their stories, they were able to write more and create a more structured story (De La Paz, 1999).

Engagement

Engagement is another way to look at motivation in students when talking about writing. Computers can be a source of engagement for students to write. Carver and Todd (2016) conducted a study to see if computers were more engaging for students. “In this study, students seemed to be engaged or focused more on the computer than they would have been normally using paper and pencil to write” (Carver and Todd, 2016, p.118). Implementing activities that are engaging for the students can be powerful when it comes to student interest. In addition, Garcia and Caso (2004) also discovered that engagement for students could be found using a student friendly environment. For example, having the students set goals, use frameworks and giving them support in their writing, all help to create a positive emotional environment for them. Moreover, giving

students specific goals can have a positive effect on the quality of their writing (Graham, Kiuahara, McKeown, & Harris, 2012). In order for students to achieve high quality writing, encouraging them as they are writing, giving them positive feedback and offering advice on how to improve their writing will help them become successful writers. Moreover, encouraging self-belief within themselves would help encourage students to focus on their writing tasks.

Students are also engaged when they have the chance to be creative. When teachers introduce and allow students to practice writing with engaging activities in elementary school, they will be able to foster confidence and hopefully a lifelong love of writing (Robinson & Feng, 2016). Fraser, (2006), states that, “Having open-ended activities helps to encourage creativity for solutions with is engaging for students. It invites personal and multiple interpretations in the ending of the story” (p. 2). In other words, giving students the time to try new ideas where they do not feel rushed to complete the task will help improve their end results.

Student Choice

In addition to modeling, motivation and engagement, student choice has also been an area of best practice to help students excel in writing.

Csikszentmihalyi (1998) has seen creativity as something that needs to be found within each student. Giving the students a choice in their writing helps to foster this creativity. The question is, how can creativity be flourished within a lesson

and at the same time, make sure the students are stimulated and challenged (Fraser, 2006, p. 94)?

Student choice ties in nicely with both themes of motivation and engagement. It is part of a motivational-enhancement in writing and creates a positive emotional environment for students. When it comes to student choice, students feel like they have some control over what their learning. Students need to feel that type of ownership by given the choice on what to write (Lewin, 1992). Furthermore, choice and self-sufficiency are certainly connected to motivation for students. Giving the students a choice on how they want to write can have a huge impact on the quantity and quality of their writing.

In addition to having a choice of how to write, it is proven that giving them a choice on the topics to write about also has been successful. Johnson (2004) argued, that having a choice between different themes means more students would have a greater chance of finding topics that are eye-catching to them. Furthermore, having basic instructional choices can also lead to engagement in writing and other daily tasks for students. Instructional choice is giving students opportunities to make choices between two or more options, and the students have chosen one of the options (Lane, Royer, Messenger, Common, Ennis & Swogger, 2015). For teachers, instructional choice should not be something extra on their plate; it should make exposure to writing more enjoyable.

Figure 2.2 shows the purpose of the literature review with a list arguments made by each study. This was an important outline to help distinguish between the purpose of the studies and to create a reasonable argument for conducting my study.

Purpose of Lit Review	Argument Steps	Relevant References
Historical Background	Little research done on writing processes and the motivation associated with it	Almargot & Chauquoy, 2001 in Garcia, de <u>Caso</u> , 2004, p. 141
	Modeling is helpful in showing students how to think like a writer	Donald Graves, 1983 in Read, 2014, p. 470 Knudson, 1991; Graham & <u>Perin</u> , 2007, in Read, 2014 p. 475
Contemporary Context	Student choice helps improve motivation	Fraser, 2006 p. 94; <u>Doty</u> & <u>Csizer</u> , 1998 in Read, 2014, p. 476; Johnson, 2004, p. 96; Lane & Royer, 2015, p.475,482, 483
	Motivation and engagement help students improve writing skills and better outcomes	Garcia, de <u>Caso</u> , 2004, p. 142; <u>Darrington</u> & <u>Dousay</u> , 2015, p. 29
Theories and concepts	Introduce IMSCI Model – Inquiry, Modeling, Shared writing, Collaborative writing, Independent writing	Read, 2014, p. 471
	Introduce Green’s Masterpiece Sentences Six-Stage Process - improving descriptive sentences	<u>Diliberto</u> , 2004, p. 34
	<i>Writing process</i> – Ask, Reflect, Text and idea generation, grammar, paragraphing, and story structure	Dunn & Finley, 2010, p. 40
	<i>Scaffolding/Interventions</i> – help show an increase in motivation towards writing, also boosts confidence and gives students more attention	Garcia, de <u>Caso</u> , 2004, p. 142; Read, 2014, p. 476
	<i>Motivation/Engagement</i> with attractive content will help students produce better texts	Garcia, de <u>Caso</u> , 2004, p. 142; <u>Darrington</u> & <u>Dousay</u> , 2015, p. 29
	<i>Self-efficacy</i> - Overall, students who are motivated through engaging texts have a better chance of improving self-efficacy.	Garcia, de <u>Caso</u> , 2004, p. 155
	<i>Student Choice</i> – open-ended activities encourage creativity	Fraser, 2006 p. 94; <u>Doty</u> & <u>Csizer</u> , 1998 in Read, 2014, p. 476; Johnson, 2004, p. 96; Lane & Royer, 2015, p.475,482, 483
Previous research and its limitations	Lack of listed resources for Interventions that were successful	Garcia, de <u>Caso</u> , 2004, p. 142; Fraser, 2006 p. 94
	Little research done on the connection between motivating writing and the writing process together	Garcia, de <u>Caso</u> , 2004, p. 141
The significance of the issue being researched	Many teachers neglect writing altogether	Beck & Jeffery, 2007; Coker & Lewis, 2008, Graham & <u>Perin</u> , 2007; Graham & Harris, 2005; <u>Nagin</u> , 2003; Read 2014, p. 469

Figure 2.2. Overview of the purpose of the studies and the arguments that they identify and investigate

Best Practice for Interventions

Small-group interventions are a good option for all types of writers. Likewise, Garcia and de Caso (2004) state, “This helps students with learning disabilities who experience problems with a lower self-efficacy, negative motivational pattern and lower self-esteem” (p.142). Students are more motivated when teachers encourage them to do their best in a small group setting. According to Dunn and Finley (2010), best practice with interventions is to provide writing instruction between twenty to thirty minutes a day, over ten to twenty weeks. This has proven to help improve writing for regular education students and for students with learning disabilities.

Gair (2015), introduced the scaffolding theory where he believed that students learn best from the direct support of adults, however, as the students begin to grow as independent thinkers, less support was then needed from an adult. The support then shifted from the teacher to knowledgeable peers. In other words, placing students in small groups where they can gain knowledge from interacting with each other is beneficial (Gair, 2015). When students are introduced to specific writing strategies, the use of scaffolding becomes helpful for successful writers. Being able to break apart concepts into smaller lessons for the students to learn, gives them more time to focus on the specifics of their writing (De La Paz, 1999).

Summary

“Researchers have argued that writing strategies, knowledge, skills, and motivation all play an important role in students’ growth as writers. Because of the ways in which affective and cognitive processes interact with writing, it is important that interventions for developing writing ability focus on strategies for developing both motivation and cognitive processes” (Garcia & DeCaso, 2004, p. 156). Many research-based instructional strategies have been found to be effective in encouraging students in the writing process therefore improving their overall writing performance. There is a lack of research combining writing interventions for narrative writing, with engagement within specific student instruction. Encouragement and teacher modeling are necessary when teaching the writing process in order to attain success in writing. Giving the students choice on a topic will help motivate them to promote self-efficacy. Finally, incorporating *Green’s Masterpiece Sentences Six-Stage Process* as demonstrated by Algozzine and Diliberto, in 2004 and the *Gradual Release* strategy explained by Read, Landon-Hays and Martin-Rivas in 2014 both show that within the small group interventions improvement in the students’ narrative writing should be evident.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

I conducted a nine-week study on small group interventions to help motivate my students in writing. The students were arranged into five pre-selected groups based on their writing abilities. These groups allowed for differentiated instruction when working one-on-one with me. The students chose an event in their life that they wanted to turn into a personal narrative story. Each week, the groups met with me for mini writing lessons and for help throughout the writing process.

Setting

My study took place in an urban school in eastern Pennsylvania. Of approximately 525 students who attend the school, 96 percent of the school is economically disadvantaged. The population of the students is almost 81 percent Hispanic, ten percent Black or African American and six percent White. About 18 percent of the students are ESOL students and 15 percent are special education students. In the district, there are 16 elementary schools, four middle schools and two high schools. There are approximately 14,000 students and 1,500 teachers in the district.

Participants

The participants included twenty-two students from my homeroom class, fourteen boys and eight girls. I was fortunate to have them all agree to the student assent form to participate in my study (Appendix E). However, only fifteen of the

twenty-two students returned their parent consent forms by the time they were due (Appendix C-D). There were eight boys and seven girls who participated in this nine-week action research study. I will only be discussing the progress of these fifteen students throughout this paper even though all twenty-two students participated in the small group writing interventions. All of the students wrote a personal narrative and they all had the chance to work in small groups with me throughout the writing process.

Data Sources

Questionnaires: (Appendix H) The students were given online questionnaires through Google Forms. They had to sign into the teacher's Google Classroom to find the Google Forms questionnaires. Then, each student had to respond to the questions using both multiple choice and open-ended formatted questions. I was notified through my Google Classroom once the students responded to the questionnaire. Direct quotes were taken from the open-ended questions in the questionnaires and used in this study.

Surveys: (Appendix I) The students were given writing surveys prior to the study so that I could determine which students enjoyed writing. The survey also helped me determine what types of writing the students liked and whether they liked to share their work with their classmates or not. In concluding the study, the students took the same writing survey to see if their opinions about writing had changed from the beginning.

Interviews: (Appendix J) The students were interviewed throughout the small group interventions to see if they were more motivated and engaged while working in a small groups with me, rather than the whole group. The students would be asked two or three questions at the conclusion of the lessons. The interviews also helped me determine if the students needed extra support on their narratives or not.

Student Work: (Appendix K) The students had multiple narrative drafts throughout this study. They began creating a list of “seeds” of the events in their lives. Then they completed a graphic organizer of who, what, when, where, why and how about the event of their choosing (Appendix F). After that, they began writing their rough drafts in their writing journals, and then they edited and rewrote new drafts as well. The writing process that was used requires the students to edit and rewrite their personal narrative stories multiple times until they come to their final draft. Eventually, the students typed their drafts to make it easier to edit and change things in their narratives.

