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## A Grounded Theory Study of the Impact of Florida School Report Cards on High School English Language Arts Teachers' Self-Efficacy and Perceptions of Student Writing

Casey S. Briand  
*University of Central Florida*

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A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF FLORIDA SCHOOL  
REPORT CARDS ON HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS  
TEACHERS' SELF-EFFICACY AND PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT  
WRITING

by

CASEY S. BRIAND

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Honors in the Major Program in English Language Arts Education  
in the College of Education and Human Performance  
and in The Burnett Honors College  
at the University of Central Florida  
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Thesis Chair: Dr. Elsie L. Olan

## **ABSTRACT**

This study sought to uncover how the annual Florida School Report Card influences secondary English Language Arts (ELA) teachers' self-efficacy and perceptions of student writing. The study's findings suggested that ELA teachers' self-efficacy may be indirectly influenced by the School Report Card. The participants in this study suggested that they do not feel totally capable of applying the information learned from the School Report Card to their own classrooms. The teachers who participated in the study also reported that they have low outcome expectations when interacting with the School Report Card. They do not believe that their actions can influence the School Report Card, and suggested that they see the school grade as a moving target with changing rules they may not be able to keep up with. The School Report Card was not suggested to directly impact the participants' perceptions of student writing. Instead, the data suggested that a variety of internal and external factors influence the way teachers perceive their students' writing quality. Finally, most of the participants suggested that they view the school grade as an unfair measure of achievement, and a tool that does not take into account the quality of the learning in the school and represents the school poorly. Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) was used to situate these findings and gain a better understanding of how the School Report Card functions as a tool for teachers and administrators.

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To my wonderful chair, for your constant belief in me,  
To my committee, for your invaluable guidance and support,  
To my teachers, for your lessons that extended beyond the classroom,  
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To my sister, for never letting me take myself too seriously,  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	iii
LIST OF TABLES.....	vi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH LITERATURE .....	2
The Sources of Self-Efficacy .....	2
Locus-of-Control.....	4
The Role of Self-Efficacy in the Classroom .....	5
Teacher Efficacy, Collective Efficacy, and School Climate.....	8
School Accountability .....	12
Accountability in Florida .....	14
Accountability and School Climate.....	16
Writing Instruction and Assessment .....	18
Summary .....	20
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY .....	22
Research Setting.....	22
Participants .....	23
Data Collection.....	24
Data Analysis .....	25
CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS .....	28
Initial Coding.....	28
Focused Coding.....	29
Thematic Coding.....	34
Research Questions and Findings .....	36
Teacher Interviews .....	40
Self-Efficacy Surveys.....	55

Summary .....	55
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS.....	57
Emergent Theory: Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT).....	57
Finding One.....	59
Finding Two .....	64
Self-Efficacy Surveys.....	66
Implications for Teachers and Administrators .....	68
Implications for Policy .....	70
Limitations .....	72
Conclusions and Future Research .....	73
APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL OF EXEMPT HUMAN RESEARCH.....	75
APPENDIX B: RESEARCH COUNTY NOTICE OF APPROVAL.....	77
APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	79
APPENDIX D: SELF-EFFICACY SURVEY .....	82
APPENDIX E: CHARMAINE’S CODED INTERVIEW .....	86
APPENDIX F: ARTHUR’S CODED INTERVIEW .....	104
APPENDIX G: AMY’S CODED INTERVIEW .....	130
APPENDIX H: LAMONT’S CODED INTERVIEW .....	160
WORKS CITED .....	185

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Example of Initial Coding .....	29
Table 2: Coding Scheme .....	30
Table 3: Thematic Codes .....	34

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

The School Report Card is a familiar concept to students who attended Florida public schools within the last decade. Every year, schools within the state receive a letter grade from the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) ranging from “A” through “F,” and the grade is reported to the public on an annual report card. Students are often made aware of their school’s grade through their parents, teachers, or school administrators. This reporting of school grades has become a part of the way Florida stakeholders perceive and track the quality of the state’s schools.

It is important for the educational stakeholders in Florida to be aware of the effect the School Report Card may have on students and teachers. However, little research has been done in order to find out how the report card influences the way teachers view themselves and their students. The main objectives for this research were to answer the following questions: What, if any, effect does the Florida School Report Card have on teacher self-efficacy in a secondary English language arts classroom? And, what, if any, effect does the School Report Card have on teacher perceptions of student writing within a secondary English language arts classroom? The purpose of this study was to explore the nature of the relationship between the Florida annual School Report Card and high school English Language Arts teachers’ self-efficacy and perceptions of student writing. The following section of this research will discuss the sources and school applications of self-efficacy, the origins and effects of the school accountability movement, and the current state of secondary writing instruction in the United States.



## **CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH LITERATURE**

Self-efficacy is part of a larger social learning theory that has been extensively studied and documented within many different fields and disciplines. In education, the self-efficacy of both students and teachers has proven to be a significant factor in school achievement, playing a part in both student and teacher motivation. A student's writing self-efficacy, in particular, determines the time and perseverance a student will dedicate to a writing task, and has a significant impact on a student's academic success within a secondary school setting (Bandura, 1977, p. 197). A teacher's own self-efficacy, just as importantly, may determine how much time and effort she dedicates to teaching, how satisfied she feels with her work, and how willing she is to try new strategies to help student growth. While writing self-efficacy in school has been broadly explored, especially in regards to the self-efficacy of English Language Learners, university students, and primary school students, the effects of the school accountability movement on teacher self-efficacy in secondary schools has not been largely documented.

### The Sources of Self-Efficacy

Albert Bandura (1997) defines self-efficacy as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required to produce given attainments" (p.3). Self-efficacy is a part of the larger framework of social cognitive theory, which serves as way to explore the mechanisms that control human behavior. In his 1977 paper "Self-Efficacy: Towards a Unifying Theory of Behavioral Change," Bandura describes the two components that make up a person's self-efficacy: efficacy expectations and outcome expectations. An outcome expectation is a person's estimate "that a given behavior will lead to certain outcomes" (p. 193). An efficacy

expectation is the belief in one's own ability to complete the necessary behavior to achieve the desired outcome. Self-efficacy is based on the information one gathers from four different sources.

According to Bandura (1977), the four ways people can acquire the information they need to form their self-efficacy are comprised of performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences, emotional arousal, and verbal (or "social") persuasion. Although the sources of information vary in reliability of the efficacy information they provide, self-efficacy is always influenced by factors within the students and teachers themselves, as well. For example, a student who is constantly compared to a successful older sibling at home may retain low self-efficacy even after experiencing performance accomplishments. A teacher who naturally holds herself to a certain standard of excellence may retain low self-efficacy if she consistently falls short of her own expectations of herself, even if others would consider her to be high-achieving.

Performance accomplishments, or mastery experiences, refer to successful events experienced by a person. When a person attempts tasks, "successes raise mastery expectations; repeated failures lower them" (Bandura, 1977, p. 195). This indicates that when a teacher personally experiences success teaching a subject area or task, the teacher's efficacy expectations will rise. It is also possible for self-efficacy to be gained through vicarious experiences. As people can gain information through sources other than direct experience, students and teachers can gain efficacy through observing their peers successfully complete tasks, although the efficacy expectations gained through vicarious experiences are "likely to be weaker and more vulnerable to change" (Bandura, 1977, p. 197). Emotional arousal refers to the source of information that rests with a student's physiological responses to anxiety and stress. People can gain information

about their state of fear from the responses that their own bodies are giving off, such as a racing heartrate.

