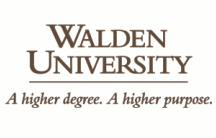

1-1-2008

The relationship of self -evaluation, writing ability, and attitudes toward writing among gifted Grade 7 language arts students

Lisa DeMent
Walden University

NOTE TO USERS

This reproduction is the best copy available.

Walden University

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Lisa DeMent

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Pamela Warrick, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty
Dr. Linda LeBert, Committee Member, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer

Denise DeZolt, Ph.D.

Walden University
2008

ABSTRACT

The Relationship of Self-Evaluation, Writing Ability, and Attitudes Toward Writing Among Gifted Grade 7 Language Arts Students

by

Lisa DeMent

M.Ed., Mercer University, 2000
B.A., East Stroudsburg University, 1989

Doctoral Study Submitted in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Walden University
November 2008

ABSTRACT

Previous research has indicated that literary skills performance in reading and writing for middle school students has declined. There remains an important gap in the current literature regarding the decline in literary skills, which is a good predictor of the potential for students to drop out of school. The goal of this study was to determine if the use of self-evaluation influences students' writing ability and their attitudes toward writing. Using a quasi-experimental nonequivalent control group design, and over the course of 10 weeks, the researcher administered a writing pre- and posttest, as well as a pre- and posttest Writing Attitude Survey (WAS) to 70 gifted Grade 7 students. Two classes formed the experimental group, and 2 classes formed the control group. Students in the first group participated in focused self-evaluation instruction and practice. A pre- and postwriting test patterned after the Georgia Grade 8 Writing Assessment was assessed with a standardized writing rubric, and the WAS provided the quantitative data. ANCOVA and an independent sample *t* test compared the average change from pretest score to posttest score between the groups in overall writing score, ideas, style, organization, and conventions. They showed a level of significance. A Cramer's V compared the average change from pretest survey score to posttest survey score between the groups in the areas of gender, ethnicity, and group. It showed a statistically significant difference. Findings from this study may directly influence the increased use of self-evaluation across language arts, as well as other content area subjects.

The Relationship of Self-Evaluation, Writing Ability, and Attitudes Toward Writing Among Gifted Grade 7 Language Arts Students

by

Lisa DeMent

M.ED., Mercer University, 2000
B.A., East Stroudsburg University, 1989

Doctoral Study Submitted in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Walden University
November 2008

DEDICATION

> *The person determined to achieve maximum success learns the principle that progress is made one step at a time. A house is built one brick at a time. Football games are won a play at a time. A department store grows bigger one customer at a time. Every big accomplishment is a series of little accomplishments*. (David Joseph Schwartz)

This doctoral study has been a series of little accomplishments that brought me to this point of success in completing a body of work. Many people made this process possible, and I dedicate this doctoral study to all my friends and family members who offered encouragement, support, and faith along the journey. Your continuous interest and pride in my achievements empowered me to my final destination.

A few people stand out because they walked beside me and carried me when I could go no further. To my mom, who was always proud of me. To my sisters, Elaine and Andrea, who lent their support in ways I could not have imagined when I began this passage. To Aunt Ginny, who spent the last few Junes noting my progress and helping me get to the next stage. To Jeanne, I would not have begun this journey if it were not for you. You never let me give up, and you steered my ship when I could not. To Maisha, this paper would not have even begun without your insight, wisdom, and shoulder to lean on in the early stages of development. To Steven, whose statistical knowledge ensured that this dissertation would occur. To Debbie, Paula, and Bonnie, who listened to my ramblings and cheered me along the way. Finally, to the Monday Night Ladies, who stood by me every step of the way and listened, cried, and rallied whenever I sent out an "S.O.S."

No man is an island, and all of these people proved that to me. Finally, I believe that the words by Frost (2001) truly stated what I gained through this process: "We can

support young writers as they struggle to find their authentic voices, and we can learn to tilt our ears toward those voices and listen" (p. 3). Through this dissertation journey, I have learned to hear.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my doctoral committee chairperson, Dr. Pamela Warrick, as well as my other committee member, Dr. Linda LeBert. I also would like to acknowledge Dr. Marie-Anne Mundy. All are from Walden University. Their scholarly advice was invaluable as I embarked on this long journey. I could not have done it without them. My sincere thanks and appreciation go out to all three of these women.

I appreciate the public school system under study for allowing me to conduct this research. I am grateful to the administration and staff at ABC Middle School, with special recognition to Dr. Bill Kruskamp. I am especially grateful to Debbie Sheftel, who assisted in coding my research, and Jennifer Jankauskas, who offered support, lent an ear when needed, and became my personal cheerleader. In particular, I would like to thank the students and their parents who participated in the study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

Self-evaluation can support students' involvement in the learning process while providing teachers with valuable information to guide instruction. Through self-evaluation, students reflect on what and how they learn (Carr, 2002). The ultimate goal of self-evaluation is to have students discover what they can do well, what their problems are, and how they can improve (Hansen, 2003). In turn, this process can improve student motivation and academic achievement through empowerment and the implementation of self-evaluation learning strategies. Many students entering middle school seem to lose their drive for learning and the learning experience. They seem to have lost the motivation to learn and often find school boring (Deci & Flaste, 1995). Self-evaluation, with its focus on the self, may be one way to reignite the desire of middle school students to learn .

Creation and criticism are central components when working with words (McCormick Calkins, 1994). Writing allows us to put thoughts on a page and then pull back and ask questions about our thoughts. This dynamic process makes writing an extremely powerful tool for learning, and this process is the core of self-evaluation (McCormick Calkins). Self-evaluation requires that writers use reflective questions and events to analyze their writing. Self-evaluation helps students become aware of their own writing process; from there, they may improve. The use of reflective questions on single pieces of writing, the writing process, and on collections of writings can improve students' writing ability (Underwood, 1998).

Recent research on self-evaluation and writing has focused on (a) how well students are aware of their own learning (Van Kraayenoord & Paris, 1997); (b) how students evaluate their writing and how this process transfers to the larger context of assessment and evaluation (Cassata, 2000); (c) self-evaluation as part of another strategy (Troia & Graham, 2003); (d) students' awareness of the challenges that writers face when using self-evaluation (Underwood, 1998); (e) students' writing attitudes and achievement toward writing and how these may change from grade level (Knudson, 1995); and (f) the role of rubrics in self-assessment (Andrade & Boulay, 2003). What is not known is if the use of self-evaluation in regard to writing in a language arts class has any effect on students' attitude toward writing and their writing ability. This study may provide new information because its focus was on self-evaluation, coupled with attention on students' attitudes toward writing and writing proficiency. This study may take self-evaluation in a new direction, adding further support to the benefits of self-evaluation.

The research problem described in this study is applicable to other practitioners because writing is a key component in many classrooms. Self-evaluation requires that students reflect on their process of learning and what they are learning (Carr, 2002). This process allows students to discover their own strengths and weaknesses. It also allows them to learn what is required for improvement (Hansen, 2003). By understanding the effects of self-evaluation on students' attitudes toward writing and writing proficiency, teachers of middle school students will have an effective way to connect with this population. Adolescence is a time when students are becoming interested in how knowledge and skills relate to and are important to them (Stevens, 2003). It seems that at

this stage of development, based on where adolescents are in their maturity and learning process, it is an opportune time to build upon adolescents' interests in themselves through writing activities that allow them to take a deeper look inside themselves.

The outcomes from this study may directly influence the increased use of self-evaluation across language arts and other content area subjects. Studying this problem may lead to social change because it directly ties into the tenets of the knowledge society, which needs people who can invent and create (Hargreaves, 2003). In addition, this new society requires a culture of people who can continue learning themselves (Hargreaves). Self-evaluation enables one to learn through introspection, evaluation, and then application. To prepare this culture, society needs teachers who can promote deep cognitive learning; higher order thinking skills; and metacognition (i.e., thinking about thinking). Hargreaves found that highly successful teachers of students in Grades 7 and 8 involve their students in their own assessments.

This study may provide teachers with useful information, including that middle school students are capable of self-evaluating when they are taught the appropriate strategies. In general, the study may provide evidence to support the conclusion that self-evaluation has a positive influence on students' attitudes toward writing and their writing ability. In today and tomorrow's society, there is a pressing need for people who can invent and create, as well as continuing to learn (Hargreaves, 2003).

Implications for self-evaluation as a vehicle for social change include the fact that students are included in the process of becoming better writers. Instead of receiving feedback on their writing exclusively from the teachers, self-evaluation requires that

students step back and evaluate their own work to determine what is good, what needs to improve, and what can be added. In so doing, social change occurs as students become active, learning participants in our knowledge society.

The goal of this study was to determine how the use of directly taught self-evaluation strategies affects students' writing ability and attitudes toward writing. The results of this study may assist in the advancement of theory and professional practice.

Statement of the Problem

Studies have shown that literary skills performance (i.e., reading and writing) among middle school students has declined (Stevens, 2003). This is a concern because "they are good predictors of a student's potential for dropping out of school" (Stevens, p. 138). This problem affects middle school students, especially in language arts classes, but it also extends to other content courses because students who struggle with writing tend to have lower achievement levels. More precisely, the problem is developing effective writing strategies that truly involve middle school students in their own learning. Currently, concerns about children's writing have led to calls for improvements in the teaching of writing (Troia & Graham, 2003).

Many states and school districts have designed and implemented strategies and procedures to improve students' writing performance based on these concerns. This is a daunting task because skilled writing requires one to be able to acquire and coordinate all the strategies involved in the writing process and to have knowledge about specific writing genres and conventions. Therefore, efforts geared to improving writing

instruction must focus on helping students develop the strategies, skills, and knowledge needed for effective writing (De La Paz & Graham, 2002).

Many possible factors have contributed to this problem, including the lack of knowledge, preparation, and confidence in teachers who teach writing, and the fact that writing is one of the most difficult skills to master because it involves executing and managing multiple cognitive, linguistic, and physical tasks to accomplish goals associated with subject matter, audience needs, and communicative purposes (De La Paz & Graham, 2002). Finally, the structure of the middle school classroom may not be meeting the needs of adolescents, whose learning is often fragmented and does not challenge them to think reflectively and solve problems (Stevens, 2003). This study may contribute to the body of knowledge needed to address this problem by determining if the use of specifically taught self-evaluation strategies in writing influences middle school students' writing ability and attitudes toward writing.

Nature of the Study

The study investigated the relationship of self-evaluation to students' attitudes toward writing and writing ability. To determine whether there is a relationship between students' attitudes and writing ability when they are specifically taught self-evaluation strategies, this quantitative study accumulated data from students in four classrooms in a suburban middle school.

Because of the nature of this study, the quantitative methods design that was used was the quasi-experimental nonequivalent control-group design. In this design, there is an experimental group (Group A) and a control group (Group B), which are selected without

randomization. Both groups take a pre- and posttest, but only Group A receives the treatment (Creswell, 2003). The quantitative research design was chosen for this study based on previous research conducted by Andrade (1999), who examined the effects of instructional rubrics and self-assessment on students' writing and their understanding of good writing. The quantitative design allowed the researcher to use a specific treatment with one group of students to describe and explore their understanding of self-assessment and the techniques used to self-assess. In addition, this research design provided insight into whether self-evaluation contributes to students' understanding of good writing and their writing ability. The quantitative information allowed the researcher to provide clean and clear results regarding the phenomenon of self-evaluation.

This quantitative research study measured the influence of self-evaluation strategies on the writing performance and attitudes of suburban, gifted students in Grade 7. A writing pe- and posttest, as well as the pre- and posttest administration of the Writing Attitude Survey (WAS; see Appendix A), was used. Only the participants in Group A received direct instruction in self-evaluation strategies and techniques. The standardized writing rubrics used in this study are reliable and valid based on their use for assessment for the Georgia Middle Grades Writing Assessment (GMGWA), and the reliability statistics used for this test as well as rater validity. The proper training in its administration took place.

The participants attended the same middle school where the researcher teaches. The teacher conducted the study by compiling data within her particular classroom throughout the 10-week period. The participants' scores on the writing pre- and posttest

supplied one portion of the data; their responses pre- and posttest to the WAS supplied the other portion of the data. The format of the classes was derived from a created self-evaluation curriculum. The researcher used quantitative analysis to interpret the data results. Thorough details of the data analysis exist in section 3 of the study.

Research Questions

To address the focus and purpose of this study, the following research questions were developed:

1. Is there a relationship between the use of self-evaluation strategies and students' writing ability?
2. Is there a relationship between the use of self-evaluation strategies and students' attitudes toward writing?

Hypothesis 1

H_{01}*:* There will be no significant relationship between the groups before they have been taught self-evaluation strategies and after they have been taught self-evaluation strategies on attitudes toward writing.

H_{a1}*:* There will be a significant relationship between the groups before they have been taught self-evaluation strategies and after they have been taught self-evaluation strategies on attitudes toward writing.

Hypothesis 2

H_{02}*:* There will be no significant relationship between the groups before they have been taught self-evaluation strategies and after they have been taught self-evaluation strategies in writing ability.

H_{a2}: There will be a significant relationship between the groups before they have been taught self-evaluation strategies and after they have been taught self-evaluation strategies in writing ability.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quasi-experimental nonequivalent control-group design study was to investigate the relationship of self-evaluation strategies on middle school students' attitude toward writing and writing ability in the gifted education classroom. Recent research has provided data on the following issues: (a) students' awareness of their own learning; (b) how students evaluate their writing; (c) students' awareness of the challenges writers face when using self-evaluation; and (d) students' writing attitude and achievement toward writing, and its effect on grade level, along with the role of rubrics in self-assessment (Andrade & Boulay, 2003; Cassata, 2000; Knudson, 1995; Underwood, 1998, Van Kraayenoord & Paris, 1997).

Van Kraayenoord and Paris (1997) posited that students are capable of assessing their own work as well as providing cognitive and affective evaluations. Underwood (1998) concluded that over time, students who receive instruction in evaluation and reflection become more aware of the challenges writers face, and from there, they improve their own writing. Cassata (2000) conducted a study on self-evaluation and found that middle school students are capable of self-evaluating in mature and sophisticated ways. Knudson (1995) discovered a positive relationship between grade level and gender in writing performance. Andrade and Boulay (2003) sought to discover the role of rubrics in self-assessment. Results from their study demonstrated that in

historical essay writing, there has been a positive relationship between writing and female scores and the use of self-assessment rubrics. However, in response to literature writing, there has been no effect with male or female students and the use of self-assessment rubrics. What has been lacking from these studies has been an examination of directly taught self-evaluation strategies and the influence of writing on students' attitudes toward writing and their own writing performance. That was the goal of this study.

The influence of self-evaluation strategies on students' writing proficiency and attitudes toward writing was explored at a suburban middle school outside of Atlanta, Georgia. The independent variable was generally defined as self-evaluation. The dependent variable was generally defined as students' attitude toward writing. In this study, pre- and posttests measured the relationship between specifically taught lessons on self-evaluation for achievement on the writing pre- and posttests of the participants in Group A and Group B. At the same time, the influence of self-evaluation strategies on students' writing proficiency and attitudes toward writing were explored using the WAS pre- and posttest. An ANCOVA using the writing pretest as the controlling variable, or covariance, was used to statistically control for other variables. An independent samples *t* test also was used to support the ANCOVA findings. For the WAS, a Cramer's V was used to statistically control variables and allowed each one to be examined separately. Adding support to the Cramer's V was a chi-square test, which allowed the WAS results to be analyzed through survey categories and responses. This allowed the researcher to evaluate the students on various parameters. Both groups were compared on the posttest.

Theoretical Framework

This study examined the relationship of self-evaluation on gifted Grade 7 students' writing performance and attitudes toward writing in a language arts class. Several theories provided a framework for this study because they tied in directly with the beliefs of self-evaluation. The theories that provided a framework for this study were the constructivist theory, the theory of multiple intelligences, the social-cognitive theory, and the genetic epistemology theory.

In Bruner's (1966) constructivist theory, learning is viewed as an active process. Learners develop new ideas and concepts through a connection to current and previous knowledge. Constructivism views learning as a process in which learning is constructed by us rather than given to us. This occurs through one's own interaction with a set task (Bruner, 1966). Education is the most powerful when learners personally discover new information and apply it (Bruner, 1960). Students, instead of the teacher, organize, explore, conduct, and monitor their own learning. The role of the teacher becomes supportive and reflective as students construct meaning for themselves and engage in critical thinking (Iran-Nejad, 1995). Including the theory of constructivism in this study helped the participants to personally connect to their writing and understand what they need to do to reach their desired goals.

The theory of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983) addresses the facets of intrapersonal learning, which is a key component of self-evaluation. The premise of this theory is that all learners have different levels of intelligence and that these intelligences direct the style and ways in which they learn. Another belief of this theory is the need for all learners to develop skills in each facet of intelligence to enhance their overall learning

(Gardner). Developing students' ability to understand themselves better is the foundation of self-evaluation and the reason for the inclusion of this theory in the study.

A third theory framing this study is the social-cognitive theory, which states that human achievement depends on interactions among one's behaviors, personal factors, and environmental conditions (Bandura, 1986). Modeling of processes, behaviors, and procedures are a key focus in Bandura's theory. Learning occurs when one has the opportunity to observe a given behavior and practice it. Self-evaluation provides this construct in learning because when students' self-assess, they observe, reflect, and appraise what they have done. This then gives students the opportunity to practice and improve to meet desired outcomes (Carr, 2002).

Finally, the genetic epistemology theory, based on the work of Piaget (1970), holds cognitive structure as a central part of this theory. Cognitive development occurs with activities or situations that engage students and require adaptation. Self-evaluation aligns well with this theory because through self-evaluation, students engage with their writing through evaluation, and from there, they adapt, change, and improve their writing.

Definitions of Terms

Curriculum: "A plan of instruction that details what students are to know, how they are to learn it, what the teacher's role is, and the context in which learning and teaching will take place" (North Central Regional Educational Library, 2002, p. 1).

Georgia Middle Grades Writing Assessment (GMGWA): A writing test that is given to all Georgia public education students in Grade 8.

Gifted: Possessing high aptitude and talent.

Goal: "A generic concept that encompasses the essential meaning of terms such as intention, task, deadline, purpose, aim, end, or object" (Locke & Latham, 1990, p. 2).

Introspection: The "examination of one's own thoughts and feelings" (*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 1993, p. 42).

Metacognition: The ability to think about thinking, or the ability to control cognitive processes in an effort to become more aware of how one learns best (Jensen, 2000).

Self-concept: The full spectrum of ideas, feelings, and attitudes that one has about his or her own identity, worth, capabilities, and limitations (Marzano, 2003).

Self-evaluation: The process by which one reflects upon one's own work and assesses for strengths and weaknesses (North Central Regional Educational Library).

Self-regulation: Self-generated thoughts, feelings, and actions intended to attain specific learning goals, such as analyzing an assignment, utilizing different strategies to meet individualized learning goals, or evaluating personal progress on learning outcomes (Zimmerman, Bonner, & Kovach, 2003).

Strategy: Techniques or methods that can be used to address a lesson, unit, or a specific area of learning.

Writing Attitude Survey (WAS): A survey that measures the survey respondents' attitudes toward writing.

Writing Pre- and Posttest: A test that measures the writing ability of students in the following areas: idea, organization, style, and conventions.

Scope, Limitations, Delimitations, and Assumptions

The scope of this study centered on the relationship between self-evaluation strategies and students' writing ability and writing attitude. It focused on a convenience sample of 70 academically gifted Grade 7 language arts students at ABC Middle School in a suburb outside of Atlanta, Georgia.

The limitations in this study are sometimes present in quantitative studies. Differences in the composition of each student group (achievement, motivation, background, educational experiences) and previous experience in the writing classroom were threats to the internal validity of the study. In addition, participation in this study was limited to gifted Grade 7 language arts students in a large school system in Georgia. Time constraints also served as an internal threat to validity. The teacher was unable to incorporate as much direct instruction on self-evaluation as the study required. Another internal threat was the differentiated maturation of the students. In addition, the teacher's teaching style served as an internal threat to validity. Some students did not respond well to the self-evaluation instruction because of the teacher's instructional style.

In this study, the researcher and the instructor were one in the same. The dual role was a potential limitation because it was difficult to eliminate all forms of bias. The interpretation of the researcher may, or may not, have been consistent with that of another researcher. Scientific rigor eliminated the potentiality of the researcher subconsciously falsifying data. This included using another scorer to grade the writing pre- and posttest, member checking the WAS pre-and posttests, as well as using another reviewer for the data. The researcher adhered to the highest standards of ethics and made every effort to be completely unbiased.

This study was conducted based on three assumptions that related to the participants. The first assumption was that the participants in this study answered all of the WAS questions openly and honestly. The second assumption was that the Grade 7 students who participated in the study were capable of self-evaluating given adequate instruction and modeling in the process. The third assumption was that the increase in scores was based on treatment, not any other uncontrolled variable such as maturation.

Significance of the Study

A study on the relationship between self-evaluation and gifted Grade 7 language arts students' writing ability and writing attitude is important for several reasons. The results may fill a gap that exists in the literature pertaining to the attitude and ability of student writers. Limited research has discussed the use of self-evaluation and its relationship to middle school students' attitude and writing ability. Teachers of writing may benefit from the results of this research because they may see the need for instructional practices that will better prepare students to become contributing citizens in

the knowledge society (Hargreaves, 2003). This means devising instruction that focuses on developing and implementing higher order thinking skills, which supports student preparation for the knowledge society. As stated earlier, writers who can self-evaluate fare better than those who do not (Hansen, 2003).

Educators, students, and members of the community may benefit from the results of the study by obtaining a better understanding of self-evaluation and its implementations in the classroom. Furthermore, research informs society of the need of the middle school students in requiring a curriculum that involves them in their own learning (Stevens, 2003). The significance of this study lies in its potential to contribute not only to the development of students as self-evaluators but also to enable teachers to enhance the learning process for all students. The development of self-evaluation ties directly to the skills needed in our knowledge society, and it may bring about social change in the teaching of writing.

Studying this problem may lead to social change because it directly ties into the tenets of the knowledge society, which requires the need for people who can invent and create (Hargreaves, 2003). In addition, this new society requires a culture of people who can continue learning by themselves (Hargreaves). This research involves learning from one's own experiences to inform and improve one's own understanding.

Finally, the significance and implications of this study are that self-assessment, linked with external standards, may help students regulate their actions to desired outcomes. In addition, students in the middle grades may benefit from analyses and discussion of strategies for writing. Students will appraise, conclude, and analyze for

their own purposes their strengths and weaknesses in writing, and from this interpretation, they may be able to set goals toward self-improvement. Furthermore, students may come to understand that important writing standards exist beyond the subjective judgment of the teacher. This could possibly challenge students toward focusing on higher standards as the year progresses, subsequently leading to social change.

Summary

Literature (Carr, 2002; Reif, 1992; Schunk, 2003) has suggested that teaching students how to self-evaluate and incorporating it into writing assignments is an effective way to increase student achievement and interest in writing. Self-evaluation can support students' involvement in the learning process while providing teachers with valuable information to guide instruction. Self-evaluation enables students to reflect on what they learn and how they learn. The result of self-evaluation is the ability of students to discover what they do well, where their problems are, and what they can improve.