Field Log: (Appendix J) A weekly log was kept to record student observations during the small group interventions. This is where quotes as well as actions were recorded, in order to keep an organized list of the participation during the study. The field log was updated as often as possible each week to keep an ongoing list of the data that was being collected.

Procedures

To begin my action research study, I first planned and completed my proposal to apply to the Human Services Internal Review Board (HSIRB) (Appendix A). Next, I requested permission from my building principal to conduct my research (Appendix B). After that, I explained in “child-friendly” terms what my study was about to my students so that I could get consent from them (Appendix E) as well as their parents. The parental consent form was sent home in both English and Spanish to accommodate the home language of some families (Appendix C and Appendix D). Once I had permission from all of the participating parties, my principal and the approval from the HSIRB, I began my research with the steps described below. The study took place over the course of nine-weeks for about 30-minutes each day.

The following is a week-by-week timeline of my study:

Week 1 - 9/4/17

- Explained my study to the students in “kid-friendly” language, handed out the student consent forms. Read over the form as the students filled it out (Appendix E)
- Handed out parent consent forms to be sent home (Appendixes C and D)
- Collected parent consent forms (Appendixes C and D)
- Students completed the Writing Survey (Appendix I)
- Students brainstormed topics for narratives
- Students learned how to begin their narrative writings by creating seeds of their lives
- I modeled my Popplet example on the “seeds” of my own life
- Students chose their top choice for their narrative topics
- Students filled out the Asking Questions Graphic Organizer (Appendix F)
- Students were divided into writing groups
- Students began writing their rough drafts in their writing journals

Week 2 - 9/11/17

- Students finished writing their rough drafts in their writing journals
- Students listened to *Fireflies* by Julie Brinckloe. I pointed out the similes, metaphors, descriptive language and dialogue
- Students watched a video on using dialogue
- Students completed a worksheet to practice using quotations
- Students filled in the dialogue page of their figurative language packet by adding an example

Week 3 - 9/25/17

- Students edited their first drafts by adding dialogue and descriptive language to it
- Students wrote their second drafts in their writing journals making sure to add quotation marks when people are talking

Week 4 - 10/2/17

- Students learned more about similes and metaphors by watching a video
- Students completed a worksheet where they had to find all of the similes and metaphors
- Students completed an activity on creating both similes and metaphors
- Students added a simile or metaphor to their narrative story
- Students filled in the simile and metaphor pages of their figurative language packet (Appendix G) by adding an example for each

Week 5 - 10/16/17

- Students watched a video on onomatopoeia
- Students completed a worksheet on onomatopoeia
- Students filled in the onomatopoeia page of their figurative language packet by adding an example
- Students added at least one onomatopoeia word to their narrative stories
- Students began typing their second drafts on the computer in a Google Doc

Week 6 - 10/30/17

- Students finish typing their second draft, which is now their third draft
- Students read a poem on personification
- Students learned about idioms, by watching a YouTube video
- Students filled in the personification page and idioms page of their figurative language packet by adding an examples and illustrations
- Students added a personification line to their narrative stories
- Students added an idiom to their narrative stories

Week 7 - 11/6/17

- Students learned alliteration and exaggeration through videos
- Students completed worksheets on alliteration and exaggeration
- Students filled in the alliteration and exaggeration pages of their figurative language packet by adding a examples of both
- Students added either alliteration or exaggeration to their narrative stories in Google Docs

Week 8 - 11/13/17

- Students took an online survey about working in groups (Appendix H)
- Students learned basic editing marks with an editing chart
- Students edited their printed drafts with a colored pen
- Students were given a list of synonyms for “said”
- Students peer edited the printed drafts with a different colored pen
- Students began editing and fixing their third drafts

Week 9 – 11/20/17

- Students finished editing their third drafts
- Students’ final drafts were printed, reviewed by them and handed in to be graded by me with the narrative writing rubric (Appendix M)
- Students designed a cover sheet with a title for their narratives
- Students took the writing survey (Appendix I)

Trustworthiness Statement

To ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the results in this study, I have followed ethical guidelines. First off, I obtained written permission from the Moravian College’s Human Subject Internal Review Board (Appendix A). In addition, the principal of my school gave me written permission to conduct my study (Appendix B). Further, the students’ parents signed a consent form for their child to partake in my study (Appendixes C and D). I explained in my letter to the parents that I would only use the data from those students who had permission to participate in my study. Students’ names would be protected by pseudonyms.

It also states that the students could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Lastly, all study data and materials will be kept in a safe and secure place until the conclusion of the study. In addition, the students also sign an assent form to participate in my study (Appendix E). I explained my research project to them in kid friendly terms that they would understand.

Once the majority of the consent forms were returned the study began. During the study, I remained open to biases and multiple points of views from the data. I did this by discussing my study with colleagues and classmates in my researcher classes (Hendricks, 2009). A prolonged period of my study helped identify the overall effects of my small group writing interventions (Hendricks, 2009). I used triangulation to support my data resources and ensure the validity of my study. The data collected included student surveys, student artifacts, student conferences and observational data using a field log. There were two surveys given to the students, one at the beginning of the study and one at the end to see if the students' opinions changed about writing. I also used interviews to cognize students' opinions on the interventions that were most engaging to the students. Ethicality was present in my study by the constant observations and changes made to the study to meet the needs of my students.

RESEARCH NARRATIVE

“No one can tell your story, so tell it yourself. No one can write your story, so write it yourself.” – Unknown

How Did I Get Here?

In my five years of teaching, I have noticed that students struggle with motivation when it comes to writing. Each year, I begin my writing class with high expectations that my students will enjoy writing as much as I did. And every year, I seem to be disappointed. There are usually four or five students who enjoy writing, out of the 20-25 students. Others are extremely needy and want me to spell every word for them. In addition, the majority of the students fall somewhere in the middle where they are motivated to write some days depending on the topic, but other days they want nothing to do with it. Overall, they seem to need a lot of guidance when it comes to writing.

My school is located in eastern, Pennsylvania in an urban setting. It is a Title 1 school with approximately 96 percent of the students receiving free breakfast and lunch. Over the years, I have noticed that because of the population of my students, they seem to lack the experiences and knowledge compared to other students their age from the same setting. In addition, this has contributed to the lack of background knowledge, which in turn, has affected their writing habits. This is an example of how their economic isolation can lead to the lack of independent initiative especially when it comes to writing. Many students get shy

and embarrassed to share what they have written, and a lot of that comes from the lack of confidence they have in themselves to write diligently.

These are all reasons why I decided to do my study on motivating fourth grade students to enjoy writing by engaging them in the writing process to help improve their personal narrative stories. In the past, I would teach personal narrative writing as a whole group and I would spend a lot of time circling around the room in order to help each student with the steps in the writing process. Writing was the most frustrating time of my day. I was by myself, teaching 20 something students. I had to do my best to divide up my time in order to make it fair for all of the students in the class. And every year, I seemed to fail at this. The most needy students gobbled up the majority of my time, the early finishers would be done before I even got the chance to conference with them about their rough drafts. My stress level would continue to increase day after day during writing. I was making the same mistakes over and over again. That is why I knew I had to make a change.

After getting to know the students during the first week of school on a personal level, it was helpful to have them respond to different writing prompts so that I could get to know them on a writing level. I know every teacher begins the school year with a perspective of each student on the social level, but then that changes after getting to know your students on an academic level. It's important for me as an intermediate grade-level teacher to understand my students on an

academic level early on in the school year. This helps me to plan my instruction as well as grouping in different subject areas. For my study, it was imperative that I determine which writing levels my students were on by early September.

The first writing lesson they did was to write a letter to tell me what they did over summer break. From the first writing sample, I felt like I had a pretty good idea of the writing ability of each student. Spelling, grammar and letter formatting are all things that incoming fourth graders should be pretty good at. It was easy to distinguish between the on-level, approaching and advanced writers.

Getting Started

It was September 4th, and I was ready to get the ball rolling on my study. I was anxious and excited to explain my study to the students. *“Boys and girls, I need your help with a special project.”* I had all of their eyes looking at me with attention when I asked them this question, *“Who would like to help me with something? I have to do a research project for my school”*. I continued. Some of them looked at me with confusion, and wanted to know what I was talking about. I began explaining our upcoming writing unit and how I wanted to try something new this year. I could tell that many of them were excited to get the one-on-one time with me during this lengthy writing process. After explaining my study in “kid friendly” terms, and answering all of the questions they had for me, I passed out a half sheet of paper to all of the students (See Appendix E).

I asked the students to put their names on their papers, and to place a check next to one of the sentences. Then I collected all of the responses. To my surprise, *ALL* of my students agreed to partake in my study! However, the challenging part was to get the parents to consent as well. That same day, I sent the Parent Consent Form home with all of my students (Appendixes C and D). I told them that, whoever can get it signed and returned to me by Friday, would be part of my study. I also used Class Dojo to send a picture of the parent consent form to all of the parents to let them know about my study as well. That way, the parents knew what to expect from their child that day.

The very same day, the students began by taking the initial writing survey (Appendix H). This writing survey told me some good information about my students. It told me if the students liked writing, whether they liked to share their writing with others, if they pre-wrote and edited their writing previously and if they like to know what others think about their writing. This writing survey was a baseline to see how my students felt before the narrative writing unit began. From the initial writing survey I was able to tell that the majority of the students like to write in general. Almost half of the students thought they were good writers prior to the narrative writing unit. A little more than half of the students said that they like to plan before they wrote. In addition, almost half of the students said they like to write about things they have learned.

Planting The Seeds

The next day, September 5th, I introduced the personal narrative writing unit by sharing my Popplet life story with my “seeds” projected on the whiteboard (Figure 4.1). I went through each event in my life and explained how I added the month or just the season and year that the event occurred. The students were able to ask questions about my seeds so that I could engage and inspire them with my stories of my life events. Many of the students were motivated to get started.