The final source of information is verbal persuasion. Verbal persuasion, which is described by Pajares, Johnson, and Usher, (2007), as an aspect of “social persuasion” (p.107), is a source of efficacy information that stems from what people hear and are generally exposed to in their environment. People are socially persuaded when they are “led, through suggestion, into believing that they can cope successfully with what has overwhelmed them in the past” (Bandura, 1977, p.198). Although social persuasion generally produces weaker efficacy beliefs than performance accomplishments, social persuaders “play an important part in the development of a student's self-beliefs” (Pajares, Johnson, & Usher, 2007, p.107).

### Locus-of-Control

Locus-of-control is the belief of an individual that the events that occur in his life are either within his control, or outside of his control. When an individual feels that he is in control of his decisions and the outcomes of his life, he has an “internal” locus-of-control. When an individual feels that he does not have control of his decisions and outcomes, he has an “external” locus-of-control. According to Rotter (1966), “when a reinforcement is perceived by the subject as following some action of his own but not being entirely contingent upon his action, then, in our culture, it is typically perceived as the result of luck, chance, fate, as under the control of powerful others, or as unpredictable,” and “we have labeled this a belief in external control” (p. 1). Likewise, when a “person perceives that the event is contingent upon his own behavior or his own relatively permanent characteristics, we have termed this a belief in internal control” (p. 1).

Locus-of-control is closely related to and broader than self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is related to an individual's belief in his ability to complete a specific task or set of tasks, rather than a more general set of beliefs about the nature of control. Locus-of-control is an important factor in an educational environment because it influences how much effort students and teachers may be willing to dedicate to certain tasks. If a teacher has an external locus-of-control and feels that she is not in control of what goes on in her classroom, she may become discouraged and frustrated.

### The Role of Self-Efficacy in the Classroom

Self-efficacy plays an important role for both students and teachers in the classroom. In order to explore the nature of the relationship between the Florida School Report Card and the self-efficacy of teachers, the role self-efficacy plays in the classroom for both students and teachers must be explored. In a classroom setting, students with high self-efficacy for a certain task “participate more readily, work harder, persist longer when they encounter difficulties, and achieve at a higher level” (Schunk, 2003, p. 161). The social factor of self-efficacy is especially relevant to students. Students gain information not just from their own actions, but from the actions of their peers, as well as verbal persuasive information from teachers. Students who observe peers who are similar to them successfully accomplishing a task are more likely to believe that they are also capable of accomplishing that task (Schunk, 1995, p. 282). In addition to placing some weight on these vicarious experiences, “Students typically rely on teacher feedback for progress information, and they may not be able to reliably gauge progress on their own” (Schunk, 2003, p. 162). Therefore, students acquire a great deal of information about their ability to perform certain tasks through vicarious experiences and social persuasion.

This has been explored by Pajares, Johnson, and Usher (2007), and Schunk (2003), who state that teacher and peer feedback form an important component in the way a student comes to view her ability to complete school-related tasks. Positive social persuasion has the power to encourage and motivate students to continue attempting tasks, while negative social persuasion has the potential to persuade students that they are not capable of tasks. It is easier for social persuasion to dissuade students and lower their efficacy expectations than it is for it to social persuasion to raise efficacy expectations (Pajares, Johnson, & Usher, 2007, p. 107). Social persuasion can come from sources such as teacher feedback through assigned grades, verbal teacher feedback, and interactions with peers. An example of the verbal aspect of social persuasion would be a teacher telling a student “you can do this!” when facing a difficult task.

Teachers, like students, rely on their self-efficacy to accomplish tasks and persevere through difficulties in the classroom. According to Sezgin and Erdogan (2015), in their study “Academic Optimism, Hope and Zest for Work as Predictors of Teacher Self-efficacy and Perceived Success,” a teacher’s “self-efficacy level is considered as an important indicator of a successful teaching career” (p. 8). In the same study, the authors examined the relationship between teacher self-efficacy, hope, and zest for work. “Hope” is defined as a belief-based emotion that the desired outcome is going to be produced in a given situation (p. 9), and “zest for work” refers to feeling positive emotions, such as vitality, excitement, hope, and energy, when approaching a given task. The researchers found a positive correlation between teacher self-efficacy, hope, and zest for work, in addition to self-efficacy positively correlating with other features such as academic optimism and perceived success (p. 15). This indicates that self-efficacy plays an important role for teachers in a classroom, as teachers with a positive general

perception of their careers may be more prepared to persevere through difficult situations and pursue academic success. Additionally, if students can gain self-efficacy information through the social persuasion aspects of their school environment, teachers may as well. This remains a less-studied space in regards to questions about self-efficacy in education.

Additional research into teacher self-efficacy shows that not only is it important for helping teachers maintain hope, optimism, and a positive attitude; it also influences the way teachers teach in the classroom. According to Soodak and Podell (1996), “teacher efficacy may underlie critical instructional decisions, such as the use of time, choice of classroom management strategy, and questioning techniques” (p. 401), which indicates that teacher efficacy may influence the way a teacher interacts with students and facilitates student achievement. This relates to outcome expectations and efficacy expectations. The belief that teachers may hold that they have the ability to influence outcome may further influence their actions (p. 402). The researchers also suggested that “teacher efficacy is comprised of three uncorrelated factors which we labeled Personal Efficacy, Outcome Efficacy, and Teaching Efficacy” (p. 408). Personal efficacy refers to the belief that one has teaching skills, and outcome efficacy refers to the belief that the use of those skills will lead to the desired outcomes. Teacher efficacy refers to the belief that teaching can overcome the effects of influences outside of the classroom (p. 408). The researchers suggest that all three of these efficacy components influence how a teacher works with students and within the school.

The purpose of this study is to explore the nature of the relationship between the Florida annual School Report Card and high school English Language Arts teachers’ self-efficacy and perceptions of student writing. The current research indicates that self-efficacy is an important

classroom influence for both students and teachers. The research also suggests that the social interactions students and teachers have with each other and with their environment have the potential to influence the academic self-efficacy of both students and teachers. While students and teachers gain a great deal of their self-efficacy information through their own mastery experiences, the vicarious experiences of their peers and the feedback from others also may play a role in influencing self-efficacy for various academic tasks.

