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Journal Writing in a First Grade Classroom

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ABSTRACT

This research study, which was comprised of both qualitative and quantitative data, aimed to measure the effects of journal writing experiences in an elementary classroom. The study was conducted in a first grade elementary classroom in eastern Pennsylvania. The purpose of this study was to determine if providing frequent journal writing opportunities would influence or improve student self-efficacy, motivation, and achievement in writing. Students were given choice when selecting a topic, weekly mini-lessons were taught, and weekly conferences were held with each student.

Data collected throughout the study consisted of a researcher field log, writing conference notes, surveys, interviews, graded journal entries, and student artifacts. The analysis of the data led to multiple conclusions. The mini-lessons allowed for a repetitive structure that introduced and reinforced writing concepts, leading to a positive effect on student achievement. One-on-one conferences served as a motivational tool, led to increased feelings self-efficacy, and allowed for scaffolding so that each student's needs were met. The journal writing experiences led to an increase in student achievement, and the opportunity for student choice allowed for more motivating writing experiences.

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For John, Mom, Dad, and Shea...

Thank you for supporting me every step of the way and motivating me to succeed.

I couldn't have done it without your support!

For Nicole...

Thank you for being my Moravian partner throughout this entire experience, for your support, and for your help along the way.

For my Students

Thank you for working your hardest and showing me ways I can improve my teaching.

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RESEARCHER STANCE

My passion for teaching began at an early age. My first and second grade teacher was a woman whom I adored. I have fond memories of creating projects and listening to stories in a fun and welcoming environment. At the end of our two years together she even invited the class to her wedding. Knowing that I was special enough to attend my teacher's wedding was an incredible feeling, and is a feeling that sparked a true passion. From that moment on, I realized that I wanted to follow in her footsteps. I wanted to teach children and make them feel as special as she made me feel that day. Twenty years later, here I am as a first grade teacher. I want to be the teacher that my first graders can always think back on as someone who motivated them and sparked their passions.

Throughout my years of being a student, I have always been a perfectionist. I was never satisfied with my work unless I knew that I put one hundred percent effort into it. It brought about a competitive nature in me to strive to get the top grades, and I wouldn't be satisfied unless I did. Although this was not always an attainable goal, this drive to succeed has shaped me into a teacher who strives to do her best each day. It is this perfectionism that has led me to not just accept the holes in my current curriculum and teaching methods. One hole has been in the area of writing.

During my first year of teaching I realized that I was not incorporating as much writing into each day as I would have liked. Our literacy program was

rigorous and required a lot of material to be taught each day. My colleagues and I struggled with finding enough time to incorporate the basic writing lessons that are so important for beginning readers and writers.

This led me to start researching different writing methods and ways to incorporate more writing into my first grade classroom. In our “Teacher as a Researcher” course, I found that I could incorporate journal writing as a task my students could work on during their differentiated reading time. While I met with groups, one of the students’ assignments at their seats was to write in their journals. In their journals I asked them to write about whatever they’d like, and provided picture cards and story starters for suggestions if they were stuck. They worked on their journals at least three days a week, and I made time for conferences during any down time we had during the day. At the end of the week students shared their favorite entry and students were able to ask questions and have conversations about their entries. This sparked dialogue among peers and more interest in writing.

Unfortunately, over the past two years I was not able to maintain this strong writing environment. We started a new curriculum last year that I have found requires even more material to cover, and even less time to devote to true writing experiences. Our focus is now on responding to prompts from literature we have read. Although this is important, I do not see the excitement or writing

achievement I once saw with my first year students. I feel as though I am doing a disservice to my students and action has to be taken on my part.

In all areas of life, people learn from first-hand experiences, having repeated opportunities to practice a task, and having guidance along the way. So the goal for my research study was to provide repeated opportunities for my students to practice their writing in their journals. I would incorporate time into our schedule for journal writing at least two times a week so that my students were actively writing each week. Students would receive a student-friendly rubric based upon the curriculum rubric that they could refer to during their writing to ensure they were including all that is needed in their writing. Picture prompts and story starters would be provided for students to help generate ideas. Each week at least one mini-lesson would be taught that focused around the writing process, including generating topics, adding details, and appropriate conventions. My other goal was to hold conferences with students during any free moments of the day to review their entries. These steps allowed for a more focused writing plan in my classroom.

Overall, I wanted my first graders to enjoy the writing process, express their ideas and feelings through writing, and have greater self-efficacy and motivation in regards to writing. My goal was for students to leave my classroom as confident writers who could look back on first grade as a motivating learning experience. Therefore, my research question was: Does providing first grade

students with journal writing opportunities influence or improve student self-efficacy, motivation, and achievement in writing?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing is an important skill needed for success to progress through the education system and a skill required in the workforce. In Wagner's (2008) book titled *The Global Achievement Gap*, he stated that writing was important to two out of the seven survival skills needed to succeed in our global economy.

Cutler and Graham (2008) surveyed primary teachers throughout the United States about their instructional writing practices. They found that 65% of the teachers surveyed did not use a commercial program for writing instruction. Out of the teachers who did use a commercial program to teach writing, 45% of those programs focused on the teaching of handwriting or spelling.

Coker, Farley-Ripple, Jackson, Wen, MacArthur, and Jennings (2016) conducted a study of one state to determine the variability of writing instruction in thirteen different first grade classrooms. They found "that early writing instruction differs across days, classrooms, and schools" (p. 818).

History of Writing

Hawkins and Razali (2012) studied the writing trends over the past 100 years. Through their research they found three definitions of writing that have influenced the trends over the years: "writing as penmanship, writing as product, and writing as process" (p. 306). "Writing as penmanship" involved a strict focus on neat penmanship. Teachers taught this method of writing through students imitating their work and through repeated practice. Then in the 1930s and 1940s it

was decided that penmanship was only one aspect of writing, and they renamed penmanship to “handwriting”. As the years progressed there began to be a movement away from focusing on drill practices with handwriting. Teachers were then encouraged to “teach handwriting and grammar within the context of authentic composition” (Hawkins & Razali, 2012, p. 309).

After this shift away from “writing as penmanship,” there was an emphasis placed on focusing on the product produced. “Writing as product” was described by Hawkins and Razali as instruction through oral lessons, lessons on syntax, spelling, and punctuation. These were still traditional teaching methods, and continued through the 1970s. In the 1980s these techniques began to be criticized once the whole language movement began taking place.

This movement led to the idea of “writing as process.” “Writing as process” encouraged more time to be spent on one assignment, where students would reflect on and revise one piece of writing. It also included students collaborating with a partner and conferencing with the teacher. Hawkins and Razali also mentioned that in this phase of writing “the redefinition of teacher as facilitator, rather than evaluator, was emphasized” (p. 313). As all other approaches, these ideas were also met with criticism by some. These critics argued that with so much focus on the process, the product was lost in the mix. This was an issue due to increased pressure for schools to score well on state tests.

So now we are at a crossroads in writing education. The Common Core State Standards have been adopted and writing standards have been put into place. The Pennsylvania State Standards have “Long Term Transfer Goals” in English Language Arts. In the area of writing, the goal is to “produce writing to address task, purpose, perspective, and intended audience; research and gather evidence to create a clear and coherent message” (Pennsylvania Department of Education, n.d.).

Brown, Morrell, and Rowlands (2011) stated, “In an effort to raise test scores and school API ratings, teachers have moved away from the well-tested foundations of writing instruction: student choice, revision, writer’s craft, publication, and authentic assessment. Instead of giving students blocks of time to write, revise, and share, we focus on teaching writing recipes with the five-paragraph essay” (p. 17). Instead of teaching with our students’ best interests in mind, teachers are forced to teach this standard essay format in order to meet testing expectations.

Assessment of Writing and Writing Tools

Casey, Miller, Stockton, and Justice (2016) discussed the use of Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM) assessments in writing. These CBM assessments consist of students being given a prompt and then writing for a certain amount of time. The most common ways to assess these writing pieces is through counting the total number of words that were written in three minutes.

Casey, et al. (2016) explained that this is not the best measure of a student's ability because it doesn't take into account the student's construction of meaningful sentences; they could just write a list of unrelated words and have that count as total words. The CBM assessments and various other assessments to measure writing progress tend to overly focus on mechanics, which isn't a full measure of writing and is also an issue for English Language Learners. This focus on mechanics is a disservice to students who do well with mechanics but struggle with developing meaningful ideas. It is also unfair to students who have great ideas but are being penalized for a little grammar mistake.

Casey, et al. conducted a study to look into the method of analyzing T-units, and to see if measuring words per T-unit would show growth over time. T-units are "thought units" that consist of a subject, verb, and any other addition such as an adjective, adverb, or preposition. The results indicated that "the majority of teachers were supportive of using words per T-unit and agreed with a de-emphasis on mechanics in the assessment and evaluation process of written samples" (p. 51). This supports the idea that assessing with a focus on solely mechanics isn't considered a best practice for teachers.

One tool to both foster writing instruction and use as a means of assessment is a rubric. In a study conducted by Bradford, Newland, Rule, and Montgomery (2016), they looked to find the influence of using rubrics with first and second grade students. They argued the use for rubrics when they stated that

“scoring and norming of student work not only allow teachers to closely evaluate student mastery, but also serve as a valuable form of professional learning” (Bradford, Newland, Rule, & Montgomery, 2016, pp. 463-464). The rubrics that they used with these first and second graders didn’t just focus on mechanics, but consisted of the following writing characteristics: “focus and idea generation, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions” (p. 466). Teachers assessed the writing using the teacher rubric from Houghton-Mifflin Harcourt Journeys, and a student-friendly rubric was adapted from the curriculum given rubric. This student-friendly rubric was used during writing instruction to teach the different writing traits and the difference between high and low scores on the rubric. It was used during conferencing, where the teachers and students used the rubric to score their work. Not only did the use of rubrics improve student writing scores in this study, but it also was a positive experience for the students. Bradford, et al. stated, “Additionally, rubric use relieved students of uncertainty about expectations and gave them the opportunity to be in control of their own writing success” (p. 471). This is an important part of also increasing a student’s writing self-efficacy.

Overall, through the use of rubrics as an assessment tool, students’ writing can be assessed not just on grammar but on various traits of writing. Rubrics also serve as a valuable instructional tool in an elementary classroom, and can be a valuable tool during teacher-student conferencing.

Writing Conferences

Conferencing is an important part of the writing process in the elementary setting. Gair (2015) used a structured form of conferencing during her writing-workshop model of teaching writing. Gair held conferences with four to five students a day for a span of five to ten minutes during independent writing time. In reference to her conferences, Gair stated, “I embrace a constructive literacy approach within which the assessment of student writing is designed to offer ongoing targeted feedback and incremental goals for improvement, as well as guide subsequent re-engagement lessons” (p. 447). Gair used a Writing Conference Process which included the following steps: “receiving the piece, identifying what the writer does effectively, identifying what the writer needs, teaching a writing strategy or craft technique through mentor texts, setting writing goals, and writing anecdotal notes/assessment” (p. 448).

In a more simplified version of a teacher-student conference, Jones and East’s (2010) conferences consisted of the teacher sitting next to the student and the teacher reading the student’s journal aloud, with the student assisting the teacher as needed. Then the teacher chooses one teaching point to discuss and writes it down on the students writing piece as a reminder.

All in all, teacher feedback during conferences is essential in helping guide students through the writing process. It is during the writing process, not after the work is submitted, where students benefit from feedback the most

(Calkins & Ehrenworth, 2016). Conferencing provides students with a goal to move forward in their writing. Additionally, according to Jones and East (2010), it builds the writer's confidence because the teacher is also praising the strengths of his/her writing pieces.

Self-Efficacy

Romeo (2008) discussed self-efficacy when giving students self-efficacy inventories. He stated that "self-efficacy inventories tap students' beliefs regarding their competence to be successful in writing in general and specific aspects of the writing process" (p. 32).