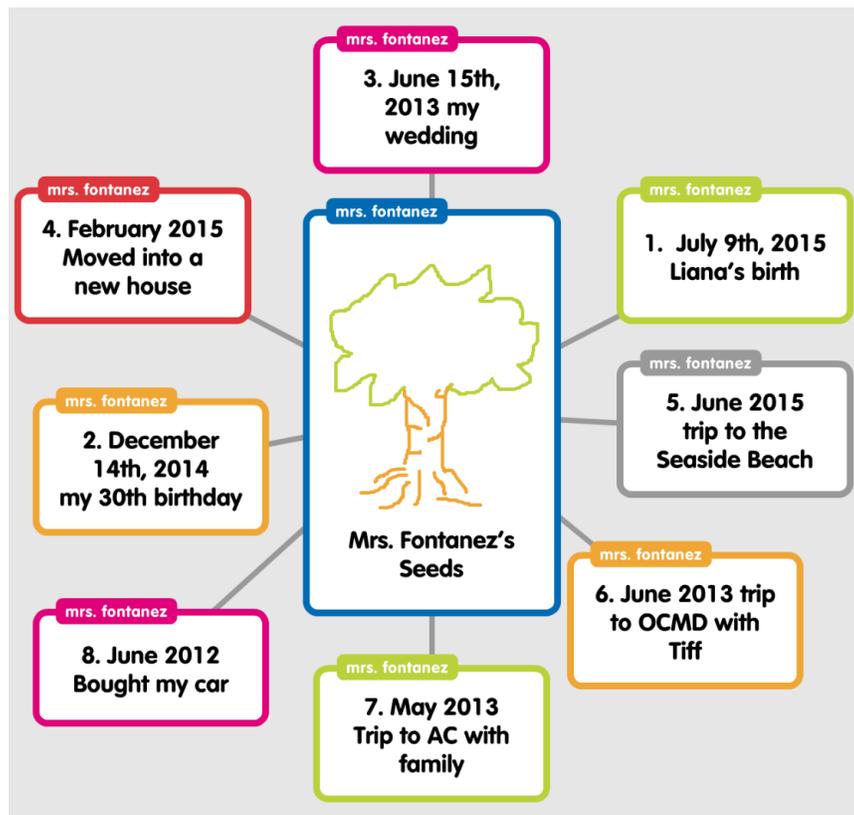


Figure 4.1: Popplet example of my “seeds”

Following the discussion, the students created their own list of seeds of the events that happened in their lives. The students were required to write down events that were more recent; ones that they could remember a lot about. I told them to think about when the event happened, who was there, how they felt, what was said and other details that they could remember. I told the students, the more details they can remember, the better and more descriptive their personal narratives would be.

The next day, the students had to choose one event that they wanted to write about. Many of the students struggled with this. So, I walked around to read their seeds, and I helped them pick the events that were meaningful to them. I also asked a few questions about their events to see what kinds of detail they could remember. Once the students had their event chosen, they filled in the *Asking Questions* graphic organizer (Appendix F). They filled in who was there, when the event happened, where it happened, why or how the event happened if possible. From the graphic organizer, the students began writing their first drafts. I told them to keep in mind, what was said, and to write as many details as they could remember about the day. Many of the students completed their rough drafts in a few short minutes while complaining about writing and saying that they did not want to write about the ENTIRE day of the event. I reminded them that a narrative story has a beginning, middle and an end. Meanwhile, their notebooks had nothing more than a paragraph written on the paper. I knew their rough drafts

were going to be short even with the use of the graphic organizer. But at that point, I just wanted a baseline of a story to work with. Some of the more advanced writers wrote almost two pages, I could tell which students were going to need the most guidance and that ones that wouldn't.

The Start of Interventions

The following week the students began working in their writing groups. I began by splitting the students into four writing groups based on their abilities to write independently. I put independent writers in one group and then scaffolded accordingly. I met with one group each day for a half hour Tuesday through Friday. I went over the writing rubric with them to let them know what was expected (Appendix M). Some of the students were excited about writing their narratives, where others felt overwhelmed. After showing them the expectations, I read the book *Fireflies* by Julie Brinkloe. I told them to pay attention to the details and dialogue in the book. I pointed out how the story began with a catchy beginning to hook the reader in.

As I read the book, I stopped to point out similes and metaphors. Overall, the students were really engaged in the story. When I asked them if they liked the story, one student, Victor said, "The story *Fireflies* was good because we can add more details in our stories". I did the same thing each day with all four writing groups. After the students met with me the first week, they were assigned to go

back and edit their rough drafts by adding, a catchy beginning, dialogue and more details.

<p>Question: How do you like working with a small group?</p>	<p>Melissa - "I felt comfortable because we get to work together to get ideas" Sandy - "The teacher made it less hard because she was helping me." Terrance - " You get to get your work done". Devon - "It's better because there are five people and it's not talkative" Michael - "It's better small group because there's less talking and more working". Xander " I like it back here because not a lot of people are here. And the teacher is close by to answer questions". Kristi - " You have somebody to work with and to keep us on track".</p>
--	---

Figure 4.2: Student Interviews

After the first week with working in small groups, I interviewed some of the students elicit their thoughts on how they liked working in a small group. Some of the responses are in figure 4.2 above.

Dialogue

My teacher said, "You must add dialogue to your narratives!" Many of the students had no idea what dialogue was, until I pointed it out in the story *Fireflies*. In their rough drafts, many of them had what was said, but they did not have the direct quotes with the exact words that were said. The students needed to learn how to do this, so they watched a video on using quotation marks. Many of the students loved the video and knew what to do on their stories. Others needed my help BIG time. They were confused between a direct quote and stating what someone said. For example, Evan wrote, "My mom told me to get up". He had

this sentence in quotation marks, but I explained to him that this is not what his mom said to him. I asked him, “What exactly did she say to you to get you out of bed?” Then he replied, “Evan, wake up!” I asked him if he could see the difference and he smiled agreed that he could.

Finally, other students in the group also caught on to the difference and were able to fix their stories. The students worked hard to add direct quotations and quotation marks to their stories for the rest of this week. Some of the better writers were able to help others add quotes to their narratives.

Similes and Metaphors

The kids were like a school of fish swimming in the same direction. Their eyes were staring, their body language was engaged and they were ready for the next lesson. During the fourth week of the small group interventions the students learned what similes and metaphors were by watching YouTube videos that explained what they were. After watching the videos, they had to fill out a figurative language packet (Appendix G). In the packet, each page has the students write a definition, an example and to draw a picture to illustrate the example.

After meeting with each group for the second time in small groups, I asked my students two questions. Do you like working in small groups? And did you like learning from the Google Classroom videos? You can see the responses from the students in figure 4.3 on the following page.

Do you like working in small groups?	<p>Melissa - “ I like working in the back. I like using the Google classroom to learn definitions of the words simile and metaphor”.</p> <p>Sara - “ The videos were better because we were working in a small group and there was not a lot of people talking”.</p>
Did you like learning from the Google Classroom videos?	<p>Jeremy - Learning from videos is easier than just working together.”</p> <p>Juliana- “I liked it because it was teaching me similes and metaphors. It was interesting”</p> <p>Devon - “It was fun but educating at the same time. I forgot it was educating”</p>

Figure 4.3: Student Interview Responses

Onomatopoeia

Boom! Bang! Crash! During week five of my study, the students were introduced to onomatopoeia words. The students watched the YouTube song about onomatopoeia words. Then they had to write down three examples of them in their figurative language packets and draw a picture to go along with it. The students loved the onomatopoeia song. Throughout the day, I would hear them singing or humming the song. It made me feel like such an engaging teacher! The students loved watching the videos I had chosen for them and in turn, they were eager to add the new figurative elements to their narrative stories. After discussing different sound words, the students had to figure out where they could add one in their story. At this time, I also read through each student’s story and

gave them suggestions on where they could add details and where to expand on their stories.

After each student conferenced with me (in our small group), they began typing their next drafts into a Google Doc. I did the same thing with each group throughout the week. The students who were not meeting with me, were continuing to type their stories on the Chrome books. After meeting with each group the third week, the students took a survey posted on my Google Classroom. (Appendix H) The Figure 4.4 below shows some of the responses from the students.

<p>Please tell me how you are feeling about your narrative story so far.</p> <p>Finish this statement: I feel that my narrative story....</p>	<p>Terance - "I hope there's more writing activities."</p> <p>Sandy - "So far I like the narrative because I'm remember more and more about what happened that day and it's fun remembering it and writing it into a story and plus if I forget I could go back and look at it"</p> <p>Devon - "That I like my story so far is amazing"</p> <p>Melissa - "mad because I have a long one"</p> <p>Kristi - "I am OK doing the narrative story. It helps me learn a lot about writing."</p> <p>Juliana - "I feel that my narrative story is funny but very sad at the same time you're going to love my narrative story a lot."</p> <p>Adam - "I feel that my narrative story is getting better"</p> <p>Jason - "I feel that my narrative story is getting better."</p> <p>Zoe - "I like telling about my life"</p>
---	---

Figure 4.4: Google Classroom Survey Responses

At this point in my study, the students were engaged and motivated to learn more about improving their stories. Each day, I noticed that the groups who

met with me were excited and anxious to learn the new lesson I was about to teach them. This was so different from the past; these feelings about the narrative writing unit were new. I never felt at such ease during writing. For the half hour each day, all I had to do was to focus on the 5 or 6 students in my group for that day, and it was much less stressful than in the past.

Personification and Idioms

The clouds danced across the sky. Week six began with a lesson on personification. The students came to me with confusion after reading examples of personification and watching the video with even more examples. I paused for a minute and rolled my pencil across the table. After their eyebrows shot up, I asked the question, “what did my pencil just do?” Of course, they responded with, “it rolled across the table”. Then I stated, “what do we as humans do to travel from one spot to another?” Now, I got the responses that I was looking for. The students shouted out, “run”, “walk”, “skip”, “dance”, and “slide”. So then, I rephrased my question, “so then how can I describe my pencil rolling across the table, but replacing the word rolling with a “humanlike” action?” Then I heard responses such as, “the pencil danced across the table”. This is when I saw the light bulb come on. Their facial expressions had changed and I knew that the students understood personification. We discussed a few more examples and the students wrote them down in their figurative language packets. Then they each

added one to their narrative stories. Those who still needed time to type their drafts were doing that also.

In addition to personification, the students also learned about idioms. They watched a really engaging fourteen-minute video about idioms. The video was filled with examples of idioms and played short clips of a little boy acting out each example. The students were really engaged and understood what idioms were at the end of the video. They were all able to add one example and draw a picture of the literal meaning in their figurative language packet. Victor was so proud of his drawing; he couldn't wait to show it to me. The students worked with a partner and had a lot of fun adding idioms to their narrative stories. I also had the more advanced writers help others with adding idioms also.

After week six, I posted questions on my Google Classroom for the students to respond to. I wanted to see what challenges the students were facing at this point with their narrative stories. But I also wanted to see what they enjoyed, so that I could continue to engage them throughout the writing process. The students' answers to the questions are shown in Figure 4.5 on the following page. What is the hardest thing about writing your narrative story? What is your favorite thing so far about writing your narrative story?