### Teacher Efficacy, Collective Efficacy, and School Climate

In addition to being an important factor in a teacher's own career satisfaction and teaching methods, a teacher's self-efficacy is an important component in shaping the classroom environment and the success and self-efficacy of the students. The literature indicates that self-efficacy of the teacher and school, and the climate of the school, may be a factor in the academic efficacy and achievement of students. In Bandura's 1997 book *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control*, the author describes the influence teacher self-efficacy has on students. Teachers who have low instructional self-efficacy "believe that there is little they can do if students are unmotivated and that the influence teachers can exert on students' intellectual development is severely limited by unsupportive or oppositional influences from the home and neighborhood environment" (p. 240). Teachers with low instructional self-efficacy resort to a custodial approach when dealing with the classroom, favoring a pessimistic attitude towards the students' ability to improve. This creates a classroom environment that undermines students and their academic ability. In the same book, Bandura further explores "collective school efficacy" (p. 243), which is the combined self-efficacy of an educational institution or organization. There are

many factors capable of lowering the self-efficacy within an educational institution as a whole, such as heavy workloads, a perceived lack of voice within the organization, insufficient pay, and frustrating policies and practices handed down from the administration. The literature indicates that the self-efficacy of the teachers in a school has the potential to influence the climate of a classroom, in turn influencing the achievement and efficacy of the students.

Brookover et. al (1978) further examined school climate. The authors defined school climate as “a composite of variables” that may be broadly conceived as the “norms of the social system and expectations held for various members as perceived by the members of the group and communicated to members of the group” (p. 302). In their study, the authors examined schools of different demographics such as primarily white schools, primarily African-American schools, and schools of both low and high socio-economic status (SES). They found that student achievement was not solely linked to the demographics of the schools; rather, achievement had more to do with the climate within the school. In higher-achieving schools, teachers spent a majority of the time in the classroom instructing, students who were identified as struggling were not taught to a lower ceiling of achievement, students were often grouped into cooperative teams, and students were given appropriate positive and negative reinforcement when necessary. Another variable shown to influence school climate was “the teachers’ expressed evaluations and expectations” (p. 312). These results remained true for both high SES and low SES schools, suggesting that “school composition does not necessarily determine school climate” (p. 316). In addition to factors of socio-economic status and racial demographics, it was the climate of the school and the environment of the learning, created in part by the teachers, which played a role in the achievement level of the students.



Høigaard, et. al. (2015) studied school climate as well, examining the relationship between school climate, student self-efficacy, and student achievement in a Norwegian middle school. In the study, the researchers surveyed ninth and tenth grade students in areas of school goal orientation, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), and academic self-efficacy. The findings of the study suggested that the academic self-efficacy of the students was positively correlated with a perceived “task” goal structure. The “task” goal structure reflects the students’ perception of their school’s emphasis on effort, understanding, and the belief that all students can learn and be successful (p. 67). This is a reflection of the “mastery” goal orientation that values student understanding over performance, and is in contrast to the “ability” goal structure. The “ability” goal structure reflects the “performance” goal orientation, which values academic ability and positive performance over understanding. The results of this study, therefore, suggest that the perceived climate of the school and the perceived goal orientation of the school correlate to the academic self-efficacy of the students. Students reported higher levels of academic achievement and academic self-efficacy when they perceived that their school and teachers respected them and placed higher value on students’ understanding and the effort they put into their work than strictly the numerical achievement outcomes.

The Brookover (1978) and Høigaard (2015) studies indicate that factors within a student’s environment, such as peer, teacher, and school interactions, have the ability to influence student self-efficacy and achievement. School climate and the goals the students perceive the school has for their learning also play a role in determining self-efficacy. Students feel more confident in themselves and in their ability to successfully accomplish academic tasks when they feel that their teachers care about their learning and that their school values their

academic efforts rather than just their performance. These studies also noted a link between self-efficacy and achievement. Students and schools with a high general academic self-efficacy also demonstrated higher academic performance. This has implications for the importance of teacher self-efficacy in the classroom. If a teacher's self-efficacy is linked to school climate, then a teacher's own self-efficacy may have the ability to influence the students' efficacy and achievement.

The research suggests correlations between factors in a student's education environment and the academic self-efficacy the student develops. In the current United States educational climate, the school accountability movement is a central part of the educational environment for many schools. A less-studied space in the current research pertains to the effect of the school accountability movement, specifically the influence of standardized writing assessments and resulting School Report Cards, on teacher academic self-efficacy and perceptions of student writing. In secondary writing classrooms in the United States, public school students nationwide are assessed in writing based on state and Common Core standards. According to the Florida Department of Education's *Guide to Calculating School and District Grades* (2016), Florida schools are awarded a grade ranging from A through F based on the results of these writing assessments, other subject area assessments, and factors such as Adequate Yearly Progress and rate of graduation (p. 2). In many schools, the school's grade may have the potential to become an integral part of the school's educational environment, possibly influencing the teacher's self-efficacy and therefore contributing to the classroom climate or otherwise affecting student writing efficacy and achievement. The next sections will describe the background of the school accountability movement across the United States and in the state of Florida.

## School Accountability

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act was signed into United States law in January of 2002 by President George W. Bush. As one of the key provisions of the act, states were required to administer standardized assessments to all public school students in order to receive federal school funding. The other provisions of the act include greater choice for parents and teachers, more flexibility for state school educational governing agencies, a heavier focus on reading for young children, and increased accountability for schools. These provisions are still relevant because they helped to create a foundation for the A through F grading system that would be implemented in certain states across the U.S., including Florida.

In order to implement stronger accountability for schools, states were required to develop assessments based off of challenging math and reading state standards. Students in grades 3 through 8 were required to be tested yearly in both subjects. The results of the assessments were used to determine which schools were making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) towards a proficient level and which schools were not. Each state was given the independent power to determine what constituted proficiency. States determined their own standards and designed assessments to test those standards. The assessment results were compared against a national benchmark called the “National Assessment of Educational Progress,” intended to measure the rigor of state standards against each other. The federal portions of the law were implemented when schools did not show evidence of AYP. Schools that were not meeting AYP for multiple years in a row were subject to sanctions and interventions. In addition, all states were required to bring all students up to proficiency on the assessments by the 2013-2014 school year.

The results of the yearly assessments were required to be reported to the public in annual “report cards.” As part of the report cards, states had the opportunity to choose how to present the general academic state of a school to parents and the community. Several states chose to use nothing other than their AYP measurement. Some states, such as South Dakota and Wyoming, used markers such as “excellent” and “meeting expectations,” and some, such as Alaska, used a 1-5 star system. Other states, including Florida, decided to implement an A through F grading system, similar to what students themselves are awarded on their own individual report cards.

Although few studies have been completed regarding the effects the School Report Card has on the schools themselves, there have been studies done that suggest parents, teachers, and students may be highly aware of these grades. In 2004, Figlio and Lucas studied the housing market in relation to the newly-graded schools after the implementation of NCLB in Florida. They looked at the rise and fall of housing prices located near schools of different grades. The results of their study suggested that “the housing market responds significantly to the new information about schools provided by these ‘School Report Cards’” (p. 603). Although the researchers found that the reaction of housing prices in response to the grades of nearby schools diminished over time, “schools that consistently received grades of ‘A’ maintained their large house price premia over several years” (p. 603). This suggests that School Report Card grades are not overlooked by the community, and that parents may take them into account when choosing where to live. The results of a similar study by Hart and Figlio (2015) suggested that “parents respond to school grades by enrolling their children in higher-graded schools” (p. 892). These results suggest that the community at large pays attention to the grades of a school and may use the results of the annual report card to make decisions.