This study measured the relationship of self-evaluation (using directly taught strategies and rubrics) to the writing achievement and attitude of gifted Grade 7 students in a language arts class. The remaining sections of this study present the relevant scholarly professional literature (section 2), the design of the study (section 3), the findings of the study (section 4), and the conclusions and recommendations for the education profession (section 5).

SECTION 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Teaching and assessing writing effectively has become a major concern in education. Troia and Graham (2003) stated, "Teaching writing creates anxiety, avoidance, and frustration for those who teach it. Teachers often comment that they lack the knowledge, skills, and strategies that would be helpful to them in guiding their students to become better writers" (pp. 75-76). In addition, research has shown that literary skills performance (reading and writing) for middle school students has declined (Stevens, 2003).

Assessment can be a valuable tool to monitor student learning, evaluate the success of various teaching methods, and guide instructional decision making (Isaacson, 1999). Teachers need to be concerned about teaching writing and how their students will perform on local, county, and state assessments (Isaacson). Effective and appropriate use of assessment to improve instruction is a continuing concern in education. It seems apparent from the research that more attention should be applied to assessment.

This review of the literature provides information on (a) the needs of middle school students, (b) difficulties students face, (c) teacher professional development and writing, (d) research based on self-evaluation, (e) theories that frame self-evaluation, and (f) a critique of studies conducted on self-evaluation. These themes were explored in order to build a thorough understanding based on this study's hypotheses and research questions. The literature used to compile this review included theoretical and research-based sources collected from a myriad of resources and databases recognized as scholarly

works. The collection included accepted peer-reviewed journals; published text in the corresponding fields; ProQuest; and EBSCOhost, a scholarly journal computer database that provides electronic access to scholarly journal articles from databases such as ERIC and Academic Search Premier. The majority of articles retrieved from EBSCO were located in these two databases.

Meeting the Academic Needs of Middle School Students

Understanding Middle School Students

To understand strategies that are effective when teaching middle school students how to write, it is important to discuss the needs of middle school students (Stevens, 2003). The philosophical intent of middle schools was to address the unique needs and abilities of early adolescents (Stevens). The purpose of these schools was to give students a more personalized learning environment in which they could work with teachers who would provide them with a meaningful curriculum and the opportunity to think reflectively and solve problems (Stevens).

Descriptive research has found that most students in the middle grades do not experience much of what has been advocated (Stevens, 2003). This is because middle schools are large and departmentalized, with little or no interdisciplinary learning, and have no integration of content or curricula. Students may see six or more teachers each day. These characteristics often are typical of urban middle schools, but they are not limited to them (Stevens). Based on the needs of adolescents, it does not seem that the standard middle school environment is conducive to their stage in life (Stevens).

Stevens (2003) posited that during the middle grade years, there is a significant decrease in students' learning and motivation. Students' grades, attitudes toward school, attendance rates, and attachment to school decline, and there is an increase in truancy. This belief was supported by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 1998) Reading Report Card, which found that literary skills performance (reading and writing) for this age group has declined (as cited in Donahue, Voelkl, Campbell, & Mazzeo, 1998). "This is a concern because they are good predictors of a student's potential for dropping out of school" (Stevens, p. 138). Reports from the (2003) NAEP (as cited in Persky, Daane, & Jin, 2003) Report Card showed that three out of every four students in Grades 4, 8, and 12 achieved only partial mastery of writing skills and knowledge needed at their respective grade levels. Further analysis revealed that only 1 in 100 students attained "advanced" writing skills. This report led to the National Commission on Writing's (NCW, 2003a) recommendation that writing become a crucial focus in school reform endeavors.

A decline in literacy skills for this age group has added to the importance of finding effective strategies to help middle school students become better writers. Writing tasks for middle school students develop greater importance because they are increasingly asked to demonstrate their knowledge and creativity through writing (Hooper et al., 1993). Compounding the issue of writing ability are students' attitudes toward writing. As students progress through the grades, their attitude toward writing becomes less favorable (Hogan, 1980). Compared with other school subjects, there is a pattern of decline in writing attitudes. Beginning with Grade 3, interest in writing is high.

It peaks in Grade 4 and declines from Grades 6 to 8 (Hogan). Hogan's findings were supported by Knudson (1991), who found that older students have less positive attitudes toward writing than younger students.

Stevens (2003), who discovered that an inherent problem in middle schools revolves around the curriculum that is taught versus the ability level of students, commented, "At a time when students are developing more ability to handle complex tasks and abstract ideas the curricula tends to focus on concrete and low-level skills" (pp. 138-139). Stevens found that teachers dominate class activities and leave few opportunities for students to interact in middle school instruction. This allows little or no development of students' ability to work with others.

The middle school structure adds further complications. Many function in a departmentalized manner, that is, there are discrete content areas with separate skills and knowledge. This setup often fragments students' learning, making it less relevant to their lives. This is in sharp contrast to adolescents' learning and social needs. Adolescence is a time when students are interested in knowing how knowledge and skills relate to and are important to them (Stevens, 2003). This would be an appropriate time, based on adolescents' mindset, to build upon their interests in themselves through writing activities that require them to take a deeper look inside themselves. Self-evaluation is a strategy that enables this to occur.

Understanding Gifted Students

Plucker and McIntire (1996) asserted that students of all ability levels are bored in school; in particular, gifted students often are not challenged in the classroom. They

contended that gifted students at the middle school level of education need more emphasis on the depth and complexity of materials. Frey (2000) contended that a balance needs to be struck between gifted students' cognitive and psychosocial needs so that these students can develop an understanding of who they are and what they want now and in the future. This balance is further supported by a need for gifted students to "experience personal connectedness to the curriculum and instruction in which they are participants" (Smith, 1999, p. 13). The concern for gifted students during the middle school years is that if they lose their interest in school then, this interest will not return in high school, and they will have lost the work ethic needed for them to be academically successful (Frey).

Gifted students need exposure to a wide range of concepts and contexts, as well as encouragement and the freedom to explore what interests them independently. This combination enables gifted students to develop their own beliefs and discover what they need to say, especially when in regard to writing (Van Tassel-Baska, 2003). In addition, gifted students are the most motivated when they are engaged in tasks that are personally and culturally meaningful to them (Ford, Alber, & Heward, 1998).

Independent exploration in learning is crucial for gifted students. Independent learning begins in early childhood for most gifted students, and many later in life consider themselves primarily self-taught. Gifted students have the capacity to study a topic of interest extensively and immerse themselves in their own work (Van Tassel-Baska, 2003). These abilities strongly support the need to incorporate the use of self-

evaluation into a writing curriculum for gifted students because self-evaluation requires them to study and immerse themselves into their own work.

Writing Proficiency of American Students

Becoming proficient and comfortable writers is a skill that needs to be championed and nurtured in students. This was clearly seen in a review of the literature conducted by De La Paz and Graham (2002), who found that the average American student is not a proficient writer. There are many reasons for this outcome. The first is that writing itself is a difficult skill to master. Writing involves executing and managing multiple cognitive, linguistic, and physical tasks to accomplish goals associated with subject matter, audience needs, and communicative purposes. These operations include planning, producing text, transcribing, reviewing, and revising, activities that are repetitive in nature (De La Paz & Graham). This supports the belief of researchers who have been assessing this issue that American students struggle in writing.

Research also has shown that there is a difference between expert and unskilled writers (Albertson & Billingsley, 2001). Adequate writers know writing conventions and have a good understanding of their topic. Expert writers possess those skills as well as the ability to plan, review, and self-regulate as part of the writing process. These writers know what to include or leave out of text, and they are keenly aware of their audience. According to Albertson and Billingsley, writers who use all these skills and who can monitor and direct their own writing can improve the quality of their written work

Kauffman and Gentile (2002) found that gifted students' natural tendency to explore ideas and manipulate written expression gives them the potential to become great

writers. Characteristically, gifted students possess strong cognitive and linguistic abilities that aid them in becoming proficient writers (Alber, Martin, & Gammill, 2005). Writing instruction in general and gifted education has received little emphasis. According to the National Commission on Writing (2003b), only one in four students' scores indicated proficiency on federal writing tests.

A study conducted as part of the NAEP, which focused on writing achievement, found that at the Grade 4 level, slightly more than 60% of the students tested were classified as basic writers, demonstrating only partial mastery of the skills and knowledge at that grade level. Sixteen percent of these Grade 4 students scored below this basic achievement level. Similar results were obtained at the Grade 8 level (De La Paz & Graham, 2002). What these data showed is that the majority of students write at a basic level only. Compounding the fact that writing is a difficult task to learn was the sense that writing also is a difficult task to teach. The information gathered from De La Paz and Graham and the NAEP demonstrated the need for a strategy that will propel students beyond basic writing competency.

Difficulties That Students Face

It is important to look first at the writing problems students face before looking at strategies in teaching writing (Troia & Graham, 2003). In contrast to the efforts of their more accomplished peers, struggling writers produce papers that are shorter, with poor organization, incomplete thoughts, and weaker overall quality. In addition, struggling writers' compositions often have more grammatical errors and unnecessary information (Troia & Graham). Troia and Graham noted that struggling writers have difficulty

executing and regulating the process of writing, particularly the planning and revision stages. White (1994) commented, "Most students do not revise because they have not learned how to evaluate what they write; they have not internalized any consistent set of criteria or standards to which they can hold themselves" (p. 10).

Motivation for Early Adolescents

Motivational issues for early adolescents "have a degree of uniqueness and certainly a special sense of urgency about them. This is due to increasing academic stakes, age-related declines in motivation, and motivational shifts resulting from making the transition out of elementary school" (Anderman & Maehr, 1994, p. 287). Individual and environmental factors have contributed to the decline in motivation for middle school students. Individual factors refer to the more accurate self-evaluations that students produce as they progress through elementary school. Early adolescents tend to see intelligence as a stable trait. Added to this are stricter grading policies, decreased student-teacher relationships, and less input in decision making that impact adolescents' motivation (Anderman & Maehr).

Motivating students to write involves designing instruction that is the most relevant to students. Challenge, real-life significance, curiosity, autonomy, recognition, and evaluation are instructional contexts that spur students' motivation and interest in writing (Bruning & Horn, 2000). When students expect that they can successfully achieve a writing task that they value, they are the most motivated (Lam & Law, 2007). Newby (1991) found that teachers who relate writing to students' interests or experiences enable students' to answer the question of why they are writing and understand the value this

writing holds for them. Knowing and understanding increase student motivation. Providing more autonomy in the writing process, which may include freedom to choose content, styles, and approaches, is crucial to motivation because it allows students to gain and maintain control of the writing task (Bruning & Horn). Self-evaluation strategies allow students to pinpoint weaknesses and create a plan for improvement. This could be an effective strategy for struggling writers to help them overcome writing deficiencies.

Writing Concerns and Teacher Professional Development

Developing effective writing strategies that really interest middle school students is a challenging and daunting task for many teachers. "Concerns about children's writing have led to calls for improvements in the teaching of writing" (Stevens, 2003, p. 75). Many states and school districts have designed and implemented strategies and procedures to improve students' writing performance based on these concerns. This is a daunting task because skilled writing requires one to acquire and coordinate all the strategies involved in the writing process, as well as knowledge about specific writing genres and conventions. Therefore, efforts geared toward improving writing instruction need to focus on helping students develop the strategies, skills, and knowledge needed for effective writing (De La Paz & Graham, 2002). Public discussions about education often leave out the most essential people, namely, teachers, who can make known the concerns and frustrations (Wood & Lieberman, 2000).

Brooks (2007) cited the findings of several researchers (Frager, 1994; Gilespie, 1991; Susi, 1984) that teachers who think of themselves as writers plan, create, and demonstrate writing in their curriculum based on that attitude. Teachers whose self-

concept of their writing is low or mediocre may not write frequently, and it may negatively affect their ability to truly support their students in the writing process (Brooks).

Graves (1994) discovered that few adult Americans had "witnessed the power of writing as demonstrated by their teachers" (p. 155). Teachers feel inadequate to teach writing when they are not confident in their own writing ability (Bowie, 1996). To teach writing effectively, teachers do not necessarily have to see themselves as writers, or write daily. Instead, it is merely necessary that writing instructors feel the effect of the "power of writing" (Bowie, p. 25) once in their own lives and then draw upon that experience as teachers (McCormick Calkins, 1994).

Brooks (2007) conducted a study to determine if teachers need to be confident, avid readers and writers to be effective teachers of reading and writing. His case study examined four Grade 4 teachers, all of whom were known as exemplary reading and writing instructors. The following research questions guided Brooks's study:

> How did the four fourth grade teachers describe themselves as readers and writers? What relationships, if any, did the teachers believe existed between their reading and writing and their teaching of reading and writing, and what factors most influenced the teachers' reading and writing instruction? (pp. 179-180)

Brooks (2007) used interviews as the primary source of data collection, with field notes from a larger study conducted by Allington and Johnston (2002) that focused on the relationship between teachers' reading and writing and their teaching of reading and writing as a secondary source of data. The findings of this study indicated that the teachers' individual reading and writing preferences played an insignificant role in their effectiveness as a reading and writing teachers. Brooks's results showed that the teachers

in his study varied as readers and writers. Occurrences in the teachers' lives, as well as their own personal interests, guided their reading and writing. The teachers in this study shared that their effectiveness as teachers stemmed more from their ability to know and support their students rather than their own reading and writing in the classroom.

Through messages from the media and politicians, the quality of public education is an issue of high debate. Teachers' work quality is criticized, so reform initiatives are put in place. The media and politicians seem to agree that good teachers make a difference in student learning. It seems logical to scrutinize teacher preparation and accountability to see what can be done to create effective teachers. Meanwhile, professional development of inservice teachers continues to be neglected. At a time when teachers must constantly analyze the changing learning needs of students and then be able to respond effectively, occasional workshops and generic techniques are not enough to improve the performance of veteran teachers (Wood & Lieberman, 2000). Wood and Lieberman contended that

> Experienced teachers are more likely to grow and learn if involved with professional development contexts that build on their commitments to children, focus on the specific classroom dilemmas they face daily, and recognize that teachers have learned from classroom experiences. (p. 256)

Opportunities to reflect, collaborate, research, critique, and assess are crucial for experienced teachers, and they can lead to improvements in public education. These same qualities are the key ingredients in the process of self-evaluation.

Teachers new to the profession often have ideas on the teaching of writing that do not align with current ideology and practices. Limited research exists on how preservice teachers learn about children's writing or how work in a classroom setting effects

preservice teachers' beliefs about teaching writing (Napoli, 2001). Odell and Wang (2003) stated that preservice teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning often are inconsistent with new standards and methods of teaching. In terms of writing instruction, preservice teachers tend to see this as the teaching of conventions, not as the creation and communication of ideas. Ultimately, they see their role as assessors of writing (National Center for Research on Teacher Learning, as cited in Odell & Wang).

Recommendations have been made that teacher education courses help preservice teachers develop their beliefs about writing and writing instruction by having them reflect on their own experiences as writers (Zeek & Wickstrom, as cited in Napoli, 2001). The recommendations to help teachers become more comfortable are the same as those supported by the proponents of self-evaluation in the classroom. Difficulties facing writing instruction include the level of expertise that teachers need to effectively implement the program, a difference in opinion of effective writing strategies, poor definitions of research vocabulary and techniques, and teachers' own fears and attitudes toward writing. Self-evaluation allows the onus of teaching writing to be shared by teachers and students through personal reflection and adaptation.

Self-Evaluation

Research Base

Self-evaluation is a powerful technique that can support students' involvement in the learning process while providing teachers with valuable information to guide instruction. When students self-evaluate, they reflect on what and how they learn (Carr, 2002). Through this process, they also discover what they can do well, what their

problems are, and how they can improve (Hansen, 2003). In addition, self-evaluation helps students to develop feelings of ownership and responsibility for learning (Paris & Paris, 2001). Teaching students to self-evaluate and assess their own writing will benefit them as writers because it will allow them to become independent learners who have control over their own learning.

Teachers must see students as the best evaluators of their own learning in order to know what they really know or can do (Reif, 1992). This statement is the driving force behind why teachers should help students to become self-evaluators and assessors. Reif contended that teachers who listen to students' perceptions about themselves and their writing can help students address what they think they can, or cannot, do.

When self-assessment becomes part of the writing process, students develop an orderly evaluation of their performance. It also enables students to assign their success to internal factors. Graham and Harris (1997) found that when the students in their study engaged in self-regulated strategies such as self-assessment in writing, their metacognitive and self-efficacy improved. Students' views of their writing ability became more accurate and specific to the required task. Furthermore, the students' focus on assessing their writing moved from mechanics to content and organization.

During this time of authentic and alternative assessment, student self-assessment is often not held in as high regard as other forms of this movement (Andrade & Boulay, 2003). Much of this lack of support comes from the poor understanding of self-assessment and the assumption that it is difficult, impractical, and unnecessary. When asking students to self-evaluate, teachers are not asking them to assign themselves a

grade; rather, teachers are providing students with a tool that can support their learning and skill development (Andrade & Boulay). Affording students the time to reflect on their writing before they write their final draft copies gives them the opportunity to assess their strengths and weaknesses (Cooper & Odell, 1999).

Writing teachers must figure out how to put students' appraisals of their work at the heart of the evaluation process (Atwell, 1998). One way to make this happen is to develop self-assessment as a formal evaluation tool composed of three parts: students' portfolios and self-assessment questionnaires, teachers' written comments, and student-led conferences with parents and teacher. These three pieces remain in a folder all year so that students can observe their growth over time and set appropriate goals for themselves (Atwell). The questionnaires that students respond to can have them collect and record data about their accomplishments, state their criteria for good work, describe their growth, and record any new knowledge or activity. Goals can then be set and assessed based on the progress they have made toward those goals (Atwell). Beginning writers often struggle as they try to identify problems in their writing as well as techniques that will improve their writing. Using the tools mentioned previously, beginning as well as accomplished writers receive the support they need to ensure success when evaluating their own work (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1985).

Creation and criticism are central components when working with words (McCormick Calkins, 1994). Writing allows one to put thoughts on a page and then step back and ask questions about those thoughts. It is this dynamic action that makes writing

an extremely powerful tool for learning. This is what is at the core of self-evaluation (McCormick Calkins).

Ways to Self-Evaluate

There are many ways to bring self-evaluation into the writing classroom. Reif (1992) had her students arrange their writing from the most effective to the least effective and then discuss their reasons for ranking their work in that order. She also had her students look at their writing comprehensively each trimester and respond to it with set questions that she has created. In addition, at the end of the last semester, she had her students respond to a self-evaluation for the entire year. Reif recommended that students look critically at the writing they have done and compare it to previous writing, as well as the work of others, all the while focusing on making their own work better.

Students need direct instruction in how to self-evaluate. One way for teachers to do this is to have students complete a self-report scale to rate their progress in a particular area. After this rating is completed, students discuss it with their teachers, who can provide feedback (Schunk, 2003). Teachers need to teach students how to self-evaluate (Carr, 2002). Creating opportunities in the classroom for self-evaluation should be given serious consideration. Carr reiterated Schunk's beliefs that self-evaluation is a powerful tool when it is taught explicitly. Conferences, checklists, rating scales, questionnaires, journals, and learning logs can be used to teach students how to self-evaluate (Carr).

Self-Evaluation and Learning Theory

There are several learning theories that tie in well with self-evaluation. The theories that provided a foundation for this study included the constructivist theory, the

theory of multiple intelligences, the social-cognitive theory, and the genetic epistemology theory. In Bruner's (1960) constructivist theory, learning is viewed as an active process. Learners use their past and current knowledge to develop new ideas or concepts. In the constructivist approach, education is a process of discovery. Information or knowledge is most effective when gained by personal discovery, and then acted upon (Bruner).

A constructivist classroom is student centered, with students organizing the information, exploring the learning environment, conducting the learning activities, and monitoring their own learning. Teachers assume a more supportive and reflective role, and the students are free to explore meaning for themselves and engage in critical thinking (Iran-Nejad, 1995). When one writes and composes, meaning no longer resides in text but through what the writers learn as they build, create, and evaluate their own writing (Greene, 1994). This fits with the main components of self-evaluation because when students pursue ideas on their own, they gain a better understanding. When incorporating the constructivist theory in classroom practices, teachers engage in an active dialogue with students and guide them so that they can facilitate their own learning (Bruner, 1960). When students self-evaluate, they focus on where they are and where they want to be; from there, they can construct what they need to learn in order to achieve the desired tasks. This is part of the foundation of the constructivist learning theory.

This study also drew upon the principles of the theory of multiple intelligences (MI) proposed by Gardner (1983). MI focuses on the belief that intelligence is "the ability to gain access to and understand one's inner feelings, dreams and ideas" (Gardner, 1993, p. 20). Gardner (1999) identified eight intelligences in his theory of MI. He

believed that these intelligences do not operate independently; rather, they are used at the same time as people develop skills or solve problems. The theory of MI addresses the facets of intrapersonal learning, a key component of self-evaluation.

Intrapersonal intelligence (Gardner, 1995) involves the capacity to understand oneself and to appreciate one's fears and motivations. It also relates to inner states of being; self-reflection; and metacognition, which is the process of thinking about thinking and is a key component in learning how to self-evaluate. All of these components are essential for self-evaluation. Having this intelligence allows people to have an effective working model of themselves and to use this information to regulate their learning. Developing intrapersonal intelligence means that students can think deeply inside themselves, a process that can be enhanced by self-paced projects and choices. Strategies used to employ this intelligence are self-checking materials, goal sheets, and journals (Gardner, 1999). These same strategies are at the core of self-evaluation.

Goleman (1995) posited that the concept of intrapersonal or emotional intelligence is as important as cognitive intelligence. Emotional/Intrapersonal intelligence determines how well people use the skills they have, including their intellect. Individuals who are emotionally adept understand and manage their own feelings well (Goleman).

Developing a sense of self and exploring the affective component in education may be especially beneficial to gifted students (Johnson, 2000) because they tend to have an elevated sense of self and sensitivity. In addition, many gifted students are perfectionists who can be especially critical of their own capabilities, which leads to low self-esteem. This may lead to gifted students underachieving academically because they

have a sense of failure. In addition, some gifted students mask their true ability in order to fit in with their peers as well as their teachers (Diaz, 1998). By developing a sense of self, gifted students, particularly females, can truly develop appropriate goals and make decisions based on deeply held values (Badolato, 1998). Research has shown a relationship between social and emotional development and the school factors of social status, perception of teacher and peers, class participation, achievement, and self-direction in learning (Katz, 1994). Success, or lack thereof, in these areas can be linked to either positive or negative self-concept (Katz). Self-evaluation, which employs the tenets of Gardner's (1995) intrapersonal intelligence, may be one way to help gifted students achieve their desired goals.

Another theory that framed this study is the social-cognitive theory. This theory states that human achievement depends on the continuous reciprocal interactions among behaviors, personal factors, and environmental conditions (Bandura, 1986). Observing and modeling the behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others is a major emphasis of the theory (Bandura, 1977). Observational learning is a key component because it requires the learner to focus attention on something being modeled, observe its characteristics, and then reproduce what was seen (Bandura, 1986). Modeling is essential in teaching students how to self-evaluate, thereby utilizing the key foundations of the theory.