The students who finished typing their stories were working with a peer to edit the third drafts on the computer. This was really hard for the students to do.

- Devon** - “The hardest thing about my narrative story is... adding lots of details because I might forget something and then I have to guess what happened "trust me I am not good at guessing" so I just leave that part out and that happens a lot "if you ask me". So if I leave a part out and it is my favorite part I get upset very. So that is the hardest thing about my narrative story. My favorite thing so far is when we helped our cat and we still love him very much.” (SIC)
- Evan** - “The hardest thing looking back and forth from my story. how I get to share with people”
- Jason** - “I think the hardest thing about the narrative is to remember what happened that whole entire day and ways to explain the things that happened. And my favorite thing about the narrative is how you remember what happened when it happened and how it happened.” (SIC)
- Juliana** - “The hardest thing is that I have to put similes and metaphors . My favorite thing is that I get to write a lot.”
- Kristi** - “I'm having hard time with my narrative and what I like about my narrative is that I learn a lot about writing”
- Michael** - “the hardest thing about writing my narrative is to spell. and my favorite thing is about my narrative is the part then I writing the story”
- Melissa** - “The hardest thing was like typing it you have to basically memories the story my favorite thing is that I talk about what happened”
- Sandy** - “The hardest thing was writing it on paper 2 times and then we had to write it on the Chrome Book. My favorite thing was when we had the seeds we had to pick it was very easy for me I picked the one about my puppy.”
- Sara** - “The hardest thing is doing the editing (SIC) marks. My favorite things are the time you get to write one thing that you will never forget that happened in your life.”
- Terrance** - “The hardest narrative thing that I wrote is the dialog because I had to remember all the things that people said. The favorite thing so far is writing the narrative because I could laugh and talk about what happened in the narrative story and make other people laugh.” (SIC)
- Victor** - “The hardest part of my narrative story. Is trying to remember the past and to write into a story. My favorite is remembering the good times.”
- Xander** - (the hardest thing) “is all the I” “and my favorite thing about it is get to read it all”
- Zoe** - “My hardest thing is capital I. My favorite is that it's like you waiting to see what's going to happen next.” (SIC)
- Adam** - “The hardest thing is that when you add the extra stuff like synonym, metaphors and the other stuff. My favorite thing is doing the story because it's fun writing.”
- Jeremy** - “the hardest thing about it is capital I my favorite so far is changing things” (SIC)

Figure 4.5: Students responses to Google Classroom Questionnaire

I gave them suggestions to read their partner's stories aloud so they could hear how it sounded. After doing this for a few days, many of the students had an "ah ha" moment. They were now able to hear the problems in their stories where before they were missing these things when they were reading it to themselves. The students also pointed out all of the lowercase "i's" that were typed instead of the capital "I". Another big problem that was hard for the students to see was the word spacing on the computer. When the students typed their drafts, they would put multiple spaces in between words but would not notice it when they were editing their drafts themselves.

Alliteration and Exaggeration

Writing, really, shows realistic realities come to real life. Week seven was filled with alliteration and exaggeration, two of the students' favorite things to learn. The videos that the students watched were filled with examples and made it easy for them to come up with their own. They wrote their examples in their figurative language packets and drew pictures to go along with the examples. The figurative language organizer was a great resource for the students to refer to when they were ready to add new things to their stories. Exaggeration was a concept that the students loved making up on their own. They enjoyed the examples from the video and then created new ones for their narratives. It was easy for the students to add exaggeration into their stories, where alliteration was

a little more challenging. I reminded them that only one or the other needed to be used and that sometimes there is no perfect spot to fit in alliteration.

R.I.P. *Said*

Exclaimed, stated, asked. During week eight, I printed the most current drafts for all of the students. I introduced my “*R.I.P. Said*” tombstone poster. This poster has 35 synonyms for the word “*said*”. I told each of the students that they could only use the word “said” one time in their narrative. “Ugh, no, ah” they moaned when they heard the news. That’s when I pulled out a handful of colored pens, and asked them all to pick a color. Their attitudes changed instantly! They were motivated and excited for the challenge. First, the students used the colored pens to circle all of the “*said*s” in their stories. Then they got to work with a partner to replace all but one “said”, with other words from the tombstone poster. Most of the students loved this challenge, but some of them needed help with replacing the repeated words.

While the students were working with partners, replacing all of the “*said*s”, I conferenced with each one independently during their small group intervention time with me. I read their stories aloud, and tried to use funny voices so that they students could hear their mistakes. Melissa was first up, as I read her story to her, she laughed, and yelled, “Mrs. Fontanez, stop!” She was eager to fix her mistakes right away. She got up and went to grab a Chrome book to make the changes needed. Finally, I told the rest of the students in her group to do the

same. Each of the students seemed to have the same reaction to me reading their stories. They laughed, but realized how funny they sounded. There were missing words, or punctuation or the spelling was wrong. I read so fast and lost my breath, because of a missing periods or punctuation marks. This way of editing was very engaging for them.

The Finale!

During the last week, the students got the chance to ask me any last questions then we went over the rubric and expectations for the final draft one last time. They used their time to peer edit and read each other's stories, making sure there were no mistakes and the final draft was ready to hand in. At this point I could see the confidence in their eyes, I could tell they were proud and excited to hand in their stories for a grade. In fact, after asking the students if they wanted their narratives to be displayed in the hallway for everyone to read, they all responded with a confident "yes"! Parent-teacher conferences were right around the corner and I explained that the stories would be displayed for all of their parents to read. The students were excited and told me they wanted to make a cover page for their narratives so that the cover would attract the readers as they were hanging in the hallway. I was relieved and felt like my job was done. The study came to an end, and the students were proud of their work and I was a proud teacher!

DATA ANALYSIS

There were a number of different methods used for collecting data during my study. Each data source was used in order to show a change in the students' feelings towards writing, engagement during lessons, as well as improvement in their narrative stories. After reviewing each data source, it was helpful to see the impact small group interventions had on the students' work.

Surveys

The students took a pre and post survey to show how their feelings changed prior to the study and after the study was over (See tables 5.1 and 5.2 on the following page). The reason for the survey was to prove that their engagement and motivation towards writing was changed. Also, to prove that some students enjoyed writing and sharing their narrative stories following the personal narrative writing unit. From the pre survey, it's noticeable that there were some students who were concerned about their handwriting, but also wanted to improve on their writing skills.

Through this survey, I was also able to see things that my students liked about their writing. Terrance wrote in the initial survey that he wanted to improve on details, he liked to write a lot and that he wanted to write stories that are interesting. Melissa commented that she wanted to learn how to write better and longer, she loved to write and she loved creative writing. Sandy wanted to improve on vocabulary. In addition, she also mentioned that she loved to write

Pre Writing Survey Results

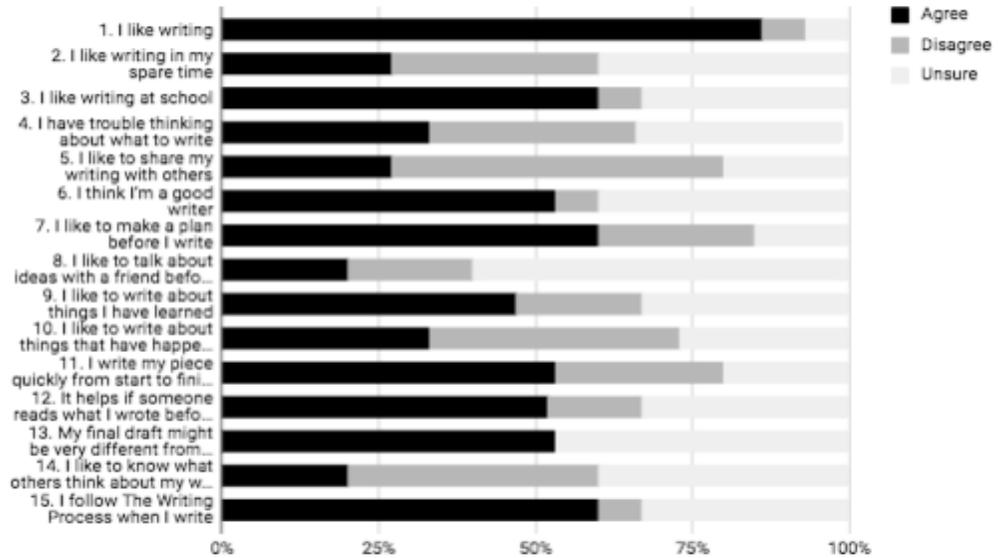


Table 5.1: Pre Writing Survey Results

Post Writing Survey Results

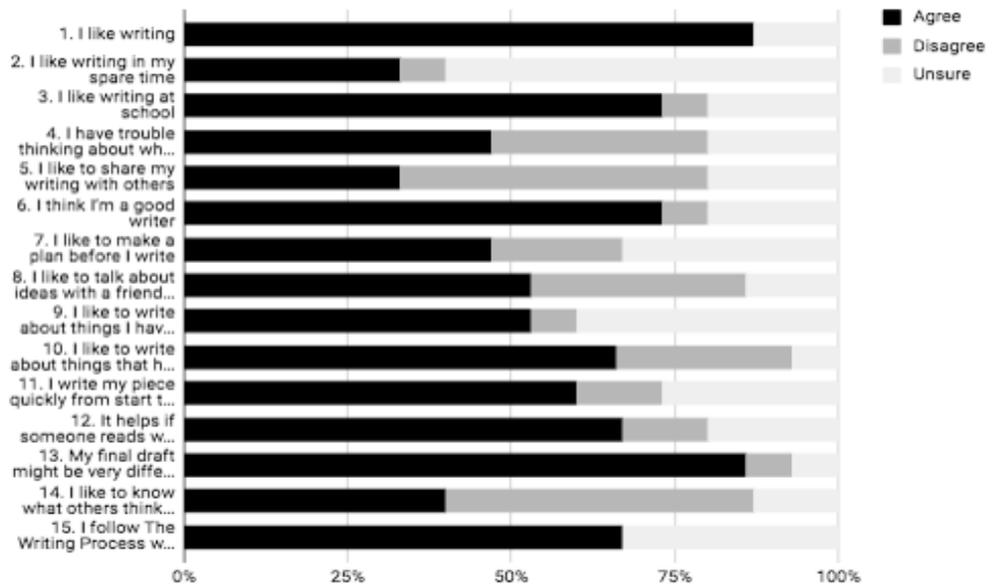


Table 5.2: Post Writing Survey Results

books. On the same survey, Xander said that he thought writing was important because it helps him in his life and he loves to write about his life. Evan said that he liked his handwriting. Lastly, Zoe said that she wanted to improve on writing on lines.