Brown, Morrell, and Rowlands (2011) held a Young Writers Camp for fourth through twelfth graders with a goal of developing students' self-efficacy. They provided authentic writing experiences to promote intrinsic motivation, persistence, effort, and self-confidence. Students in grades 4 and 5 took a class called "Discovering Your Writer's Voice". Students in grades 6 through 8 took a class called "Developing Your Writer's Voice", and high school students took a class called "Writing with an Attitude". Brown, Morrell, and Rowlands stated, "While the lower grades primarily engage in more creative writing, all the writing done in class is purposeful. We want students to see that writing is fun and can be used academically" (p. 15). A majority of the student entered this camp with little enthusiasm to write. Although this was only a two week camp and the researchers

did not perform “in depth statistical analysis”, they found that the camp did improve students’ attitudes toward writing.

In another study, Hall and Axelrod (2014) described students’ writing self-efficacy as “the belief in their competence as writers” (p. 41). They explained that in our current educational standing that focuses on student accountability and Common Core Standards, it is important for teachers to consider how students’ writing-self efficacy and writing achievement are connected. Hall and Axelrod looked to explore elementary students’ attitudes, motivation, and self-efficacy towards writing. They found that students indicated experience, conventions, elaboration, and teacher response as factors that indicated competence in writing. Hall and Axelrod’s use of conventions was one way that students indicated themselves as “good” or “bad” writers. Students also stated that elaboration and using details made them good writers. Students expressed positive feelings about writing when talking about writing as a means to express ideas and be creative. On the other hand, negative feelings about writing focused on how writing can be difficult, including the aspects of spelling, punctuation, organizing thoughts and ideas, and writing long sentences.

Seban and Tavsanli (2015) conducted a study to examine second grade students’ feelings about their literature identities. The study included writing mini lessons followed by students being actively engaged in writing. These students were then interviewed on questions like what they needed in order to read and

write, how they view themselves as readers and writers, how they see themselves as members of the literacy classroom, and why do they read and write.

Seban and Tavsanli (2015) found that all students considered conventions and accurate writing important. They believed that these ideas of the importance of mechanical aspects of writing could have been influenced by the traditional writing approach that the curriculum followed, and influenced by the emphasis on conventions in first grade. Unlike the traditional approach, this study practiced a writing workshop method. Seban and Tavsanli stated, “The ongoing writing practices and the mini lessons through study units on different genres, and responses to others’ writing and sharing, increased their knowledge about the purposes of writing and they became more aware of their writing processes” (p. 230).

Writing Workshop

Lucy M. Calkins is a prominent name in the area of writing workshop. Writing workshop is categorized as a writing process that entails multiple steps. Calkins and Ehrenworth (2016) emphasized the important aspects of a writing workshop. There should be about ten minutes of explicit whole-group writing instruction, followed by at least 30 minutes of writing time. During this writing time, the teacher should be conferencing with students. Then the workshop should end with 5-10 minutes of student sharing and goal setting.

Gair (2015) modeled her writing workshop after Calkins' approach. Gair started with whole group instruction consisting of a mini lesson that focused on a certain aspect of writing. After that, the students moved onto independent writing. According to Gair, during this time, the students would "brainstorm, write, edit, and confer with writing partners or me" (p. 446). The workshop then ended with a portion of student sharing. Gair explained, "The writing workshop is intended to be learner-centered, an environment in which active learning and inductive instructional methods are fundamental characteristics" (p. 446).

Jasmine and Weiner (2007) followed a similar writing workshop model with first grade students. The writing workshop was held two to three times a week for 35-40 minutes. Jasmine and Weiner stated, "During this time, the children were engaged in the writing process, while the teacher observed and held conferences with the students. Writing topics were generated by the use of personal journals" (p. 135). This writing workshop method was enjoyable for the students. It was regarded so positively that "many students frequently asked for Writing Workshop to be extended and/or scheduled more often" (p. 137). It allowed for students to choose what they would like to write about, work with others, and have one-on-one time with the teacher.

Motivation

Motivation is a driving factor in students' writing decisions and achievement. According to Brown, Morrel, and Rowlands (2011), years ago, in

1983, Donald Graves expressed his concern in the way writing was taught in the classroom. He explained that the way writing instruction was taught stifled students writing identities, self-expression, and motivation. Unfortunately, this lack of motivation in writing has continued today. We need to look at what motivation means to our students and how we can achieve this in our classrooms.

Hall and Axelrod (2014) explored students' motivation toward writing. In terms of writing motivation for students, Hall and Axelrod categorize it as “factors that make them *want* to write” (p. 38). If students are not motivated to write, it is less likely that they will put in the effort and be as successful as they would be if they did enjoy the process. Hall and Axelrod found that topic choice, sharing, freedom, and praise were the biggest themes that came about when looking for what motivates students to write. They concluded that topic choice was the most frequently mentioned motivator throughout all age groups.

Student Choice

When students are given choices in their writing, they tend to be more motivated to write. As mentioned in the previous section, Hall and Axelrod found that topic choice was a major motivator for students to write. They further stated, “When discussing *topic choice*, children described the importance of being familiar with writing topics and the restrictions they felt when writing about assigned topics” (p. 38).

Calkins and Ehrenworth (2016) discussed choice as an essential element in teaching writing. Calkins and Ehrenworth stated, “A writer’s commitment to his or her subject leads that writer to bring the imprint of his or her own passions to the page, writing with that magical quality we call voice” (p. 9). Choice could mean students choosing a topic. If there is one main topic for the entire class, the students could have choice in subtopics, what they want to research, or what position they want to defend in regards to the topic. Students could also have a choice as to what book they would like to write about, or the themes to write about. Another aspect of choice is choosing the strategies to apply while writing. Self-regulation and goal setting is important for success.

In Seban and Tavsanli’s (2015) study that examined second grade students’ feelings about their literature identities, they found that student choice was an important factor in the writing process. Seban and Tavsanli stated, “Students expressed positive opinions about being free to determine the topics and audiences. Students mentioned they liked to write because they are free to choose what to write about” (p. 225). However, they found that some struggling writers had negative feeling towards topic choice because they had a tough time decided what to write about. This is when the idea of allowing student choice, while giving some options comes into play.

Behizadeh (2014) conducted a case study of an eighth grade African-American male who was in the lowest English Language Arts class in his school.

This student struggled with writing, and felt that he wasn't allowed to express himself in his writing at school. Behizadeh (2014) emphasized the idea of structured student choices through assistance and one-on-one meetings. Structured student choice is important because "students in lower level English language arts classes like Xavier may need more assistance when making authentic writing choices" (p. 7). However, limiting students' options too strictly could also restrict students from expressing themselves fully through writing.

Journal Writing

In a study conducted by Jones and East (2010), they believed that a way to provide positive writing experiences was through the implementation of journal writing throughout the entire school day, as well as including a home and school connection. According to Jones and East, journal writing in a first grade classroom involves, "daily practice, consistent feedback, integration into other classroom practices, a supportive environment, sharing opportunities, and a home/school connection" (p. 114).

In Jones and East's study, students from one first grade classroom were exposed to these journal writing experiences daily throughout one school year. Each student was given feedback at least twice a week, from one-on-one conferences with the teacher and also through the use of a parent volunteer program. Mini-conferences with the teacher involved the teacher reading the student's journal entry aloud, choosing one topic to discuss, and then writing the

suggestion on the student's journal entry. Parent volunteers were also told to write a suggestion on the journals as they met with students. Students also shared their journal entries in multiple different contexts.

In Jones and East's (2010) study, throughout the day students used a variety of resources to aide in their writing process. These resources included a word wall, spelling dictionary, alphabet/sound charts, Elkonin boxes, and science terms. Jones and East found that these full-year journal writing experiences led to an increase in the categories of correct spelling, total words used, and correct punctuation. A limitation of the study by Jones and East is that they only studied 15 students.

Conclusion

Positive writing experiences in an elementary classroom can lead to success in reading and improve a child's self-efficacy. There is currently a lack of a universal successful writing instruction approach across elementary schools. Research has shown that providing students with choice, holding writing conferences, utilizing rubrics, and teaching through a writing workshop method are all components of providing successful writing experiences. My research centered around the following themes: assessment of writing and writing tools, writing conferences, self-efficacy, writing workshop, motivation, student choice, and journal writing. These different methods and techniques supported my research question: Does providing first grade students with journal writing

opportunities influence or improve student self-efficacy, motivation, and achievement in writing?

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research study was to provide weekly journal writing opportunities for my first graders in hopes of increasing motivation, self-efficacy, and achievement. The study was conducted in a first grade classroom with a total of 15 participants. The study was conducted over 11 weeks. Each week a writing mini-lesson was taught that focused on a certain component of our writing rubric. Students were then given the opportunity to write in their journals about a topic of their choosing. Student-teacher conferences were conducted on a weekly basis. A variety of data sources were utilized to document the events taking place during the study and to measure if there was an increase in student motivation, self-efficacy, and achievement. I kept a field log to document any important events that took place during our writing time. This field log also was a tool for me to reflect on the significance of these events. Conference notes were taken to keep track of students' writing progress and were also utilized to help me decide what skills needed to be reviewed in future mini lessons. Surveys and interviews were conducted to measure student motivation and self-efficacy, and artifacts were collected to measure student achievement.

Data Sources

Field Log

Throughout my research study I kept a double entry field log to keep track of the events that took place. On one side I recorded my observations and

on the other side I recorded my reflections. The observation section included what I taught or reviewed that day, students' reactions and actions during the writing time, and any student quotes. These observations were crucial in creating a time line and for collecting observational data. The field log was created as a table in Microsoft Word and saved in my school computer that requires my credentials to access.

Conference Notes

During my research study I also took writing conference notes. As I conferenced with each student I recorded notes about what they did well with and also noted what skills we reviewed. These notes allowed me to track students' strengths and weaknesses, and also provided me with an idea of what writing skills needed to be retaught during the future mini-lessons.

Surveys

I administered a pre- and post-survey to determine my students' self-efficacy and motivation toward writing. I did change one question in the post-survey to make it past tense. These surveys were analyzed to see whether students' self-efficacy and motivation toward writing changed.

Interviews

I administered a pre-study interview to gain a further insight into my students' self-efficacy and motivation toward writing at the beginning of

my study. I then conducted an interview with the same questions, but more specific, at the end of the study. I changed the questions slightly to gather more specific information at the end. The interview answers were analyzed to see any data patterns and to see whether students' self-efficacy and motivation changed throughout the study.

Student Artifacts

I gathered a pre-, mid-, and post- journal entry sample from each student. These artifacts were crucial to my study because they are evidence as to whether student achievement increased in writing. I graded each sample using the Wonders Curriculum rubric to analyze if student achievement changed as my study progressed.

Procedures

The school year began as a normal year would, with students learning classroom procedures and getting acclimated to the first grade language arts curriculum. During the first week of school, the informed consent forms were sent home to parents. The following week I explained to the students the purpose of my study and that I would be collecting data through their journal writing, surveys, interviews, and conferences with me. I then administered a pre-study survey and had students fill out student assent forms.

For 11 weeks students participated in writing mini-lessons that consisted of me modeling a journal entry and discussing the new skill being introduced.

After Week 4 I reviewed writing concepts that I observed students needed additional practice with. Students wrote in their journals after the mini-lesson, and then worked in the journals with me during our conference time. The schedule for the 11 weeks was as follows:

Week 1:

- Students completed a journal entry that was graded as a baseline.
- Informed consent form was sent home to parents.

Week 2:

- Teacher administered a writing survey.
- Teacher introduced the writing rubric.
- Teacher reviewed conventions: capitalization, punctuation, and spelling
- Students began writing in their journals using personal experiences or student selected prompts
- Teacher taught a mini lesson focusing on what a topic is and what supporting facts are.
- Teacher began conferencing with students.
 - During the conference the teacher reviewed: capitalization, punctuation, spelling, topic choice, and details.
 - The teacher made reference to the writing rubric.
 - The teacher gave positive remarks and worked with students on areas that needed to be reinforced.