Self-efficacy is a component of Bandura's (1993) social-cognitive theory. Self-efficacy concentrates on how self-perceptions of one's ability to perform a task influences engagement in and successful completion of the task (Bandura). Self-efficacy

develops from tasks that are highly challenging yet achievable. Self-efficacy grows through mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, and interpretation of physiological and emotional states. When students persist at tasks and expend effort to ensure success, their self-efficacy increases (Schunk, 2003). Bandura's theory supports the notion that students need more than intelligence and skill to perform successfully. They also need a strong sense of self to use what they have well and to regulate their learning (Bandura). Finally, self-efficacy beliefs are task specific and build through normative criteria rather than through comparison with others.

Students' self-efficacy in adolescence is challenged by psychological and physical changes that influence students' sense of personal control, which may result in lower self-confidence. This lack of confidence can affect students writing ability because writing requires one to have confidence in organizing and managing the various tasks involved in the process (Bandura, 1997). Schunk (2003) found that efficacy does not need to be extremely high for effective learning; instead, it needs to be high enough only to sustain engagement in present and future tasks. Schunk added that prerequisite knowledge and skills, along with high self-efficacy, are good predictors of writing achievement.

Self-evaluation in writing development is an important factor in self-efficacy (Schunk, 2003). Students' positive self-evaluations increase their self-efficacy because they can see that they understood the objective and employed a strategy that promoted their success. Low self-evaluations, on the other hand, do not necessarily decrease self-efficacy as long as students can reflect on their work and believe that they can succeed. As students continue to work harder and adopt new strategies through self-evaluation,

their self-efficacy increases (Schunk). In addition, confident students are less apprehensive as writers and have more feelings of self-worth about their writing (Pajares, 2003).

Studies on Writing and Self-Efficacy

Several studies have examined writing and the self-efficacy beliefs of students in Grades 6 to 10. Some of these studies have gleaned information in regard to gender, writing, and self-efficacy, as well as grade level differences, writing and self-efficacy. Many of the following studies have found that self-efficacy plays a primary role in predicting student-writing performance. These studies have illuminated the need for adults who work with adolescents to be aware of the role self-efficacy and other motivational beliefs in academic learning (Klassen, 2002).

Anderman (1992) conducted a study with 678 participants in Grades 6 and 7. The participants included regular education and special education students. They completed a self-report questionnaire of cognitive strategy use and attitude toward writing. Participants' achievement test scores and school grades were included in the data collected. Results from this study showed that the students in Grade 7 felt more efficacious than the students in Grade 6. The findings also indicated that self-efficacy was the strongest of all the factors in predicting achievement (Anderman).

Pajares and Valiante (1999) conducted a study with 742 participants in Grades 6, 7, and 8. All ability levels of students, except for those requiring special education, were included in this study. The participants were asked to write an essay in 30 minutes. All essays were measured on a writing skills self-efficacy scale focusing on confidence to

perform specific writing skills. Results from this study demonstrated that self-efficacy beliefs decreased from Grade 6 to Grade 7, but rebounded in Grade 8.

Spaulding (1995) investigated essay writing and self-efficacy. Participants in this study were 185 Grade 7 students of all ability levels, except for students whose special education status did not allow them to be mainstreamed. All participants completed an essay with an assigned writing topic that was judged for length and quality. The self-efficacy measure for this essay was a scale assessing linguistic competence linked to specific standards of English class. The findings showed that perceived self-efficacy positively related to writing-task engagement. Students with high and low efficacy were engaged in the task for the teacher, but not for the researcher. There was a significant interaction between self-efficacy and audience (Spaulding).

The findings from the aforementioned studies supported for the need for further research on self-evaluation and writing. Each study provided information on a different aspect of writing and self-efficacy. Anderman (1992) focused on cognitive strategy use and attitude toward writing. Pajares and Valiente (1999) evaluated confidence to perform specific writing tasks. Spaulding (1995) illustrated the link between writing task engagement and self-efficacy. The research that was proposed in this study took self-evaluation to a new level by putting a lens on self-evaluation in regard to students' writing ability and attitudes toward writing.

A final theory framing this study is the genetic epistemology theory, based on the work of Piaget (1970). Cognitive structure is a central part of this theory, which includes patterns as well as physical and mental actions that correspond to stages of development.

Genetic epistemology theory sees cognitive development as a constant effort to align with the environment through assimilation and accommodation (Piaget). In Piaget's view, the actions with the environment are physical and mental, that is, a child learns first through encountering and then exploring an object or an idea. At first, information is assimilated into existing thought structures. If what is being explored does not match these thought structures, cognitive disequilibrium occurs, and there is motivation to accommodate the new experience. The process of accommodation allows the new thought pattern to be constructed, thus allowing the new information to be assimilated and equilibrium to be established temporarily. This process occurs every time a child encounters a new experience that cannot be assimilated. According to Piaget, this process explains how knowledge is constructed.

Another principle of Piaget's (1970) theory is that one's developmental stage should determine the learning materials and activities being used. This ties in well with self-evaluation because students perform at levels that are appropriate for them personally. Finally, teaching methods should actively involve students and present challenges (Piaget). When self-evaluation is used, students become active participants in their writing. They are challenged to continue to improve their writing, and they can see the visual effects overtime.

The key principles of this theory mesh with the perspective of self-evaluation. One of these principles is that cognitive development occurs through activities or situations that engage students and require adaptation. Self-evaluation accomplishes this because students engage with their writing through evaluation. The common thread

among these theories is that effective learning is an active process that engages the learners with themselves. This core belief provides a framework for self-evaluation because it relates to students' writing ability and attitudes toward writing.

Studies on Self-Evaluation

Research has been conducted to determine the effects and impact of self-evaluation. Much of this research has focused on (a) how well students are aware of their own learning, (b) how students evaluate their writing and how this process transfers to the larger context of assessment and evaluation, (c) self-evaluation as part of another strategy, (d) if students become more aware of the challenges writers face when using self-evaluation, (e) students' writing attitude and achievement toward writing and how this may change from grade level, and (f) the role of rubrics in self-assessment. The following review of these studies provides insight into what has been learned about self-evaluation and writing.

Van Kraayenoord and Paris (1997) conducted a study to determine if self-assessment could be measured in a brief interview. The students in their study ranged from 8 to 12 years of age. They asked the students a series of questions focused on determining how well they were aware of their own learning. One of the questions centered on whether the students understood what work was difficult for them to do and what work made them proud. The students also identified samples of their work that showed their literary abilities and evidence of their academic progress. In addition, the students reported their feelings about self-review and future academic development, and explained how they shared their work with their parents and how they viewed feedback

from teachers. The results showed that the students could assess their own work and provide cognitive and affective evaluations (Van Kraayenoord & Paris).

Albertson and Billingsley (2001) investigated the performance of 2 gifted students in writing, focusing primarily on the application of strategy instruction along with self-regulation techniques to identify their impact on the quality of writing and fluency expression in creative writing. Both students in their study were 13-year-old gifted students in Grade 7 who were part of their schools' honors programs. The study design was a single-case, time series design. The 2 participants used a set strategy instruction for their writing, along with a reviewing checklist.

This study measured text production, the number of story elements, and the number of minutes spent planning and reviewing their writing (Albertson & Billingsley, 2001). Overall, 16 stories were scored. Subjective evaluation was used to judge the writing quality of the participants. The results indicated that the use of strategy instruction, along with self-regulation, improved performance outcomes for both participants concerning story length, fluency of text production, and story element. This investigation also demonstrated that including self-regulation as part of the writing process can be an important part of creative writing for gifted learners.

A key component in the self-evaluation process is the use of reflective questions and events. It helps students to become more aware of their own writing process so that they can improve. The use of reflective questions on single pieces of writing, the writing process, and on collections of writings can improve students' writing ability (Underwood, 1998). Examples of reflective questions included, "What do you notice when you look

back at your earlier work?" and "What do you see as the special strengths of this paper?" (Underwood, p. 18). Reflective questions involve students in their writing and give them a personal stake in what they write.

To assess the benefits of reflective questions, Underwood (1998) conducted a year-long ethnographic study that focused on a middle school language arts portfolio assessment system of average students who participated routinely in reflective activities. Underwood taught at the middle school in this study. Complete sets of portfolios from 12 students over the school year were examined. The language arts portfolio assessment system had the students assemble their portfolios at the conclusion of each of the three trimesters. An examination committee made up of professionals in the English Department graded these portfolios. The grades that the committee assigned became the official report card grades. The students explained themselves to a distant, critical audience three times over the course of the year. This audience also graded them.

Underwood (1998) focused his study on the following reflective prompt that the students included in their portfolio: "What challenges have you experienced as a writer during this grading period?" (p. 20). In addition, Underwood explained his purpose in selecting average students for his study. He theorized that average students were probably less likely to engage spontaneously in reflective analysis than stronger students.

Teaching reflective analysis is a strategy that has positive implications for students. The findings from Underwood's (1998) study supported his contention that over time, average students instructed in the art of reflective analysis become more aware of the challenges writers face and personally improve their writing. The weakness of this

study is that it was performed at a school that had an official portfolio assessment system. This system included an examination committee that reviewed and graded all portfolios. In addition, it was already determined that the grades from this committee would become the official report card grades. To duplicate this study in a school that does not have these systems already in place would be difficult at best. Future research could include the work of students at below or above/gifted intelligence.

Another study reviewed in this paper focused on two classes of Grade 7 students and their teacher, specifically targeting how the combination of assessment and evaluation procedures in the classroom, along with the teacher's attitudes about evaluation and self-evaluation, created a context for self-evaluation in writing (Cassata, 2000). Cassata used a single embedded case study with a nested unit of analysis as the research design. The purpose of the study was to determine the ability of Grade 7 students to assess their writing and evaluate how the process of self-evaluation fits in with assessment and evaluation conducted at the classroom and school levels.

Cassata (2000) used a variety of methods to answer her research questions. The qualitative methods included (a) teacher and student interviews, (b) classroom observations, (c) various student surveys, and (d) students' written reflections. Qualitative content analyses for teacher interviews, classroom observations, and portions of student interviews and surveys were employed. The study took place over 3 months. A smaller targeted sample from the two classes was selected for a closer investigation.

The overall results from this study indicated that the students demonstrated a great deal of self-evaluative behavior, which included using strategies and criteria to evaluate

their work. This study showed that when given the opportunity, middle school students are capable of self-evaluation in mature and sophisticated ways.

Self-evaluation also has been used in conjunction with the self-regulated strategy development model (SRSD; Troia & Graham, 2003). This model has been used effectively with capable and struggling writers. In this strategy, the teacher models how to use the target strategy and then provides students with as much support as they need as they progress toward independent use of the strategy. The SRSD model is implemented by teaching students background knowledge to apply a particular writing strategy, such as narrative writing. Then they learn how to apply this strategy across different contexts and writing tasks. Students gain further knowledge through the use of self-instruction, goal setting, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation. Students do not move from support to independent use of a strategy until they are able to do so. According to Troia and Graham, the SRSD model has led to improvement in students' quality of writing, knowledge of writing, approach to writing, and attitudes about writing.

Research also has been conducted to determine if students are capable of improving their writing ability with self-assessment. Harrington, Gillam, Andrews, and Day (2006) carried out an action study on this issue. They employed questionnaires, interviews, and observations to assess students' responses to writing. In addition, each of the researchers evaluated the effectiveness of self-evaluation strategies, according to the students, in each other's classrooms. The participants included six classes of students in Grades 3 to 7 (ages 8-12) in the United Kingdom. The findings showed that student attitudes improved and their view of the classroom atmosphere became more inviting to

them. In addition, analysis of end-of-year tests demonstrated that the participants' writing ability increased (Harrington et al.).

Understanding the role of rubrics in self-assessment was the focus of a study by Andrade and Boulay (2003). They examined the impact of using a self-assessment rubric on the essays of 397 students in Grades 7 and 8. Two hundred and fifty-one students attended School A, and 146 students attended School B. The Grade 7 students accounted for 183 of the participants, and 214 of the students were in Grade 8. Boys comprised 191 of the participants, and girls comprised the other 201 participants. Data came from two essays that the students wrote: One was historical fiction, and one was a response to the literature.

In addition, all of the participants received instructional rubrics articulating the quality criteria for the essays. The participants in the treatment group received formal instruction regarding the use of the rubrics and were allotted time to complete these rubrics; the control group received no direction instruction on the use of the rubrics. The findings suggested a positive relationship between treatment and the girls' scores on the historical essay; however, there was no statistically significant relationship between the boys' scores and the treatment on the historical essay. Findings for the response to literature essay revealed no treatment effect for either boys or girls. Andrade and Boulay (2003) concluded that the findings might have been affected through insufficiency of the intervention, as well as effects of the rubrics and gender differences regarding self-assessment.

Music education has employed the use of self-evaluation to help instrumentalists improve (Hewitt, 2005). Hewitt conducted a study to determine if grade level differences exist in self-evaluation tendencies. The participants included 92 middle school students and 51 high school students. All participants were part of a countywide school district located in a large mid-Atlantic city. The study was conducted in two summer music programs. The data that were collected consisted of the participants' self-evaluation of their performances during rehearsals, with judges evaluating the participants' final performances. Hewitt discovered that the high school students' self-evaluations were more accurate than middle school students' self-evaluations in all areas except for melody and rhythm. In addition, the middle school student participants' scores had a greater correlation with the judges' scores than did those of the high school students. Hewitt concluded that middle school students are capable of self-evaluating but they need the appropriate instruction and guidance to help them be successful self-evaluators.

Limited research has been conducted on students' attitude and experiences with writing. Even less research has been done to discover adolescents' writing attitudes and experiences. One goal of this study was to investigate further student attitudes and writing. The next section reviews research on student attitudes and experiences with writing.

Knudson (1995) sought to discover if there is a relationship between writing achievement and attitude toward writing along with grade level and gender attitude toward writing in students in Grades 1 to 6. The participants included 430 students enrolled in a K-6 elementary school in a lower to lower middle socioeconomic area in

southern California. The 430 participants were students from three classrooms at each grade level, including 232 boys and 198 girls. Eight-nine participants were in Grade 2, 80 were in Grade 3, 85 were in Grade 4, 90 were in Grade 5, and 86 were in Grade 6. The participants were administered a writing attitude questionnaire and a writing prompt. To add to this data, Knudson interviewed 12 students (three from each grade level) using 10 open-ended questions. These 12 students were randomly selected from the sample.

The findings from Knudson's (1995) study showed that students begin school seeing writing as drawing. From there, they move to seeing it as printing; by Grade 6, see writing as being cursive. Students in Grade 1 tend primarily to the surface-level features of writing. By Grade 4, students use process-writing strategies in their approach to writing. Knudson proved that there is a positive relationship between grade and gender in writing performance. Further probing demonstrated that female upper grade students have more positive attitudes toward writing and tend to be above-average writers.

An extensive review of the research and literature conducted on self-evaluation and writing did not uncover opposition to this strategy. Although some studies have posited results that did not show large increases with the coupling of self-evaluation and writing, none of them showed a negative relationship to writing. Studies with only minor results explained that this finding could be based on the method of data design and collection, as well as analysis. Sample size and variations in sampling processes may also have affected these results.

Conclusion

Researchers have agreed that there is a deficit in writing among middle school students. They also seem to have agreed that there are effective strategies for teaching students to write. Teacher modeling and direct strategy instruction are designated as the foundation of many strategies to help students become competent, skillful and lifelong writers. In addition, from this review of the literature, it became apparent that assessment must be classroom, county, and state based. Teachers must learn how to teach their students how to evaluate their own writing. This may require further inservice for teachers to learn how to use and implement effective assessment techniques in their classroom practices. Difficulties facing writing instruction and assessment include the level of expertise that teachers need to implement the program effectively and the need for continuous professional learning opportunities for teachers and administrators.

The research regarding self-evaluation has indicated that it is a powerful tool in involving students in their own writing and that students' writing improves when they are involved in the self-evaluation process. Concerns arose about effectively using self-evaluation in the classroom. One concern was the time and rigor of teaching students the process of self-evaluation. How does one teach self-evaluation while meeting the demands of a packed curriculum?

Furthermore, standardizing self-evaluation so that it remains constant can be a difficult task. Using reflective questions involve students in their own writing, but how much of this is a quantifiable evaluation? Finally, students can be taught how to self-evaluate, yet when it comes time to perform based on the requirements of the current

school structure, students need to perform on a grade scale that often does not allow room for the nuances and subjectivity of self-evaluation.

SECTION 3: RESEARCH METHOD

Introduction

This quasi-experimental nonequivalent control group design study compared the writing performance and attitudes of gifted Grade 7 students attending middle school in a suburb outside of a major city in the southeast area of the United States. The research took place during a 10-week period, with the students organized into four classrooms. The Georgia Writing Performance Standards was used as a pre- and posttest for the participants. The Writing Attitude Survey (WAS) pre- and posttests also were used. Two of the four classes in this study received direct instruction in self-evaluation strategies and techniques; the other two classes did not. Convenience sampling was used to select the four classrooms for participation. These groups were formed from a combination of randomized, computer-scheduled enrollments. Scores from the writing pretest and writing attitudinal pretest survey served as the baseline data for the study. The analysis of this data against the writing posttest and the WAS posttest determined statistical significance. The standardized writing rubrics used in the study were reliable and valid, and the proper training in their administration took place.

The sample was one of convenience based on their natural formation; therefore, this quantitative design was the most appropriate for this study. Students from four Grade 7 language arts classes at this middle school made up the sample. The students attended the middle school where the researcher teaches; therefore, they were an obvious choice for the study.

Current research provided data on students' awareness of their own learning, how students evaluate their writing, and if students become more aware of the challenges writers face when using self-evaluation. Van Kraayenoord and Paris (1997) posited that students are capable of assessing their own work and providing cognitive and affective evaluations. Underwood (1998) showed that over time, students who have been instructed in evaluation and reflection become more aware of the challenges that writers face and, from there, improve their own writing. Another study conducted on self-evaluation found that middle school students are capable of self-evaluating in mature and sophisticated ways (Cassata, 2000). The findings from these studies led to this study, which examined self-evaluation from the perspective of the attitudes of gifted Grade 7 students toward writing and writing performance. The researcher conducted the study following approval from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB approval #9-20-29450-0).

The purpose of this study was to better understand the research problem. In this study, a pre- and posttest was used to measure the relationship between specifically taught lessons on self-evaluation and specifically designed rubrics for self-evaluation achievement on the writing pre- and posttests of the participants. At the same time, the relationship of self-evaluation strategies to students' writing proficiency and attitudes toward writing was explored using WAS pre- and posttests at a suburban middle school outside of a major city in the southeast area of the United States.

The baseline data for this study came from a writing pretest that is part of the school's standard policy for each grade level during the first 9 weeks of school, and from

the WAS. The administration of the writing pretest took place during the first 9 weeks of the school year. The administration of the WAS took place at the beginning of the study and was given to all gifted education Grade 7 students in the classes taught by the researcher. The administration of the same instruments took place at the end of the study, that is, at the end of January 2008. The analysis of the pretest data against the posttest data determined statistical significance. The specific methods of analyses that were used resulted from the convenience sampling of the study group. The assessments were reliable and valid, and proper training in the administration of them took place.

Research Design and Approach

The researcher used a quantitative, quasi-experimental, nonequivalent control group design to determine if there was statistical significance in the students' writing attitude and ability before and after they were taught self-evaluation strategies. In a quasi-experimental design, the researcher studies two groups that are not randomly assigned. Group A (experimental group) receives an intervention or treatment during the experiment, whereas Group B (control group) does not receive an intervention or treatment during the experiment (Creswell, 2003). The utilization of intact classrooms was the rationale for this design. These classrooms were in place from the start of the school year and were taught by the teacher. These classes were chosen because of the close proximity of the researcher to the subject matter and the sample, as well as the sample's availability for input.

In addition, the researcher was specifically interested in finding out how middle school students in Grade 7 start to have different attitudes toward different subjects. This

was a sample of convenience. Randomization of the participants was allowed because of the assignment of the classes based on the school's scheduling system. According to Creswell (2003), a convenience sample sometimes is the only possible sample because the researcher must use naturally formed groups such as that that occur in a classroom, an organization, or a family unit. Creswell used a diagram to illustrate this type of design:

Group A: O_1 ____X____ ____O_2____

He also addressed this type of design in his writing, commenting that "in this design, there is an experimental group (A) and control group (B) which are selected without randomization. Both groups take a pre- and posttest. Only the experimental group receives the treatment" (p. 169).

In this quantitative study, the treatment was the directly taught self-evaluation strategies. The experimental group received the treatment. The researcher implemented teaching strategies gleaned from the review of literature. A discussion of these teaching strategies follows.

Setting and Sample

The participants were gifted Grade 7 students at a middle school in a suburb of a major city in the southeast area of the United States. There are approximately 900 Grade 7 students at this middle school, and 200 of them are identified as gifted education students. From this number, another 100 of them belong to the Grade 7 gifted education team, of which the researcher is a member.

This study focused on 70 Grade 7 gifted education students in a middle school classroom. Thirty-three students comprised Group A (experimental group), and 37

students comprised Group B (control group). The 70 participants are students in the classes that the researcher teaches.

Students in the four selected Grade 7 gifted language arts classes received a consent form (see Appendix B) to take home to their parents. This was to ensure the rights of the participants and allow them to withdraw from the study if so desired. The researcher followed up with any student who did not return the consent form. The researcher gave an assent form (see Appendix C) to the participants because they were under the age of 18. They had to sign this age-appropriate document to allow the study to continue. The sample ethnicity groups were as follows: 60% White, 16% Black, 8% Hispanic, and 16% Asian. The ages of the students who participated in this study ranged from 12 to 14 years, with a mean age of 13. The breakdown of the participants by gender was 48% female and 53% male. In addition, the researcher ensured that the demographics of both groups matched and reflected the demographics of the school.

Treatment

In this study, the treatment was the directly taught self-evaluation strategies in writing. Over the course of 10 weeks (November through the beginning of January), the researcher incorporated the use of directly taught self-evaluation strategies in two of the four classes of language arts that she teaches. These strategies came from the extensive literature review that was done before the study was conducted and included the following protocols:

1. Portfolio assessment: All students were required to keep a portfolio of their writing throughout the school year. Students implemented self-

evaluation strategies through reflecting on their growth, as well as areas of strengths and weaknesses in writing from the samples in their portfolio. Students arranged their writing from most effective to least effective and discussed their reasons for ranking.

2. Self-assessment rubrics: Students used self-assessment rubrics on certain pieces of their writing to evaluate their written pieces to see if they met all the requirements of the rubric. This was the same rubric used by the teacher to grade the participants' written work.
3. Student-led conferences: Students conducted conferences with the teacher to discuss their own evaluation of their writing.
4. Self-evaluation scales and checklists: Students completed a self-report scale and checklists on writing. They rated their progress in a particular area.
5. Reflection journal: Students completed reflection journals on their experiences as writers. These were used to help them see their own attitudes as writers.