After looking at all of the data from both, the pre and post surveys, one can see that the percentage of students who like writing stayed pretty much the same. However, the percentage did go up from 60 - 70% of the students who answered that they like writing in school. Also, the percentage of students who liked to share their writing with other went from 27 - 33%. One of the biggest surprises to me was that before beginning the study, only 53% of the students in my study said that they thought they were good writers, and after the study, this number increased to 73% of the students. Another shocking discovery was that prior to writing their narratives, only 33% of the students agreed that they liked to write about events in their lives. However, after the narrative writing unit, 66% of the students enjoyed writing about events that happened in their lives. Lastly, it was obvious that some of the students were inexperienced with the writing process because prior to the study, only 53% of the students agreed that their first drafts may look very different from their final drafts, but after completing the writing process throughout my study, 83% of them realized this is in fact the truth of what happens as we write and edit and rewrite multiple drafts.

In addition to the multiple-choice questions, the students also had five open ended questions where they had to write a response. One question in particular had many similar responses at the conclusion of the narrative writing unit. The results from the post survey in figure 5.1, shows that many students chose narrative writing as their favorite type of writing as a result from an engaging experience with writing their own during the study (See figure 5.1 below).

Question 17	Student Responses
What type of writing is your favorite? Why? (ex. Narrative, letter, persuasive, informative, how-to)	<p>Melissa - “The type of writing i like is narrative because I like talking about my life”</p> <p>Xander - “ I like writing about my life because it is real”</p> <p>Evan - “Narrative because I share my life”</p> <p>Jeremy - “Narrative that’s because it’s fun to go back to fix things and change things”</p> <p>Michael - “Narrative is my favorite because it is very long and it is about your life”</p> <p>Juliana - “My favorite writing is narrative writing because I get to write a lot and I like writing.</p> <p>Devon - “I like narrative writing because you get to share your stories”</p> <p>Jason - “My favorite writing is narrative because it’s about my life”</p> <p>Adam - “Narrative because it’s fun writing stuff about me”</p> <p>Zoe - “My narrative because I can tell people what happened”</p>

Figure: 5.1: Post-Survey Responses

Writing Rubrics

In order to measure the quality of the writing throughout the writing process, a writing rubric was used (Appendix M). Early on, it was used to score the students' rough drafts based on conventions, spelling, organization, style and voice, content and ideas, and the use of the writing process. At the end of the writing process, the same rubric was then used to score the students' final drafts in hopes to see improvement in all areas. Table 5.3 on the next page, shows the scores given to each student on their rough draft and their final drafts. The dark bar represents the students' scores on their rough draft, and the light bar represents the scores on their final drafts. In looking at the data, one can see that *all* of the students improved their narrative scores on their final drafts. Some improved much more than others and excelled in certain areas.

Xander went from a score of 6 all the way up to a 21! I was so impressed with his improvement and the changes he made to his story throughout the writing process. Even though he complained about the amount of work he had to do along the way, I can tell he was extremely happy with the results and couldn't wait to share his final draft with his mom. Michael jumped from a score of 8 to a 21, which was also very impressive he really improved on the dialogue in his story, and added many important details throughout. The last student who stood out drastically was Adam. He went from a 9 to a 22. Adam's story was also missing a lot of detail in the beginning, but after he added more descriptive words

and figurative language, his final draft was very well written with very few mistakes (See Appendix L for student examples).

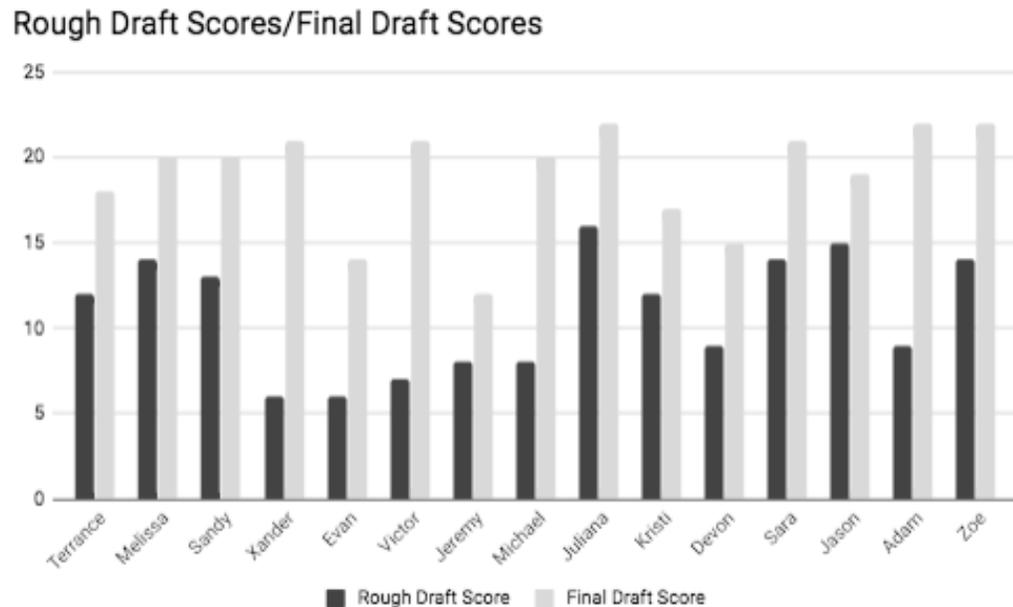


Table 5.3: 4th Grade Writing Rubric Scores

Field Log

During my study, I completed an observation chart, each day that I worked with a writing intervention group (See Appendix K for a snapshot of the field log). After analyzing the data from this chart, I was able to pick out common themes from what I observed. I began with the format of the classroom during these small group interventions. Each day, the students worked in their small writing groups, and one day a week they would work directly with me. In the writing groups, the students were able to peer edit each other's stories. Some

observations that I made during these lessons were that students were engaged in their writing groups. They were able to choose their own narrative writing topic based on events in their lives. They were able to watch videos on YouTube introducing them to different figurative language elements that was linked to my Google Classroom. The YouTube videos were helpful in engaging the students as well as teaching them the correct use of adding detail and the use of dialogue in their stories. Furthermore, the videos also introduced them to similes, metaphors, onomatopoeias, idioms, alliterations and personification. Along with the videos, the students had to complete short activities while learning each part of the figurative language dialect. The students were then able to apply what they learned to their narrative stories by including each of the literary devices. As the students wrote and rewrote their drafts, they were able to enhance the vocabulary and fix spelling mistakes along the way. All of these procedures are what helped the students improve their narrative stories.

Bins

After reading through my field log, my surveys and student artifacts, I was able to come up with common topics. I used common words, phrases and summaries of what I was able to find from the data sources. Although it was time consuming, it was very helpful to see the impact that my study had on my students. The common topics that came up frequently include, intervention plans,

student engagement, successful intervention strategies, figurative language used in narratives and lastly, struggles that the students encountered along the way.

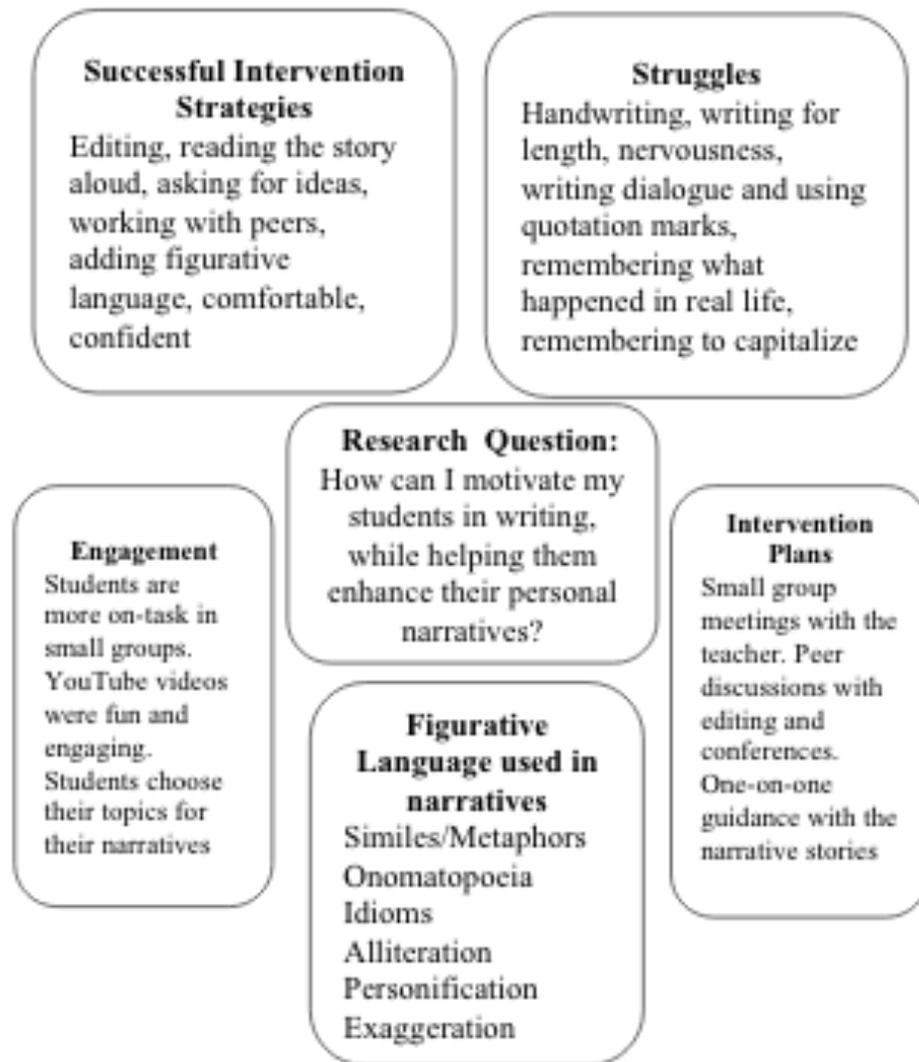


Figure 5.2: Bins of common threads in the data related to my study

THEME STATEMENTS

Engagement and Successful Intervention Strategies

Students' attitudes towards writing changed when they were engaged through small group interventions. Giving them the choice of topics to write about helped to hook them into the writing unit. Using multimodal forms of writing such as the computer, helped engage the students in writing also. Lastly, watching videos to learn new concepts proved to engage them with new writing strategies.