Week 3:

- Students continued to write in their journals using personal experiences or student selected prompts.
- Teacher taught a mini lesson focusing on organization and using transition words. The teacher taught follow up mini lessons on this subject throughout the week.
- The teacher continued conferencing with students.
 - During the conference the teacher reviewed: capitalization, punctuation, spelling, topic choice, details, organization, and transitions.
 - The teacher made reference to the writing rubric.
 - The teacher gave positive remarks and worked with students on areas that needed to be reinforced.

Week 4:

- Students continued to write in their journals using personal experiences or student selected prompts.
- Teacher taught a mini lesson focusing on adding a closing sentence to the journal entries. The teacher taught follow up mini lessons on this subject throughout the week.
- The teacher continued conferencing with students.
 - During the conference the teacher reviewed: capitalization, punctuation, spelling, topic choice, details, organization, transitions, and closure.
 - The teacher made reference to the writing rubric.
 - The teacher gave positive remarks and worked with students on areas that needed to be reinforced.

Week 5:

- Students continued to write in their journals using personal experiences or student selected prompts.
- Teacher taught a mini lesson reinforcing organization, adding details, and adding a closing sentence. The teacher taught follow up mini lessons on this subject throughout the week.
- The teacher continued conferencing with students.
 - During the conference the teacher reviewed: capitalization, punctuation, spelling, topic choice, details, organization, transitions, and closure.
 - The teacher made reference to the writing rubric.
 - The teacher gave positive remarks and worked with students on areas that needed to be reinforced.

Week 6:

- Students continued to write in their journals using personal experiences or student selected prompts.
- Teacher taught a mini lesson reviewing concepts students seemed to be struggling with.
- The teacher continued conferencing with students.
 - During the conference the teacher reviewed: capitalization, punctuation, spelling, topic choice, details, organization, transitions, and closure.
 - The teacher made reference to the writing rubric.

- The teacher gave positive remarks and worked with students on areas that needed to be reinforced.
- The teacher collected a journal entry as a mid-study assessment.

Week 7:

- Students continued to write in their journals using personal experiences or student selected prompts.
- Teacher taught a mini lesson reviewing concepts students seemed to be struggling with.
- The teacher continued conferencing with students.
 - During the conference the teacher reviewed: capitalization, punctuation, spelling, topic choice, details, organization, transitions, and closure.
 - The teacher made reference to the writing rubric.
 - The teacher gave positive remarks and worked with students on areas that needed to be reinforced.

Week 8:

- Students continued to write in their journals using personal experiences or student selected prompts.
- Teacher taught a mini lesson reviewing concepts students seemed to be struggling with.
- The teacher continued conferencing with students.
 - During the conference the teacher reviewed: capitalization, punctuation, spelling, topic choice, details, organization, transitions, and closure.
 - The teacher made reference to the writing rubric.
 - The teacher gave positive remarks and worked with students on areas that needed to be reinforced.

Week 9:

- Students continued to write in their journals using personal experiences or student selected prompts.
- Teacher taught a mini lesson reviewing concepts students seemed to be struggling with.
- The teacher continued conferencing with students.
 - During the conference the teacher reviewed: capitalization, punctuation, spelling, topic choice, details, organization, transitions, and closure.
 - The teacher made reference to the writing rubric.

- The teacher gave positive remarks and worked with students on areas that needed to be reinforced.

Week 10:

- Students continued to write in their journals using personal experiences or student selected prompts.
- Teacher taught a mini lesson reviewing concepts students seemed to be struggling with.
- The teacher continued conferencing with students.
 - During the conference the teacher reviewed: capitalization, punctuation, spelling, topic choice, details, organization, transitions, and closure.
 - The teacher made reference to the writing rubric.
 - The teacher gave positive remarks and worked with students on areas that needed to be reinforced.

Week 11:

- The teacher collected a journal entry as the post assessment.
- The teacher administered the post survey.
- The teacher conducted post-study interviews.

Trustworthiness Statement

To ensure that my research study was both trustworthy and valid, I made sure to follow numerous ethical guidelines. I was granted approval and written permission from Moravian College's Human Subject Internal Review Board (HSIRB) to conduct my study. I was also given permission by my building principal to go forward with the study. Parents were given an informed consent form that provided details of my research project. The consent form explained that although all students would participate in the curriculum, their children's data would only be used in my study with their consent. It also indicated that students could withdraw from the study at any point without penalty. The survey that the

children completed was also attached to the consent form so that parents could review it. Students also were read aloud an assent form indicating that their permission would allow me to use their data, or they could choose not to without penalty. In order to make the assent form and student survey age appropriate, I included faces with descriptions underneath that I read aloud as options for students to choose from.

Throughout the study I collected various types of data in order to ensure the validity and trustworthiness of my research. Through these multiple sources I was able to triangulate my data so that my findings were represented by various types of sources. One data source I utilized was a double entry journal where I recorded observations and my reflections. These observations were chronologically documented and allowed me to get an accurate view of the goings on in my classroom on a daily basis. Writing conference notes were used to keep track of students' strengths and weaknesses, and were also used as a reflection tool for me to see what I needed to continue to teach during my mini-lessons. Student journal examples and graded rubrics were used to compare student achievement from the beginning of my study and the end. The same rubrics were used throughout the study to ensure that I used the same criteria both times I assessed the writing. Students were also exposed to these rubrics regularly so that they were consistently reminded of the expectations. Student surveys were collected throughout the study to get an accurate picture of my students' writing

self-efficacy. Individual interviews were conducted so I that I could accurately quote students and represent their true feelings about the study. I remained open to any unexpected research findings and took into consideration all points of view when analyzing my data.

Another ethical method I used throughout my study was to constantly reflect on the events taking place during my study. Throughout my study, the goal was always to ensure that my students' needs were always met and that I was representing the data collected in a valid and trustworthy way.

MY STORY

Week 1

The beginning of the year began like every other. New students coming in, excited to see what first grade will bring, and my own anticipation of what learners I would have this year. I teach first grade at a school in eastern Pennsylvania. It is a suburban school, but on the edge of a bigger city, and is now classified as a Title I school.

I began my study by having students write in their journals in order to get a baseline and see what kind of writers I would be working with this year. When asking them to tell me what they did over the summer, I mostly got one sentence. One student, who I will call John, wrote a sentence that consisted of unclear words with mostly the letters x, t, s, and a. I asked him to read me what he wrote and he said, "I went to the beach with my dad" (Appendix K). Another student, who I will call Molly, wrote one word "Paris" (Appendix L). Although a majority of students only wrote one sentence, these students stood out to me in particular and brought about an excitement in me. I had a new group of students to help develop writing habits and to teach them to elaborate and expand upon their ideas. I wanted writing to not just be a mundane experience that students felt was a chore.

The next step of the process was conducting a pre-study survey (Appendix F) and having students complete an assent form (Appendix B). I was surprised that

three students did not wish to share their data in my study, but it also made me consider that they could be unsure of their own writing and not confident enough to share with others. This moment increased my own motivation to make writing an enjoyable experience, where my students would feel comfortable in sharing their work and become confident in themselves as writers. The surveys yielded a mixed result of how students felt about their writing and themselves as writers. I would have a total of 15 students participating in my study.

Another part of the introduction of my study involved reviewing the student-friendly rubric that I adapted from our Wonder's 4-Point Scoring Rubric (*Unit Assessments*, 2017). I reviewed each section and had the students put a rubric in their writing folders so they could have access to it at any time (Appendix H). I also took some time to discuss capitalization, punctuation, and spelling which would be topics we would come back to throughout the study.

Week 2

The following week I taught the first mini-lesson of the study. My first mini-lesson focused on what a topic is and what types of supporting facts to use. We discussed the "Five Finger Model", which was present on our Wonder's Rubric under the "Support" section. On each finger there was a question word, and I referred to them as the "5 W's." 5 W's included: who, what, where, when, and why.

After the first mini-lesson, students did their second journal entry. This time they were allowed to pick from the pictures or story-starters if they needed help choosing a topic to write about (Appendices N and O). I encouraged students to write more details, so they took more time for this second entry. Some still had trouble getting started and needed a lot of prompting so I set a timer for five minutes of silent writing, which seemed to help. Many students chose pictures to help them come up with a topic to write about. I was happily surprised to see students helping each other out. One student was stuck so I suggested the student go get a picture. John added to my suggestion and told the other student that she could also look in our story starter bin.

The following day I began conferencing with each student. I wrote what the student's did well with and what skill or skills we reviewed (Appendix M). I also began conducting interviews to gain insight into students' self-efficacy and motivation in the area of writing (Appendix D). Some students seemed very confused with some of the interview questions, so I had to simplify questions as much as I could (i.e. for "How do you feel about writing" I ended up asking them to choose from these options: "Good, ok, or I don't like it"). One student responded to "What's your least favorite thing about writing?" with "climbing trees", which indicated confusion. I got mixed answers about liking writing and not liking writing, but was surprised with how many students indicated that they did like writing. What I found to be the most common in the pre-interviews I

conducted was that students' favorite part of writing was drawing pictures. This observation confirmed my desire to motivate students to actually write, and not just write one sentence with a major focus being on the picture they would draw. During the interviews, the students indicated that they liked having the pictures and story-starters as an option, so I hoped this option of student choice would be a motivational tool throughout the study.

The next day I had students write in their journals while I conferenced with some students and conducted more interviews. Again the pattern I saw during interviews was that most students' favorite part of writing was drawing. I noticed that a few said their least favorite part was "messaging up", which indicated to me that I needed to work on building their confidence and letting them know it's ok to make mistakes. In most of the conferences we discussed adding more details. Throughout the writing time I also observed a lot of the students going to the story starter bins.

Week 3

The third week of my study began with a mini-lesson focused on organizing a story and using transition words. I passed out a list of transition words for students to utilize and keep in their writing folders (Appendix I). I conferenced with students on their entries. I encouraged them to write about what they did over the weekend or something they would be doing that week because I observed this topic of writing yielded the most ideas. We had discussed in class

the idea of “restricted choice” so I wanted to discuss with my students that if they felt overwhelmed and were unsure of a topic to choose, they could think about their own lives and what they have done. Some students were still unsure what to write about when I was observing their writing, so I spoke with them about what they did over the weekend and we discussed together what their topic would be.

Two days later I had students continue their journal writing and later taught another mini lesson. I had observed that some students were not using the transition words appropriately, so during the mini lesson I reviewed the appropriate way to use transitions, and which transition words would come at the beginning of the story, the middle, and the end. I made sure to praise them for their attempts at utilizing the transitions. I encouraged the use of multiple transition words throughout a story rather than just one because I had observed one student using the word “next” each time. I also discussed some editing marks I made in journals during the first conferences I held. I went over that three lines underneath a letter meant the letter needed to be capitalized, and a small line after a word meant there needed to be a punctuation mark. I allowed them to go back into their journals after the mini-lesson and continue working.

Molly, my student who had previously written one word in her entry, came up to show me her journal without me prompting her to come sit with me. This time her entry consisted of two sentences. I went back to her first entry and showed her that she had started by only writing one word, and now she had two

whole sentences. The look on Molly's face confirmed to me why I was doing this study! This also began a trend where some students would come up to me at points in the day to enthusiastically show me their writing.

On cloud nine after talking with Molly, I continued to make observations while students were journaling. Another student, who I will refer to as Megan, told me she didn't write anything because she couldn't think of any ideas. I suggested utilizing the story-starter bins. She told me there was nothing in the bin that gave her an idea. Another student reminded her that there was one bin with pictures and another with words. This interaction made me realize two things: I would need to continue to motivate students to develop their own ideas instead of just telling them to go to the story-starter bins if needed, and another was that my new class was a supportive group of students willing to help each other when they saw another was stuck.