The baseline data for the quantitative study came from the writing pretest and the WAS. The administration of the writing pretest took place during the first 9 weeks of school as part of a school-wide assessment given to all students to assess the attitudes toward writing exhibited by the study participants. The design of the WAS is based on the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ; Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990). This instrument has its roots in social-cognitive theory (Bandura, 1976), which framed

this study. Research conducted by Garcia and Pintrich (1995) supported the validity and reliability of the MSLQ:

> Results suggest that the MSLQ has a relatively good reliability, and confirmatory factor analysis supports the validity of the general theoretical framework and the scales that measure it...In addition, the predictive validity seems reasonably good. The MSLQ seems to be useful, reliable, and valid way to assess motivation and learning strategies in the classroom. (p. 1)

The WAS uses a summative Likert scale to assess students' attitude toward writing. In reviewing multiple items from the MSLQ, specific items were chosen to create the WAS used in this study. In addition, the WAS contains 25 items to increase its validity. The same question is asked two or three different ways to increase validity. There was no norming process.

The administration of the writing posttest took place at the end of the study in January 2008. The researcher also administered the WAS at the end of the study period. ANCOVA was used to statistically control for other variables, which allowed the researcher to evaluate the students on various parameters. Furthermore, it equalized the groups statistically on preknowledge. Analysis was conducted on the pretest and posttest data to determine the significance of a variable on another variable before and after it was administered. The pretest data were compared with the posttest data to determine if the treatment had any effect on Group A's writing ability and attitudes toward writing. The data also were used to determine what effect, if any, occurred for Group B over the 10 weeks.

The researcher added further support to the study findings by conducting a two-tailed independent-measures *t* test to compare the means derived from the two

independent samples of data. This allowed the researcher to look at means from both groups in all areas of the writing pre- and posttests and compare them. These areas included total score, ideas, organization, style, and conventions.

Cramer's V was used for the WAS to statistically control for other variables, which allowed the researcher to evaluate the students on various parameters. Furthermore, it equalized the groups statistically on preknowledge. Analysis was conducted on the pretest and posttest survey data to determine the significance of a variable on another variable before and after it was administered. The pretest data were compared with the posttest data to determine if the treatment had any effect on Group A's attitudes toward writing. The data also were used to determine what effect, if any, occurred for Group B over the 10 weeks. In addition to conducting a Cramer's V test, a chi-square test was run to provide a full picture of the WAS data.

> The chi-square (x2) test is a nonparametric test of statistical significance that can be used to analyze nominal data. These data take the form of counts of the number of cases falling into various categories. The purpose of the chi-square test is to determine whether these observed frequencies differ significantly from the frequencies one would expect to see if only chance factors were operating. (See, 2007, p. 22)

Instrumentation and Materials

The researcher used a writing pretest and posttest, as well as the WAS, given both as a pre- and a posttest, as the instruments for data collection. The writing pre- and posttests were completed using a pen-and-paper format. All students were given a writing prompt based on the Gwinnett Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) guidelines (Gwinnett is the county the school is located in) and the Georgia Middle Grades Writing Assessment (GMGWA) practice prompts. The writing pre- and posttests were scored

using the state-approved rubric for scoring the Grade 8 GMGWA. Four testing levels comprise the assessment instrument in the following areas: idea, organization, style, and conventions.

The writing pre- and posttests yielded different types of scores, including raw scores and performance level. Student writing samples were scored using an analytic scoring system. Analytic scoring means that more than one feature or domain of a paper is evaluated. Analytic scoring provided detailed information on student writing, including performance levels. Each domain is scored holistically. The domains consist of several components. A component is a feature of writing within a particular domain. The score assigned indicates the test raters' overall impression of the writer's command of the components using predetermined scoring criteria contained in the scoring rubrics. A raw score is the number in all areas of writing (content/organization, style, sentence formation, usage, and mechanics) that a student achieves. Performance level includes the areas of excellent, effective, and minimal that is assigned to a student's writing ability based on their raw score. The writing pre- and posttest is valid and reliable and is based on Georgia State's Writing Test.

> The State Writing Assessment Core Development and Advisory Committees assisted the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) in developing the writing component of the student assessment program. The committees comprised of educators with expertise in the instruction of writing skills and writing assessments, consist of eight committees-a Core Development and Advisory Committee for each grade level (3, 5, 8, and 11). The goal of the Writing Assessment Core Development and Advisory Committees and the GaDOE is to create developmentally appropriate assessment procedures to enhance statewide instruction in the language arts. Statewide writing assessments serve the purpose of improving writing and writing instruction. (GaDOE, 2007)

The reliability statistics for the GMGWA are as follows: Cronbach's alpha reliability and standard error of measurement - Alpha 0.91598 and Sem 3.31322. The validity of the assessment can be supported by the rater agreement information, which had a total number of papers flagged for rescoring as 306, and the total number of papers not needing rescoring as 118,364. This led to a rescore rate of 0.0026%. Furthermore, the writing prompts and scoring rubrics were aligned with the state curriculum, providing for content validity.

The students completed the WAS using a pen-and-paper format. They read a list of 25 items and indicated on a 4-point Likert scale an opinion and perception of their writing. All students completed this survey at the same time, thus ensuring no communication between participants. This increased the validity of the results. The choices were from the following categories: (a) *always*, *sometimes*, *rarely*, *never*; (b) *strongly agree*, *agree*, *disagree*, *strongly disagree*; and (c) *excellent*, *above average*, *average*, *below average*.

The WAS includes 25 questions that investigate attitudes on writing, with subcategories that respectively measure feelings about writing, interest in writing, rating/grading of writing, and confidence in writing. Scores were calculated using an additive scale and measured the construct of writing and students' attitude toward it. The WAS was teacher made. To increase the validity of this testing instrument, a number of items were added to the test. The WAS was self-scored by the researcher and another teacher at the school where the researcher teaches. The second scorer also is a teacher of

gifted language arts students. Both scorers' results were analyzed for any discrepancies to ensure validity in scoring.

Data Analysis

An outside company trained in holistically scoring writing samples based on the GMGWA rubric scored the writing pre- and posttest. The researcher scored the writing WAS pre- and posttest herself and had another scorer score the surveys. The researcher employed member checking to verify the results of the data analysis. ANCOVA served as the method of data analysis for this study. The pretest composite scores and posttest composite scores for the writing tests and the WAS were computed for the study. The directly taught self-evaluation strategies served as the independent variable. The writing attitudes and ability of the students served as the dependent variable. The use of the pretest scores in both writing ability and writing attitude served as the covariants. McDonald (2006) explained:

> Analysis of covariance…is used when you have two measurement variables and one attribute variable…. It is a way of comparing the Y variable among groups while statistically controlling for variation in Y caused by variation in the X variable. (p. 1)

Based on this evidence and the nature of this study, the option to use this type of data analysis was deemed the most appropriate.

Research Question 1

Is there a relationship between the use of self-evaluation strategies and students' writing ability?

Hypotheses

H_{01}: There will be no significant relationship between the experimental group receiving direct instruction in self-evaluation strategies and the control group not receiving self-evaluation strategies on attitudes toward writing, controlling for the pretests in ability in writing.

H_{a1}: There will be a significant relationship between the experimental group receiving direct instruction in self-evaluation strategies, and the control group not receiving self-evaluation strategies on attitudes toward writing, controlling for the pretests in ability in writing.

For this study, a comparison of the mean scaled scores of the WAS pretest to the mean scaled scores of the WAS posttest took place. Comparing scaled scores is an effective way to measure student performance in a subject over a period of time (Harcourt Assessment Inc., 2004). The researcher sought to determine if the scaled scores of the WAS posttest would increase after students received direct instruction in self-evaluation strategies. The analysis of the pretest data against the posttest data, using ANCOVA to control for pretest ability in writing, took place to determine statistical significance.

Research Question 2

Is there a relationship between the use of self-evaluation strategies and students' attitudes toward writing?

Hypotheses

H_{02}*:* There will be no significant relationship between the experimental group receiving direct instruction in self-evaluation strategies, and the control group not receiving self-evaluation strategies on writing ability, controlling for the pretests in attitude in writing.

H_{a2}*:* There will be a significant relationship between the experimental group receiving direct instruction in self-evaluation strategies, and the control group not receiving self-evaluation strategies on writing ability, controlling for the pretests in attitude in writing.

For this study, the comparison of the mean holistic scaled scores of the writing pretest to the mean holistic scaled scores of the writing posttest took place. The researcher sought to discover if the holistic scores of the writing posttest would increase after students received direct instruction on self-evaluation strategies using ANCOVA and a two-tailed independent-measures *t* test. The researcher also sought to determine if the scaled scores of the WAS posttest would increase after students receive direct instruction in self-evaluation strategies. The analysis of the pretest data against the posttest data, controlling for attitude using Cramer's V, determined statistical significance. In addition, a chi-square test was employed to analyze the results in the categories of the survey and determine if over time there was an effect on these subcategories because of the use of self-evaluation strategies. A detailed discussion of the data analysis follows in section 4.

SECTION 4: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate the relationship between self-evaluation and students' writing ability and attitude toward writing. Seventy students in the experimental and control groups participated in writing activities several times a week. Thirty-three students in the experimental group participated in self-evaluation instruction as a teaching strategy that included the setting of goals; self-evaluation scales, checklists, and rubrics; portfolio assessment; and student-led conferences with teacher and parents. Thirty-seven students in the control group did not receive any instruction in self-evaluation, nor did they perform any self-evaluation activities.

The researcher collected data in two phases over 4 months during the 2007-2008 school year. During the first phase of data collection, the researcher administered a writing assessment pretest and a WAS pretest to students in both groups. In the last phase, the researcher administered a writing assessment posttest and a WAS posttest. The results were statistically analyzed using SPSS 14.0 (2). Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were employed. All testing was based on determining statistical significance at a two-sided alpha level of 0.05.

Study Sample

Seventy students in four classes participated in the study. The classes were heterogeneous in ethnicity and gender. Two classes were randomly assigned to the experimental group, and two classes were randomly assigned to the control group. To ensure further validity, one class in the control group and one in the experimental group

were taught in the morning, and one class in the control group and one class in the experimental group were taught in the afternoon. All students returned a parental consent and student assent form granting permission for them to participate in the study. Thirty-seven students in two classes comprised the control group. The experimental group was made up of two classes of 33 students. Section 4 examines the results, which are grouped by hypotheses and presented according to the research questions.

Data Collection

Each group took a writing pretest based on the GMGWA writing prompts. The students in the experimental group received self-evaluation instruction and were given opportunities to practice and employ self-evaluation strategies through portfolio assessments, self-goal setting, self-evaluation rubrics, student-led conferences with teacher and parents, self-evaluation scales, and checklists.

Data Analysis

The researcher collected quantitative data using the pretest-posttest format and the GMGWA's scoring rubric as well as pre- and posttest data on the WAS. This section explains the writing pre- and posttest data. The researcher used the scores from a beginning-of-the-year Grade 7 writing sample and a writing sample taken at the end of Week 10 of this study as data. The writing assessment followed the GMGWA format and procedures. The students had a topic sheet with instructions, a rough draft sheet, and a final copy sheet. Students were given a 75-minute writing period. The researcher sent the pre- and posttests to the Georgia Center for Assessment for scoring. The scores were

measured on a continuous scale with a range of 5 to 25. The researcher used SPSS to test the construct of the overall writing achievement.

Research Question 1

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant relationship between the use of self-evaluation strategies and students' writing ability. ANCOVA and a *t* test were used to analyze the for this research question. The pretest was used as the controlling variable, or covariance, and the ANCOVA allowed the researcher to statistically control for other variables and equate the students on various parameters. According to McDonald (2006), "Analysis of covariance…is used when you have two measurement variables and one attribute variable…. It is a way of comparing the Y variable among groups while statistically controlling for variation in Y caused by variation in the X variable" (p. 1). Based on the results of the ANCOVA and the *t* test, the results were not statistically significant, so the null hypothesis was accepted. This was further supported by Yanik (2001), who commented, "Analysis of covariance is used to test the main and interaction effects of categorical variables on a continuous dependent variable, controlling for the effects of selected other continuous variables which covary with the dependent" (p. 1). This evidence and the nature of this study deemed this type of data analysis as the most appropriate.

Test for Homogeneity of Slopes

To verify the assumption of the homogeneity of slopes, the researcher ran this test. The confirmation of this supposition had to occur for the ANCOVA to proceed. Garson (2006) confirmed that "the covariate coefficients…are the same for each group

formed by the categorical variables and measured on the dependent. The more this assumption is violated, the more conservative ANCOVA becomes" (p. 27). The following tables illustrate the results.

The researcher tested Hypothesis 1 using ANCOVA and a *t* test. Tables 1 to 21 show the results of the ANCOVA. Tables 22 to 32 show the results of the *t* test. Table 1 shows the results of the test for homogeneity of slopes between the covariates and the beginning-of-the-year GMGWA's sample test.

Table 1

Test for Homogeneity of Slopes Between Covariates and Beginning-of-the-Year GMGWA *Sample Test*

Tests of between-subjects effects						
Source	Type III sum of squares	*df*	*MS*	*F*	Sig.	Partial η^2
Corrected model	113.135[a]	3	37.712	5.637	.002	2.04
Intercept	7.148.118	1	7148.118	1068.557	.000	.942
Group	1.058	1	1.058	.058	.692	.002
IdeasPre* OrgPre* StylePre* ConPre* TotalPre* Group*IdeasPre*	109.051	1	109.051	16.302	.000	.198
OrgPre* StylePre* ConPre* TotalPre	6.890	1	6.890	1.030	.314	.015
Error	441.507	66	6.690			
Total	34215.000	70				
Corrected total	554.643	69				

[a]R^2 = 204 (Adjusted R^2 = 168)
Dependent Variable: Total Post

The interaction was not significant, $F(1,66) = 1.030$, $p = .314$, partial $\eta^2 = .015$, so the researcher assumed homogeneity of slopes.

Table 2 shows the results of the test for homogeneity of slopes between the covariates and ideas, specifically students' ability to use genre-appropriate strategies and a well-developed thesis.

Table 2

Test for Homogeneity of Slopes Between Covariates and Ideas

Tests of between-subjects effects						
Source	Type III sum of squares	*df*	*MS*	*F*	Sig.	Partial η^2
Corrected model	17.506[a]	3	5.835	3.450	.021	.136
Intercept	1101.164	1	1101.164	651.010	.000	.908
Group	.333	1	.333	.197	.659	.003
IdeasPre* OrgPre* StylePre* ConPre* TotalPre* Group*IdeasPre* OrgPre* StylePre* ConPre* TotalPre	15.608	1	15.608	9.227	.003	.123
	2.222	1	2.222	1.314	.256	.020
Error	111.637	66	1.691			
Total	5272.000	70				
Corrected total	129.143	69				

[a]R^2 = 136 (Adjusted R^2 = .096)
Dependent Variable: Ideas

The interaction was not significant, $F(1,66) = 1.314$, $p = .314$, partial $\eta^2 = .020$, so the researcher assumed homogeneity of slopes.

Table 3 shows the results of the test for homogeneity of slopes between the covariates and organization, namely, that there was a clear hook, body, conclusion, and an effective use of transition.

Table 3

Test for Homogeneity of Slopes Between Covariates and Organization

Tests of between-subjects effects						
Source	Type III sum of squares	*df*	*MS*	*F*	Sig.	Partial η^2
Corrected model	5.184[a]	3	1.728	3.222	.028	.128
Intercept	281.043	1	281.043	523.954	.000	.888
Group	.005	1	.005	.009	.925	.000
IdeasPre* OrgPre* StylePre* ConPre* TotalPre* Group*IdeasPre* OrgPre* StylePre* ConPre* TotalPre	5.053	1	5.053	9.421	.003	.125
	.099	1	.099	.185	.669	.003
Error	35.402	66	.536			
Total	1387.000	70				
Corrected total	40.586	69				

[a]R^2 = 128 (Adjusted R^2 = .088)
Dependent Variable: Organization

The interaction was not significant, $F(1,66) = .185$, $p = .669$, partial $\eta^2 = .003$.

Table 4 shows the results of the test for homogeneity of slopes between the covariates and style, specifically, a consistent tone, writer's purpose using vivid and precise language, and various sentence structures.

Table 4

Test for Homogeneity of Slopes Between Covariates and Style

Tests of between-subjects effects						
Source	Type III sum of squares	*df*	*MS*	*F*	Sig.	Partial η^2
Corrected model	2.625[a]	3	.875	3.081	.033	.123
Intercept	309.944	1	309.944	1091.212	.000	.943
Group	.116	1	.116	.409	.525	.006
IdeasPre* OrgPre* StylePre* ConPre* TotalPre* Group	2.621	1	2.621	9.228	.003	.123
IdeasPre* OrgPre* StylePre* ConPre* TotalPre	.178	1	.178	.625	.432	.009
Error	18.746	66	.284			
Total	1412.000	70				
Corrected total	21.371	69				

[a]R^2 = .123 (Adjusted R^2 = .083)
Dependent Variable: Style

The interaction was not significant, $F(1,66) = .625$, $p = .432$, partial $\eta^2 = .009$, so the researcher assumed homogeneity of slopes.

Table 5 shows the results of the test for homogeneity of slopes between the covariates and conventions, specifically, sentence structure, punctuation, use of a variety of conjunctions, grammar, usage, mechanics, and spelling.

Table 5

Test for Homogeneity of Slopes Between Covariates and Conventions

Tests of between-subjects effects						
Source	Type III sum of squares	*df*	*MS*	*F*	Sig.	Partial η^2
Corrected model	7.166[a]	3	2.389	5.200	.003	.191
Intercept	288.768	1	288.769	628.600	.000	.905
Group	.002	1	.002	.004	.952	.000
IdeasPre* OrgPre* StylePre* ConPre* TotalPre* Group*IdeasPre* OrgPre* StylePre* ConPre* TotalPre	6.892	1	6.892	15.002	.000	.185
	.159	1	.159	.345	.559	.005
Error	30.319	66	.459			
Total	1464.00	70				
Corrected total	37.486	69				

[a]R^2 = .191 (Adjusted R^2 = .154)
Dependent Variable: Conventions

The interaction was not significant, $F(1,66) = .345$, $p = .559$, partial $\eta^2 = .005$, so the researcher assumed homogeneity of slopes.

Table 6 shows the results of the test for homogeneity of slopes between the covariates and gender.

Table 6

Test for Homogeneity of Slopes Between Covariates and Gender

Tests of between-subjects effects						
Source	Type III sum of squares	*df*	*MS*	*F*	Sig.	Partial η^2
Corrected model	.791[a]	3	.264	1.087	.361	.047
Intercept	45.266	1	45.266	186.616	.000	.739
Group	.023	1	.023	.096	.758	.001
IdeasPre* OrgPre* StylePre* ConPre* TotalPre* Group*IdeasPre* OrgPre* StylePre* ConPre* TotalPre	.788	1	.788	3.248	.076	.047
	.051	1	.051	.211	.648	.003
Error	16.009	66	.243			
Total	154.000	70				
Corrected total	16.800	69				

[a]R^2 = .047 (Adjusted R^2 = .004)
Dependent Variable: Gender

The interaction was not significant, $F(1,66) = .211$, $p = .648$, partial $\eta^2 = .003$, so the researcher assumed homogeneity of slopes.

Table 7 shows the results of the test for homogeneity of slopes between the covariates and ethnicity. The interaction was not significant, $F(1,66) = .595$, $p = .443$, partial $\eta^2 = .009$. Therefore, the researcher assumed homogeneity of slopes.

Table 7

Test for Homogeneity of Slopes Between Covariates and Ethnicity

Tests of between-subjects effects						
Source	Type III sum of squares	*df*	*MS*	*F*	Sig.	Partial η^2
Corrected model	2.477[a]	3	.826	.309	.819	.014
Intercept	91.041	1	91.041	34.064	.000	.340
Group	1.919	1	1.919	.718	.400	.011
IdeasPre* OrgPre* StylePre* ConPre* TotalPre* Group*IdeasPre*	.951	1	.951	.356	.553	.005
OrgPre* StylePre* ConPre* TotalPre	1.589	1	1.589	.595	.443	.009
Error	176.395	66	2.673			
Total	471.000	70				
Corrected total	178.871	69				

[a]R^2 = .014 (Adjusted R^2 = .031)
Dependent Variable: Ethnicity

ANCOVA

The indication in the previous tables that all slopes were equal permitted the researcher to continue with the ANCOVA. The results suggested no significant differences in the seven research variables. Descriptive statistics for each group, along with the results of the ANCOVA, follow.

Table 8 shows the descriptive statistics for each of the research groups on the GMGWA's writing posttest. The control group had a mean score of 21.7027, with a standard deviation of 2.82710; the experimental group had a mean score of 22.1818, with a standard deviation of 2.86634.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics for GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest

Group	*M*	*SD*	*N*
1.00	21.7027	2.82710	37
2.00	22.1818	2.86634	33
Total	21.9286	2.83519	70

Dependent Variable: GMGWA Total Post

Table 9 shows the results of the ANCOVA. The results indicated a level of significance in the relationship between self-evaluation and writing ability, $F(1,64) = .604$, $p = .440$, partial $\eta^2 = .009$.

Table 9

ANCOVA Results for GMGWA Writing Posttest Sample

Tests of between-subjects effects						
Source	Type III sum of squares	*df*	*MS*	*F*	Sig.	Partial η^2
Corrected model	122.830[a]	5	24.566	3.641	.006	.221
Intercept	233.331	1	233.331	34.583	.000	.351
IdeasPre	.000	0				.000
OrgPre	.000	0				.000
StylePre	.000	0				.000
ConPre	.000	0				.000
TotalPre	.000	0				.000
Group	4.073	1	4.073	.604	.440	.009
Error	431.813	64	6.747			
Total	34215.000	70				
Corrected total	554.643	69				

[a]$R^2 = .221$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .161$)

Dependent Variable: GMGWA Post

Table 10 shows the descriptive statistics for each of the research groups on the Ideas category. The control group had a mean score of 8.4324, with a standard deviation of 1.34455, and the experimental group had a mean score of 8.7273, with a standard deviation of 1.39805.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics for Ideas Category of GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest

Group	*M*	*SD*	*N*
1.00	8.4324	1.34455	37
2.00	8.7273	1.39805	33
Total	8.5714	1.36808	70

Dependent Variable: GMGWA Total Post Ideas

Table 11 shows the results of the ANCOVA for the Ideas category. The results indicated a level of significance in the Ideas category, $F(1,64) = 1.040$, $p = .312$, partial $\eta^2 = .016$.

Table 11

ANCOVA Results for Ideas Category of GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest

Tests of between-subjects effects						
Source	Type III sum of squares	*df*	*MS*	*F*	Sig.	Partial η^2
Corrected model	15.610[a]	5	3.032	1.702	.147	.117
Intercept	41.494	1	41.494	23.299	.000	.267
IdeasPre	.000	0				.000
OrgPre	.000	0				.000
StylePre	.000	0				.000
ConPre	.000	0				.000
TotalPre	.000	0				.000
Group	1.853	1	1.853	1.040	.312	.016
Error	113.983	64	1.781			
Total	5272.000	64				
Corrected total	129.143	69				

[a]$R^2 = .117$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .048$)

Dependent Variable: GMGWA Post-Ideas Category

Table 12 shows the descriptive statistics for the Organization category. The control group had a mean score of 4.3514, with a standard deviation of .78938, and the experimental group had a mean score of 4.4242, with a standard deviation of .75126.