Before beginning this study, I was aware that many fourth graders dislike writing. Every year the majority of my class needs a lot of guidance and repeated practice when it comes to independent writing. For my study, I was in search for an idea to get my students to not only to enjoy writing, but to become more confident and to be able to work independently. During the small group interventions, the students used different materials to complete their writing. They used their notebooks, the computers and even YouTube videos to help guide them through different steps in the narrative writing process. As Lisa Delpit states, "Rather, students need focused instructional strategies throughout their school years that are designed specifically for their cultural and academic backgrounds." (p. 70)

Not all students learn the same. In order for a teacher to be successful in teaching students with varying backgrounds; it is important to design lessons that specifically target the students' cultures. This helps them make a connection and

will make the lessons more meaningful for them. Of course, it is a challenge to have all of the lessons relate to the students backgrounds, however, the way the material is presented can also be helpful for the students to keep them engaged. The use of YouTube videos to teach the figurative language dialect was very engaging and helped to target the culture by differentiating learning. In this case, the visual and aural learning styles were being utilized.

Struggles and Intervention Plans

Small group meetings helped the students develop confidence in writing. They improved their grammar and punctuation in their stories. Having the students go back to self-edit helped them to recognize the mistakes they made the first time they wrote.

Students write with more confidence when they work in smaller groups with the teacher. The more one-on-one attention they are given, the better they do. Students also excel more when they use their peers to help edit their writing. This forces the writer to reread what they have written, as well as another student reading the work that was done. When all of these strategies are done, the students' writing has fewer mistakes. The students had to communicate with each other in order to learn through social interactions. In my study, there were four writing groups set up, each group consists of about six or seven students. The students had to work together to accomplish certain tasks that are being asked of them daily, in order to improve their narratives by use of the writing process. As

Dewey states, “The principle that development of experience comes about through interaction means that education is essentially a social process” (p. 58).

While presenting new vocabulary to the students I kept in mind this strategy used by Lisa Delpit, "What does work is: 1. Integration: connecting new vocabulary to prior knowledge. 2. Repetition: encountering/ using the word/ concept many times. 3. Meaningful use: multiple opportunities to use new words in reading, writing, and discussion" (p. 68). These steps are important to keep in mind while teaching students new material to help build basic knowledge with vocabulary. My class is targeted with low-income students who normally do not have a strong vocabulary background. Integration, repetition and meaningful lessons with vocabulary words are ways to build this skill. The use of videos also helped the students learn the vocabulary words and how to use the new concepts in their narratives. Melissa and Zoe really enjoyed listening to the songs in the videos, which helped them learn the new concepts that were taught.

Engagement and Intervention Plans

Students were engaged when they were in small groups with the teacher. Many students needed the constant attention for them to focus and work in order to gain the confidence to work independently. As Freire states, “Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other” (Freire p. 73).

It's hard to find students who are fully engaged in their learning and take responsibility for their learning. We as teachers must be hopeful and patient with the students on a daily basis. Our gaining of knowledge as well as the students' is constantly changing. Working with these students in a small group setting allowed me to help them on their narratives and give them the attention they needed for writing. Much of Victor's success was due to the fact that I was able to answer questions for him and sit with him when he needed a little motivation to continue writing.

NEXT STEPS

Thinking back to the beginning of my study, and how the first drafts of the narrative stories went from a few sentences written down on paper, to a lengthy narrative with characters, dialogue and figurative language elements. I know the students have come a long way and I am proud of the progress they have made. As Freire states, “A deepened consciousness of their situation leads people to apprehend that situation as an historical reality susceptible to transformation. Resignation gives way to the drive for transformation and inquiry, over which men feel themselves to be in control” (Freire, p.85). From the process of the narrative writing, the students have learned the importance of transforming their stories. Many of them began their first drafts with a single paragraph. Throughout my study, their drafts changed from simple paragraphs into longer purposeful stories, describing a single day in their lives in full detail. The students have transformed their stories and have had full control of each draft along the way.

Using intervention groups for writing as proven to be very successful in my classroom. Even though this study took nine weeks to finish, I believe that using shorter writing units would also prove to be successful. Students definitely benefit from the small group interventions, where they can use their peers as well as the teacher to help with editing and revising. The students were really engaged from the YouTube videos that were used to introduce the figurative language

elements. They were able to take what they learned from the videos and apply it to their own stories.

Thinking ahead to next year, I would like to try the interventions with another teacher in the classroom. I think it would work even better having another person doing the interventions simultaneous with a different group or even just having another person to guide the rest of the small groups as I focus on my intervention group. However, I would definitely try this again next year with or without another teacher. I even think the small group interventions would benefit the students in other subjects we well.

APPENDIX A: HSIRB Approval

 Account, HSIRB <hsirb@moravian.edu>

5/25/17 ☆



to me ▾

Dear Kristina,

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 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(s)**. 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!

Take care,
Jean



APPENDIX B: Principal Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

August 30, 2017

Dear [REDACTED]

I'm currently a graduate student at Moravian College. This semester I am enrolled in a course called EDUC 702: *Reflective Practice*, where I am required to conduct a teacher action research study in my classroom. The purpose of my study is develop strategies that are the most engaging and beneficial for *all* students in my classroom for writing narratives. I will be doing this by teaching small intervention groups to each of my below level, on level and above level writing groups. These mini-lessons will be ten to fifteen minutes long. The students will then apply the strategies to their narrative stories. There will be a new strategy for each group to try on a weekly basis. The timeframe of this study will be roughly three months.

All research participants will be provided with a pseudonym for purpose of discussion so that they remain anonymous. My instructor and I will have access to the data collected. Information concerning the study will be discussed with a research support group at Moravian College using the pseudonyms. All of the students will participate in the curriculum, but each child's data will only be used should the parent/guardians choose to sign the child's consent form. Research materials will be kept in a secure, locked location outside of the classroom and will be destroyed after the completion of the study. Students may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty, but will still be required to complete all classroom work.

If any questions or concerns arise, please do not hesitate to contact me at Kfontanez@basdschools.org. The questions may also be directed to my Moravian College professor, Dr. Richard Grove, at GroveR@moravian.edu or (610) 861-1482.

Sincerely,

Kristina Fontanez
4th Grade Teacher
[REDACTED] Elementary School

- I give permission to you to conduct the action research project described above.
- I do **not** give permission to you to conduct the action research project described above.

Sonia Vazquez	
Signature of Principal	Date

APPENDIX C: Parent Consent Form English

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I am currently working to achieve my Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Moravian College. One of the course requirements of *Reflective Practice* is the completion of an action research project. The question I will be targeting is, how I can motivate my students in writing while helping them enhance their narrative writing.

The purpose of the study is to see how small group interventions will help to engage the students and in turn they will be able to improve on the rough draft of their narrative stories. The students will complete a survey prior to the study so that I can see which students enjoy writing, and which ones need more motivation. Students may skip any questions that they are uncomfortable with. A detailed scoring rubric identifying the expectations of the narratives will show the students what is expected in their final drafts. My students will continue to work in small groups during the intervention-writing unit. The students will complete the same survey at the end of the project in order to see growth and improvement. I will be using data from a variety of areas all within the Common Core Standards. All students' names will be kept confidential. All students will take part in the small group interventions as part of the regular curriculum, but I will use only the data from research participants in the study. Please note that any of my students may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. You may tell me directly by email or by contacting me on Class Dojo.

Should you have any questions regarding the study, please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED] Elementary School (610) 865-5881 or kfontanez@basdschools.org.

My faculty sponsor at Moravian College is Dr. Tristian Gleason, at gleasont@moravian.edu, or can be reached at 610-861-1482.

Please sign and return the bottom portion of the form at your earliest convenience. I thank you in advance for your support in this study.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Kristina Fontanez
4th Grade Teacher
[REDACTED] Elementary School

_____ I will allow Mrs. Fontanez to use the information gathered from the study at [REDACTED] Elementary School.

_____ I do not allow Mrs. Fontanez to use the information gathered from the study at this time.

Parent/Guardian's Signature _____ Date: _____

Child's Name _____

APPENDIX D: Parent Consent Form Spanish

Estimados padres,

Actualmente estoy estudiando para conseguir mi maestría de currículo e instrucción en el Colegio de Moravian. Uno de los requisitos del curso de *práctica reflexiva* es la realización de un proyecto de investigación. La pregunta de mi investigación será, cómo puedo motivar a mis alumnos en la escritura y ayudarlos a mejorar su escritura narrativa?

El propósito del estudio es observar cómo pequeños grupos de intervención en la escritura ayudarían a la motivación de los estudiantes a la hora de escribir, y como esto ayudaría con sus bocetos de escritura narrativa. Los alumnos completarán una encuesta antes del estudio para saber cuales estudiantes disfrutaban de la escritura, y cuáles necesitan más motivación. Los estudiantes pueden saltarse cualquier pregunta que no se sienten cómodos contestando.

Información detallada se le proveerá al estudiante para que este entienda las expectativas del proyecto de escritura final. Mis estudiantes continuarán trabajando en pequeños grupos durante la unidad de intervención de la escritura. Los estudiantes completarán la misma encuesta al final del proyecto para ver el crecimiento y mejora. Utilizaré los datos de una variedad de áreas todo dentro de las normas comunes. Nombres de todos los estudiantes se mantendrán confidenciales. Todos los estudiantes participarán en las intervenciones de grupos pequeños como parte del plan de estudios regular pero voy a usar sólo los datos de los participantes de la investigación en el estudio. Tenga en cuenta que cualquiera de mis estudiantes puede retirarse de este estudio en cualquier momento sin penalización. Pueden decirme directamente por correo electrónico o ponerse en contacto conmigo en clase Dojo.

Si tienes alguna pregunta relacionada con el estudio, no dude en contactarme a la escuela elemental de Donegan teléfono (610) 865-5881 o a mi e-mail escolar: kfontanez@basdschools.org. Usted también puede contactar mi profesor de la Facultad del Colegio de Moravian, el Dr. Tristian Gleason, en gleasont@moravian.edu, o llamarlo a el 610-861-1482.

Por favor firme y regrese la parte baja de este permiso a la escuela a la brevedad posible. Le agradezco de antemano su apoyo en este estudio.