Later on in the week, a student, who I will call Heather, came up to show me her respond-to-prompt journal book, which was another journal book we used to respond to literature. I told her I was impressed with her details. She said, "Yesterday I only wrote one sentence so today I wrote more!" This was a student whom I had conferenced with earlier in the week and we discussed adding details. This interaction was what I was hoping for in my study. I wanted my mini-lessons and conferences to develop the students' writing and help them develop a greater

sense of self-efficacy in writing. This student’s excitement regarding her expansion on ideas was a step forward with my self-efficacy goal.

Later on that same day, I did a review mini-lesson on organization. I wrote a story and went through our Hamburger Model while writing and also included transition words. The Hamburger Model, which you will see in Figure 4.1, was a picture in the “organization” category of our student friendly rubric, where the top bun stood for the “topic sentence”, the toppings and burger stood for the “details”, and the bottom bun stood for the “closing sentence”. The Hamburger Model was something I would utilize from that point on each time I modeled a journal entry. It was also the beginning of me using a journal entry model as part of my mini-lesson. There is a close up picture of the Hamburger Model that I would draw below.

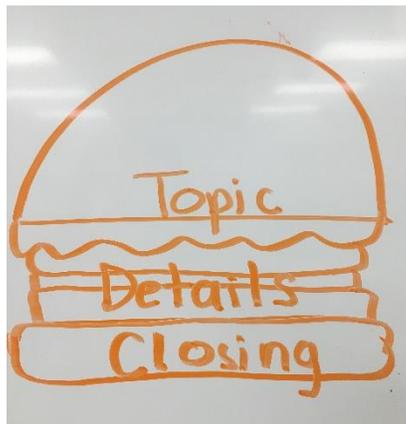


Figure 4.1

Week 4

I began this week with a mini-lesson about adding a closing sentence. I modeled a journal entry and went through our Hamburger Model, but especially focused on the importance of ending our story. Some students were confusing when I asked “what do I need to end my story” by saying, “you need to end with a period” during the whole group lesson. I made sure to demonstrate with the Hamburger Model that we needed an ending sentence so that the meat and toppings weren’t just going to fall out of the burger. I also made sure to repeat to students that they could write about what they did over the weekend (what my story was about) or going on a trip (also what my story was about). I asked students where they could go if they were stuck. Megan responded with “Look at the story-starters.”

After my mini-lesson I observed students writing and held conferences. During the conferences I made sure to refer to the student rubric and point to the Hamburger Model when we were talking about the story’s organization. I was happy to see that Megan got to work right away on a story. She also did a closing sentence to her story, which led me to believe that the lesson resonated with her. During this time, a student who I will call Erica, came up to me and said, “I wrote so much that I had to go to the very bottom!”

The following day, I taught another mini-lesson that reviewed adding a closing sentence. I modeled a new story. One of the students asked, “Are you

going to show the hamburger?”, so I drew the model and we went over the pieces of my story and where they fit on the Hamburger Model. Then I wrote down options for them to use as closing sentences: “It was ____” or “It made me feel ____.” I did this in order for students to have a guide as to how to start ending their stories. I reminded them of the rubric in their writing folder so that they could see the Hamburger Model because some asked me if they could draw it in their journals. Another student, who I will refer to as Susie, ended up drawing the model in her journal. I asked if it helped her during our conference time and she said “yes”.

During journal time I overheard one student, who I will call Connor, say, “I don’t even know what to write.” I looked over and he said “Oh, I know” and went over to the story starters. When I went over to him he decided to write about his birthday. It was nice to watch him figure out his idea on his own without my assistance. While observing journal time, I also noticed a lot of students using the closing sentence “It was ____.”

During conference time I continued to help students add more details to their stories, but noticed that they had good ideas, and many were utilizing the transition word sheet. I also noticed an increase in students coming up to me, wanting to show me their writing, and wanting for me to conference with them. I thought this could possibly be indicating an increase in self-efficacy and the

conferencing piece could also be serving as a motivational piece. Throughout writing time I had five students eager to show me their entries!

Week 5

I started this week by modeling a journal entry of what I had done over the weekend, referring to the Hamburger Model as I went. This time when I asked students what I should end my story with, I pointed to the bottom of the hamburger and a student said, “A closing sentence!” I provided them again with some closing sentence options: “I was ___” and “It made me feel ___.” The closing sentence starters continued to be helpful because I observed a lot of students using them. I found that my repeated modeling was effective for students because they were consistently reminded of how to construct a story.

During writing time I observed that students were generating more ideas on their own without my assistance. One student who I previously had to sit with to help along with his writing brought his journal over to me and showed me his story, which had some details and a closing sentence!

The following day I modeled a story by showing them pictures that I took when I had went on a trip to Cape May and then I wrote a journal entry about it. Showing the pictures to go along with my story excited the students and was great way to share a little more about myself and my family. I suggested to them that if they could not think of anything to write, they could think of a trip they took. A

lot of the students wanted to share about their trips so I encouraged them to write about that.

While I was modeling my story, I reviewed transition words and also the 5 W's. I again showed them the rubric so they could see the "Five Finger Model" that represented the 5 W's. While I was writing my entry, John commented, "That's a big sentence." I corrected him and explained that there were five separate sentences that made up a story. This indicated to me that we still needed to work on understanding the differences between a story and a sentence. When I got to the end of my entry I asked "What do I end my story with?" A student, who I will call Josh, said "A closing sentence." Susie gave me a closing sentence to use.

When I conferenced with Susie she said, "I wrote a lot of sentences!" We talked about her writing and I told her she could move onto her picture and she said, "I'm going to write more sentences!" She also said, "Remember when I wrote a lot of sentences on my gymnastics one? It's because I love gymnastics." This conversation was important to me because it captured the excitement that writing was bringing out in some of my students.

While Connor was writing he told me, "I know my ending sentence...I'm so excited!" Later on while I was conferencing, Connor came up to me and said "I got to the bottom!" (of the page). A total of four students approached me during

conference time to show me their work! This excitement to write more and show me their work was a great indicator of student motivation.

The next day I taught a mini-lesson on sequencing. We discussed the importance of putting a story in an appropriate order. I chose a story starter about something that scared me. I modeled a journal entry about a time I was afraid of a spider.

Then I conferenced with students while the others wrote in their journals, using the rubric to refer to the 5 W's. I observed two students going to the story-starter bin. One student asked if he could use my story starter and two other students I met with used a time they were afraid as an idea for their entry. Two students brought their journal entries up to me eager to share!

The conferences indicated to me that students were eager to write longer entries. When I conferenced with Erica she said, "That's the first time I ever went to the next page!" During my conference with Megan she said, "I'm bringing this little helper over", referring to her sight word page in her writing folder (Appendix J). She also said, "I want to keep writing more stories in my journal except one." This was the student who, at the beginning, kept saying she didn't know what to write about, now she was showing more motivation to write! I also noted that I should be on the lookout for students who were utilizing the other resources I had made available to them; such as: the word wall and their sight word paper inside of their writing folder.

During my conference with John he said, “I cannot spell any word in the world except sight words.” This lack of confidence broke my heart, and also made me realize that I needed to give him a lot of reassurance and positive feedback when I conferenced with him. When I spoke with Molly, she told me she used a story-starter to help her write her entry. She said it helped her spell the words correctly. At the end of our writing time, Heather brought her journal up to me and asked, “Do you like it? I kinda added more details.” These conferences indicated to me that students were motivated to make their entries longer, but also needed continued positive feedback.

The next day I had journal writing as an option for seat work when students finished their work. Molly came up to me to show me her entry. I had her sit with me and we did a quick conference. She used the story starter “If I had 3 wishes...” She did the closing sentence, “That’s my wish.” I was really impressed with how Molly ended her sentence in a way that went along with her opening sentence. Now that we were approaching the mid-point of the study, I was impressed with how Molly’s writing had evolved!

Week 6

We were now at the mid-point of my study. I began the week by having students write an entry that I would score for the mid-study assessment. John was about to hand in his story, but then went back and said “I have to do my closing sentence.” When I had Megan read hers aloud to me she said, “I want to do

another.” These two interactions solidified to me that there was progress being made and there was motivation to write! After scoring the entries with the rubric, all of the students added more details than their pre-study entry! The mini lessons and frequent journal entries seemed to have helped students develop their writing further. There were still areas that needed improvement, so I noted that we needed to continue to work on using appropriate sight word spelling and punctuation during mini lessons and conferences.

Two days later in the morning, one of my students, who I will refer to as Ella, came up to me and said, “My dad’s opening up his shop, then I’m going to my grandmas. I’m going to write about that in my journal.” This excited me that students were coming in and thinking about the events they were going to write about in their journal without my prompting.

Later on that same day, I did a mini-lesson where I showed students a journal entry I wrote that had some mistakes. These mistakes included: sight words spelled incorrectly, a short “o” word spelled incorrectly, missing punctuation, and missing capitalization of first letters. I read it aloud and we went through and fixed the mistakes. I also made sure to include transition words and point those out while we fixed the passage. The students enjoyed fixing my errors, so I realized this was a technique I should continue to utilize now that we were six weeks into the study. Change was needed at this point.

I told students their first job for seat work was to write an entry in their journals. I observed many students discussing what they were going to write about. It was nice to see that students were discussing their topics with each other because it created the positive classroom environment I was hoping for in my study. During this writing time, I observed three students utilizing the story-starter bins, and two students came up to me to show me their journal entries!

Week 7

At this point in the school year, our schedule was becoming more routine and expectations were becoming more intense. However, one of my students still had her mind on writing! During our literacy whole group lesson, Ella said to me, “I want to write in my journal right now.” It was a wonderful moment knowing she was thinking of journal writing even when I wasn’t instructing on it!

After our literacy whole group lesson, I taught a mini-lesson where I had a journal entry with mistakes. These mistakes included: sight word spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. I also made sure to include transition words. Then I had students do a journal entry as their first seat work job. During this time I saw one student go to the story-starter bin and conferenced with some students.

Two days later, I continued conferencing with students. I noticed that the students I met with did a nice job with organization (opening, details, closing). I realized we still needed to work on punctuation and capitalization, so for the next

mini-lesson I would focus on conventions but also reinforce organization because students were getting the hang of it!

During conferences, Megan shared her journal entry with me, and when we were finished she also wanted to read two more to me. Thinking back to where we started, with Megan struggling to find ideas to write about, it was motivating to see how far she had come to now wanting to share multiple stories with me!

Week 8

To begin this week, I wrote a journal entry about my weekend with the class, making capitalization, punctuation, and spelling mistakes. They began to pick up on the mistakes I was making, which kept their attention. We referenced the Hamburger Model to ensure I wrote it correctly.

Many of the students were discussing with each other what they were going to write about when I sent them back to their seats to get started on their entries. I was excited to see this classroom dialogue continuing even on Week 8 of the study. Erica said to her table buddies, “I have a lot to write about!” Students were also still bringing me their entries to show me. After she was finished with her entry, Heather brought it over to me to show me her work.

As I conferenced during the rest of the week, I observed that students were continuing to add more details to their stories and working hard to appropriately structure their entries. When I conferenced with John he said, “I’m trying to write

more sentences. I'm going to write 6!" This continued motivation to improve his writing was what I had hoped for John at the beginning of the study.

A majority of the students I conferenced throughout the week with did well with details and punctuation! Megan did such a great job that I was able to just talk with her about adding an apostrophe for a possessive noun, which was a grammar concept we learned that week. The conferences were becoming a great way to scaffold writing instruction to target each student's needs!

Week 9

I taught a mini-lesson to start out the week, which consisted of a journal entry with errors in punctuation, capitalization, and possessive nouns. Students helped me correct my errors and we referenced the Hamburger Model to ensure I had a beginning, middle, and end (Figure 4.2). I had a lot of participation during this lesson, which indicated to me that showing an entry with mistakes was still a motivating lesson to my students.