In 2009, seven years after the implementation of NCLB and School Report Cards, a board of governors and state school officials drafted the first Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in math. The standards were adopted by 45 states, including Florida; although Florida has since reworked the CCSS into the Florida State Standards. As part of President Barack Obama’s Race to the Top (RTT) grant, states were further encouraged to adopt the Common Core standards. According to the United States Department of Education, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed in 2015, reducing the federal components of NCLB while still retaining the requirements for standardized assessments and the reporting of school performance. Standardized writing assessments are just one piece of the accountability puzzle; however, researchers have noted the large impact they have had on how literacy is handled in schools. According to Lawrence and Jefferson (2015), “In the current context of high stakes testing, school literacy is often defined by standardized literacy assessments—most state tests require students to demonstrate proficiency on specific kinds of writing tasks and reading material (p. 17). This indicates that literacy in school is linked to standardized assessments and accountability, and that the self-efficacy of secondary English Language Arts teachers who are invested in literacy development may also be connected to accountability. In the next section, school accountability will be further discussed as it applies to the state of Florida.

### Accountability in Florida

According to the Florida Department of Education Bureau of Accountability Reporting, School grades in Florida are calculated based on the culmination of up to eleven factors as of the 2015-2016 school year. First, there are four achievement components based on English language

arts, Social Studies, Mathematics, and Science. These components take into account student performance on statewide assessments. Second, learning gains, or improvements, on the Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) are taken into account. Third, middle and high school acceleration rates are included in the calculation. “Acceleration” refers to the percentage of middle and high school students who pass accelerated exams and advanced courses, such as AP, IB, or AICE courses. Finally, the high school graduation rate is incorporated into the school grading equation (p. 2). All of these factors accumulate points, which are added up to achieve different grades. To earn an A, a school must earn 62% or more of possible points. To earn an F, a school must earn 31% or less of possible points (p. 2).

Mandatory public school grading began in Florida in the 1998-1999 school year with the institution of the Florida state voucher program, which is officially known as the Florida Opportunity Scholarship Program. No Child Left Behind shares some similarities with this program (Chakrabarti, 2013, p.500). Under the program, if a school received a grade of “F” twice within a period of two years, students would be eligible to receive a government voucher to move to a private or higher-performing school. Incentives to avoid an F grade include facing the “shame and stigma” and negative public visibility of having the lowest school grade (p.501). This is a significant program because it not only provided a model for the school accountability sections of the NCLB act, but it also put into place a practical use for the Florida A through F school grading system, making the system more visible to the public.

The 2013 study by Chakrabarti indicated that “threatened” Florida schools, or schools which received one F, took certain measures to improve their test scores. These measures include focusing more attention on the “students expected to score below and close to the high stakes

cutoffs” (p. 508), and focusing on writing due to the belief that “writing scores were much easier to improve in than reading and math scores” (p. 520). The researcher notes that the response to the F grade, in his study period of 1993-2002, was positive. He notes that although there was indeed a focus shift to lower-performing students in F schools, “the improvement of the lower performing students does not seem to have come at the expense of the higher performing ones” (p.524). Also, the writing scores of F schools increased due to the focus on writing, and schools implemented positive changes to writing instruction such as introducing writing across the curriculum and school-wide writing projects (p. 520).

Chakrabarti’s study (2013) suggests that schools in Florida pay attention to school grades. The grades on the annual School Report Card have tangible consequences for teachers, administrators, parents, and students, and are suggested to be considered important by stakeholders in the community. This underscores the idea that school grades were not created without purpose. The purpose of the School Report Card and the larger school accountability movement is to inform stakeholders about the progress of schools. It is important to explore the effects the School Report Card could potentially have on students and teachers. The next section will discuss the school accountability movement as it relates to the school climate of secondary schools in the United States.

### Accountability and School Climate

While there has been much debate among parents, teachers, and lawmakers concerning the academic effectiveness of No Child Left Behind, the Common Core State Standards, Race to the Top, and the Every Student Succeeds Act, there has also been discussion about the effects

that so much assessment has on the morale of students and teachers and the climate of the schools. In 2013, Elish-Piper, Matthews, and Risko published their study “Invisibility: An Unintended Consequence of Standards, Tests, and Mandates.” The authors found that an academic culture of “standards, high-stakes testing, accountability, and one-size-fits-all curricula” often creates “an instructional climate that, in effect, renders teachers and students invisible and nonessential to the literacy instruction that occurs in the classroom” (p. 4). The researchers conducted and analyzed interviews with students and teachers across multiple grade levels and content areas dealing with literacy, and found a similar thread in the way students continually reported that they felt “invisible,” as if they are just a number and a test score to their teachers. Their teachers reported similar feelings. They frequently admitted to losing sight of their students as individuals due to becoming “bogged down in the skills and the assessments” (p. 8). The authors examine the strategies used by some teachers in their study to engage both the “hearts and heads” of students even in an era of accountability. However, the authors note that, “for many, external pressures make it impossible for teachers to oppose the mandates, standards, and testing that constrain their ability to teach, and by consequence their students’ ability to learn” (p.18). This indicates that some teachers may feel the accountability within their literacy instruction forces them to focus so intently on the assessment scores that they forget to see their students as individuals. It must be questioned what effect this instructional climate could have on teacher self-efficacy. Therefore, this study seeks to explore the relationship between the School Report Card grade and secondary English Language Arts teachers’ self-efficacy.

The current research suggests that assessments inherent in the accountability movement may have the potential to influence school climate, teacher self-efficacy, and potentially student



self-efficacy for various tasks. Florida is one of the states that use an A-F letter grading system to report its performance to the public. A component of the instructional climate of schools that has not been thoroughly studied is the possible effect of the grade a school receives as part of its yearly report card on the self-efficacy of teachers and their perceptions of student writing. The next section will explore the current state of writing instruction and assessment within U.S. public schools, as well as Florida schools, and how it is mediated by writing assessment.

### Writing Instruction and Assessment

In their 2013 book, “*Writing Instruction that Works: Proven Methods for Middle and High School Classrooms*,” Applebee and Langer researched the state of writing instruction in U.S. schools. Their questions centered on the *how*, the *who*, and the *what* of writing instruction – How much extended writing do students do? Who reads it? What is the effect of high-stakes tests? And what kinds of writing instruction do teachers emphasize?

The researchers found that, at the time of the national survey, students in English class, were not writing a great deal on average (p.13). Students were, on average, writing less than two pages total per week in their English classes, and another two pages total for all of their other subjects combined. In addition, the researchers found that only 19% of assignment questions asked students to write one paragraph or more. The rest of the questions required fill-in-the blank or copying tasks, described as “writing without composing” (p.14).

In regards to the effect of high-stakes assessment on writing instruction, the researchers found that teachers place high importance on state and district assessment when shaping writing curriculum. In the national survey, 86% of middle school teachers and 66% of high school

teachers rated the state writing assessments as important (p. 16). Teachers also reported that, on the state and district assessments, relatively little writing was required (p. 16), suggesting that “writing on average mattered less than multiple-choice or short-answer questions in assessing performance in English” (p. 17). Teachers reported a frequent focus on state assessment test prep activities and materials when designing assignments for class. Applebee and Langer note that while aligning the curriculum to standards and assessment-style rubrics can be valuable, “teachers’ responses suggest that high-stakes tests were having a very direct and limiting effect on classroom emphases” (p. 17). The researchers found that the writing instruction observed in the study reflected a deeper altogether understanding of effective writing instruction. However, they note that the percent of class time spend on writing instruction was small, and that “competing priorities, such as test preparation, constrained the amount of time given to writing instruction” (p. 21).