Sinceramente,

La Sra Kristina Fontanez
Maestra del 4to grado
Escuela Elemental de [REDACTED]

____ Si permitiré que la Sra. Fontanez use la información adquirida del estudio en la Escuela primaria de [REDACTED].

____ No, no permito que la Sra. Fontanez use la información adquirida del estudio en este tiempo.

Firma del padre/Guardian: _____ Fecha _____
El nombre del niño _____

APPENDIX E: Student Consent Form

Student Assent Form

Directions: Please select one of the following choices.

_____  Yes I agree to allow Mrs. Fontanez to use my writing survey and narrative story in her research project.

_____  No I do not want Mrs. Fontanez to use my writing survey and narrative story in her research project.

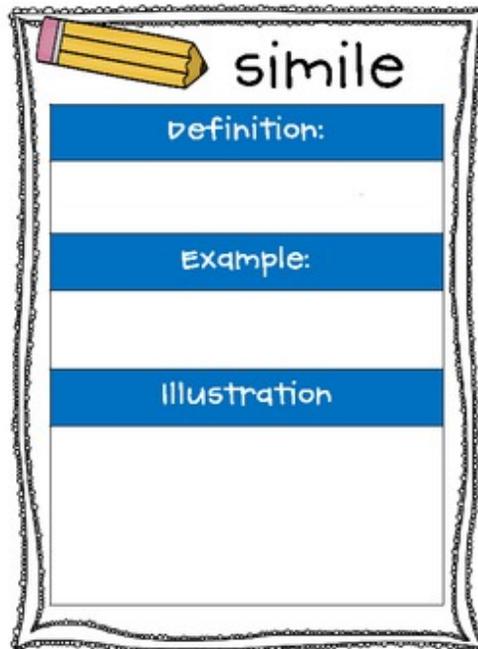
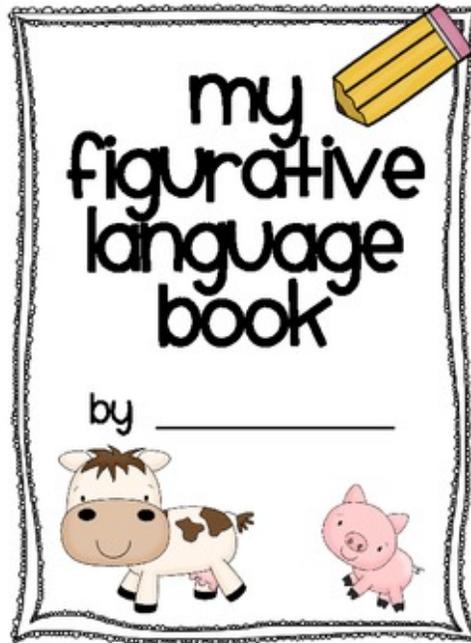
APPENDIX F: Asking Questions Graphic Organizer

Name _____ Date _____

 **Asking Questions** 

WHO?	WHAT?
WHEN?	WHERE?
WHY?	HOW?

APPENDIX G: Figurative Language Graphic Organizer



APPENDIX H: Writing Questionnaire Google Forms

Writing Questionnaire

October 12th 2017

Working in small groups...

- Helps me learn better
- Kinda helps me learn
- Does NOT help me learn better
- Other:

Working on the computer to learn through videos...

- Helps me learn better
- Kinda helps me learn
- Does NOT help me learn better

Learning with videos is...

- Really fun!
- Is okay if I have to
- Is harder for me to concentrate

Typing my story is...

- Better and easier for me
- Is okay for me to do if my teacher says I have to
- Is really hard and time consuming for me to do

Please tell me how you are feeling about your narrative story so far. Finish this statement: I feel that my narrative story....

Your answer _____

SUBMIT

Page 1 of 1

APPENDIX I: Pre and Post Survey

 **WRITING SURVEY** 

Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions: Circle the phrase that describes you as a writer.

1. I like writing.

agree disagree unsure

2. I like to write in my spare time.

agree disagree unsure

3. I like writing at school.

agree disagree unsure

4. I have trouble thinking about what to write.

agree disagree unsure

5. I like to share my writing with others.

agree disagree unsure

6. I think I am a good writer.

agree disagree unsure

7. I like to make a plan before I write.

agree disagree unsure

8. I like to talk about my ideas with a friend before I write.

agree disagree unsure

9. I like to write about things I have learned.

agree disagree unsure

10. I like to write about things that have happened to me.

agree disagree unsure

11. I write my piece quickly from start to finish; then I make changes.

agree disagree unsure

12. It helps if someone reads what I wrote before I make changes.

agree disagree unsure

13. My final draft might be very different from my rough draft.

agree disagree unsure

14. I like to know what others think about my writing.

agree disagree unsure

15. I follow the writing process when I write.

agree disagree unsure

16. Describe what you like about your writing:

17. Describe how you would like to improve your writing:

18. What type of writing is your favorite? Why? (ex. narrative, letter, persuasive, informative, how-to)

19. What type of writing is your least favorite? Why?

20. Is writing important to you? Why or why not?

APPENDIX J: Interview Questions and Responses Snapshot

9/20/17 **How do you like working with a small group?**

Q2 "I felt comfortable because we get to work together to get ideas"

Q3- "The teacher made it less hard because she was helping me."

Q1 " You get to get your work done", "It felt so good to work in the back because I feel good to not be bothered and to feel good about writing."

Q11 - "It's better because there are five people and it's not talkative"

Q2 - " I like working in the back. I like using the google classroom to learn definitions of the words simile and metaphor".

Q9- "It's better small group because there less talking and more working".

Q8" I like it back here because not a lot of people are here. And the teacher is close by to answer questions".

Q10 - " You have somebody to work with and to keep us on track".

How did you like working in a small group on the story *Fireflies*?

Q6- "The story *Fireflies* was good because we can add more details in our stories".

10/3/17 **How do you like learning from videos?**

Q13 - " The videos were better because we were working in a small group and there was not a lot of people talking".

Q7 - Learning from videos is easier than just working together."

Q9 - "I liked it because it was teaching me similes and metaphors. It was interesting"

Q13 - "It was fun but educating at the same time. I forgot it was educating"

Q6 - "It taught us about what a simile and a metaphor is"

Q2- "It was cool to add some words and learn more about onomatopoeia. It was fun learning about that"

10/17/17 **How do you feel about this writing small group intervention process?**

Q14 - "I felt happy because we have learned more and improved our writing skills."

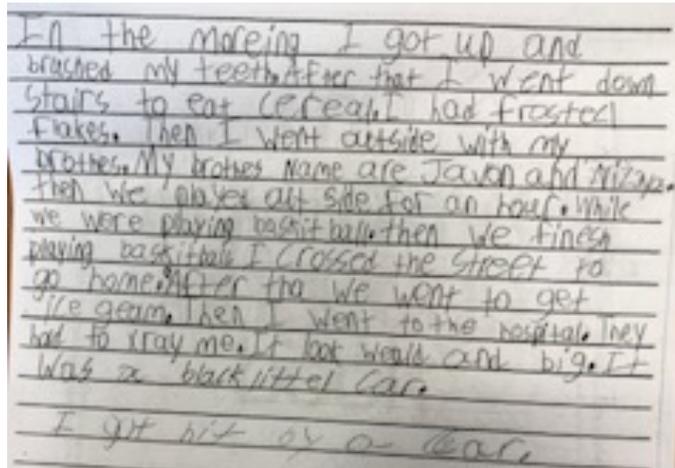
Q3 - "I felt nervous to have you read my story because I thought you were going to say I did something wrong. I spelled writing or I didn't put a period at the end of the sentence." |

APPENDIX K: Field Log Snapshot

9/21/2017	Met with group 2 to read <i>Fireflies</i> and talked about description, dialogue and similes. Students began their 2nd drafts. They must finish it before we meet again.	The group was engaged in the story	The students seem engaged when the teacher read the story.
9/22/2017	NO meeting	X	X
9/25/2017	NO meeting	X	X
9/26/2017	Met with group 3 to read <i>Fireflies</i> and talked about description, dialogue and similes. Students began their 2nd drafts. They must finish it before we meet again.	The students were engaged when I read the story to them and talked about descriptions and dialogue.	The students were really engaged with reading the story.
9/27/2017	Met with group 4 to read <i>Fireflies</i> and talked about description, dialogue and similes. Students began their 2nd drafts. They must finish it before we meet again.	Students were adding catchy beginnings to their narratives.	They did this from the modeling of the story <i>Fireflies</i> .
9/28/2017	Met with group 1 talked about similes and metaphors. Students watch the youTube videos, then filled out their vocab packets and added one into their 2nd drafts.	All students completed their 2nd draft and were really engaged with the videos.	All of the students were really engaged watching the videos.
9/29/2017	Met with group 2 talked about similes and metaphors. Students watch the	Some students did not finish their 2nd draft. So they were	They were really engaged watching the videos.

APPENDIX L: Student Work

Xander's Rough Draft

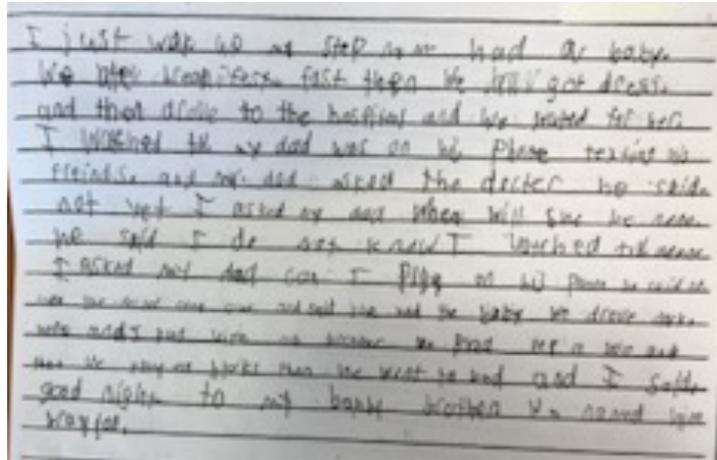


Xander's Final Draft

In summer I woke up and I went to the bathroom to brush my teeth. I ate Frosted Flakes and then I went to the store and got Takis. Then my brothers woke up and I asked "do you want any Takis"? Then I went outside with both of my brothers. Their names are Javon and Nizaya. At the park I was playing basketball and I made a 3-pointer like water. Then when I shot another one, I fell "boom". There was a big swing and one of my friends did a backflip off it. At the park there was a lot of people playing on the playground and basketball.