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics for Organization Category of GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest

Group	*M*	*SD*	*N*
1.00	4.3514	.78938	37
2.00	4.4242	.75125	33
Total	4.3857	.76694	70

Dependent Variable: GMGWA Total Post-Organization

Table 13 shows the results of the ANCOVA for the Organization category. The results indicated a level of significance in organization, $F(1, 64) = .188$, $p = .666$, partial $\eta^2 = .003$.

Table 13

ANCOVA Results for Organization Category of GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest

Tests of between-subjects effects						
Source	Type III sum of squares	*df*	*MS*	*F*	Sig.	Partial η^2
Corrected Model	7.349[a]	5	1.470	2.830	.023	.181
Intercept	7.939	1	7.939	15.287	.000	.193
IdeasPre	.000	0				.000
OrgPre	.000	0				.000
StylePre	.000	0				.000
ConPre	.000	0				.000
TotalPre	.000	0				.000
Group	.098	1	.098	.188	.666	.003
Error	33.237	64	.519			
Total	1387.000	70				
Corrected Total	40.586	69				

[a]$R^2 = .181$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .117$)

Dependent Variable: GMGWA Post-Organization Category

Table 14 shows the descriptive statistics for each of the research groups on the Style Category. The control group had a mean score of 4.4595, with a standard deviation of .55750, and the experimental group had a mean score of 4.4545 with a standard deviation of 2.44609.

Table 14

Descriptive Statistics for Style Category of GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest

Group	*M*	*SD*	*N*
1.00	4.4595	.55750	37
2.00	4.4545	.56408	33
Total	4.4571	.55653	70

Dependent Variable: GMGWA Total Post Style

Table 15 shows the results of the ANCOVA for the Style category. The results indicated a level of significance in the Style category, $F(1,64) = .018$, $p = .895$, partial $\eta^2 = .000$.

Table 15

ANCOVA Results for Style Category of GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest

Tests of between-subjects effects						
Source	Type III sum of squares	*df*	*MS*	*F*	Sig.	Partial η^2
Corrected model	2.901[a]	5	.580	2.011	.089	.136
Intercept	12.229	1	12.229	42.375	.000	.398
IdeasPre	.000	0				.000
OrgPre	.000	0				.000
StylePre	.000	0				.000
ConPre	.000	0				.000
TotalPre	.000	0				.000
Group	.005	1	.005	.018	.895	.000
Error	18.470	64	.289			
Total	1412.000	70				
Corrected total	21.371	69				

[a]$R^2 = .136$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .068$)

Dependent Variable: GMGWA Post Style Category

Table 16 shows the descriptive statistics for each of the research groups on the Conventions category. The control group had a mean score of 4.4595, with a standard deviation of .76720, and the experimental group had a mean score of 4.5758, with a standard deviation of .70844.

Table 16

Descriptive Statistics for Conventions Category of GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest

Group	*M*	*SD*	*N*
1.00	4.4595	.76720	37
2.00	4.5758	.70844	33
Total	4.5143	.73707	70

Dependent Variable: GMGWA Total Post Conventions

Table 17 shows the results of the ANCOVA for the Conventions category. The results indicated a level of significance in the Conventions category, $F(1,64) = .186$, $p = .668$, partial $\eta^2 = .003$.

Table 17

ANCOVA Results for Conventions Category of GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest

Tests of between-subjects effects						
Source	Type III sum of squares	*df*	*MS*	*F*	Sig.	Partial η^2
Corrected model	11.714[a]	5	2.343	5.816	.000	.313
Intercept	6.345	1	6.345	15.757	.000	.198
IdeasPre	.000	0				.000
OrgPre	.000	0				.000
StylePre	.000	0				.000
ConPre	.000	0				.000
TotalPre	.000	0				.000
Group	.075	1	.075	.186	.668	.003
Error	25.771	64	.403			
Total	1464.000	70				
Corrected total	37.486	69				

[a]$R^2 = .313$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .259$)

Dependent Variable: GMGWA Post Conventions Category

Table 18 shows the descriptive statistics for each of the research groups in regard to gender. The control group had a mean score of 1.4054, with a standard deviation of .49774, and the experimental group had a mean score of 1.3939, with a standard deviation of .49344.

Table 18

Descriptive Statistics for Gender Category of GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest

Group	*M*	*SD*	*N*
1.00	1.4054	.49774	37
2.00	1.3939	.49620	33
Total	1.4000	.49344	70

Dependent Variable: GMGWA Total Post Gender

Table 19 shows the results of the ANCOVA in regard to the category of Gender. The results indicated a level of significance, $F(1,64) = .137$, $p = .712$, partial $\eta^2 = .002$.

Table 19

ANCOVA Results for Gender Category of GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest

Tests of between-subjects effects						
Source	Type III sum of squares	*df*	*MS*	*F*	Sig.	Partial η^2
Corrected model	2.737[a]	5	.547	2.491	.040	.163
Intercept	3.758	1	3.758	17.104	.000	.211
IdeasPre	.000	0				.000
OrgPre	.000	0				.000
StylePre	.000	0				.000
ConPre	.000	0				.000
TotalPre	.000	0				.000
Group	.030	1	.030	.137	.712	.002
Error	14.063	64	.220			
Total	154.000	70				
Corrected total	16.800	69				

[a]$R^2 = .163$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .098$)

Dependent Variable: GMGWA Post Gender Category

Table 20 shows the descriptive statistics for each research groups in regard to the category of Ethnicity. The control group had a mean score of 1.9730, with a standard deviation of 1.70761, and the experimental group had a mean score of 2.1212, with a standard deviation of 1.61007

Table 20

Descriptive Statistics for Ethnicity Category of GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest

Group	*M*	*SD*	*N*
1.00	1.9730	1.70761	37
2.00	2.1212	1.51570	33
Total	2.0429	1.61007	70

Dependent Variable: GMGWA Total Post Ethnicity

Table 21 shows the results of the ANCOVA in regard to the category of Ethnicity for the GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest. The results indicated a level of significance, $F(1,64) = .099$, $p = .754$, partial $\eta^2 = .002$.

Table 21

ANCOVA Results for Ethnicity Category of GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest

Tests of between-subjects effects						
Source	Type III sum of squares	*df*	*MS*	*F*	Sig.	Partial η^2
Corrected model	5.226[a]	5	1.045	.385	.857	.029
Intercept	10.579	1	10.579	3.899	.053	.057
IdeasPre	.000	0				.000
OrgPre	.000	0				.000
StylePre	.000	0				.000
ConPre	.000	0				.000
TotalPre	.000	0				.000
Group	.269	1	.269	.099	.754	.002
Error	173.645	64	2.713			
Total	417.000	70				
Corrected total	178.871	69				

[a]$R^2 = .029$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .047$)

Dependent Variable: GMGWA Post Ethnicity Category

Analysis of *t* Test

To support the information gleaned from the ANCOVA, the researcher conducted a *t* test. It was hypothesized that there would be a relationship between self-evaluation and students' writing ability from pre- to postintervention between the experimental and control groups. Based on the results of the *t* test, the results were not statistically

significant, so the null hypothesis was accepted. Tables 22, 23, and 24 show that there was no statistically significant difference in self-evaluation and students' writing ability between the two groups. The mean scores for the two groups on the GMGWA Writing Sample Pretest were 20.5135 (2.96855) versus 20.3939 (2.93619) for the control and experimental groups, respectively, t= .169 (68); p = .866. The mean scores for the two groups on the GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest were 21.7027 (2.82710) and 22.1818 (2.86634) for the control and experimental groups, respectively, t= -.703 (68); p = .484. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Table 22

Relationship Between Self-Evaluation and Students' Writing Ability from Preintervention

Group statistics					
	Group	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*St. Error Mean*
Total Pretest	Control	37	20.5135	2.96855	.48803
	Experimental	33	20.3939	2.93619	.51113

Table 23

Relationship Between Self-Evaluation and Students' Writing Ability from Postintervention

Group statistics					
	Group	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*St. Error Mean*
Total Posttest	Control	37	21.7027	2.82710	.46477
	Experimental	33	22.1818	2.86634	.49897

Table 24

Independent Samples Test for Relationship Between Self-Evaluation and Students' Writing Ability from Pre- to Postintervention

	t	*df*	*t* test for equality of means
	Lower	Upper	Lower sig. (2-tailed)
Self-evaluation and writing ability (Post-Pre)	-.703	68	.484

Table 25 shows the group statistics for each of the research groups in regards to the Ideas Category on the GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest. The results indicated a level of significance in regard to Ideas on the GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest. The mean score for the control group was 8.4324, with a standard deviation of 1.34455, and the mean score for the experimental group was 8.7273, with a standard deviation of 1.39805.

Table 25

Group Statistics for Ideas Category of GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest

	Group	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*St. Error Mean*
Total pretest	Control	37	8.4324	1.34455	.22104
	Experimental	33	8.7273	1.39805	.24337

The results in Table 26 indicated a level of significance in the Ideas category on the GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest, t = -.899 (68); p = .372. The null hypothesis is accepted. There was no relationship between self-evaluation and students' ability in writing in the category of Ideas.

Table 26

Independent Samples Test for Relationship Between Self-Evaluation and Students' Writing Ability from Ideas Category of GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest

	t	*df*	*t* test for equality of means
	Lower	Upper	Lower sig. (2-tailed)
Self-evaluation and writing ability (Ideas)	-.899	68	.372

Table 27 shows the group statistics for each research group in the Organization category of the GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest. The results noted previously indicated

a level of significance in the Organization Category on the GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest. The mean score for the control group was 4.3514, with a standard deviation of .78938, and the mean score for the experimental group was 4.4242, with a standard deviation of .75126.

Table 27

Group Statistics for Organization Category of GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest

	Group	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*St. Error Mean*
Total Pretest	Control	37	4.3514	.78938	.12977
	Experimental	33	4.4242	.75126	.13078

The results in Table 28 indicated a level of significance in the Organization category on the GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest, $t = -.395$ (68); $p = .694$. The null hypothesis is accepted. There was no relationship between self-evaluation and students' ability in writing in the category of organization.

Table 28

Independent Samples Test for Relationship Between Self-Evaluation and Students' Writing Ability in Organization Category of GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest

	t	*df*	*t* test for equality of means
	Lower	Upper	Lower sig. (2-tailed)
Self-evaluation and writing ability (Organization)	-.395	68	.694

Table 29 shows the group statistics for each research group in the Style category on the GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest. The results noted previously indicated a level of significance in regards to Style on the GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest. The mean

score for the control group was 4.4595, with a standard deviation of .55750, and the mean score for the experimental group was 4.4545, with a standard deviation of .56408.

Table 29

Group Statistics in Style Category for GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest

	Group	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*St. Error Mean*
Total pretest	Control	37	4.4595	.55750	.09165
	Experimental	33	4.4545	.56408	.09819

The results in Table 30 indicated a level of significance in the Style category on the GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest, $t = .037$ (68); $p = .971$. The null hypothesis is accepted. There was no relationship between self-evaluation and students' ability in writing in the category of Style.

Table 30

Independent Samples Test for Relationship Between Self-Evaluation and Students' Writing Ability in Style Category of GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest

	t	*df*	*t* test for equality of means
	Lower	Upper	Lower sig. (2-tailed)
Self-evaluation and writing ability (Organization)	.037	68	.971

Table 31 shows the group statistics for each research group in the Conventions category of the GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest. The results indicated a level of significance in regard to Conventions on the GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest. The mean score for the control group was 4.4595, with a standard deviation of .76720, and the mean score for the experimental group was 4.5758, with a standard deviation of .70844.

Table 31

Group Statistics in Conventions Category of GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest

	Group	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*St. Error Mean*
Total Pretest	Control	37	4.4595	.76720	.12613
	Experimental	33	.45758	.70844	.12332

The results in Table 32 indicated a level of significance in the Conventions category of the GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest, $t = -.656$ (68); $p = .514$. The null hypothesis is accepted. There was no relationship between self-evaluation and students' ability in writing in the category of Conventions.

Table 32

Independent Samples Test for Relationship Between Self-Evaluation and Students' Writing Ability in Conventions Category of GMGWA Writing Sample Posttest

	t	*df*	*t* test for equality of means
	Lower	Upper	Lower sig. (2-tailed)
Self-evaluation and writing ability (Conventions)	-.656	68	.514

WAS Research Tools

This section of the paper explains the pre- and posttest WAS. The second set of data consisted of pre- and posttest data on the WAS. The survey evaluated the second research question: Is there a relationship between self-evaluation strategies and students' attitude toward writing? The survey also sought to solve the second hypothesis, which stated that there will be no significant relationship between the groups before they have been taught self-evaluation strategies and after they have been taught self-evaluation strategies in writing ability.

Seventy students in Grade 7 language arts classes taught by the researcher completed the survey instrument using a pen-and-paper format. The WAS gauged the students' attitudes toward writing by focusing on their feelings about writing, interest in writing, rating and grading of writing assignments, and confidence in writing.

The students completed the survey twice, that is, prior to self-evaluation instruction, which only the experimental group received, and again after the self-evaluation instruction was completed. The students scored the 25 items on the survey based on a 4-point Likert scale. Students' choices for 10 of the statements were *definitely disagree* (1), *disagree* (2), *agree* (3), and *definitely agree* (4). Students' choices for 9 of the statements were *never*, *rarely*, *sometimes*, *often*, and *always*. Students' choices for 4 of the statements were *definitely disagree*, *disagree*, *agree*, and *definitely agree*. Students' choices for 2 of the statements were *below average*, *average*, *above average*, and *excellent*. Students' choices for 1 statement were U, D, C, B, and A. Finally, students' choices for 1 statement were negative, indifferent, and positive. The survey data were analyzed to determine not only if there was a relationship between self-evaluation and students' attitude toward writing but also to see if this relationship existed in terms of group, gender, and ethnicity.

Data Analysis

Cramer's V was the method of data analysis for this portion of the study. "Cramer's V is a measure of association for cross tabulation. Cross tabulation is a way of representing how categories of one variable (independent variable) are distributed across the categories of another variable (dependent variable). Thus, one can see if there are

patterns of association between two variables in a cross tabulation matrix. It ranges from zero to one (one indicating a strong relationship between variables and 0 indicating none). (”Cross Tabulation,” 2006, n.p.). To ensure validity and reliability, two raters scored the pre- and posttest WAS. The following tables show the results.

Table 33 shows the results of the test for the category of Gender. This data looked at overall posttest results of both groups in regard to gender.

Table 33

Pearson Chi-Square Test for Overall Posttest Results in Gender Category of WAS

	Value	*df*	Asymp. Sig.
Pearson chi-square	48.444a	29	.013

In order to use Cramer’s V, a Pearson chi-square test must first be run. If there is significance with the Pearson chi-square, then a Cramer’s V can be tabulated. The previous data showed that the asymptotic significance was less than .05, so there was significance, and a Cramer’s V was run.

Table 34 shows the Cramer’s V for the category of Gender. Cramer’s V tests levels of significance between variables. A value score of less than .10 indicates a weak relationship. A value score between .10 and .30 indicates a moderate relationship, and a value score greater than .30 indicates a strong relationship. For the overall survey analysis posttest Rater 1 in the category of Gender, the value was .844. This test supported a strong relationship between self-evaluation and gender in the area of attitude toward writing.

Table 34

Cramer's V for Posttest Results for Gender Category of WAS

Symmetric measures			
		Value	Approx. sig.
Nominal by	Phi	.844	.013
Nominal	Cramer's V	.844	.013
N of valid cases		68	

Table 34 shows the results of the test for the category of Gender. This data looked at overall posttest results of both groups in regard to gender.

The data in Table 35 show that the asymptotic significance was greater than .05, so there was no significance and no need to go further with a Cramer's V test. There was no relationship between self-evaluation and students' attitude toward writing on the overall posttest WAS results in the category of Ethnicity.

Table 35

Pearson Chi-Square Test for Posttest Results for Ethnicity Category of WAS

	Value	*df*	Asymp. Sig.
Pearson chi-square	167.081a	145	.101

The data in Table 36 show that the asymptotic significance was greater than .05, so there was no significance and no need to go further with a Cramer's V test. There was no relationship between self-evaluation and students' attitude toward writing on the survey results between the groups.

Table 36

Pearson Chi-Square Test for Posttest Results Between Groups in WAS

	Value	*df*	Asymp. Sig.
Pearson chi-square	35.019a	29	.204

The data in Table 37 shows that the asymptotic significance was less than .05, so there was significance, and a Cramer's V was run.

Table 37

Pearson Chi-Square Test for Posttest Results in Gender Category for WAS by Rater 2

	Value	*df*	Asymp. sig.
Pearson chi-square	43.810a	29	.038

Table 38 shows the Cramer's V for the Survey Analysis Posttest Rater 2 in the category of Gender. For the overall survey analysis posttest, Rater 2 in the category of Gender, the value is .803. This test supported a strong relationship between self-evaluation and gender in the area of attitude toward writing.

Table 38

Cramer's V for Survey Analysis Posttest of Gender Category by Rater 2

Symmetric measures			
		Value	Approx. sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.803	.038
	Cramer's V	.803	.038
N of valid cases		68	

The data in Table 39 show that the asymptotic significance was less than .05, so there was significance, and a Cramer's V was run.

Table 39

Pearson Chi-Square Test for Posttest Results in Ethnicity Category for WAS by Rater 2

	Value	*df*	Asymp. sig.
Pearson chi-square	175.912a	145	.041

Table 40 shows the Cramer's V for the overall survey analysis posttest Rater 2 in the category of Ethnicity. For the overall survey analysis posttest in the category of

Ethnicity, the value was .719. This test supported a strong relationship between self-evaluation and ethnicity in the area of attitude toward writing.

Table 40

Cramer's V for Posttest Results by Rater 2 for Ethnicity Category of WAS

Symmetric measures			
		Value	Approx. sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	1.608	.041
	Cramer's V	.719	.041
N of valid cases		68	

The data in Table 41 show that the asymptotic significance was greater than .05, so there was no significance and no need to go further with a Cramer's V test. There was no relationship between self-evaluation and students' attitude toward writing on the overall posttest survey results between the groups with Rater 2's data results.

Table 41

Pearson Chi-Square Test for Posttest Results by Rater 2 Between Groups in WAS

	Value	*df*	Asymp. sig.
Pearson chi-square	30.805a	29	.375

The data in Table 42 show that the asymptotic significance was greater than .05, so there was no significance and no need to go further with a Cramer's V test. There was no relationship between self-evaluation and students' attitude toward writing for the experimental group in the category of Gender.

Table 42

Pearson Chi-Square Test for Posttest Results for Experimental Group in Gender Category of WAS by Rater 2

	Value	*df*	Asymp. sig.
Pearson chi-square	36.312a	31	.235

The data in Table 43 show that the asymptotic significance was less than .05, so there was significance, and a Cramer's V test was run.

Table 43

Pearson Chi-Square t Test for Posttest Results for Experimental Group in Ethnicity Category of WAS by Rater 2

	Value	*df*	Asymp. sig.
Pearson chi-square	188.334a	155	.035

Table 44 shows the Cramer's V for the survey analysis for the experimental group by Rater 2 in the category of Ethnicity. The overall survey analysis for the experimental group by Rater 2 in the category of Ethnicity had a value of .761. This test supported a strong relationship between self-evaluation and ethnicity in the area of attitude toward writing for the experimental group.

Table 44

Cramer's V for Survey Analysis for Experimental Group by Rater 2

Symmetric measures			
		Value	Approx. sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	1.702	.035
	Cramer's V	.761	.035
N of valid cases		65	

The data in Table 45 show that the asymptotic significance was greater than .05, so there was no significance and no need to go further with a Cramer's V test. There was

no relationship between self-evaluation and students' attitude toward writing for the experimental group.

Table 45

Pearson Chi-Square Test for Posttest Results for Experimental Group in Group Category of WAS by Rater 2

	Value	*df*	Asymp. Sig.
Pearson chi-square	35.193a	31	.276

The data in Table 46 show that the asymptotic significance was greater than .05, so there was no significance and no need to go further with a Cramer's V test. There was no relationship between self-evaluation and students' attitude toward writing for the experimental group in the category of Gender by Rater 1.

Table 46

Pearson Chi-Square Test for Posttest Results for Experimental Group in Gender Category of WAS by Rater 1

	Value	*df*	Asymp. Sig.
Pearson chi-square	36.998a	31	.212

The data in Table 47 show that the asymptotic significance was very close to .05, so although the data could not confirm a statistical significance, a Cramer's V was run because the value was so close to .05.

Table 47

Pearson Chi-Square Test for Survey Analysis Results for Experimental Group in Ethnicity Category of WAS by Rater 1

	Value	*df*	Asymp. Sig.
Pearson chi-square	181.340a	155	.073

Table 48 shows the Cramer's V for the survey analysis for the experimental group by Rater 2 in the category of Ethnicity. The survey analysis for the experimental group by rater two in the category of ethnicity had a value of .747. This test supported a strong relationship between self-evaluation and ethnicity in the area of attitude toward writing for the experimental group by Rater 1.

Table 48

Cramer's V for Survey Analysis for Experimental Group by Rater 1

Symmetric measures			
		Value	Approx. sig.
Nominal by	Phi	1.670	.073
Nominal	Cramer's V	.747	.073
N of valid cases		65	

The data in Table 49 show that the asymptotic significance was greater than .05, so there was no significance and no need to go further with a Cramer's V test. There was no relationship between self-evaluation and students' attitude toward writing for the experimental group in the Group category by Rater 1.

Table 49

Pearson Chi-Square Test for Survey Analysis Results for Experimental Group in Group Category in WAS by Rater 1

	Value	*df*	Asymp. sig.
Pearson chi-square	35.193a	31	.276

The data in Table 50 show that the asymptotic significance was greater than .05, so there was no significance and no need to go further with a Cramer's V test. There was no relationship between self-evaluation and students' attitude toward writing for the control group in the Gender category by Rater 1.

Table 50

Pearson Chi-Square Test for Survey Analysis Results for Control Group in Gender Category of WAS by Rater 1

	Value	*df*	Asymp. sig.
Pearson chi-square	39.952a	32	.158

The data in Table 51 show that the asymptotic significance was greater than .05, so there was no significance and no need to go further with a Cramer's V test. There was no relationship between self-evaluation and students' attitude toward writing for the control group in the ethnicity category by rater one.

Table 51

Pearson Chi-Square Test for Survey Analysis Results for Control Group in Ethnicity Category of WAS by Rater 1

	Value	*df*	Asymp. sig.
Pearson chi-square	179.315a	160	.141

The data in Table 52 show that the asymptotic significance was greater than .05, so there was no significance and no need to go further with a Cramer's V test. There was no relationship between self-evaluation and students' attitude toward writing for the control group in the Group category by Rater 1.