The results of the Applebee and Langer (2013) study indicate that high-stakes assessment has a tangible presence in classes across the curriculum in secondary schools, including English language arts classrooms. One of the important findings from the study is that, in many schools, only a small amount of time is being spent in the classroom on writing instruction and activities. The researchers note that “the actual writing that goes on in typical classrooms across the United States remains dominated by tasks in which the teacher does all the composing, and students are left only to fill in the missing information” (p.27). This may be relevant to the composition of writing instruction because, according to Troia et. al (2012), students who write more frequently in the classroom for a variety of purposes showed stronger motivational writing beliefs. This finding “has implications for instructional practice, in that teachers should encourage students to

write frequently for a variety of purposes, both in and out of school, to enhance students' motivation to write" (p. 39).

The research suggests that there may be a general nation-wide trend of all students spending less time on writing. This implication may have a relation to student self-efficacy, as well. Writing self-efficacy is developed primarily through the information students gain through their own mastery experiences, the verbal and social persuasion to which they are exposed, and the vicarious experiences of their classmates. If time to write is being reduced in volume and often replaced with simple fill-in-the-blank or note-taking activities, students may have less opportunity to develop positive self-efficacy for composing through their own mastery experiences and may need to rely on the experiences of their peers and the school's social persuasion in order to make self-efficacy decisions.

If assessment affects student self-efficacy, it may have the potential to influence teacher self-efficacy as well. According to the Elish-Piper, Matthews, and Risko (2013) study regarding a sense of "invisibility" in the classroom, teachers often feel invisible and unimportant to the literacy activities of a classroom. It must be questioned if the current state of writing instruction and assessment creates a school climate that devalues teachers and leaves them with a sense of no control over the learning in their own classroom. It must further be questioned how Florida's A through F grading system influences school climate and how it might influence teachers' own self-efficacy and their perceptions of the writing in their classrooms.

### Summary

Self-efficacy research indicates that students and teachers gain the information required to make self-efficacy judgements through multiple sources, including their own mastery experiences, the experiences of their peers, and the social persuasion from the environment around them. School climate has been suggested to be a contributing factor to this social persuasion aspect of efficacy for both teachers and students. The current literature, such as the 2013 studies by Elish-Piper, Matthews, and Risko, and Applebee and Langer, also suggests that the standardized state assessments required through NCLB and ESSA may have an influence on both the instructional climate within the literacy classroom and the time spent writing in the English language arts classroom. One less-studied space within the current literature pertains to the effects of the ongoing writing assessments in Florida and the resulting grades given to Florida schools on the School Report Card on teacher self-efficacy and their perceptions of student writing. Therefore, this study seeks to explore the nature of the relationship between the Florida annual School Report Card and high school English Language Arts teachers' self-efficacy and perceptions of student writing.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this study was to determine what, if any, effect the Florida School Report Card has on teacher self-efficacy in secondary English language arts classrooms. This study also sought to determine what, if any, effect the School Report Card has on teacher perception of student writing within secondary English language arts classrooms.

This research sought to answer the following question:

- 1) How does the annual Florida School Report Card impact high school English Language Arts teachers' self-efficacy and perceptions of student writing?

Data analysis was conducted using a grounded theory methodology. In order to study the teacher response to the Florida School Report Card, the researcher surveyed and interviewed multiple secondary English Language Arts teachers at a high school in Central Florida.

### Research Setting

The data collection took place at one high school in Central Florida that has undergone changes in the grades given on the annual School Report Card. At the school site, the school received grades of D and F up until 2011, at which time the grades shifted and the school began to receive grades of B and C. According to the 2015-2016 School Improvement Plan, the school site is a Title 1 school with a 99% free and reduced lunch rate, and a student body composed of 93% minority students (p. 2).

## Participants

In order to get a sense of how the School Report Card influences the self-efficacy of secondary English Language Arts teachers, four English Language Arts (ELA) teachers of varying grade levels were interviewed and asked to complete a self-efficacy survey based off of Bandura's teacher self-efficacy scale (Bandura, 2006, p. 328). All teachers included in the research have been teaching at the school since 2011 or earlier, when the shift in grades occurred. The participants were asked to choose pseudonyms to allow them to remain anonymous in the study write-up. Moving forward, all participants will be mentioned only by their pseudonyms. The participants were:

- 1) Charmaine, a ninth-grade ELA teacher who has taught English language arts at the school site for five years. Before that, she was a resource person at an elementary school.
- 2) Arthur, who teaches dual enrollment ENC 1101 and 1102, twelfth grade English for College Readiness, and twelfth grade ESOL English 4. He has taught at the school site for six years, and has been teaching ESOL students for all of those six years. Previously, he taught at a local state college and at a middle school.
- 3) Amy, a ninth and tenth grade instructional coach and ELA teacher. She has taught at the school site for six years. She has been teaching in total for six years.
- 4) Lamont, who teaches Direct Language Acquisition (DLA) reading. He has taught at the school site for six or seven years. Previously, he taught for three or four years at a high school in a different county than the school site.

In addition to participating in a self-efficacy survey, each teacher included in the research was interviewed in a face-to-face and audio-recorded meeting to discuss in person their teaching self-efficacy and the way they perceive student writing. The interview lengths ranged from twenty-five to forty minutes, and the questions asked attempted to uncover whether or not the teachers experienced a shift in their self-efficacy and perceptions of their students' writing over time as the School Report Card shifted from lower grades to higher grades.

### Data Collection

In this study about secondary English Language Arts teachers, the data collection tools were self-efficacy surveys and face-to-face teacher interviews. The 25 survey questions were modeled after similar questions Bandura used in his teacher self-efficacy scale (Bandura, 2006, p. 328). Participants were asked to rate each item, phrased as a statements such as, "I can independently create meaningful writing assignments for students," on a scale of zero to one hundred, zero being a response of "cannot do at all" and one hundred being a response of "highly certain can do." The interview questions consisted of ten items and a list of potential follow-up questions (See Appendix C).

The research proposal and data collection tools, along with other required information, were submitted to the Office of Accountability, Research, and Evaluation of the county of research during the month of March 2016. In early May of 2016, the county approved the application (See Appendix B). Data collection took place over a period of two days in early June of 2016. An assistant principal at the school site identified all four participants, asked them if they would be willing to participate, and referred them to the researcher with a specific interview

time. On the assigned days at the assigned times, the researcher went to the school site and interviewed the participants in their classrooms, interviewing two on the first day and two on the second day. Each participant signed an Informed Consent form and was invited to ask questions or indicate concerns before beginning the interview. Before the interview, each participant was also reminded that their participation is voluntary and that they could withdraw participation at any time. Each interview was audio recorded. After each interview, the researcher gave the participant the self-efficacy survey to complete. The researcher then collected the surveys. All of the research was approved by the UCF IRB (See Appendix A).