After my brothers and I were done playing, I went to go cross the street because my house was there. The car sprinted when I was running across the street. Next thing you know "bam" she hit me. The lady got out of the car, she said "I am sorry" and she was crying. Then My mom picked me up and put me in the car and drove me to the hospital. They put a weird medical machine on my finger to take my temperature. I got ice cream after that day. It was like a hospital from teen wolf. The machine was moving over my body. I broke my finger. I had a cast on it. They told me I had to stay there for 5 days.

Victor's Rough Draft



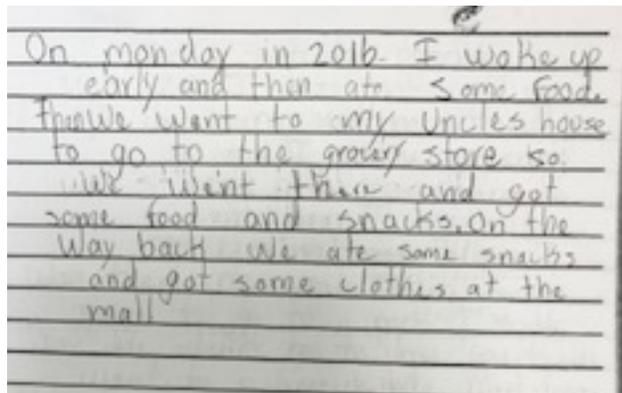
Victor's Final Draft

It was a summer morning and I was tired as a bear. I yawned "haa". My dad told me "your stepmom is having a baby". Then I ate breakfast, I ate Cocoa Puffs and after breakfast I got dressed in a red shirt, jeans, and red shoes. My brother and I were dressed. My big sister got dressed in a nice dress I was ready. My dad drove all the way to Bethlehem where she was having the baby.

We parked and went into St. Luke's hospital. We went in the waiting room and I watched T.V. for minutes which turned into hours. Then I asked my dad, "when are we leaving and when will she be done having a baby?" He said "I don't know". Then I asked my dad, "can I go on your phone?" I heard doors scream shut. "No" he yelled. Then I was as sad as a dog going in his cage. Then, I watched T.V. again and the doctor came out of the room. He stated, "the baby was born". I was as excited as a dog getting a new owner. I was going to be a big brother! I went into the room and I said, "hi". I asked, "what is his name?" "His name is Braylon" replied my stepmom.

We drove home and I played with him. We played blocks. We played peekaboo and then it was 9:00 so it was time for bed. I said "good night" and I went to bed and kissed my baby brother.

Adam's Rough Draft



Adam's Final Draft

On a Saturday morning in 2012 I was waking up. I woke up early and felt like a dog after a busy day. The pancakes my mom made were calling me "grrr" my stomach said. So I ate them fast. I went to my cousins house "yay". When I was there, my cousin informed that we are going to the park, "Yay" I replied.

We went to the park we saw a dog it was barking at the bakery man. We were playing tag and heard screams, then we went to eat. It was raining cat and dogs "pat pat pat". We went to a restaurant, I ate tacos and pizza, "yum".

Then I thought everyone around me was about to do something and I thought "hmm". My dad had to stay with me and then they told me to come inside. I knew what I was going to see and hear, when I came inside everyone yelled "SURPRISE"!! I was laughing, the cake was calling everyone. I still had some chocolate leftover. It was melting like ice cream on a super hot day. So I just gave it to my cousin because he was hungry. I knocked over my cup and I made my water jump to the floor. After that, my family went back to their homes. I was tired but my phone just woke up and started to shout noises, but I just fell asleep and said to myself "what a great day".

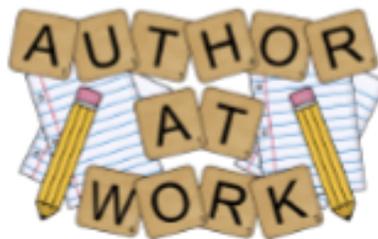
APPENDIX M: Narrative Writing Rubric



5 WRITING RUBRIC

	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
CONVENTIONS Student uses accurate punctuation and capitalization.	4	3	2	1
SPELLING Student writes most sight words correctly and uses best guess spelling.	4	3	2	1
ORGANIZATION Student has a beginning middle, and end. Student uses transitional words. Student has an opening and closing sentence.	4	3	2	1
STYLES AND VOICE Student tries interesting words. Shows own personality in appropriate way.	4	3	2	1
CONTENT/IDEAS Student stays on topic, and is thorough with interesting details. Uses descriptive detail effectively.	4	3	2	1
WRITING PROCESS Student applied the writing process to create a finish product. Student attempted some editing, and/or use resources such as a dictionary.	4	3	2	1
	Independent writer	Very little guidance	Needed some guidance	Needed a lot of guidance

TOTAL SCORE: _____



REFERENCES

- Algozzine, B., & Diliberto, J. A. (2004). Improving descriptive sentence writing in elementary students. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative education for children and youth*, 48(4), 34-36.
- Baxter, J. A., Woodward, J., & Olson, D. (2005). Writing in mathematics: An alternative form of communication for academically low-achieving students. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 20(2), 119-135.
- Calkins, L., & Ehrenworth, M. (2016). Growing extraordinary writers: leadership decisions to raise the level of writing across a school and a district. *The Reading Teacher*, 70(1), 7-18.
- Carver, L. B., & Todd, C. (2016). Using blogging software to provide additional writing instruction. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, 17(4), 8th ser., 118-129.
- Darrington, B., & Dousay, T. (2015). Using multimodal writing to motivate struggling students to write. *TechTrends*, 59(6), 29-34.
- De La Paz, S. (1999). Self-Regulated strategy instruction in regular education settings: Improving outcomes for students with and without learning disabilities. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice*, 14(2), 92-106.
- de Caso, A. M., Garcia, J. N. , Diez, C., Robledo, P., & Alvarez, M. L. (2010). Enhancing writing self-efficacy beliefs of students with learning

- disabilities improves their writing processes and products. *Electronic Journal Of Research In Educational Psychology*, 8(1), 195-206.
- Diliberto, J. A. (2004). Improving descriptive sentence writing in elementary students. 48(4), 34-36.
- Dunn, M. W., & Finley, S. (2010). Children's struggles with the writing process exploring storytelling, visual arts, and keyboarding to promote narrative story writing. *Multicultural Education*, 33-42.
- Fan, Y. S. (2016). Thinking maps in writing project in English for Taiwanese elementary school students. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*,4(1), 36-57.
- Fraser, D. (2006). The creative potential of metaphorical writing in the literacy classroom. *English teaching: Practice and Critique*,5(2), 93-108.
- Gair, M. (2015). Slaying the writing monsters: Scaffolding reluctant writers through a writing workshop approach. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 27(3), 443-456.
- García, J., & de Caso, A. M. (2004). Effects of a motivational intervention for improving the writing of children with learning disabilities. *Learning Disability Quarterly*,27(3), 141-159.
- Garlid, S. W. (2014). "Writing is not really something I do" Engaging reluctant male writers. *Afterschool Matters*, 47-52.

- Graham, S., Kiuahara, S., McKeown, D., & Harris, K. R. (2012). Supplemental material for a meta-analysis of writing instruction for students in the elementary grades. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 104(4), 879-896.
- Hendricks, C. (2009). *Improving Schools Through Action Research: A Comprehensive Guide for Educators*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Johnson, M. (2004). "This one is more me!" What children think about writing test stimuli involving choice. *Literacy (formerly Reading)*, 38(2), 90-96.
- Lane, K. L., Royer, D. J., Messenger, M. L., Common, E. A., Ennis, R. P., & Swogger, E. D. (2015). Empowering teachers with low-intensity strategies to support academic engagement: Implementation and effects of instructional choice for elementary students in inclusive settings. *Education and Treatment of Children*, 38(4), 473-504.
- Lewin, L. (1992). Integrating reading and writing strategies using an alternating teacher-led student-selected instructional pattern. *The Reading Teacher*, 45(8), 586-591.
- Marzano, R. J. (2003). *What works in schools: Translating research into action*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD Publications.
- Read, S., Landon-Hays, M., & Martin-Rivas, A. (2014). Gradually releasing responsibility to students writing persuasive text. *The Reading Teacher*, 67(6), 469-477.

Ridley, D. (2012). *The literature review: a step-by-step guide for students*.

London: SAGE.

Robinson, L., & Feng, J. (2016). *Effect of direct grammar instruction on student writing skills* (Unpublished master's thesis). Hilton Head Island, South Carolina.

Wood, D. J., Bruner, J. S. and Ross, G. (1976). The role of tutoring in problem solving. *Journal of Child Psychiatry and Psychology*, 17(2), 89-100.

Wood, J. W., (2009). *Practical strategies for the inclusive classroom*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Person Education, Inc.

RESOURCES

“19 Examples of Personification for Kids.” English Literature Hub, 15 Oct. 2016,
youtu.be/xaseqhocSC8.

“Alliteration .” Grammar Songs by Melissa , 6 Oct. 2014, youtu.be/y-koivS_aho.

Brinckloe, J. (1986). *Fireflies!* New York: Aladdin Paperbacks.

“Everyday Idioms - Made Easy.” APPUSERIES , 9 June 2013,
youtu.be/WVHIVbIgUH0.

“Figurative Language: Metaphors, Fun and Educational Game for Children.”
YouTube.com , KidsEduc- Kids Educational Games , 29 Oct. 2014,
youtu.be/T3DJ0EJUA38

“Figurative Language: Similes, Fun and Educational Game for Children.”
YouTube.com , KidsEduc- Kids Educational Games , 28 Oct. 2014,
youtu.be/XTSCSSHqH_U.

“Onomatopoeia.” *YouTube*, Mindy Bauer , 26 Mar. 2012,youtu.be/flb5kCvVBo8.
Onomatopoeia Creative Project. HolaBriannaBee, 3 Dec. 2013,
youtu.be/l1GC1yWdM_c.

Paul, Sarah. (2017, March 26). Writing rubric for primary grades [PDF Writing
Rubric]. Retrieved from <http://teacherspayteachers.com>

“Personification Figurative Language Songs by Melissa.” Grammar Songs by
Melissa , 7 Dec. 2013, youtu.be/JMKgLnhelX4.

“Similes and Metaphors.” The Brazillions , 13 Mar. 2013,

youtu.be/uoSBVNUO2LU.

The Teacher Treasury. (2017, September, 17) Asking Questions Graphic

Organizer: Who What When Where Why and How? [PDF Graphic

Organizer]. Retrieved from <http://teacherspayteachers.com>

Writing attitude survey. [PDF writing survey]. (2017, March 26). Retrieved from

<http://teacherspayteachers.com>