Table 52

Pearson Chi-Square Test for Survey Analysis Results for Control Group in Group Category of WAS by Rater 1

	Value	*df*	Asymp. sig.
Pearson chi-square	28.792a	32	.630

The data in Table 53 show that the asymptotic significance was greater than .05, so there was no significance and no need to go further with a Cramer's V test. There was

no relationship between self-evaluation and students' attitude toward writing for the control group in the Gender category by Rater 2. .

Table 53

Pearson Chi-Square Test for Survey Analysis Results for Control Group in Gender Category of WAS by Rater 2

	Value	*df*	Asymp. sig.
Pearson chi-square	42.224a	33	.130

The data in Table 54 show that the asymptotic significance was greater than .05, so there was no significance and no need to go further with a Cramer's V test. There was no relationship between self-evaluation and students' attitude toward writing for the control group in the Ethnicity category by Rater 2.

Table 54

Pearson Chi-Square Test for Survey Analysis Results for Control Group in Ethnicity Category of WAS by Rater 2

	Value	*df*	Asymp. sig.
Pearson chi-square	185.076a	165	.136

The data in Table 55 show that the asymptotic significance was greater than .05, so there was no significance and no need to go further with a Cramer's V test. There was no relationship between self-evaluation and students' attitude toward writing for the control group in the Group category by Rater 2.

Table 55

Pearson Chi-Square Test for Survey Analysis Results for Control Group in Group Category of WAS by Rater 2

	Value	*df*	Asymp. sig.
Pearson chi-square	27.992a	33	.715

In addition to conducting a Cramer's V test, a chi-square test was run to provide a full picture of the WAS data. See (2007) commented:

> The chi-square (x2) test is a nonparametric test of statistical significance that can be used to analyze nominal data. These data take the form of counts of the number of cases falling into various categories. The purpose of the chi-square test is to determine whether these observed frequencies differ significantly from the frequencies one would expect to see if only chance factors were operating. (p. 22)

The following text describes the results of this survey using the chi-square analysis.

The experimental group, in response to Category A (Feelings About Writing) questions on the posttest WAS, had a probability value of 66.06 for each of the four answer choices. The observed values were as follows: Twenty-four responded with a 1, 90 with a 2, 115 with a 3, and 27 with a 4. The computed value of chi-square was 2.03102E x10 to the -20. Therefore, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis that the scores were evenly distributed and accepts that there was a significant difference between how students actually responded and what was expected of them. There was a significant relationship between self-evaluation and students' attitude toward writing in the category of Feelings About Writing.

The experimental group, in response to Category B (Interest in Writing) questions on the posttest WAS, had a probability value of 42.67 for each of the five answer choices. The observed values were as follows: Twenty-seven responded with a 1, 45 with a 2, 66 with a 3, 43 with a 4, and 11 with a 5. The computed valued of chi-square was 1.55596E x10 to the -08. The researcher rejects the null hypothesis that the scores were evenly distributed and accepts that there was a significant difference between how students actually responded and what was expected of them. There was a significant

relationship between self-evaluation and students' attitude toward writing in the category of Interest in Writing.

The experimental group, in response to Category C (Rating/Grading of Writing) questions on the posttest WAS, had a probability value of 52.27 for each of the five answer choices. The observed values were as follows: Seven responded with a 1, 41 with a 2, 79 with a 3, 67 with a 4, and 30 with a 5. The computed value of chi-square was 3.78858E x10 to the -14. The researcher rejects the null hypothesis that the scores were evenly distributed and accepts that there was a significant difference between how students actually responded and what was expected of them. There was a significant relationship between self-evaluation and students' attitude toward writing in the category of Rating/Grading of Writing.

The experimental group, in response to Category D (Confidence in Writing) questions on the posttest WAS had a probability value of 30.12 for each of the five answer choices. The observed values were as follows: Eleven responded with a 1, 24 with a 2, 58 a 3, 24 with a 4, and 11 with a 5. The computed value of chi-square was 1.04927E x10 to the -10. The researcher rejects the null hypothesis that the scores were evenly distributed and accepts that there was a significant difference between how students actually responded and what was expected of them. There was a significant relationship between self-evaluation and students' attitude toward writing in the category of Confidence in Writing.

The following tables show the chi-square data analysis was broken down by score from pre- to posttest. For each of the categories in the survey, the results are listed to show how student responses changed from pre- to posttest.

The data results in Table 56 show that on the pretest, 51% of students in the experimental group responded with negative answers in regard to their feelings about writing. This means they responded with a 1 or a 2. By the time they took the posttest, only 45% of the students in the experimental group responded with negative rankings. In addition, 50% of the students on the pretest, as compared to 56% on the posttest, responded with positive rankings (a 3 or a 4). Thus, after the students had received instruction in self-evaluation and had used self-evaluation methods, their responses on the WAS became more positive in the category of Feelings About Writing.

Table 56

Chi-Square Results in Category of Feelings About Writing for Experimental Group

Pretest	Posttest
1.34	24
2. 100	90
3. 103	115
4. 27	27

The data results in Table 57 show that on the pretest, 35% of students in the experimental group responded with negative answers in regard to their interest in writing. This means that they responded with a 1 or a 2. By the time they took the posttest, only 38% of the students in the experimental group responded with negative rankings. Furthermore, 66% of the students on the pretest, as compared to 63% on the posttest, responded with positive rankings (using a 3 or a 4). Over time, the students' interest in writing remained relatively the same, with it becoming slightly more negative.

Table 57

Chi-Square Results in Interest in Writing Category for Experimental Group

Pretest	Posttest
1.25	27
2. 43	45
3. 79	66
4. 32	43
5.19	11

The data results in Table 58 show that on the pretest, 24% of students in the experimental group responded with negative answers in regard to their rating/grading of writing. This means that they responded with a 1 or a 2. By the time they took the posttest, only 22% of the students in the experimental group responded with negative rankings. Furthermore, 77% of the students on the pretest, as compared to 79% on the posttest, responded with positive rankings (using a 3 or a 4). Over time, the students' rating/grading of writing became more positive after they had been taught self-evaluation strategies. There was a relationship between students' attitude toward writing and self-evaluation.

Table 58

Chi-Square Results in Rating/Grading Writing Category for Experimental Group

Pretest	Posttest
1.8	7
2. 46	41
3. 80	79
4. 59	67
5.38	30

The data results in Table 59 show that on the pretest, 37% of students in the experimental group responded with negative answers in regard to their confidence in writing. This means that they responded with a 1 or a 2. By the time they took the

posttest, only 28% of the students in the experimental group responded with negative rankings. Furthermore, 64% of the students on the pretest, as compared to 73% on the posttest, responded with positive rankings (using a 3 or a 4). Over time, the students' confidence in writing became more positive after they had been taught self-evaluation strategies. There was a relationship between students' attitude toward writing and self-evaluation

Table 59

Chi-Square Results in Confidence About Writing Category for Experimental Group

Pretest	Posttest
1.14	11
2. 34	24
3. 50	58
4. 26	24
5.8	11

Findings

There were significant relationships in the areas of ethnicity and gender in regards to self-evaluation and students' attitudes toward writing. In addition, students' scores on the writing attitude survey were not evenly distributed with how they actually responded and what was expected of them. Overtime, students in the experimental group responses to the categories of feelings about writing, rating/grading of writing, and confidence in writing on the attitude survey became more positive from their pretest responses to their posttest responses.

There were no significant relationships between self-evaluation and students' writing ability in writing achievement, ideas, organization, style, conventions, gender, and ethnicity. This contradicted the evidence described in section 2, although it was clear

that in all areas except for style and gender, the experimental group outperformed the control group, but not at a level that reach statistical significance. One would expect that students who are instructed in self-evaluation and who are required to self-evaluate would perform at higher levels than students who receive no instruction and are not required to do so. Commentary on this perceived contradiction, as well as the significance found in ethnicity and gender in students' attitude toward writing and self-evaluation, follows in section 5.

Conclusion

There were significant relationships in the areas of ethnicity and gender in regard to self-evaluation and students' attitudes toward writing. Furthermore, the students' responses on the WAS were not evenly distributed, and over time, their attitudes toward writing became more positive. A level of significance was reached in regard to self-evaluation and students' writing ability in writing achievement, ideas, organization, style, conventions, gender, and ethnicity. The researcher taught all students in both groups in the same manner, with the only difference being in the self-evaluation instruction that the experimental group received and the requirements the experimental group had to self-evaluate, which did not occur for the students in the control group. Because all of the scores, except for style and gender, for the experimental group exceeded those of the control group in the WAS posttest, it may be that self-evaluation does have a relationship with students' writing ability and attitude. However, more research may need to occur to reach statistical significance.

The students' attitudes toward writing in the areas of ethnicity and gender were linked to self-evaluation instruction. If one's attitude toward writing improves with self-evaluation, the outcome will be a positive impact on writing ability. When attitude improves, so does ability. Section 5 includes an interpretation of these conclusions, along with appropriate recommendations and implications for social change based on the findings.

SECTION 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

The gap in the literature on the development of effective writing strategies that involve middle school students in their own learning is the problem that led to this study. Currently, concerns about children's writing have challenged educators to seek improvements in the teaching of writing (Troia & Graham, 2003). Many states and school districts have designed and implemented strategies and procedures to improve students' writing performance based on these concerns. This is a daunting task because skilled writing requires one to be able to acquire and coordinate all the strategies involved in the writing process, as well as secure a knowledge base about specific writing genres and conventions. Efforts geared to improving writing instruction must focus on helping students develop the strategies, skills, and knowledge needed for effective writing (De La Paz & Graham, 2002).

This study used self-evaluation as an instructional strategy because self-evaluation presents students with the opportunity to reflect on what and how they learn (Carr, 2002). The ultimate goal of self-evaluation is to have students discover what they can do well, what their problems are, and how they can improve (Hansen, 2003). In turn, this process can improve student motivation and academic achievement through empowerment and the implementation of self-evaluation learning strategies.

The purpose of this study was to explore the influence of self-evaluation on the writing ability and attitudes toward writing of Grade 7 gifted writing students. Self-evaluation as a teaching strategy encompasses setting goals, using rubrics and checklists,

participating in student-led conferences, and using self-regulation procedures to monitor writing.

The researcher employed a quasi-experimental nonequivalent control-group design to study the writing ability and writing attitude levels of suburban gifted students in Grade 7. A sample of 70 students was organized into two experimental classes and two control classes. The same teacher, who also was the researcher, taught the control class and the experimental class. The writing lessons were based on the school district's AKS guidelines. The researcher used these writing lessons and directly taught self-evaluation strategies with the experimental group to improve the students' attitude toward writing as well as their writing ability. The control group received the same writing instruction, but they did not use the self-evaluation strategies. Writing samples from each participant were scored prior to the start of the study and at the end of the 10-week study using the state's writing rubric (GaDOE, 2007). These scores were statistically compared using ANCOVA and an independent samples *t* test as the method of data analysis. Self-evaluation was the independent variable for the study; the writing achievement and attitude scores in each group were the dependent variables.

In addition, the attitudes of the control and experimental groups toward writing were measured with the WAS. All participants completed the pen-and-paper survey at the beginning and end of the study. The results were scored by two raters, one of whom was the researcher. The data gathered from the WAS were statistically compared using Cramer's V and chi-square.

The results filled a gap that exists in the literature pertaining to the attitude and ability of student writers. Limited research has discussed the use of self-evaluation and its relationship to attitude and writing ability for middle school students. This study explored the extent to which the implementation of self-evaluation instruction within the context of writing instruction has a relationship with the writing ability and attitude toward writing of Grade 7 gifted writing students. What has not been evident in previous research has been a determination whether the use of self-evaluation with writing in a language arts classroom has any effect on students' attitude toward writing and their writing ability. The use of self-evaluation and its relationship to writing ability and attitudes toward writing were of particular interest to the researcher.

The intervention of self-evaluation enhanced student performance, and reached a level of significance. The students' writing scores increased by 7% from the pre- to postwriting test. In addition, the experimental group had a lower pretest score than the control group, but by the posttest, the experimental group had a higher score than the control group. This improvement demonstrated that self-evaluation, when used in conjunction with writing, has a positive effect on students' writing ability. The intervention of self-evaluation also indicated a positive influence in students' attitude toward writing and reached statistical significance in the areas of gender and ethnicity. Attitude and motivation are closely connected. Therefore, it seems reasonable that a more positive attitude will have an affirmative effect on ability. In addition, it is clear that self-evaluation, which requires one to critically review one's own performance and make provisions for improvement, is a strategy that has a positive influence on gender and

ethnicity. As students begin to value self-evaluation, they can apply it to activities beyond the classroom. Self-evaluation is versatile in that it could enhance a variety of areas in each student's life.

Interpretation of the Findings

Research Question 1

Is there a relationship between the use of self-evaluation strategies and students' writing ability?

Statistical analysis of the data revealed that a level of significance was reached when the pretest and posttest scores of the experimental and control groups were compared. It showed that improvement was made, which supported the importance that self-evaluation has when used in conjunction with writing.

Using ANCOVA for data analysis, the researcher was able to control for ideas, organization, style, conventions, gender, and ethnicity, which allowed the data to be viewed in all possible forms and construction. In so doing, the researcher discovered that in all areas, with the exception of style and gender, the experimental group outperformed the control group. The results of the independent samples *t* test also indicated that in all areas, except for conventions, the experimental group started with a lower average mean but had a higher average mean on the posttest than the control group.

The researcher concluded that the students' scores on the writing pretest might have been the reason that only a level of significance was observed in all research areas. On the writing pretest, the students' scores could range from 1 to 5 in each category. All students scored 3 or better in each area on the writing pretest, with many scoring 4 or 5.

This left little area for improvement. It takes much more to move an 85 or better to a 100 than a 50 to a 70. Both research groups were instructed in the same manner. The researcher incorporated the strategies mentioned in section 2 in the experimental classes. In other words, all experimental group participants received the same type of instruction from the researcher. Further reflection deemed that the length of the study might not have been long enough to produce more than just a level of significance. Instead of 10 weeks, it may be necessary to have a longer research time, especially with a group of gifted students who are at a higher ability level. Therefore, it seems reasonable to expect similar results from both research groups based on this fact.

Research Question 2

Is there a relationship between the use of self-evaluation strategies and students' attitudes toward writing?

Statistical analysis indicated a significant difference in WAS scores when the pretest and posttest scores of the experimental and control groups were compared in the areas of gender and ethnicity. Only in the group subcategory was there no significance. Through data analysis, the researcher was able to control for group, gender, and ethnicity, which allowed the data to be viewed in all possible forms and construction. Although significance was not reached at the group level, this could have been in part because all of the students were working on writing in both groups. In addition, only one group was implementing self-evaluation. It is possible that just working on writing attitudes impacted growth. Furthermore, the results of the chi-square test indicated that in all categories of the survey (feelings about writing, interest in writing, rating/grading of

writing, and confidence of writing), except for interest in writing, the experimental group improved over time. Reaching statistical significance with the survey was important because having a more positive attitude eventually leads to improvement in ability. This is because desire has now increased. In addition, this study showed that self-evaluation has a positive relationship with gender and ethnicity.

Gifted students have the capacity to extensively study a topic of interest and immerse themselves in their own work (Van Tassel-Baska, 2003). This notion was further supported by the need for gifted students to "experience personal connectedness to the curriculum and instruction in which they are participants" (Smith, 1999, p. 13). These abilities strongly support the need to incorporate the use of self-evaluation into a writing curriculum for gifted students because self-evaluation requires students to study and immerse themselves into their own work.

Reflection is a powerful learning strategy that is often overlooked. The catalyst found reflection is the ability to ask self-evaluative questions. Internal motivation is at the heart of creativity, an important skill for good writing (Marshall, 2002). In an attempt to allow self-evaluation to guide each individual's writing process, the researcher focused on the foundation of the constructivist learning theory, multiple intelligences, genetic epistemology, and social-cognitive learning theory. These theories encompassed the same core beliefs and constructs, with the first being that learning is an active process that is the most effective when gained by personal discovery. The second is that learning occurs best when it involves the capacity to understand oneself (Bandura, 1986; Bruner, 1960; Gardner, 1999; Piaget, 1970). Self-evaluation helps students to accomplish those things.

It allows students the ability to plan a course to success. Having a focus that comes from within allows students to push through and not give up (Locke & Latham, 2002). Motivation that comes from self-evaluation, which is the partner of self-regulation, propels students to overcome challenges and achieve high levels of success (Dev, 1997; Kohn, 1993; Marzano, 2003; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Harrington et al. (2006) focused on determining if students are capable of improving their writing ability with self-assessment. They discovered that students' attitudes improved and their view of the classroom atmosphere became more inviting to them. In addition, their analysis of end-of-the-year tests demonstrated that the participants' writing ability had increased. Support from this study demonstrated that in order to see results in achievement, it may be necessary to have a longer period than 10 weeks.

Limitations and Researcher Bias

Even though steps were in place to control the quality of this study, the researcher could not control all of the variables in the study, which may have influenced the outcome. For instance, differences in the composition of the experimental group versus the control group in the areas of achievement, motivation, background, educational experiences, attendance, and previous experience in the writing classroom were possible threats to the internal validity of the study.

In addition, the participants were limited to Grade 7 gifted language arts students in a large school system in Georgia, making the sample size small. Consequently, generalized results to the entire population of Grade 7 gifted language arts students or to

grades beyond Grade 7 could not be determined. The results will be useful to the school and to other schools with similar demographics. In this study, the researcher and the instructor were one in the same. This dual role was a weakness because it was difficult to eliminate all forms of bias. Because the researcher also was the teacher in charge of the self-evaluation intervention, possible personal bias existed in that the researcher wanted to see growth in the students' learning and personal growth in their attitude levels. Quantitative results from the study supported the findings.

Evidence of Quality

To guard against threats to the quality of this study, and in an effort to limit researcher bias, a rater from the Georgia Center for Assessment was hired by the researcher to score the papers of the experimental group and the control group. The same rater was used for pre- and posttest scoring. Having an unbiased person score the papers eliminated subjective opinions from the researcher. In addition, the researcher used a second scorer to score the writing attitude pre- and postsurveys. Furthermore, the researcher developed writing lessons using the county's core and sequence as a guide in order to protect against potential threats in the study. The same writing lessons were taught to the students in the control group and the experimental group.

Implications for Social Change

This study on the relationship between self-evaluation and the writing ability and attitudes toward writing of a sample of Grade 7 gifted language arts students was important for several reasons. This study used self-evaluation instruction within the context of writing instruction to provide an opportunity for educational reform and social

change in society by offering self-evaluation instruction as a teaching and learning strategy that enhances motivation and ability. Teachers will be able to apply self-evaluation to meet the individual needs of students. These students will gain a better understanding of their purpose for writing and build a desire to communicate effectively through the written word. Self-evaluation is multifaceted in that it could enhance a variety of areas in each student's life.

In addition, the results sought to fill a gap that exists in the literature pertaining to the attitude and ability of student writers. Limited research has discussed the use of self-evaluation and its relationship to attitude and writing ability for middle school students. Teachers of writing may benefit from the results of this study because they will possibly see the need for instructional practices that will better prepare students to be contributing citizens in the knowledge society (Hargreaves, 2003). This means devising instruction that focuses on developing and implementing higher order thinking skills, which supports student preparation for the knowledge society. Writers who can self-evaluate fare better than those who do not (Hansen, 2003).

Educators are seeking more effective instructional strategies that produce better achievement results. The intervention in this study supplied students with a method of practice that may positively influence their future school and life experiences. The ability to set, reflect, and attain personal goals will enable the students to enhance their lives, thereby facilitating positive social change.

With awareness, self-evaluation can have a positive social impact on the students, parents, and members of the community. It will assist students in learning their

capabilities, motivate them to work for improvement, and affect the school's climate holistically. Furthermore, research has informed society of the need for middle school students to have a curriculum that involves them in their learning (Stevens, 2003). The significance of this study lies in its contribution not only to the development of students as self-evaluators but also in the potential to enhance the learning process for all students. The development of self-evaluation directly links to the skills needed in our knowledge society, and it may bring about social change in the teaching of writing.

Finally, the significance and implications of this study are that self-assessment, linked with external standards, may help students regulate their actions to desired outcomes. In addition, student in the middle grades can benefit from analyses and discussions about strategies for writing. Students appraised, concluded, and analyzed for their own purposes their strengths and weaknesses in writing, and from this interpretation, they set goals toward self-improvement. In addition, the students came to understand that important writing standards exist beyond the subjective judgment of the teacher. This could possibly challenge students toward focusing on higher standards, thus leading to social change.

Recommendations for Action

Teaching and assessing writing effectively have become major concerns in education. Troia and Graham (2003) stated, "Teaching writing creates anxiety, avoidance, and frustration for those who teach it. Teachers often comment that they lack the knowledge, skills, and strategies that would be helpful to them in guiding their students to become better writers" (pp. 75-76). In addition, research has shown that

literary skills performance (reading and writing) for middle school students has declined (Stevens, 2003).

A decline in literacy skills for middle school students adds to the importance of finding effective strategies for them to become better writers. Writing tasks for middle school students develop greater importance as these students continue to be asked to demonstrate their knowledge and creativity through writing (Hooper et al., 1993). Compounding the issue of writing ability are students' attitudes toward writing. As students progress in the grades, their attitude toward writing becomes less favorable (Hogan, 1980). Compared with other school subjects, there is a pattern of decline in writing attitudes. Beginning with Grade 3, students' interest in writing is high. It peaks in Grade 4 and then declines from Grades 6 to 8 (Hogan). Hogan's findings were supported by Knudson (1991), whose research showed that older students have less positive attitudes than younger students toward writing.

The impact of writing and learning experiences on gifted students is an added concern. Independent exploration of learning is crucial for gifted students. Independent learning begins in early childhood for most gifted students, who have the capacity to extensively study a topic of interest and immerse themselves in their own work (Van Tassel-Baska, 2003). These abilities strongly support the need to incorporate the use of self-evaluation into a writing curriculum for gifted students because self-evaluation requires students to study and immerse themselves into their own work.

Further influencing the issue is how teachers think of themselves as writers, which directly affects how they plan, create, and demonstrate writing in their curriculum

(Frager, 1994; Gilespie, 1991; Susi, 1984, as cited in Brooks, 2007). Teachers whose self-concept of their own writing is low or mediocre may not write frequently. This can negatively affect their ability to truly support their students in the writing process (Brooks).

Wood and Lieberman (2000) asserted that

> Experienced teachers are more likely to grow and learn if involved with professional development contexts that build on their commitments to children, focus on the specific classroom dilemmas they face daily, and recognize that teachers have learned from classroom experiences. (p. 256)

Opportunities to reflect, collaborate, research, critique, and assess are crucial for experienced teachers, and they can lead to improvements in public education. These same qualities are the key ingredients in the process of self-evaluation.

The researcher contends that all language arts teachers should be well versed and trained in using self-evaluation as well as teaching using a writer's workshop format. Training to apply self-evaluation to written assignments rather than just overall grade or work completion is needed. Following are suggested steps rooted in research that may be utilized when implementing self-evaluation theory:

1. Have students categorize their writing projects from the most effective to the least effective, and then explain their reasons for ranking their projects in that order (Reif, 1992).
2. Encourage students to critique their writing in depth each trimester and respond to it with questions (Reif).
3. At the end of the previous semester, have students respond to a self-evaluation for the entire year (Reif).