The unit of analysis in this research was the School Report Card, as this research sought to determine how the School Report Card impacts teachers. The current literature suggests that self-efficacy is partially dependent on the climate of the school and the social persuasion in the school environment. Recent studies also suggest that the current culture of school assessment sometimes results in a sense of invisibility and unimportance among students and teachers. Finally, the literature suggests that the Florida School Report Card is noticeable unit of measurement that is seen and understood by the educational stakeholders in the community. A grounded theory methodology was used to analyze the data in order to explore how the School Report Card impacts high school ELA teachers' self-efficacy and perceptions of student writing.

### Data Analysis

A grounded theory approach was used to analyze data. Grounded theory is a methodology of data analysis that draws theory directly from data. According to Kathy Charmaz (2004), "a grounded theory analysis starts with the data and remains close to the data. Levels of



abstraction are built directly upon the data and are checked and refined by gathering further data” (p. 497). Grounded theory analysis begins with an open research question. Data collection usually takes the form of interviews and surveys. After the data is collected, repeated concepts and ideas are coded and explored. These codes can be grouped into overarching categories that help the researcher apply theory to the data. According to Kathy Charmaz, with grounded theory, “you build your theoretical analysis on what you discover is relevant in the actual worlds that you study within this area” (p. 497).

There were two different types of data collected in this study: self-efficacy survey responses and interview responses. After data collection, it was noted that most participants indicated through the survey that they generally had very high self-efficacy. Since the survey responses were all very similar and expressed little variation, they were not used to contribute to the main data analysis. Instead, they informed the analysis of the interview responses.

Data analysis began with the coding process. According to Charmaz (2004), coding the data is the step that links simply collecting data and developing emergent theory to explain it (p. 506). The first step to coding is known as “initial coding,” “open coding,” or “line-by-line coding.” In this process, the researcher begins by reading each line of data and defining the actions or events she sees occurring (p. 506).

As initial coding began on the transcribed interviews, certain repeated codes began to emerge. Notably, all participants perceived many internal and external factors as impacting their instructional methods, their students’ quality of writing, and other elements of the classroom such as student motivation. This repeated idea was coded during the initial coding process and was later separated into four focused codes. Other ideas that arose in the initial codes included

the diversity of the school's student population, the teamwork of the teachers and administration, and the frustrations, challenges, positivity, and helplessness experienced by the participants in response to events in their classroom and their school. When focused coding began, these ideas too became focused codes.

Focused coding occurs when the researcher takes earlier frequently-appearing initial codes and applies them to larger sections of data (Charmaz, 2004, p. 508). These frequently-appearing codes become categories that are used to organize and describe data. Over the course of data analysis, 10 focused codes were developed. These codes were then grouped together to describe the three common themes that arose from my analysis.

The emergent theory from this data is suggested to be Cultural Historical Activity Theory, or CHAT. The data suggests that the participants view themselves as part of an activity system where one of the tools, the School Report Card, is used to set boundaries that teachers must decide how to interact with. This will be further explored in chapter five.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to determine what, if any, effect the Florida School Report Card has on teacher self-efficacy in secondary English language arts classrooms. This study also sought to determine what, if any, effect the School Report Card has on teacher perception of student writing within secondary English language arts classrooms.

The data collected and analyzed in this study ultimately suggested that the participants – the four ELA teachers interviewed at the school site – view themselves as belonging to an activity system. Activity theory therefore provides a framework to examine how the Florida School Report Card, and other related tools such as testing, are perceived by teachers as impacting the school activity system. The use of activity theory as a framework to better understand the influence of the School Report Card and other similar tools is based on the focused and thematic codes that were drawn from the data in the coding stage of analysis.

### Initial Coding

When using a grounded theory approach, the initial coding will often guide the data collection process. Data collection and initial coding will often occur simultaneously, with each process informing the other. Due to the researcher's limited access to the study participants, however, the interviews were conducted all at one time. There was not an opportunity to conduct an initial interview and then a follow-up interview at a later date based off of the initial coding results. However, initial coding did allow the researcher to see the emerging patterns in the data.

Initial coding was done in a two-column chart. There were four charts total, with one being used for each of the participants. In the first column on the left was the transcribed

interview with the participant. In the second column on the right, codes were applied to the participant’s dialogue. An extract from an initial coding table can be seen below.

**Table 1: Example of Initial Coding**

<p>CM: It’s different now, I don’t remember what we used to use. I taught at a middle school before, we used a different curriculum. It’s also trends, too. Everyone may use something different.</p>	<p>Perceiving educational trends as shaping instructional methods (external)</p>
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The participant in this example was answering a question about how writing instruction has changed in her time teaching over the past five or six years. The initial code was “Perceiving educational trends as shaping instructional methods (external).” The notation “(external)” served as a reminder that the participants were noting many different influential external factors, or factors originating from somewhere other than themselves, on their teaching and classroom activities, and that it was likely an important idea to mark for later focused coding.

Upon completion of initial coding, there were 652 initial codes drawn from the four teacher interviews. The focused coding process then began.

### Focused Coding

The focused coding process occurred when the researcher identified the frequency of the initial codes. The researcher took note of the initial codes that appeared frequently across all four interviews, then turned these initial codes into “categories,” or focused codes. All instances of the focused code appearing in the interviews were color-coded, counted, and sorted. The focused codes and their definitions are as follows:

**Table 2: Coding Scheme**

<b>Focused Code Category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>Initial Codes</b>
Perceiving internal factors as impacting instructional methods	The participant perceives his or her own professional knowledge, decisions, or goals as influencing his or her instructional methods and choices.	“I try to choose topics where they can express themselves, write about themselves, their families, their friends.”	CM46, CM94, AR30, AR37, AR39, AR41, AR42, AR45, AR52, AR54, AR61, AR65, AR70, AR71, AR72, AR73, AR92, AR117, AR145, AR187, AR197, AM22, AM24, AM27, AM37, AM41, AM42, AM43, AM50, AM84, AM101, AM105, AM125, AM138, AM146, AM149, AM184, AM186, LT12, LT16, LT22, LT26, LT29, LT37, LT40, LT47, LT58, LT70, LT91 (49 Occurrences)
Perceiving external factors as impacting instruction methods	The participant perceives factors outside of him or herself, such as state testing, administrative decisions, or technology, as influencing his or her instructional methods and choices.	“For the most part, I use rubrics that are established by [the country of research] because they’re required by the county, required to teach according to the standards, Florida State Standards.”	CM14, CM48, CM51, CM56, CM80, CM81, CM94, CM100, AM107, AM109, AR38, AR60, AR62, AR67, AR71, AR107, AR111, AR116, AR130, AR131, AR172, AR174, AR176, AR183, AR186, AR190, AR191, AR192, AR195, AM10, AM11, AM14, AM16, AM39, AM47, AM109, AM114, AM124, AM130, AM131, AM143, AM144, AM145, AM150, AM166, AM169, AM171, AM175, AM181, LT29, LT69, LT71, LT84, LT104, LT106 (55 Occurrences)
Perceiving internal factors as impacting other elements of student writing	The participant perceives his or her own professional knowledge, decisions, or goals as influencing factors such as	“Um, I always like to tell my students too, like in writing there is no right answer. If you can prove what	CM68, AR96, AR101, AR142, AR151, AR153, AM90, AM128, AM134, AM139, AM185, AM187, LT50, LT94, LT96, LT101 (16 Occurrences)