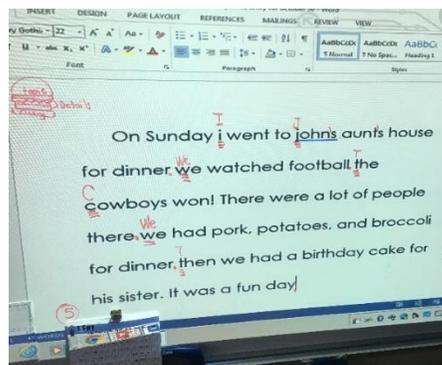


Figure 4.2

Then I had students write their entries, and suggested for them to think about when they went trick-or-treating or something else they did over the weekend. I observed and two students utilizing story starters. It was interesting to see that even after I gave a few suggestions for what students could write, they still wanted to make their own choices with the story-starters. This led me to think that they did still like to have their own freedom to choose, rather than just going with my suggestions.

Week 10

This was the last week of instruction for my study. I continued to use the technique of showing students an entry that had some mistakes. These mistakes included: punctuation, capitalization, missing commas. We also reviewed the Hamburger Model and the 5 W's to ensure that my entry was organized and had adequate details. Participation continued to be high for this, which was a great way to end my last week of instruction for the study!

I had students go to their seats and write their own entry while I conferenced. I encouraged them to talk about their weekend or use a story starter if they were stuck, and I noticed two students using the story-starters. When I conferenced with John, he told me, "I'm doing nice neat handwriting. I don't want to mess up this one like I did the other ones." I asked him what he meant by this and his response was, "I wrote big." So my thoughts were that he was referring to his handwriting. He also tried to find the sight word "new" in our bin of words but

couldn't so I had him go to the word wall and we found it together. John was continuing to work hard to do his best on his entry, but again he seemed to lack some confidence in his work. It made me curious as to how he would respond to the survey and interview the next week in regards to how he felt about his writing.

Susie came up to me and said, "I wrote one sentence. Now I'm going to write another!" I took a look at her journal, and she actually meant she had written one story and was going to write another! During my conference with her she said, "That was the most writing I ever did! Two stories!" I saw this motivation to write more stories with Susie, as well as other students. I saw a lot of students showing each other how much they have written in their journal so far. Heather again brought her journal up to me to show me her work, which was becoming a routine for her. She was a student who needed consistent reassurance, so I was happy to provide her with that each time she showed me her entry.

Later on in the week, I had students respond to a story in their other writing journals that we use for our literacy curriculum. In these journals students responded to stories we read during our literacy whole group lesson. I wrote "first", "next", and "last" on the board. I had a student say excitedly, "Those are transition words!" It was nice to see that our writing mini-lessons and journal writing time was also carrying over to other writing assignments! During this writing time, Susie came up to me and said, "Miss Lewis, can I go crazy and do more writing?" While doing another project that involved writing, Megan said, "I

did a lot of writing. I didn't even do three, I did more than three (sentences).” Another student, who I will refer to as Lucy, stated, “I'm going to make 5 sentences.” The motivation to write more was now also carrying over to our other writing assignments too, which was a great moment to see. My goal was to increase writing motivation, and to see this motivation being carried over to other parts of our school day was an affirming observation.

Although I was experiencing these positive moments, I also had an experience that brought me back down to Earth. Josh saw my survey that I was stapling for the following Monday. He said, “I don't like writing.” When I asked him why he said, “It's boring. Video games are the funnest thing.” This made me realize that unfortunately my study won't change everyone's mind about writing, but as long as it created a positive experience for some students and increased achievement, I would be happy!

Week 11

For the final week of my study, I began with writing an entry during our mini lesson time. While I wrote, I made mistakes with punctuation and possessive nouns. I had students help me correct my mistakes and ensure my writing was organized with adequate details.

Then I had them do their final journal entry that I would grade as their post-student assessment. I had at least six students excitedly tell me what they were going to write about. I also had four to five students looking in the story

starter bins. Lucy approached me and said, “Mrs. Mollica I’m doing six sentences!” Students did an amazing job with their entries. I had eight students improve from their mid-study entry! All fifteen students improved from the pre-study entry! For my two students that I began my story with, John and Molly, the difference between their pre- and post-entries was eye-opening. They had more structure to their stories and more details! They also added punctuation and some appropriate sight word spelling (Appendices K and L). All of these improvements confirmed that my study was successful in improving writing achievement with my students!

Throughout this week I also administered the post-study survey (Appendix G) and conducted post-study interviews (Appendix E). Although there was not a significant difference in results for each question between the pre-interview and post-interview, I was happy to see a difference in response to the question, “What’s your favorite thing about writing?” Eight out of my fifteen students had pre-interview answers that involved drawing pictures. The post-interview responses only had four students who still spoke about pictures, and three even had answers that spoke about choice!

In Week 10 I had wondered how John would respond to the post-interview questions, and his answers were truly insightful. One question was, “What is your favorite thing about writing?” John responded, “That I’m a good writer.” I asked him, “What’s your least favorite thing about writing?” His

response was, “That I mess up some of my writings.” I followed with, “What do you mean?” He answered, “Sometimes I add letters to words and I don’t even know if you’re going to understand.” I also asked, “Do you like conferencing with the teacher?” He responded, “Yeah.” I asked, “Why?” John said, “because then I just learn not to mess up my writing. I know to write words I know.” These answers showed me that he does view himself as a good writer! However, he still lacks total confidence in himself. He seemed to view conferences as a positive experience where he could work with me and I would help him progress. The interview was a great learning tool because I was able to see first-hand how a student, who really struggled at the start of the study with writing, was able to evolve and understand himself more as a writer. It also emphasized the benefits of one-on-one conferencing.

The survey data indicated that more students felt happy when asked to write in their journals, and felt happy while writing at the end of the study versus before the study began. More students also felt positively about meeting with the teacher. However, when asked how they feel about their own writing, less students answered positively in the post-survey.

Overall, my study was a tremendous learning experience and I can definitively say that it positively impacted students’ writing achievement. Their excitement to expand on their stories and show me their writing also indicated to me that journal writing was also a motivating experience and did positively

impact some of the students' self-efficacy toward writing. The students' responses throughout the study were the most amazing part for me. Conversing with my students about their writing, listening to them interact with each other about writing, and hearing their excitement about expanding their stories and becoming better writers was the most rewarding part!

DATA ANALYSIS

Throughout my study I collected various forms of data to measure the effects my study had on student self-efficacy, motivation, and achievement. During the course of my study I kept a double-entry field log of observations that I made and my reflections on what I had observed. While conferencing with my students I took notes on what students did well with and also noted what skills we reviewed during the conference. Pre- and post-surveys and interviews were also conducted to gain insight into students' feelings about writing. In order to measure achievement, I collected pre-, mid-, and post-journal entries and graded each of them using our Wonders writing rubric. Through the use of these multiple sources of data, I was able to see the effects my study had on my first graders.

Analysis of Field Log

While analyzing my field log, I was able to pull out a lot of student quotes for My Story. These quotes were key in analyzing what effects my study had on my students. I was able to see student motivation through the quotes I recorded in my field log. For instance, when Heather stated, "Yesterday I only wrote one sentence so today I wrote more!" Also, when Erica said, "I want to keep writing more stories in my journal except one." Another example would be when Susie stated, "Remember when I wrote a lot of sentences on my gymnastics one? It's because I love gymnastics." These quotes showed to me that journal writing was a motivating experience for the students. The quotes and the instances where I

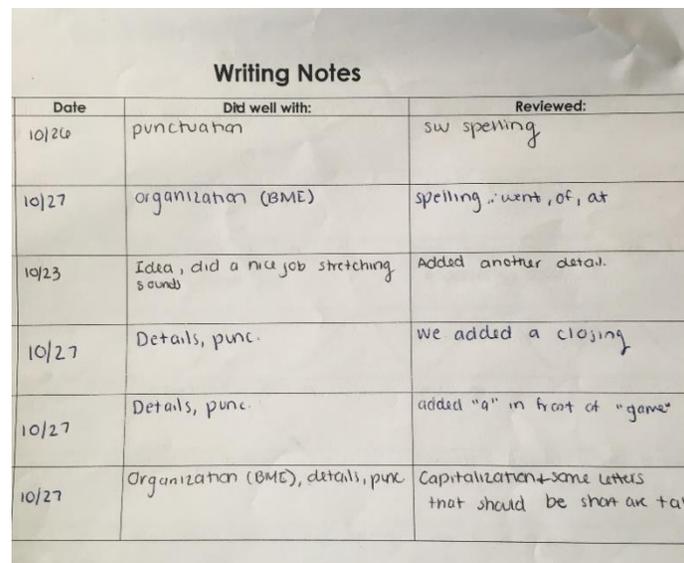
noted that students were excitedly showing me their stories also indicated that there was an increase in student self-efficacy because the students were proud of their work.

Through my field log I was also able to see that students were learning from the mini-lessons and journal writing experiences by recording observations and student quotes. For instance, I was able to notice the positive effects of the Hamburger Model when we would repeatedly go through the story and make sure the pieces fit into the Model. It was especially evident when I had a student ask, “Are you going to show the hamburger?” Another example of student learning would be when I asked students, “What do I end my story with?” Josh stated, “A closing sentence.” Previously the students had answered with “you need to end with a period.” Keeping track of observations and student quotes in my field log allowed me to see student learning unfold.

Reflections throughout my field log provided me with insight as to what I should do as my study progressed, and what ideas worked well during my study. For instance, I noticed the success of the Hamburger Model and noted that I would continue to use this strategy. I also observed that students were motivated when I wrote journal entries with mistakes, so I made sure to continue to utilize this strategy as well.

Analysis of Conference Notes

During my individual student conferences, I recorded notes about what they did well with and also noted what skills we reviewed (Appendix M). The notes allowed me to identify students' strengths and weaknesses. I would write students' strengths under the "Did well with" column, and weaknesses under the "Reviewed" column (Figure 5.1).



Date	Did well with:	Reviewed:
10/26	punctuation	sw spelling
10/27	organization (BME)	spelling, went, of, at
10/23	Idea, did a nice job stretching sounds	Added another detail.
10/27	Details, punc.	We added a closing
10/27	Details, punc.	added "a" in front of "game"
10/27	Organization (BME), details, punc.	Capitalization—some letters that should be short are tall

Figure 5.1

The notes were able to help me understand the progress my students made each week. For instance, in Week 7 I was able to notice through my conference notes that the students I met with did a nice job with organization (opening, details, and closing).

The conference notes also provided me with an idea of what writing skills needed to be retaught during the future mini-lessons. For instance, during the

Week 3 conferences I noticed some students were not utilizing transition words appropriately, so I knew that was a skill I would have to reteach. In Week 7, I realized we still needed to work on punctuation and capitalization, so for the next mini-lesson I would focus on conventions but also reinforce organization because students were getting the hang of it!

Analysis of Pre- and Post-Surveys

My pre-study survey yielded a mixed result of how students felt about writing and themselves as writers. The survey data indicated that more students felt happy when asked to write and felt happy while writing at the end of the study (nine students) versus before the study began (five students). More students also felt positively about meeting with the teacher when they were asked on the post-survey (eleven students) versus on the pre-survey (eight students). However, when asked how they feel about their own writing, less students answered positively in the post-survey (seven students) versus on the pre-survey (ten students). Overall, the surveys indicated to me that many of my students did enjoy writing by the end of my study. However, in regards to self-efficacy, student quotes were a better indicator of that progress. Figures 5.2 and 5.3 show the results of the pre-survey and post-survey responses.