4. Require students to critically examine the writing projects that they have done and compare them to previous writing efforts, their own as well as those of others students, while striving to make their own projects better (Reif).
5. Employ direct instruction when showing students how to self-evaluate. This strategy can begin by having students complete a self-report scale and rate their progress in a particular area. Students then discuss these ratings with their teachers, who can provide beneficial feedback (Schunk, 2003).
6. Teach students how to use self-evaluation. Conferences, checklists, rating scales, questionnaires, journals, and learning logs can be used effectively to teach students how to self-evaluate (Carr, 2002; Schunk).

These steps involve continual planning, monitoring, assessing, and reflecting, activities that are at the center of self-evaluation.

The researcher, who plans to meet with the administration to review the results of this study, hopes that the following actions will take place locally: (a) The administration will place an emphasis on incorporating self-evaluation strategies in language arts classrooms when students are writing, (b) language arts teachers will be given learning opportunities to increase their awareness of self-evaluation, (c) all teachers will be given strategies that do not make the teaching and assessing of writing seem worse than giving rote tasks, and (d) language arts teachers will learn how to incorporate self-evaluation into their instructional strategies to help students become more responsible for their own learning.

Recommendations for Further Study

The researcher offers the following recommendations for further research:

1. This quantitative study might be strengthened by producing richer findings with qualitative data. One method would be to conduct a mixed methods study that would involve the collection of data from interviews, observations, and videotapes to support the findings and identify students' feelings and responses to self-evaluation.
2. To have a significant impact on the educational community, this study would have to be amended. Extending the amount of time allotted for the study beyond the 10 weeks would be one suggested measure. A longer study may produce different findings. Another change would include employing a larger sample size, with the participants coming from multiple grades. Motivation for writing decreases in Grades 7 through 9 (Kear, Coffman, McKenna, & Ambrosio, 2000), so including students from these grades would be beneficial to future studies.
3. Because the findings identified a relationship between self-evaluation and attitude in the area of gender, it may be worthwhile to construct a study that specifically focuses on gender and self-evaluation.
4. This study also found a relationship between self-evaluation and attitude toward writing in the area of ethnicity. A future study could be structured on determining the impact of self-evaluation on students from different ethnic origins.

Conclusion

As indicated by the results of this study, success can come to gifted students through self-evaluation when it is used as a tool to affect their attitudes toward writing. The results also suggested that the incorporation of directly taught self-evaluation strategies by gender and ethnicity was beneficial in regard to the students' attitudes toward writing. Educators need proper training in self-evaluation. This means providing educators with opportunities to immerse themselves in writing through professional development that has a writer's workshop format. In addition, providing educators with time for peer collaboration and mentoring will help them to meet the challenges as they occur. Once educators understand the power of self-evaluation and writing on a personal level, they may be more willing to employ it as an instructional strategy with their students.

The literature (Carr, 2002; Reif, 1992; Schunk, 2003) has suggested that teaching students how to self-evaluate and then incorporate it into writing assignments is an effective way to increase student achievement and interest in writing. Self-evaluation supports students' involvement in the learning process, and it provides teachers with valuable information to guide instruction. Self-evaluation enables students to reflect not only on what they learn but also how they learn. The result of self-evaluation is the ability of students to discover what they do well, where their problems are, and what they can improve. Students and future society benefit as students become active participants in our knowledge society.

REFERENCES

Alber, S. R., Martin, C. M., & Gammill, D. M. (2005). Using the literacy masters to inspire written expression in gifted students. *Gifted Child Today, 28,* 50-59.

Albertson, L. R., & Billingsley, F. F. (2001). Using strategy instruction and self-regulation to improve gifted students' creative writing. *Journal of Secondary Gifted Education, 12,* 90-102.

Allington, R. L., & Johnston, P. H. (Eds.). (2002). *Reading to learn: Lessons from exemplary fourth-grade classrooms.* New York: Guilford Press.

Anderman, E. M. (1992, Dec.). *Motivation and cognitive strategy use in reading and writing.* Paper presented at the National Reading Conference, San Antonio, TX.

Anderman, E. M., & Maehr, M. L. (1994). Motivation and schooling in the middle grades. *Review Educational Research, 64*(2), 287-309.

Andrade, H. G. (1999, April 21). *The role of instructional rubrics and self-assessment in learning to write: A smorgasbord of findings.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

Andrade, H. G., & Boulay, B. A. (2003). Role of rubric-referenced self-assessment in learning to write. *Journal of Educational Research, 97*(1), 10-32.

Atwell, N. (1998). *In the middle: New understandings about writing, reading, and learning.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Badolato, L.A. (1998). Recognizing and meeting the special needs of gifted females. *Gifted Child Today, 21(6),* 32-37.

Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory.* New York: General Learning Press.

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Bandura, A. (1993). Perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development and functioning. *Educational Psychology, 28*(2), 117-148.

Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control.* New York: Freeman.

Bowie, R. L. (1996). *Future teachers' perceptions of themselves as writers and teachers of writing: Implications for teacher education programs.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the College Reading Association in Charleston, SC.

Brooks, G. W. (2007). Teachers as readers and writers and as teachers of reading and writing. *Journal of Educational Research, 100,* 177-191.

Bruner, J. (1960). *The process of education.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bruner, J. (1966). *Toward a theory of instruction.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bruning, R., & Horn, C. (2000). Developing motivation to write. *Educational Psychologist, 35,* 25-37.

Carr, S. C. (2002). Self-evaluation: Involving students in their own learning. *Reading & Writing Quarterly, 18,* 195-199.

Cassata. J.C. (2000). *Self-evaluation of writing ability: A case study with seventh grade students in their classrooms.* Retrieved from ProQuest database. (AAT 9996076)

Cooper, C., & Odell, L. (1999). *Evaluating writing: The role of teachers' knowledge about text, learning and culture.* Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed method approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cross tabulation. (2006). Retrieved from http://www.millsaps.edu/ socio/cross _ tabulation.shtml

De La Paz, S., & Graham, S. (2002). Explicitly teaching strategies, skills, and knowledge: Writing instruction in middle school classrooms. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 94,* 687-698.

Deci, E., & Flaste, R. (1995). *Why we do what we do: Understanding self-motivation* New York: Penguin Books.

Dev, P.C. (1997). Intrinsic motivation and academic achievement. *Remedial and Special Education, 18*(1), 12-20.

Diaz, E. I. (1998). Perceived factors influencing the academic underachievement of talented students of Puerto Rican descent. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 42,* 105-122.

Donahue, P. L., Voelkl, K. E., Campbell, J. R., & Mazzeo, J. (1998). *The NAEP 1998 Reading Report Card for the Nation and the States.* Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pubs/main1998/1999500.asp.

Ford, D. Y., Alber, S. R., & Heward, W. L. (1998). Setting the "motivation traps" for underachieving gifted students. *Gifted Child Today, 21*(2), 28-33.

Frey, C. P. (2000). A writer's workshop. *Gifted Child Today*, *23,* 38-43.

Frost, H. (2001). *When I whisper, nobody listens.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Garcia, T., & Pintrich, P. (1995 April). *Assessing students' motivation and learning strategies: The Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire.* Retrieved from ERIC Digest database. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED383770)

Gardner, H. (1983). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences.* New York: Basic Books.

Gardner, H. (1993). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences* (2nd ed.) London: Fontana.

Gardner, H. (1995). *The unschooled mind: How children think and how schools should teach.* New York: Basic Books.

Gardner, H. (1999). *Intelligence reframed. Multiple intelligences for the 21st century.* New York: Basic Books.

Garson, G. D. (2006). *Univariate GLM, ANOVA, and ANCOVA.* Retrieved from http://www2.chass.ncsu.edu/garson/PA765/anova.htm

Georgia Department of Education. (2007). *Testing.* Retrieved from http://www.public.doe.k12.ga.us/ci_testing.aspx?PageReq=CI_TESTING_WA

Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ.* New York: Bantam Books.

Graham, S., & Harris, K. R. (1997). Self-regulation and writing: Where do we go from here? *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 22,* 102-114.

Graves, D.H. (1994). *A fresh look at writing.* Portsmouth, NH:Heinemann.

Greene, S. (1994). The problems of learning to think like a historian: Writing history in the culture of the classroom. *Educational Psychologist, 29*(2), 89-96.

Hansen, J. (2003). Introduction: Writers as evaluators: Self-evaluation enables writers' growth. *Reading & Writing Quarterly, 19,* 321-328.

Harcourt Assessment, Inc. (2004). *Technical data report.* San Antonio: Harcourt Educational Measurement.

Hargreaves, A. (2003). *Teaching in the knowledge society: Education in the age of insecurity.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Harrington, P., Gillam, K., Andrews, J., & Day, C. (2006). Changing teaching and learning relationships through collaborative action research: Learning to ask different questions. *Teacher Development, 10,* 73-86.

Hewitt, M. P. (2005). Self-evaluation accuracy among high school and middle school instrumentalists. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 52*(2), 40-49.

Hogan, T. P. (1980). Students' interests in writing activities. *Research in the Teaching of English, 14*(2), 119-126.

Hooper, S. R., Swartz, C. W., Montgomery, J. W., Reed, M. S., Brown, T. T., Wasileski, T. J., et al. (1993). Prevalence of writing problems across three middle school samples. *School Psychology Review, 22*(4), 610-622.

Iran-Nejad, A. (1995). Constructivism as substitute for memorization in learning: Meaning is created by learner. *Education, 116*(1), 40-57.

Isaacson, S. (1999). Instructionally relevant writing assessment. *Reading & Writing Quarterly, 14,* 29-48.

Jensen, E. (2000). *Brain-based learning.* San Diego, CA: Brain Store.

Johnson, K. S. (2000). Affective component in the education of the gifted. *Gifted Child Today, 23*(4), 30-36.

Katz, E. (1994). *Self-concept and the gifted student.* Boulder, CO: Open Space.

Kauffman, J. C., & Gentile, C. A. (2002). The will, the wit, the judgement; The importance of an early start in productive and successful creative writing. *High Ability Studies, 13,* 115-124.

Kear, D. J., Coffman, G. A., McKenna, M. C., & Ambrosio, A. L. (2000). Measuring attitude toward writing: A new tool for teachers. *Reading Teacher, 54,* 10-23.

Klassen, R. (2002). Writing in early adolescence: A review of the role of self-efficacy beliefs. *Educational Psychology Review, 14*(2), 173-203.

Knudson, R. E. (1991). Development and use of a writing attitude survey in grades 4 to 8. *Psychological Reports, 68,* 807-816.

Knudson, R. E. (1995). Writing experiences, attitudes, and achievement of first to sixth graders. *Journal of Educational Research, 89,* 30-42.

Kohn, A. (1993). *Punished by rewards.* New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Lam, S. F., & Law, Y. K. (2007). The role of instructional practices and motivation in writing performance. *Journal of Experimental Education, 75*(2), 145-164.

Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (1990). *A theory of goal setting and task performance.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Marshall, M. (2002). *Discipline without stress punishments or rewards.* Los Alamitos, CA: Piper Press.

Marzano, R. J. (2003). *What works in schools: Translating research into action.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

McCormick Calkins, L. (1994). *The art of teaching writing.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

McDonald, J. (2006). *Analysis of covariance.* Retrieved from http://udel.edu/~ mcdonald/statancova.html

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. (10th ed.). (1993). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster.

Napoli, M. (2001). *Preservice teachers' reflections about learning to teach writing.* East Lansing, MI: National Center for Research on Teacher Learning. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED459472)

National Commission on Writing. (2003*). The neglected "R."* New York: College Entrance Examination Board.

National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges. (2003, April). *The neglected "R": The need for a writing revolution.* Retrieved from http://www.writingcommission.org/prod%5fdownloads/writingcom/neglectedr.pdf.

Newby, T. J. (1991).Classroom motivation: Strategies of first year teachers. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 83,* 195-200.

North Central Regional Educational Library. (2002). *Glossary of education terms and acronyms.* Retrieved from http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/misc/glossary.htm

Odell, S., & Wang, J. (2003). Learning to teach towards standards based writing instruction: Experiences of two preservice teachers and two mentors in urban, multicultural classroom. *Elementary School Journal, 104*(2), 147-174.

Pajares, F., (2003). Self-efficacy beliefs, motivation, and achievement in writing: A review of the literature. *Reading & Writing Quarterly, 19,* 139-158.

Pajares, F., & Valiante, G. (1999). Grade level and gender differences in the writing self-beliefs of middle school students. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 24,* 390-405.

Paris, S. G., & Paris, A. H. (2001). Classroom applications of research on self-regulated learning. *Educational Psychologist, 36*(2), 43-62.

Persky, H., Daane, M., & Jin, Y. (2003). *The nation's report card: Writing.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Piaget, J. (1970). *The science of education and the psychology of the child.* New York: Grossman.

Pintrich, R. R., & DeGroot, E. V. (1990). Motivational and self-regulated learning components of classroom academic performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 82,* 33-40.

Plucker, J., & McIntire, J. (1996). Academic survivability in high-potential, middle school students. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 40,* 7-14.

Reif, L. (1992). *Seeking diversity.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist Association, 55*(1), 68-78.

Scardamalia, M., & Bereiter, C. (1985). *Fostering the development of self-regulation in children's knowledge processing.* In S. F. Chipman, J. Segal, & R. Glaser (Eds.), *Thinking and learning skills: Current research and open questions* (Vol. 2, pp. 563-577). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Schunk, D. H. (2003). Self-efficacy for reading and writing: Influence of modeling, goal setting, and self-evaluation. *Reading & Writing Quarterly, 19,* 159-172.

See, J. E. (2007). *Basic statistics guide: Graphing and analyzing data.* Albuquerque, NM: Afotec.

Smith, E. (1999). Middle school: The balancing act. *Communicator, 30,* 12-13.

Spaulding, C. L. (1995). Teachers' psychological presence on students' writing-task assignment. *Journal of Educational Research, 88*(4), 210-219.

Stevens, R. J. (2003). Student team reading and writing: A cooperative learning approach to middle school literacy instruction. *Educational Research and Evaluation, 9,* 137-160.

Troia, G. A., & Graham, S. (2003). Effective writing instruction across the grades: What every educational consultant should know. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation, 14,* 75-89.

Underwood, T. (1998). Teaching writing with reflective questions and reflective events. *Clearing House, 72,* 18-23.

Van Kraayenoord, C. E., & Paris, S. G. (1997). Children's self-appraisal of their work samples and academic progress. *Elementary School Journal, 97,* 523-537.

Van Tassel-Baska, J. (2003). *Differentiating the language arts for high ability learners, K-8.* (ERIC Digest ED 474 306). Retrieved from http://ericec.org/digests/e640.html

White, E. (1994). *Teaching and assessing writing: Recent advances in understanding, evaluating, and improving students' performance* (2nd ed.). Portland, ME: Calendar Islands.

Wood, D. R., & Lieberman, A. (2000). Teachers as authors: The national writing project's approach to professional development. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 3*(3), 255-273.

Yanik, H. B. (2001). *ANCOVA.* Retrieved from http://www.public.asu.edu/~hyanik/as/ancova.htm

Zimmerman, B., Bonner, S., & Kovach, R. (2003). *Developing self-regulated learners: Beyond achievement to self-efficacy*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

APPENDIX A: WRITING ATTITUDE SURVEY

PURPOSE: The purpose of this survey is to find out how you feel about writing. This is not a test, and there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers. Please be as honest as possible.

HOW THE RESULTS WILL BE USED: The results will be used for two reasons: 1) to determine the effectiveness and impact of self-evaluation and writing, and 2) to determine whether self-evaluation affects your attitudes towards writing.

PARTICIPATION: Your participation is voluntary, which means you are not required to complete this survey; it is your choice.

SUBMISSION: The survey will be conducted in the participants' language arts before any self-evaluation instruction begins. The researcher will collect each survey when all participants have completed them.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION & DIRECTIONS: Respond to each of the following questions by choosing one answer that most accurately reflects your thoughts on the matter. *Be sure that you only circle one response per question.*

ID Number _____ Gender _____ Ethnicity _____
School _____ Grade _____ Date _____

1. I enjoy writing.
   1 = definitely disagree
   2 = disagree
   3 = agree
   4 = definitely agree

2. I am very interested in writing.
   1. Never
   2. Rarely
   3. Sometimes
   4. Often
   5. Always

3. Writing is something that makes me happy.
   1 – definitely disagree
   2 – disagree
   3 – agree
   4 – definitely agree

4. I feel confident when I complete written assignments.
    1 = definitely disagree
    2 = disagree
    3 = agree
    4 = definitely agree

5. I work hard to do well on each writing assignment even if I don't like the topic.
    1. Never
    2. Rarely
    3. Sometimes
    4. Often
    5. Always

6. My Friends and family would rate my writing as:
    1 = Below Average
    2 = Average
    3 = Above Average
    4 = Excellent

7. I would rate my writing as:
    1 – below average
    2 – average
    3 – above average
    4 - excellent

8. I choose to write when I have free time.
    1 = Never
    2 = Rarely
    3 = Sometimes
    4 = Always

9. I have a regular place set aside for writing.
    1. Never
    2. Rarely
    3. Sometimes
    4. Often
    5. Always

10. I write ideas of my own.
    1. Never
    2. Rarely
    3. Sometimes
    4. Often
    5. Always

11. I think it is easy to write.
    1 = Never
    2 = Rarely
    3 = Sometimes
    4 = Always

12. Writing is something that comes naturally to me.
    1. Never
    2. Rarely
    3. Sometimes
    4. always

13. What grade have you USUALLY achieved on your written assignments?
    1 = U
    2 = D
    3 = C
    4 = B
    5 = A

14. Most of the time I like writing and think that I am good at it.
    1 = Strongly Disagree
    2 = Disagree
    3 = Agree
    4 = Strongly Agree

15. Being able to write more effectively is very important to me.
    1. Never
    2. Rarely
    3. Sometimes
    4. Often
    5. Always

16. I often feel frustrated writing and don't like doing it.
    1 = Strongly Disagree
    2 = Disagree
    3 = Agree
    4 = Strongly Agree

17. Writing is my favorite part of Language Arts class.
    1 = Strongly Disagree
    2 = Disagree
    3 = Agree
    4 = Strongly Agree

18. I would describe my attitude towards writing as:
    1 = Negative
    2 = Indifferent
    3 = Positive

19. When I write for class, I think about how poorly I am doing compared with other students.
    1 = Strongly Disagree
    2 = Disagree
    3 = Agree
    4 = Strongly Agree

20. I work hard to do well in writing for this class, even if I don't like what we are writing about.
    1 = Strongly Disagree
    2 = Disagree
    3 = Agree
    4 = Strongly Agree

21. When I take write for class I think of the consequences of failing.
    1 = Strongly Disagree
    2 = Disagree
    3 = Agree
    4 = Strongly Agree

22. The most satisfying thing for me in this class is writing a well-written piece.
    1 = Strongly Disagree
    2 = Disagree
    3 = Agree
    4 = Strongly Agree

23. I have an uneasy, upset feeling when I write.
    1 = Strongly Disagree
    2 = Disagree
    3 = Agree
    4 = Strongly Agree

24. I feel my heart beating fast when I have to write, especially for a graded assignment.
    1 = Strongly Disagree
    2 = Disagree
    3 = Agree

4 = Strongly Agree

25. I am very interested in becoming a better writer.
    1 = Strongly Disagree
    2 = Disagree
    3 = Agree
    4 = Strongly Agree

APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM

Your child is invited to take part in a research study using self-evaluation in writing.

Your child was chosen for the study based on his or her convenience to the researcher.

Please read this form and ask any questions you have before agreeing to be part of the study.

Lisa DeMent, who is a seventh grade gifted language arts teacher at ABC Middle School, and a doctoral student at Walden University, is conducting this study.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to explore the use of self-evaluation in writing and its relationship with writing attitude and the writing ability of gifted seventh-grade language arts students.

Procedures:
Students will participate in two writing tests and two writing attitude surveys. Self-evaluation procedures will be used during a ten-week period. Students will be instructed in self-evaluation and writing during the 10 weeks. Regardless of participation in the study, all classes will be taught in the same manner; therefore, there will be no risks or benefits associated with participation. There will be no compensation provided, as that would present a conflict of interest.

If you agree for your child to participate in this study, your child may be selected to participate. Only the data from students and teachers with signed and returned consent forms will be used.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Your participation in this study is voluntary. This means that everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you want to be in the study. Whether or not you take part in this study will not change your relations with ABC Public Schools or the researcher. If you decide to join the study now, you or your child can still change your mind later. If your child feels stressed during the study, you may stop at any time.

If you give permission for your child to participate in this study, please indicate that below and return this form to ABC Middle School by Tuesday, September 4. If you do not give permission for your child to participate in this study, you do not need to return this form. No data from your child will be used in the research project.

Risks of Being in the Study:
Students will not endure psychological stress greater than what one would experience in daily life. To minimize any risk, the researcher plans to collect data during the normal school operating hours.

Benefits of Being in the Study:
Based on the researcher's review of the literature, one would expect self evaluation instruction to positively affect the motivations and achievement level of gifted seventh grade students in writing. Educators, students, and members of the community will benefit from the results of the study by obtaining a better understanding of self evaluation instruction and its influence and implementation in the classroom.

Compensation:
Money or gifts will not be given to any participant in this study.

Confidentiality:
Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your child's information for any purposes outside of this research project. In addition, the researcher will not include your child's name or anything else that could identify him or her in any reports of the study. All records will be kept in a locked file. Only the researcher will see them.

Contacts and Questions:
The researcher's name is Lisa DeMent. The researcher's faculty advisor is Dr. Pam Warrick. You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via xxx@xxx or the advisor at xxx@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Director of the Research Center at Walden University. Her phone number is 1-xxx-xxx-xxxx, extension xxxx.

The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Statement of Consent:

☐ I have read the above information. I have received answers to any questions I have at this time. I consent for my child,
_____, to be apart of this study.

Printed Name of Child _____

Child's Written Signature _____

Researcher's Written Signature _____

APPENDIX C: ASSENT FORM

Hello, my name is Ms. DeMent and I am doing a research project to learn about self evaluation and writing. I am also studying attitudes toward writing and writing achievement. I am inviting you to join my project. I picked you for this project because you are my student this year. You can ask any questions you have before you decide if you want to do this project.

WHO I AM:
I am a student at Walden University. I am working on my doctoral degree. I am your seventh grade language arts teacher for the 2007-2008 school year. I will be both the teacher and the researcher. I will test all students.

ABOUT THE PROJECT:
The purpose of this study is to explore the use of self-evaluation in writing and its relationship with writing attitude and the writing ability of gifted seventh-grade language arts students.