	student writing quality or student motivation.	you're saying, or if you can gather enough evidence, you're not wrong, and so they, that kind of builds their confidence too."	
Perceiving external factors as impacting other elements of student writing	The participant perceives factors outside of him or herself, such as state testing, administrative decisions, or technology as influencing factors such as student writing quality or student motivation.	"I think it's like the rise of social media, like people share how they feel more, so like boys are more socially, it's like more socially acceptable for boys to be in touch with their emotions. So, yeah, the boys get into it now."	CM18, CM22, CM67, CM73, CM87, CM98, CM102, AR23, AR57, AR58, AR64, AR69, AR76, AR79, AR91, AR98, AR100, AR101, AR115, AR127, AR152, AM26, AM30, AM35, AM63, AM70, AM75, AM77, AM81, AM82, AM115, AM191, AM204, LT5, LT15, LT32, LT39, LT48, LT50, LT63, LT64, LT65, LT78, LT79, LT90, LT101, LT105, LT107 (48 Occurrences)
Noting a feeling of helplessness or lack of control	The participant notes a feeling of being unable to control or influence a situation, or being required to "go along" with a certain situation.	"We just pray sometimes, please don't have anything on U.S. history or U.S. government."	CM82, CM111, CM114, AR161, AR169, AR175, AR179, AR182, AR196, AM66, AM110, AM118, AM161, AM162, AM163, AM167, AM182, LT53, LT54, LT57, LT81, LT83, LT85, LT86, LT108, LT114, LT115, LT12 (28 Occurrences)
Noting a positive for self or school, a moment of confidence, or a moment of agency	The participant notes a moment of feeling in-control, confident, or positive about him or herself, or his or her accomplishments or	"When we first started all of our writing focus, I think they feared the test. You know. But then, I think things changed when	CM44, CM60, AR19, AR155, AR164, AR185, AM137, AM140, AM142, AM211, AM172, AM174, AM208, LT20, LT21, LT23, LT36, LT55, LT56, LT75 (20 Occurrences)

	teaching strategies. “I feel good about this thing I did. I feel that I have the power to do this thing.”	they started learning the process that we were using here and learned how they could master the writing test.”	
Noting a challenge or frustration	The participant notes a perceived challenge or difficulty, or discusses an event or occurrence that frustrates him or her. “This is something that is hard for me to do. This is something that is hard for our school as a whole. I am frustrated by this thing.”	“The biggest issue I have with school grades is that there’s a huge lag time between a class and the grade that we get. It’s like if you were taking a course at UCF but you wouldn’t get your grade for two years.”	CM37, CM38, CM69, CM105, AR119, AR158, AR163, AR166, AR170, AR177, AR180, AR184, AR196, AM21, AM31, AM33, AM65, AM72, AM96, AM113, AM117, AM148, AM155, AM159, AM190, AM198, AM200, AM209, AM210, LT82, LT87, LT93, LT95, LT97, LT110, LT111, LT112, LT117, LT120 (39 Occurrences)
Recognizing a variety of students, student needs, and a diverse school population	The participant notes the wide variety of students, student needs, student languages, and student cultural heritages.	“Um, many of them have interesting stories to tell because they come from other countries. [Our school] is a very heavy immigrant population of students.”	CM76, AR27, AR28, AR29, AR43, AR66, AR97, AR134, AR135, AR172, AR178, AM62, AM64, AM67, AM68, AM73, AM76, AM97, AM98, AM104, AM122, AM126, AM132, AM133, AM147, AM179, AM189, LT14, LT28, LT44, LT62, LT89, LT10 (33 Occurrences)
Perceiving the school as a unit or team	The participant perceives the school as a whole to function together to achieve common goals.	“So, it’s, uh, it’s a system. We have very strongly implemented systems when it	CM65, CM115, AR77, AR85, AR99, AR102, AR109, AR110, AR156, AR194, AM23, AM40, AM127, AM156, AM170, AM183, LT77 (17 Occurrences)

		comes to how we look at student progress or student achievement.”	
Noting a shift in perception of the quality of student writing from past to present	The participant perceives a shift, either positive or negative, in the quality of student writing from any time in the past up to the present school year.	“I think they’re not as prepared as they’ve been in the past.”	CM66, CM86, CM91, CM99, AR95, AR139, AM106, AM119, AM177, LT99, LT100 (11 Occurrences)

The column on the far left represents the focused codes that were created to sort and categorize the initial codes. The column next to it provides the definition of the code, which describes what criteria the researcher used to sort initial codes into specific categories. The next column provides an example of the code taken directly from the data. Finally, the column on the far right contains every initial code that was assigned to that category. For example, the code “AR30” is the 30<sup>th</sup> initial code in Arthur’s interview. The initial code was “Identifying influence of own instructional goals to mold instructional methods (internal),” and it was coding Arthur’s statement, “The more we practice, the better we get. That’s why practice is really important, so I have seniors for the most part, I really emphasize writing a lot. In my college course I make my students, in the first semester they have to write ten essays, and in the second semester, which is really more writing about literature, they read more and they have to write four essays.” This was then categorized as “Perceiving internal factors as impacting instructional methods, because Arthur perceived his own values as directing his instructional methods. All of the initial



codes in that category represent the same idea of the participant perceiving internal factors, such as his or her own instructional goals, as influencing the instructional methods used in their classroom.

It is important to note that not every initial code became a focused code or was sorted into a focused code category. In the initial coding process, the researcher practiced, experimented, and revised the codes, resulting in many initial codes that were unrelated to or did not inform the study, and were therefore not included in the focused coding process.

### Thematic Coding

The goal of thematic coding is to organize the focused codes into overarching themes that identify emergent patterns within coded data. To create the thematic codes, the researcher merged together the focused codes that shared similar ideas. This process is described in the following table:

**Table 3: Thematic Codes**

<b>Focused Code</b>	<b>Focused Codes Combined</b>	<b>Themes</b>
Perceiving internal factors as impacting instructional methods	Perceiving internal factors as impacting instructional methods Perceiving internal factors as impacting other elements of student writing	Perceiving self as agent for learning in the classroom. (58)
Perceiving external factors as impacting instruction methods	Perceiving external factors as impacting instruction methods Perceiving external factors as impacting other elements of student writing Noting a shift in perception of	Perceiving factors other than self as impacting instructional methods and student writing. (131)

	the quality of student writing from past to present Recognizing a variety of students, student needs, and a diverse school population	
Perceiving internal factors as impacting other elements of student writing	Noting a feeling of helplessness or lack of control Noting a positive, a moment of confidence, or a moment of agency Noting a challenge or frustration	Experiencing positive and negative feelings about self and school. (81)
Perceiving external factors as impacting other elements of student writing		
Noting a feeling of helplessness or lack of control		
Noting a positive, a moment of confidence, or a moment of agency		
Noting a challenge or frustration.		
Recognizing a variety of students, student needs, and a diverse school population		
Perceiving the school as a unit or team		
Noting a shift in perception of the quality of student writing from past to present		

In the figure above, the far left column describes the original focused codes, the middle column displays the way the codes were grouped together, and the far right column indicates the

final three overarching themes drawn from the data analysis process. Focused codes relating to the internal factors participants perceived as influencing instruction, student writing, or other classroom elements were grouped together. Focused codes relating to the external factors participants perceived as influencing instruction, student writing, or other classroom elements were also grouped together. Finally, focused codes related to the positive and negative emotions participants felt in regards to their school, classroom, students, and self were grouped together.