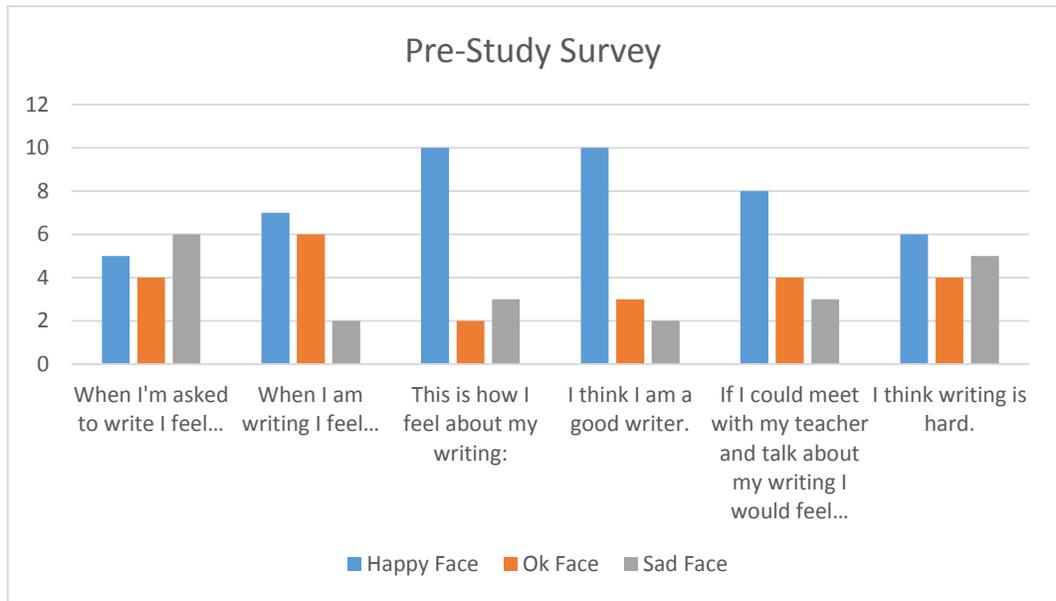


Figure 5.2

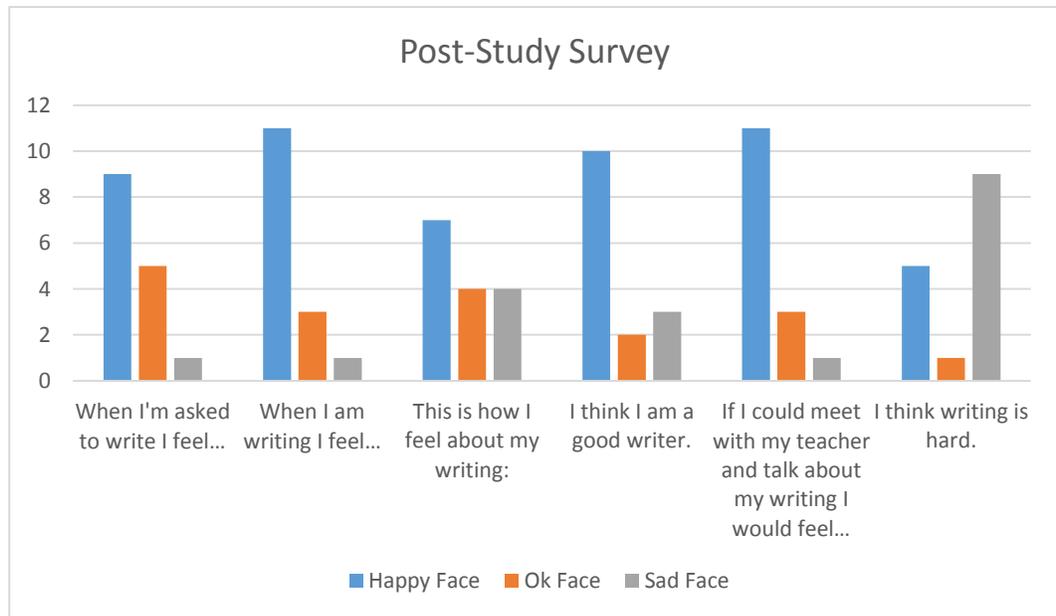


Figure 5.3

Analysis of Pre- and Post-Interviews

Although there was not a trustworthy difference in results for each question between the pre-interview and post-interview, I was happy to see a difference in response to the question, “What’s your favorite thing about writing?” Eight out of my fifteen students had pre-interview answers that involved drawing pictures. The post-interview responses only had four students who still spoke about pictures, and three even had answers that spoke about choice! The interviews indicated to me that students now viewed writing as something more than just drawing a picture and writing a sentence about it.

I was also able to see a positive increase in students’ feelings about conferencing with me. In the pre-interview students were asked, “Do you like conferencing with the teacher?” Eleven students answered positively, two answered in an “ok” fashion, one answered negatively, and there was one no response. However, when asked that same question at the end of the study, fourteen students answered positively and one student answered “sometimes.” Six students answered that they liked conferencing with me because they were able to share their stories with me, which would also indicate conferencing as a motivation tool. Three students answered that they liked conferencing with me because it helped them get better at writing, which would factor in with student self-efficacy.

When students were asked if they liked having the story-starter bins available during the post-study interview, fourteen out of the fifteen students indicated that they did like having them. The one student who did not explained that she liked writing about what she did over the weekend. This indicated to me that the students did like having the freedom of choice. Going along with that, in another post-interview question students were asked, “Do you like being able to write about anything, or would you rather have me tell you what to write about?” A majority (twelve) of the students preferred having the choice to write about whatever they wanted.

Overall, although I did not see a trustworthy difference in results for each question, some of the questions stood out to me as indicators of positive effects of my study.

Analysis of Pre-, Mid-, and Post-Journal Entries

When I graded the pre-study journal entries, ten out of fifteen students received a 2, with 4 being the maximum score. Two students scored a 2.5, and two students scored a 1. Only one student received a 3. The pre-journal entry gave me a baseline and also served as a tool to see what skills I needed to teach during my mini-lessons. The pre-journal entries indicated students needed to add more details to their entries, so the first mini-lesson I taught focused on what a topic is and what types of supporting facts to use.

There were significant improvements when I graded the mid-study entry. This time around, no students received a 1, and three students received a 2. One student received a 2.5 and seven students scored a 3. Three students received a 3.5 and one student scored a 4! Out of all fifteen students, thirteen students' scores improved from the pre-study entry. Two students' scores stayed the same. This mid-study journal entry served as an indicator of student achievement. It also indicated to me that we needed to continue to work on using appropriate sight word spelling and punctuation during mini lessons and conferences.

For the post-study entry, no students received a score of a 1 or a 2! Three students scored a 2.5, and four students scored a 3. Five students received a 3.5, and three students received a 4! Seven out of the fifteen students had the same score as their mid-study entry, and eight improved from their mid-study entry. All fifteen students improved from the beginning of the study! This indicated that the study did have a positive effect on student achievement! Table 5.1 on the following page shows the scores on the pre-, mid-, and post-study entries.

Analysis of Data through Codes and Bins

After analyzing the data in my study I was able to develop five bins that summarize the findings of my study. The bins are the following: mini-lessons, conferencing, student self-efficacy, student motivation, and student achievement.

Student:	9/8/17	10/10/17	11/13
1	2	3 (improved)	3 (same from mid)
2	2	2 (same)	2.5 (improved)
3	2	3.5 (improved)	4 (improved)
4	1	2 (improved)	2.5 (improved)
5	2	2.5 (improved)	2.5 (same from mid)
6	1	3 (improved)	3 (same from mid)
7	2	3 (improved)	3.5 (improved)
8	3	3.5 (improved)	3.5 (same from mid)
9	2	3.5 (improved)	3.5 (same from mid)
10	2.5	3 (improved)	3.5 (improved)
11	2.5	4 (improved)	4 (same from mid)
12	2	3 (improved)	3 (same from mid)
13	2	2 (same)	3 (improved)
14	2	3 (improved)	3.5 (improved)
15	2	3 (improved)	4 (improved)
Totals:	1's: 2/15, 2's: 10/15, 2.5's: 2/15, 3's: 1/15, 4's: 0/15	1's: 0/15, 2's: 3/15, 2.5's: 1/15, 3's: 7/15, 3.5's: 3/15, 4's: 1/15	1's: 0/15, 2's: 0/15, 2.5's: 3/15, 3's: 4/15, 3.5's: 5/15, 4's: 3/15
		13/15 students improved 2/15 students stayed the same	15/15 students improved from beginning 8/15 improved from mid 7/15 same from mid

Table 5.1

The mini-lessons were what began my session each week. During the mini-lessons I taught conventions, organization, and how to add details. I encouraged students to use life experiences, and I found that the students enjoyed correcting my journal entries during the mini-lessons as a review of conventions, organization, and details. I was able to find this information by looking at my field log, where I noted what I taught during each mini-lesson and noted students' reactions. I also referred to the outline of my weekly mini-lessons that I had created before my study and edited and expanded throughout the study

I was able to generate a conference bin by looking at my field log and my conference notes. My conference notes consisted of a table of each student's name, and had a section where I filled in what they did well with and what they still needed to work on. The conference time allowed me to scaffold my instruction and refer to the rubric while speaking with the students. It allowed for dialogue between myself and the students and also helped guide my future mini-lessons. Students' feelings about conferences were also positively impacted by the end of my study, and I was able to come to this conclusion by analyzing my field log, the pre-and post-surveys, and the pre- and post-interviews.

Student self-efficacy was another bin I created from my field log and answers in post-interviews. I recorded student quotes in my field log to document an increase in student-self efficacy, for instance when students were excited that they wrote more than they had previously. I also noted the frequent instances of students coming up to me, excited to show me their work, which is an indicator of self-efficacy. After analyzing answers from my post-interview questions, conferences also had a positive effect on some students' self-efficacy because they could share their work and improve their work with me. On the following page, Figure 5.4 shows the bins in a graphic organizer.