Everyone in my classes will:

* participate in two mandatory writing tests(75 minutes)

Students participating in the research study will:

* be asked to agree to complete two writing attitude surveys (20 minutes)
* be asked to allow their scores on the two writing tests to be used for research purposes

The study will last 10 weeks. All students in my classes will be given the same instruction and will take the mandatory writing tests. Only students participating in the research study will be asked to agree to complete the two surveys. Students will be instructed in self-evaluation and writing during the 10 weeks. Regardless of participation in the study, all classes will be taught in the same manner; therefore, there will be no risks or benefits associated with participation. Only the data from students with signed and returned consent forms will be used.

IT'S YOUR CHOICE:
You do not have to join this project if you do not want to. You will not get into trouble with XYZ Publix Schools, ABC Middle School, or the teacher if you say no. If you decide now that you want to join the project, you can still change your mind later just by telling me. If you feel stressed during the study, you may stop at any time.

RISK AND BENEFIT:
To minimize any risk, I will collect data during normal school hours.

Educators, students, and members of the community will benefit from the results of the study by obtaining a better understanding of self evaluation instruction and its influence and implementation in the classroom.

Privacy/Confidentiality:
Everything you tell me during this project will be kept private. That means that no one else will know your name or what answers you gave. The only time I have to tell someone is if I learn about something that could hurt you or someone else. I will not use your information for any purposes outside of this research project. In addition, your name or anything else that could identify you in any reports of the study will not be included. All records will be kept in a locked file. I will be the only person who will be able to read it.

COMPENSATION:
You will not be given any money or gifts to participate in this study.

ASKING QUESTIONS:
You can ask me any questions you want now. If you think of a question later, you or your parents can reach me at xxx@xxx or by calling 770-338-4700. You can reach my professor at xxx@xxx. If you or your parents would like to ask my university a question, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. Her phone number is 1-xxx-xxx-xxxx, extension xxxx.

I will give you a copy of this form.

Please sign your name below if you want to join this project.

Name of Child _____

Child Signature _____

Researcher Signature _____

APPENDIX D: DATA USE AGREEMENT

This Data Use Agreement ("Agreement"), effective as of September 4, 2007 ("Effective Date"), is entered into by and between Ms. Lisa DeMent ("Data Recipient") and ABC Middle School ("Covered Entity"). The purpose of this Agreement is to provide Data Recipient with access to a Limited Data Set ("LDS") for use in self-evaluation research in accord with the HIPAA Regulations.

Definitions. Unless otherwise specified in this Agreement, all capitalized terms used in this Agreement not otherwise defined have the meaning established for purposes of the "HIPAA Regulations" codified at Title 45 parts 160 through 164 of the United States Code of Federal Regulations, as amended from time to time.

Preparation of the LDS. Covered Entity shall prepare and furnish to Data Recipient a LDS in accord with the HIPAA Regulations or Covered Entity shall retain Data Recipient as a Business Associate (pursuant to an appropriate Business Associate Agreement) and direct Data Recipient, as its Business Associate, to prepare such LDS.

Minimum Necessary Data Fields in the LDS. In preparing the LDS, Covered Entity or its Business Associate shall include the **data fields specified as follows**, which are the minimum necessary to accomplish the purposes set forth in Section 5 of this Agreement:

use of pretest and posttest writing score for control class taught by Ms. Lisa DeMent

use of pretest and posttest writing score for experimental class taught by Ms. Lisa DeMent

use of student pretest and posttest writing attitude survey score for control class taught by Ms. Lisa DeMent

use of pretest and posttest writing attitude survey score for experimental class taught by Ms. Lisa DeMent

Responsibilities of Data Recipient. Data Recipient agrees to:

Use or disclose the LDS only as permitted by this Agreement or as required by law;

Use appropriate safeguards to prevent use or disclosure of the LDS other than as permitted by this Agreement or required by law;

Report to Covered Entity any use or disclosure of the LDS of which it becomes aware that is not permitted by this Agreement or required by law;

Require any of its subcontractors or agents that receive or have access to the LDS to agree to the same restrictions and conditions on the use and/or disclosure of the LDS that apply to Data Recipient under this Agreement; and

Not use the information in the LDS to identify or contact the individuals who are data subjects.

Permitted Uses and Disclosures of the LDS. Data Recipient may use and/or disclose the LDS for its Research and Public Health activities and the Health Care Operations of the Covered Entity.

Term and Termination.

Term. The term of this Agreement shall commence as of the Effective Date and shall continue for so long as Data Recipient retains the LDS, unless sooner terminated as set forth in this Agreement.

Termination by Data Recipient. Data Recipient may terminate this agreement at any time by notifying the Covered Entity and returning or destroying the LDS.

Termination by Covered Entity. Covered Entity may terminate this agreement at any time by providing thirty (30) days prior written notice to Data Recipient.

For Breach. Covered Entity shall provide written notice to Data Recipient within ten (10) days of any determination that Data Recipient has breached a material term of this Agreement. Covered Entity shall afford Data Recipient an opportunity to cure said alleged material breach upon mutually agreeable terms. Failure to agree on mutually agreeable terms for cure within thirty (30) days shall be grounds for the immediate termination of this Agreement by Covered Entity.

Effect of Termination. Sections 1, 4, 5, 6(e) and 7 of this Agreement shall survive any termination of this Agreement under subsections c or d.

Miscellaneous.

Change in Law. The parties agree to negotiate in good faith to amend this Agreement to comport with changes in federal law that materially alter either or both parties' obligations under this Agreement. Provided

however, that if the parties are unable to agree to mutually acceptable amendment(s) by the compliance date of the change in applicable law or regulations, either Party may terminate this Agreement as provided in section 6.

Construction of Terms. The terms of this Agreement shall be construed to give effect to applicable federal interpretative guidance regarding the HIPAA Regulations.

No Third Party Beneficiaries. Nothing in this Agreement shall confer upon any person other than the parties and their respective successors or assigns, any rights, remedies, obligations, or liabilities whatsoever.

Counterparts. This Agreement may be executed in one or more counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

Headings. The headings and other captions in this Agreement are for convenience and reference only and shall not be used in interpreting, construing or enforcing any of the provisions of this Agreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, each of the undersigned has caused this Agreement to be duly executed in its name and on its behalf.

COVERED ENTITY	**DATA RECIPIENT**
Signed: _____	Signed: _____
Print Name: _____	Print Name: _____
Print Title: _____	Print Title: _____

APPENDIX E: DATA COLLECTION CHART

Date	Quantitative Data	Scoring
Week 1	Pretest writing sample for 70 participants	Georgia Middle Grades Writing Assessment Rubric
	Writing Attitude Survey	Researcher and another Teacher
	Goal Setting Chart	N/A
Week 2 – 9	Weekly Self-evaluation Questions	N/A
Week 4	Short Story Rubric	N/A
Week 8	Memoir Rubric	N/A
Week 10	Parent/Student Conference Letter	N/A
	Posttest writing sample for 70 participants	Georgia Middle Grades Writing Assessment Rubric
	Writing Attitude Survey	Researcher and another Teacher

APPENDIX F: GMGWA RUBRIC

	5	4	3	2	1
Ideas	• Consistent focus on the assigned topic and purpose • Fully developed controlling idea that addresses all aspects of the assigned writing task. • Supporting ideas and elaboration are relevant to the writer's topic, assigned genre of writing, and audience • Supporting ideas are fully elaborated throughout the paper with logical examples and details • Response contains information that fully addresses reader concerns and perspectives • Uses genre-appropriate strategies to develop writer's ideas	• Consistent focus on the assigned topic and purpose • Well developed controlling idea that addresses the assigned writing task • Supporting ideas are develop with specific examples and details • Response contains information that addresses reader concerns and perspectives • Response is appropriate to assigned genre	• Generally consistent focus on the assigned topic and purpose • Developed controlling idea that addresses the assigned writing task • Most supporting ideas and elaboration are relevant to the writer's topic and assigned genre of writing • Supporting ideas are develop with some examples and details; some parts of the paper are well developed, but other parts of the paper are only partially developed • Response contains sufficient information to address the topic and some reader concerns and perspectives • Response is generally appropriate to the assigned genre	• Limited focus on the assigned topic and purpose • Minimally developed controlling idea that addresses some aspect of the assigned writing task • Supporting ideas are vague, general, and/or underdeveloped (or some ideas may be partially developed, while others are simply listed without development) • Response lacks sufficient information (due to brevity and/or repetition) to provide a sense of completeness and address reader concerns • Some points and details may be irrelevant or inappropriate for the writer's assigned topic, audience, and assigned genre of writing • Response does not demonstrate genre awareness	• Lack of focus on the assigned topic and purpose • Lack of a controlling idea • Absence of supporting ideas (or unclear supporting (ideas) • Development is lacking due to brevity of the response and/or repetition of ideas • Lacks a sense of completeness and fails to address reader concerns • Majority of details are irrelevant • Response is inappropriate to the assigned genre • Insufficient student writing (due to brevity or copying the prompt) to determine competence in ideas

Organization	• Organizing strategy is appropriate to the writer's topic and the assigned genre of writing. The overall strategy facilitates the writer's communication of ideas • Logical and appropriate sequencing of ideas within paragraphs and across parts of the paper • Introduction engages and sets the stage, and conclusion provides a sense of resolution or closure • Both introduction and conclusion fit the writer's ideas and the purpose of the genre • Related ideas are grouped in a logical manner within paragraphs • Uses effective and varied transitional elements to link all elements of the response: parts of the paper, ideas, paragraphs, and sentences. Transitions extend beyond the use of transitional words and phrases	• Overall organizational strategy or structure is appropriate to the writer's ideas and purpose of the genre • Structure guides the reader through the text • Logical sequencing of ideas across parts of the paper • Introduction sets the stage, and conclusion ends the piece of writing without repetition • Logical grouping of ideas within paragraphs • Varied transitions link parts of the paper and link ideas within paragraphs	• Organizational strategy is generally appropriate to the writer's ideas and purpose of the genre • Generally clear sequence of ideas • Introduction is clear and a conclusion provides closure • Related ideas generally grouped together within paragraphs • Transitions link parts of the paper	• Organizing strategy is formulaic and/or inappropriate to the assigned genre • Minimal evidence of sequencing • May lack an introduction or a conclusion or include an ineffective introduction or conclusion • Ideas within paragraphs are not arranged in a meaningful order • Limited use of transitions (transitions may be formulaic, ineffective or overused) • Demonstration of competence limited by the brevity of the response	• No evidence of an organizing strategy • Unclear sequence of ideas • Lacks an introduction and/o conclusion • Unrelated ideas included within paragraphs • Lack of transitions or inappropriate transitions • Insufficient writing (due to brevity or copying the prompt) to determine competence in Organization

Style	• Carefully crafted phrases and sentences create a sustained tone and advance the writer's purpose with respect to the intended audience • Varied, precise, and engaging language that is appropriate to the assigned genre • Word choice reflects an understanding of the denotative and connotative meaning of language • Figurative or technical language may be used for rhetorical effect • Sustained attention to the audience • Evocative or authoritative voice that is sustained throughout the response • An extensive variety of sentence lengths, structures, and beginnings • A variety of genre-appropriate strategies to engage the reader	• Language and tone are consistent with the writer's purpose and appropriate to the assigned genre • Word choice is precise and engaging • Attention to audience in introduction, body, and conclusion • Consistent and distinctive voice • Sentences vary in length and structure • Some genre-appropriate strategies to engage the reader	• Language and tone are generally consistent with the writer's purpose and appropriate to the assigned genre • Word choice is generally engaging with occasional lapses into simple and ordinary language • Awareness of audience may be limited to introduction and/or conclusion • Writer's voice is clear and appropriate • Some variation in sentence length and structure • May include some genre-appropriate strategies	• Language and tone are uneven (appropriate in some parts of the response, but flat throughout most of the response) • Word choice is simple, ordinary and/or repetitive • Limited awareness of audience • Minimal, inconsistent or indistinct voice • Little variation in sentence length and structure • Demonstration of competence of competence limited by the brevity of the response	• Language and tone are flat and/or inappropriate to the task and reader • Word choice is inaccurate, imprecise, and/or confusing • Little or no attention to audience • Writer's voice is not apparent • Lack of sentence variety • Insufficient student writing (due to brevity or copying the prompt) to determine competence in Style

Conventions	• Clear and correct simple, complex, and compound sentences with correct end punctuation • Variety of subordination an coordination strategies • Correct usage in a variety of contexts: subject-verb agreement, word forms (nouns, adjectives, adverbs), pronoun-antecedent agreement • Correct mechanics in a variety of contexts: punctuation within sentences, spelling, capitalization, and paragraph indentation • Infrequent, if any, errors	• Correct simple, complex, and compound sentences with correct end punctuation and few errors • Correct usage with few errors • Correct mechanics with few errors • Errors are generally minor and do not interfere with meaning	• Sentences are generally correct with generally correct end punctuation • Some errors in complex and compound sentences, and occasional sentence fragments, run-ons, or awkward sentences. Few errors with simple sentences • Generally correct usage, but may contain some errors in subject-verb agreement, word forms, pronoun—antecedent agreement, verb tense, and commonly confused homonyms • Generally correct mechanics, but may contain some errors in spelling, capitalization, paragraph indentation, and punctuation within sentences • Few errors interfere w/meaning	• Limited focus on the assigned topic and purpose • Minimally developed controlling idea that addresses some aspect of the assigned writing task • Supporting ideas are vague, general, and/or undeveloped (or some ideas may be partially developed, while others are simply listed without development) • Response lacks sufficient information (due to brevity and/or repetition) to provide a sense of completeness and address reader concerns • Some points and details may be irrelevant or inappropriate for the writer's assigned topic, audience and assigned genre of writing • Response does not demonstrate genre awareness	• Lack of focus on the assigned topic and purpose • Lack of a controlling idea • Absence of supporting ideas (or unclear supporting ideas • Development is lacking due to brevity of the response and/or repetition of ideas • Lacks a sense of completeness and fails to address reader concerns • Majority of details are irrelevant • Response is inappropriate to the assigned genre • Insufficient student writing (due to brevity or copying the prompt) to determine competence in ideas

APPENDIX G: GOAL-SETTING CHART

Category	Explanation	For each category, come up with one goal you will set for yourself to work on over the next 10 weeks.
Ideas	• This area covers the degree to which a writer establishes one main idea and elaborates on it with examples, illustrations (through the use of description), gives facts or details that are appropriate to the genre being written.	•
Organization	• This area covers the degree to which a writer's ideas are arranged in a clear order and the overall structure of the response is consistent with the genre being written	
Style	• This area covers the degree to which the writer controls and uses language to engage the reader	
Conventions	• This area covers the degree to which the writer demonstrates control of sentence formation, usage, and mechanics.	•

APPENDIX H: PERSONAL NARRATIVE/MEMOIR RUBRIC

AREAS COVERED IN PERSONAL NARRATIVE/MEMOIR ASSIGNED **POINTS**

3 (strong) 2 (average) 1 (weak)

A. IDEAS

1. **Focuses clearly on one particular event or memory**
2. **Makes clear the importance of the event or memory**
3. **Strongly communicates the writer's feelings about the event or memory**

Sum of numbers circled

x 5 =

B. STYLE/ORGANIZATION ***3 (strong) 2 (average) 1 (weak)***

1. **Attention grabbing beginning**
2. **Uses action appropriately**
3. **Uses dialogue appropriately**
4. **Uses description appropriately**
5. **Uses the details of people, place, what, where, why, when, how to share the memory.**
6. **There is an order of events -- beginning, middle, and an end**

Sum of numbers circled

x 2.5 =

C.

Grammar/Usage/Mechanics

Very few, if any, errors in grammar, capitalization, Punctuation and spelling **3**

Small number of errors in grammar, capitalization, Punctuation and spelling **2**

Numerous errors in grammar, capitalization, Punctuation and spelling **1**

Number circled x 6 =

TOTAL GRADE -- Sum of parts A, B, and C _____ =

APPENDIX I: PRETEST WRITING SAMPLE

Imagine that you are an archaeologist in the year 4062. You make a great discovery: a house that looks to be about two thousand years old, which places the structure and contents at around the middle to late twenty-first century. You are to write about this one discovery. Your paper must be one of the following:

1. The story/account (personal narrative or memoir) of your discovery and the contents of your findings.
2. A report about twenty-first-century life, documented by the contents of the house.
3. A piece of fiction (short story) on the above situation.

You have approximately 75 minutes to write your paper.

Choose a writing style with which you feel comfortable and that suits the prompt. Using the time structure outlined below, compose a written pieced that clearly addresses the prompt. Suggested use of time:

Planning/Prewriting (5 minutes)

Read the entire topic carefully.
Brainstorm for ideas.
Organize your ideas.

Drafting (25 minutes)

Use your knowledge and/or personal experience related to your topic. Concentrate on your ideas more than grammar.
Fully support your position with details, examples, and convincing reasons.
Organize your ideas in a clear and logical order.
Stay on topic.

Revising and Editing (15 minutes)

Consider rearranging your idea and changing words to make your paper interesting to read.
Use appropriate voice (tone).
Use precise nouns, descriptive adjectives and modifiers, and vivid verbs.
Vary your sentence type and kind.
Use a variety of effective transitions.

Add information, examples, or details to make your paper complete.
Edit for usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.
Make sure your paper is organized into paragraphs.
Make sure all your subjects and verbs agree.

Final Draft (15 minutes)

Write your final paper in blue or black ink.

Proofreading (5 minutes)

Proofread your paper for mistakes. Correct your mistakes neatly.

APPENDIX J: POSTTEST WRITING SAMPLE

The school cafeteria tries to provide students with healthy, tasty food. Some students enjoy cafeteria foods, but others prefer to bring their own lunch. Write a paper about cafeteria food. Your paper must be one of the following:

- Your opinion (essay) about cafeteria food
- A real or imagined story about cafeteria food
- A report about cafeteria food

You have approximately 75 minutes to write your paper.

Choose a writing style with which you feel comfortable and that suits the prompt. Using the time structure outlined below, compose a written pieced that clearly addresses the prompt. Suggested use of time:
Suggested use of time:

Planning/Prewriting (5 minutes)

Read the entire topic carefully.
Brainstorm for ideas.
Organize your ideas.

Drafting (25 minutes)

Use your knowledge and/or personal experience related to your topic. Concentrate on your ideas more than grammar.
Fully support your position with details, examples, and convincing reasons.
Organize your ideas in a clear and logical order.
Stay on topic.

Revising and Editing (15 minutes)

Consider rearranging your idea and changing words to make your paper interesting to read.
Use appropriate voice (tone).
Use precise nouns, descriptive adjectives and modifiers, and vivid verbs.
Vary your sentence type and kind.
Use a variety of effective transitions.

Add information, examples, or details to make your paper complete.
Edit for usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.
Make sure your paper is organized into paragraphs.
Make sure all your subjects and verbs agree.

Final Draft (15 minutes)

Write your final paper in blue or black ink.

Proofreading (5 minutes)

Proofread your paper for mistakes. Correct your mistakes neatly.

APPENDIX K: SHORT STORY RUBRIC

AREAS COVERED IN SHORT STORY	POINTS ASSIGNED *3 (strong)* *2* *(average)* *1 (weak)*
A. IDEAS	
4. Uses the elements of character, setting, and plot to create a convincing world	
5. Develops and resolves a central conflict	
	Sum of numbers circled x 7=
B. STYLE/ORGANIZATION	*3 (strong)* *2* *(average)* *1 (weak)*
7. Attention grabbing beginning	
8. Uses action appropriately	
9. Uses dialogue appropriately	
10. Vivid, sensory language, and details	
11. Presents a clear sequence of events that builds toward a climax	
12. Maintains a consistent point of view throughout	
	Sum of numbers circled x 2.5 =
C. <u>*Grammar/Usage/Mechanics*</u>	
Very few, if any, errors in grammar, capitalization, Punctuation and spelling	3
Small number of errors in grammar, capitalization, Punctuation and spelling	2
Numerous errors in grammar, capitalization, Punctuation and spelling	1
	Number circled x 6 =

TOTAL GRADE -- Sum of parts A, B, and C _____ =

APPENDIX L: WEEKLY SELF-EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Below are seven questions that will give you an opportunity to reflect on the writing you have done this week. You are to pick any four of the questions below and write a response to each one. Please indicate which question you are answering by using the number assigned to the question next to your answer.

Self-Evaluation Questions

1. What are you most proud of in this piece of writing?
2. What have you learned about the writing process through this assignment?
3. What will you do differently next time you have a writing assignment?
4. What is the most exciting or interesting part of this piece? How can you build on it?
5. Have you clearly explained what you mean? Is there any part that might confuse the reader?
6. What is this piece really about? Are there parts that are about something else? Can you cross them out?
7. What is still difficult for you when you write?

APPENDIX M: PARENT STUDENT CONFERENCE FORM

Dear Parents,

I am attempting to find a way to show you what your son or daughter is capable of as a writer, beyond the usual cursory statement, checklist, and/or letter grade. I believe evaluation should nurture growth, help students become better users of language, and foster more independence as learners.

This semester I have asked the students to bring their portfolios home. The portfolio is a place where students store and evaluate their written work. It is a place to show who they are as writers.

Please find enclosed in your son or daughter's portfolio the following:

Drafts of writing
Finished pieces of writing
Self-evaluation for this semester

Mom/Dad,

This is what I have done well as a writer (written by student):

Please note that this is what I will be attempting to do better (written by student):

Please read through the portfolio's contents.
What do you notice that your son/daughter is able to do well?

Please sign this letter and return it with the portfolio.

_____ _____

Parent Signature Date

Sincerely,

Lisa DeMent

APPENDIX N: WAS PRETEST SCORING SHEET

Writing Attitude Survey Pre Test Scores Question Number																										Total Score
Name/Student ID	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
12345	2	3	4	2	3	4	2	3	4	2	3	4	2	3	4	2	3	4	2	3	4	2	3	4	3	75

APPENDIX O: WAS POSTTEST SCORING SHEET

Writing Attitude Survey Post Test Scores Question Number																										Total Score
Name/Student ID	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
12345	3	4	3	2	4	3	2	3	4	3	2	4	3	3	4	2	3	2	4	3	2	3	3	4	4	77

CURRICULUM VITAE

Lisa DeMent

Experience

1999 -2001	XYZ County Schools ABC Middle School Seventh Grade Language Arts Seventh Grade Social Studies
2001-2007	XYZ County Schools ABC Middle School Seventh Grade Language Arts
2007-Present	XYZ County Schools ABC Middle School Seventh Grade Gifted Language Arts
July 2008-Present	7th Grade Language Arts Department Chair
2001-2002	S.M.I.L.E (Teachers as Leaders, local school organization) Graduate
2003-2006	Mentor to new teachers

Clubs/Committees

2001-Present	Builders Club Sponsor
2007-Present	School-wide Peer Collaboration Program Member
2001-2002	S.M.I.L.E (Teachers as Leaders, local school organization) Steering Committee Member

Awards and Recognition

2004-2006	Nominated to Who's Who Among America's Teachers
2004, 2005, 2007	Nominated for Teacher of the Year

Education

2004-Present	Doctoral Candidate Walden University Teacher Leadership
2007-2008	Gifted Certification XYZ County Schools

1997-2000	M.Ed. Mercer University Middle Grades Education (4-8)
1985-1989	B.A. East Stroudsburg University English