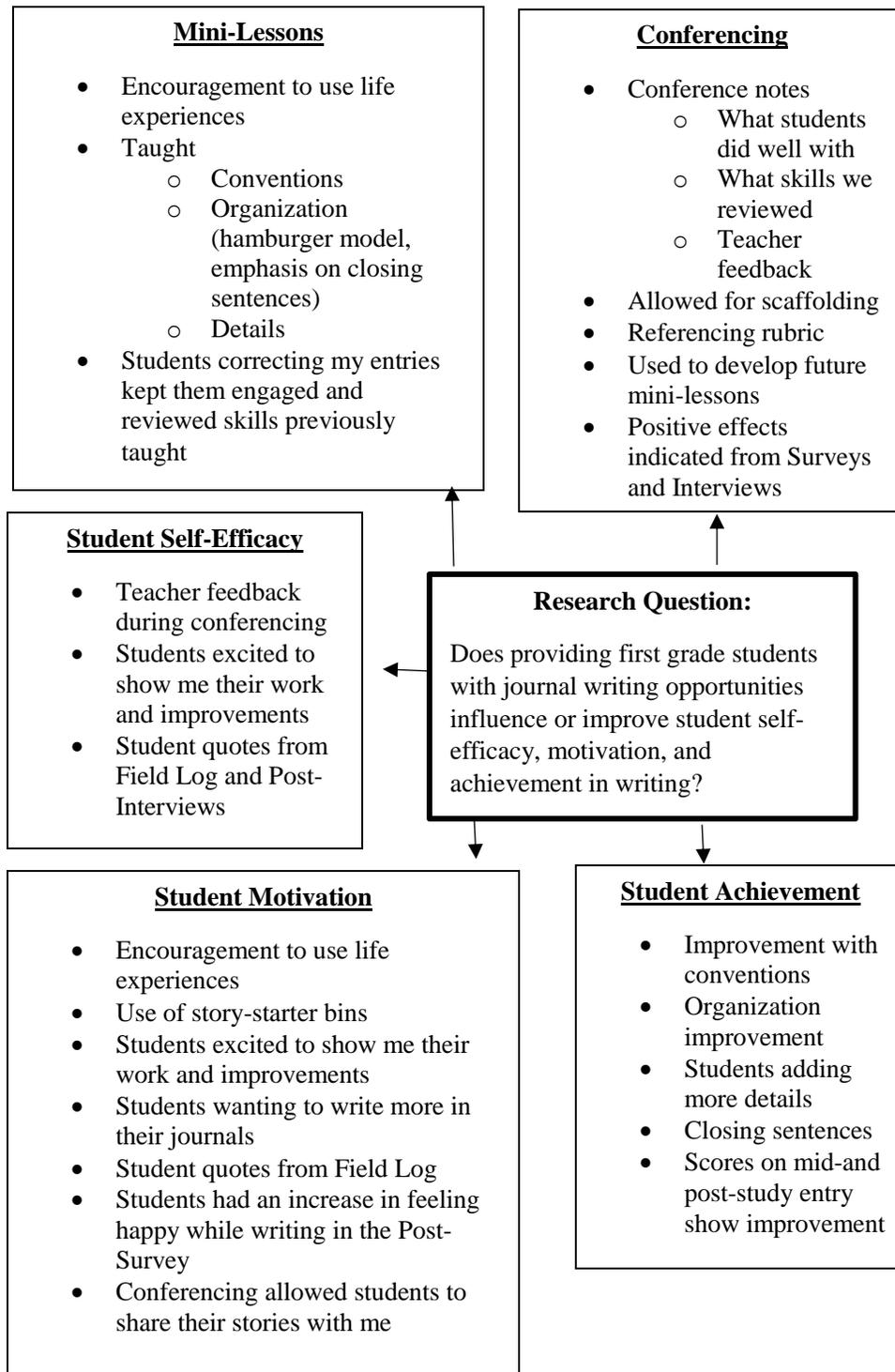


Figure 5.4

Student motivation was another bin I developed after analyzing my data. I was able to find instances of increased motivation from observations and quotes in my field log, from the post-study survey, and from the post-study interviews. Students were excited to show me their work and also share their stories with me during conference time, which were indicators of motivation. Encouragement to use life experiences through my mini-lessons was a motivating tool to get students excited to write in their journals. The availability of student choice by letting students know they could write about whatever they would like, and having the story-starter bins available were also motivating factors. The post-study survey also indicated an increase in students feeling happy to write.

Student achievement was another bin I created after analyzing multiple data sources. It was observed and documented through observations and quotes recorded in my field log. I was also able to see improvement in achievement by analyzing the pre-, mid-, and post-journal entries that I graded. Student achievement was also documented in my conference notes under the area where I noted what students were doing well with.

THEME STATEMENTS

Through the analysis of my codes and bins, I was able to develop five theme statements to conclude the findings of my study. I developed these theme statements by looking at the relationships between my bins and reflecting on how my study answered the question: Does providing first grade students with journal writing opportunities influence or improve student self-efficacy, motivation, and achievement in writing?

Theme Statement 1: Mini-lessons provided a repetitive structure that introduced and reinforced important writing concepts, and had a positive effect on student achievement in the areas of focus, organization, support, and conventions.

The mini-lessons were a crucial part of my study. They began each week of my study and were one of the driving forces behind student achievement. Students learned how to identify a topic, support the topic with details, and end their story with a closing sentence. This structure was repeated each time I wrote my own journal entry, and this repetition aided in students understanding how to structure their own entry. Students enjoyed helping me correct my entries, which reinforced different conventions pieces. I was able to see the materials taught in the mini-lessons carry over to the students' journal entries through observations, conferencing, and by comparing the pre-, mid-, and post-study journal entries. By the end of the study, all fifteen students had improved writing scores compared to

the pre-study journal entry. This indicated that the mini-lessons and journal writing experiences did increase student achievement in the areas of our writing rubric: focus, organization, support, and conventions.

Theme Statement 2: The one-on-one conferences were a motivating experience for students. Conferences also served as an open student-teacher dialogue about the writing process, which led to feelings of increased self-efficacy.

The conferences I held each week with my students proved to be an extremely beneficial part of my study. As I stated previously, when students were asked in the post-study interview if they enjoyed meeting with me, fourteen students answered positively and one student answered “sometimes.” Six students answered that they liked conferencing with me because they were able to share their stories with me. Throughout my study, students would bring me their journals without me asking them to come over to show me their work. These factors allowed me to conclude that when I met with students and allowed them to share their stories with me, it was actually a motivational tool.

In the post-study interview, three students answered that they liked conferencing with me because it helped them get better at writing, which related to student self-efficacy. The frequent times that students would bring me their journals would also correlate with self-efficacy because the students felt proud of their work and wanted to show it to me.

Theme Statement 3: Conferencing allowed for scaffolding so that each students' needs were met. Conferencing also allowed me to reflect upon my teaching and determine my future mini-lessons.

Meeting with individual students allowed me to learn each student's strengths and weaknesses in regards to writing. I was able to work with each student on what he/she needed assistance with, so I was able to meet each student at his/her level and scaffold accordingly. Lev Vygotski (1978) stated, "Over a decade even the profoundest thinkers never questioned the assumption; they never entertained the notion that what children can do with the assistance of others might be in some sense even more indicative of their mental development than what they can do alone" (p. 85). This assistance at each student's level was crucial to help his or her writing development. For some students that was adding more details, or adding appropriate punctuation. For my writers who already had those skills mastered, I was able to work with them on various grammar topics we had learned about, such as possessive nouns or commas in a series.

The conferences also allowed me to plan for future mini-lessons. Through analyzing my conference notes, I was able to determine what skills I needed to go back and reteach during our mini-lesson time. Paulo Freire (1970) stated, "The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow (p. 80)." I was able to

learn from my students what was working and what I needed to reteach and go back to. It was truly a learning experience for both my students and myself.

Theme Statement 4: Journal writing experiences led to an increase in student achievement, and had a positive effect on other writing tasks throughout the day.

The frequent opportunities students were given to write in their journals allowed for repetitive writing practice. These frequent writing opportunities, along with the mini-lessons and teacher conferencing, led to writing improvement for all fifteen students in the study. It also led to students utilizing these new writing skills in other areas of writing throughout the day. For instance, part of the Wonders curriculum is having students respond to prompts about literature we have read. Students took their writing knowledge and utilized it in their respond-to-prompt journal books as well.

Theme Statement 5: The opportunity for student choice through writing about life experiences, or using story-starters allowed for more motivating writing experiences.

Through observations and student quotes I was able to conclude that allowing students to have the freedom of choice when writing their journal entries positively impacted motivation. Life-experiences were topics that students enjoyed writing about. Students liked learning about my own experiences during

the mini-lessons, which provided for a dialogue between students about what they had experienced, and motivated them to write about it in their journals.

Students also learned that the story-starters were another resource for them to utilize if they did not want to write about a certain experience we spoke about, or if they were stuck on deciding a topic. I observed students utilizing the story-starters throughout my study, and when asked if they liked having the story-starter bins available during the post-study interview, fourteen out of the fifteen students indicated that they did like having them. The one student who did not explained that she liked writing about what she did over the weekend. In the post-interview students were asked, “Do you like being able to write about anything, or would you rather have me tell you what to write about?” A majority (twelve) of the students preferred having the choice to write about whatever they wanted.

Lev Vygotski (1978) stated, “A second conclusion, then is that writing should be meaningful for children that an intrinsic need should be aroused in them, and that writing should be incorporated into a task that is necessary and relevant for life. Only then can we be certain that it will develop not as a matter of hand and finger habits but as a really new and complex form of speech” (p. 118). It was very important to me during my study for students to have meaningful writing experiences. Allowing students to write about their own lives, or have the freedom to write whatever they’d like, allowed them to express their creativity.

NEXT STEPS

Although my study has ended, I plan to continue to implement the different components of my study throughout the remainder of the year and with my future students. I found that the journal writing opportunities allowed for students to express themselves through writing and gain valuable writing practice, so I wanted this process to continue.

I have continued to have students write about their experiences in their journals. Each Monday I have students write about an experience they had over the weekend. The story-starter bins are still available for students to utilize because my study showed the value students place on having a choice with their writing. If they do not choose to write about their experiences, they know the story-starter bins are another option for them.

The dialogue among students has also continued. Students are still excited to discuss with each other what they are going to write about in their journals. They are still excited to share their experiences with me as well.

Conferencing has continued to be a beneficial method to scaffold my teaching and gain an understanding of each student's writing progress. The conference notes have been a valuable informative assessment tool and have been beneficial to refer to when grading students each marking period.

In the future, I would like to further research the idea of "focused-correction" to gain an insight into this research based practice. This could be a

practice that I implement with my mini-lessons so that we can focus on one skill at a time. Another future implementation would be allotting a “sharing” time, where students could share their entries with one another. I would also be interested in sharing my reflective practices with my colleagues so that they can see the benefits of reflecting on their own teaching.

In conclusion, this research study has allowed me to fill the writing gap in my current curriculum. It has provided students with frequent opportunities to express themselves through writing. It has given them the opportunity for choice, which unfortunately my students don't get to have often throughout the day. These journal writing opportunities have led to an increase in student self-efficacy and have shown student motivation to write. These experiences have also led to an increase in student writing achievement. All in all, I cannot wait to continue this journey and expand on it in the years to come!

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APPENDICES

A. Principal Consent Form

April 7, 2017

Dear Mrs. Aulisio,

I'm currently a graduate student at Moravian College. This fall of 2017 I will be working on my thesis project, which requires me to conduct a teacher action research study in my classroom. The purpose of my study is to increase writing practice and participation in the classroom. I will be doing this by teaching writing mini-lessons once a week after my *Reading Wonders* whole group instruction. These mini-lessons will be five to ten minutes long, and will focus on parts of the writing process, including developing a topic, adding details, and conventions. Then during our differentiated reading time ("Readers Club") and morning work time, students will be asked to write a journal entry. They will be encouraged to look at a student-friendly rubric that I have adapted from the *Reading Wonders* writing rubric as a reference. They will also have the choice of picture prompts or story starters to help them generate ideas.

I will also be conferencing with the students and taking a pre and post survey regarding students' writing attitudes. My goal is for students to become more active with their writing, as well as build confidence in their writing. The timeframe of this study will be throughout the fall semester (roughly September-December). 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 pseudonyms. All of the students will participate in the curriculum, but each child's data will only be used with parental/guardian consent. 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 lewis@parklandsd.org.

Thank you for your consideration,

Tara Lewis

Please choose one of the following:

___ Yes, you have my permission to conduct this study in your classroom.

____ No, you do not have my permission to conduct this study in your classroom.

Signature

Date

B. Student Assent Form

Student Assent Form



Yes I agree to allow Miss Lewis to use my writing in her research project.



No I do not want Miss Lewis to use my writing in her research project.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student Assent Form



Yes I agree to allow Miss Lewis to use my writing in her research project.



No I do not want Miss Lewis to use my writing in her research project.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

C. Parent Consent Form

September 7, 2017

Dear Parents,

I'm currently a graduate student at Moravian College. This semester I am enrolled in a course called EDUC 702: *Reflective Practice*, which requires me to conduct a teacher action research study in my classroom. The purpose of my study is to increase writing practice and participation in the classroom. I will be doing this by teaching writing mini-lessons once a week after my *Reading Wonders* whole group instruction. These mini-lessons will be five to ten minutes long, and will focus on parts of the writing process, including developing a topic, adding details, and conventions. Then during our differentiated reading time ("Readers Club") and morning work time, students will be asked to write a journal entry. They will be encouraged to look at a student-friendly rubric that I have adapted from the *Reading Wonders* writing rubric as a reference. They will also have the choice of picture prompts or story starters to help them generate ideas.

I will also be conferencing with the students, interviewing the students, and taking a pre and post survey regarding students' writing attitudes. While taking the survey, your child may skip any question that he/she may not feel comfortable with. I have also attached a copy of the survey to this form for you to view. My goal is for students to become more active with their writing, as well as build confidence in their writing. The timeframe of this study will be throughout the fall semester (roughly September-December). 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 pseudonyms. **All of the students will participate in the curriculum, but each child's data will only be used with parental/guardian consent.** 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 lewist@parklandsd.org.

Thank you for your support with this!

Tara Lewis

Please choose one of the following:

____ Yes, you have my permission to use my child's data for your study.

____ No, you do not have my permission to use my child's data for your study.

Signature

Date

D. Pre-Study Interview

Interview questions:

1. How do you feel about writing? (Good, ok, or I don't like it)
2. When I say it's time to write how do you feel? Why?
3. What's your favorite thing about writing?
4. What's your least favorite thing about writing?
5. Do you like having the topics available?
6. Do you like conferencing with the teacher?
7. Do you like being able to write about anything, or would you rather have me tell you what to write about?

E. Post-Study Interview

Interview questions:

1. How do you feel about writing?
2. When I say, "(student's name), it's time to write in your journal" how do you feel? Why?
3. What's your favorite thing about writing?
4. What's your least favorite thing about writing?
5. Do you like having the story starters?
6. Do you like meeting with me about your writing? Why?
7. Do you like being able to write about anything, or would you rather have me tell you what to write about?

F. Pre-Study Writing Survey

Name _____

Date _____

Writing survey

1. When I'm asked to write, I feel....



Good



Ok



Bad

2. When I am writing, I feel...



Happy



Ok



Unhappy

3. This is how I feel about my writing:



My writing is great!



My writing is ok.



My writing is bad.

4. I think I am a good writer.



Yes



I don't know.



No

5. If I could meet with my teacher and talk about my writing I would feel...



Happy



Ok



Unhappy

6. I think writing is hard.



Yes



I don't know.



No

G. Post-Study Writing Survey

Name _____

Date _____

Writing survey

1. When I'm asked to write, I feel....



Good



Ok



Bad

2. When I am writing, I feel...



Happy



Ok



Unhappy

3. This is how I feel about my writing:



My writing is great!



My writing is ok.



My writing is bad.

4. I think I am a good writer.



Yes



I don't know.



No

5. If I could meet with my teacher and talk about my writing I would feel...



Happy



Ok



Unhappy

I read this aloud as:
How did you feel
when you met with
me about your
writing?

6. I think writing is hard.



Yes



I don't know.

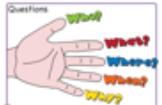
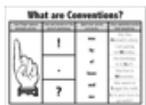


No

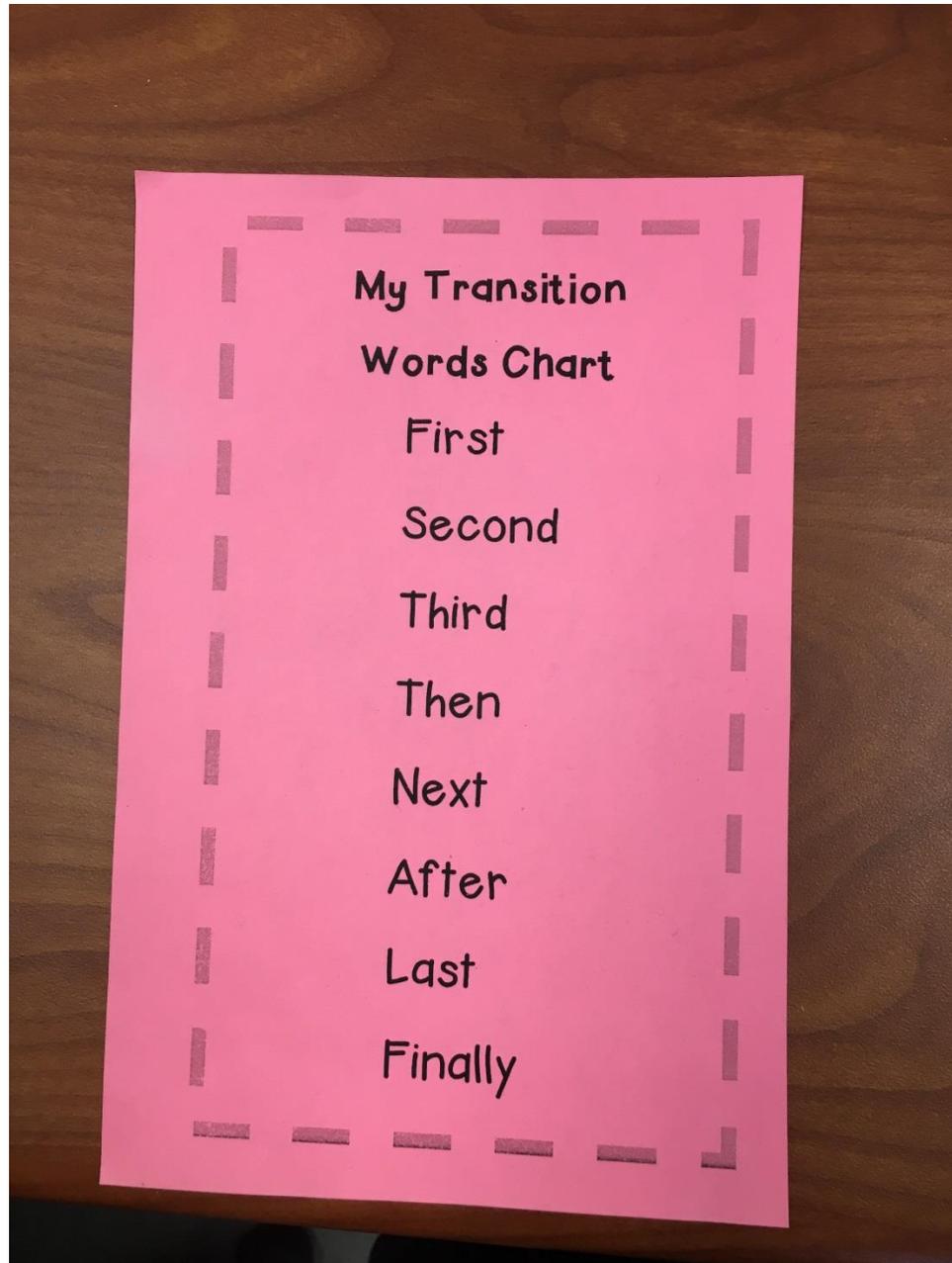
H. Student Writing Rubric



My Writing Rubric

Score	Focus: 1. Topic 	Organization: 	Support: 	Conventions: 
4	I keep one focus.	I have a topic sentence, details, and then a closing sentence.	I use specific details and engage my reader.	I have a few, if any, errors.
3	I mostly keep one focus.	I mostly have a topic sentence, details, and then a closing sentence.	I use details.	I have some errors.
2	I lose focus at times.	I am missing a topic sentence, some details, or a closing sentence.	I have a few details, but they are not specific.	I have several errors.
1	I do not have a clear focus.	My writing is not organized.	My writing does not include many details and my word choice is limited.	I have serious errors in the conventions of standard English.

I. Student Transition Words Handout



J. Student Sight Word Handout

Aa	Bb	Cc
a about above after again ago all and animal another answer any are around away	be because before began been better blue boy brought brother build busy buy by	call can carry caught children climb come color could
Dd	Ee	Ff
day do does done door down	early eat enough eight every eyes	fall father favorite few flew find food for found four friend from front full fun
Gg	Hh	
give go gone good great green grow guess	happy hard has have he heard help her here how	<div data-bbox="1065 1346 1393 1402" style="text-align: center;">Ii</div> I into instead is

Jj	Kk	Ll
jump	knew know	large laugh learn like live listen little look love
Mm	Nn	Oo
make many me money month more mother move my	near new no none not nothing now	of oh old once one only or other our out over
Pp	Qq	Rr
people picture place play poor pretty pull push put	question	right round run

Ss	Tt	Uu
<p>said school see she should small so some soon start sure surprise</p>	<p>the then their there they this three thought through to today together tomorrow too toward</p>	<p>under up upon use</p>
Vv	Ww	Xx
<p>very</p>	<p>walk want warm was water way we were what where who why with woman wonder work would write</p>	
Yy		Zz
<p>year you young your</p>		

K. Student Artifact: John's Pre- and Post-Journal Entry

Pre-Journal Entry:



9-8-2017

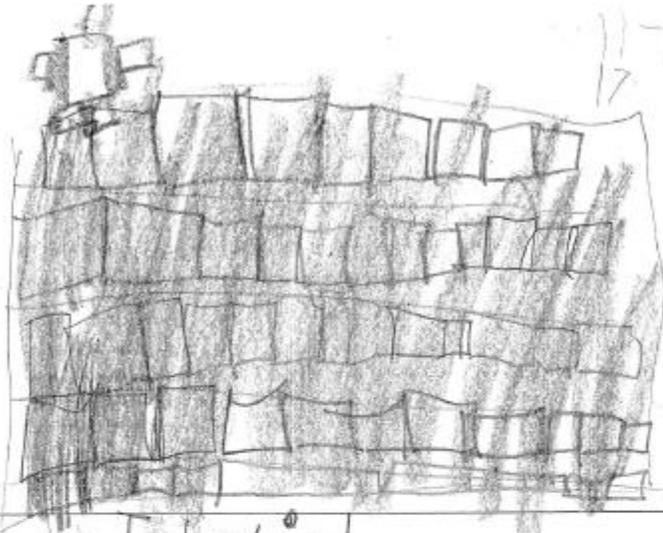
+SA SX X X SA S S AS

XS SX AS XS

X + SX S SX S P.

"I went to the beach with
my dad."

Post-Journal Entry:



Yesterday I went

Yesterday

went

to make I got

chicken cheese

to play golf

game

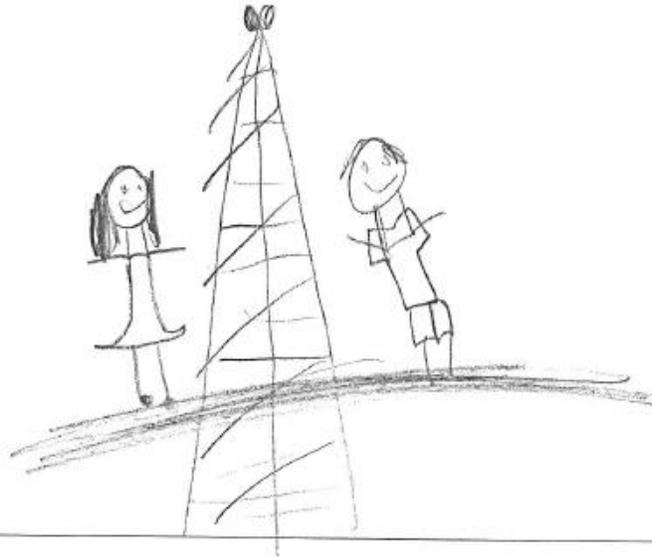
I had fun It was

a MASeng

amazing

L. Student Artifact: Molly's Pre- and Post-Journal Entry

Pre-Journal Entry



paris
Paris

Post-Journal Entry

11-13-2017



Frit I wet to chekecha.
First went Chuck e Cheese

Guess How muc I got
Guess muc

sixteen air heads, blue,
red, and green, wen I go
again. It will be fun.
when be

26

M. Conference Writing Notes Template

Writing Notes

Name	Date	Did well with:	Reviewed:

N. Story-Starters



<p>My favorite thing to do is </p>	<p>When I was young </p>
<p> I am happiest when</p>	<p>If I could do anything I want I would</p>
<p> My friends always say</p>	<p> Today I feel</p>
<p>I was embarrassed when </p>	<p>The biggest mess I ever made was </p>
<p>I was just waking up in the morning when </p>	<p>Sometimes I need help</p>

O. Story-Starter Pictures