The resulting themes were:

1. Perceiving self as agent for learning in the classroom
2. Perceiving factors other than self as impacting instructional methods and student writing
3. Experiencing positive and negative feelings about self and school

These themes suggest that the participants perceive their activity system to be mediated by both their own actions and events outside of their control. The code “experiencing positive and negative feelings about self and school” also suggests that the participants are emotionally involved in their activity system and therefore do not see their emotions as being detached from the classroom.

### Research Questions and Findings

The research question for this study was addressed by the data collection tools chosen, which were the teacher interview and self-efficacy survey. The study was designed to inquire into the effects of the Florida School Report Card on secondary English Language Arts teachers’ self-efficacy and perceptions of student writing. Through interviewing and surveying teachers,

the researcher attempted to learn more about the School Report Card as a tool and the influences it may have within a secondary school setting.

### Research Question

The research sought to answer the following question:

1. How does the annual Florida School Report Card impact high school English Language Arts teachers' self-efficacy and perceptions of student writing?

The interview questions were crafted to attempt to explore this question. Each of the four teacher participants were asked the same ten questions, with variations in the conversation depending on their answers. The self-efficacy survey, modeled after Bandura's teacher self-efficacy survey, was used to inform the researcher's understanding of the interview data.

### Findings

In relation to the key constructs of self-efficacy and perceptions of student writing, the findings of this study are as follows:

1. At the school site, the locus-of-control and self-efficacy of secondary English Language Arts teachers may be indirectly influenced by the annual School Report Card. Notably, while the participants did not draw a direct connection between school grade and self-efficacy, they did note feelings of frustration and confusion when attempting to make sense of the consistently evolving standards to which they are held. Self-efficacy to apply the results of the School Report Card is suggested to be lowered in response to the

perceived confusion and constantly changing guidelines. Participants discussed instructional challenges related to constantly shifting standards, unclear state and district goals, confusing test results, and ultimately, a school grade that they do not feel they can apply to their own classrooms. All four participants in some way noted feelings of helplessness in the face of factors outside of their control. Additionally, participants overwhelmingly reported feelings that external factors outside of their direct control, including state and district testing, impact their classroom instructional methods. This suggests that the School Report Card and its surrounding elements may have the potential to misplace teachers' locus-of-control to outside of themselves in some areas. The participants suggested that they feel frustrated and misrepresented by the grade their school receives. They suggest that they see the School Report Card as being misapplied, used as a useless evaluation with no way for teachers to apply the results. They suggest that their outcome expectations for interacting with the school grade are low. Although participants are frustrated by the grade, the school grading process, which participants saw as a moving target, is suggested to impact participants' self-efficacy even more than the ultimate school grade itself. Because of its perceived uselessness, participants suggested that they have begun to discount the School Report Card entirely, thus removing some of its intended effectiveness for educators. However, despite what teachers may think of the tool, administrators are still required to take it into account. This may have the potential to cause boundaries for teachers that they must decide whether or not to cross. It is important to note that the participants additionally reported feelings of agency, confidence, and collaboration with each other and with the

administration. Three out of four participants also perceived that student writing has generally improved in the past five years, and that the FSA testing format is superior to the FCAT in terms of student learning benefit. It's therefore suggested that while the confusing external factors related to evaluation, testing, and School Report Card may potentially cause frustration, externally placed locus-of-control, or lowered self-efficacy, schools that create strong institutional relationships and provide adequate teacher support can alleviate some of these issues. Due to this, the school grade does not appear to have a drastic negative effect on the school climate of the school in this study.

2. At the school site, secondary English Language Arts teachers' perceptions of student writing do not appear to be directly linked to the school's grade. However, participants' general perceptions regarding themselves, their students, and their school appear to be influenced by many factors inside and outside of themselves, such as teacher/administrator relationships and interactions, testing, and their own experiences. State and district testing, especially, was a factor every participant perceived as impacting both their own instructional methods and student writing quality. Three out of four participants noted their beliefs that student writing has improved in the past five years, due to factors including a strong administration and principal, as well as the FSA test being more critical-thinking and analysis oriented than the FCAT test. The school site's annual grade has vastly improved from the previous D's and F's; however, the participants still do not feel that the grade adequately reflects the quality of the school, the students' writing, or the effort put in by students, teachers, and administration. They

noted their frustration that the gains they feel they have made as a school are not reflected by equal gains in the school's grade.

These findings highlight the constructs identified and explored in this study. Ultimately, this study found that the participants are frustrated by the school grade, as they feel that it is unfair and a misrepresentation of their school. The school grading process is suggested to impact their self-efficacy, as participants expressed doubt in their ability to apply the school grade and related testing data to their classrooms in a meaningful way. The School Report Card is perceived as a "moving target" that sets unrealistic and unfair expectations for teachers and students. There is a sense that no matter how hard the teachers and students work, it ultimately won't matter because the rules will just keep changing. The participants noted feelings of simply trying to "keep up" in an era of rapidly changing educational standards. Ultimately, all of the ten focused codes worked together to create a more complete thematic picture of the data. The data collected from each data collection tool will be explored in detail in the following sections.

### Teacher Interviews

Teacher interviews were conducted in order to gather data about the teacher participants' self-efficacy and perceptions of student writing. The interview questions were created in order to address these two categories of understanding.

Each of the four teacher participants told their own narrative regarding their own writing instruction, writing instruction at their school, their students, the factors that influence their instructional choices, and their feelings about school grade, administration, and testing. While all

of the narratives shared certain elements, three of them ultimately held a more positive view regarding students' writing abilities, while one of them was generally negative. However, all four participants shared similar views regarding factors such as the internal and external elements influencing their instructional decisions, and a sense of helplessness in relation to the School Report Card. These shared elements appeared frequently during the coding process, and therefore became the focused codes combined to create the three thematic codes drawn from the data. The thematic codes and related findings will now be discussed in further detail.

### Finding One

The first finding of this study states “at the school site, the self-efficacy of secondary English Language Arts teachers may be indirectly influenced by the annual School Report Card.” This is suggested by the way the teacher participants discussed the internal and external factors influencing them in the classroom. Exploring the ways participants viewed both internal and external classroom influences assisted the researcher in developing a richer understanding of how the teacher participants were impacted by multiple factors, including the School Report Card. Participants described feelings of self-efficacy when they had the opportunity to exercise their own instructional methods, choices, and goals. These feelings were complicated when participants discussed the external factors that influence their instructional methods. Participants suggested that these external factors shift their locus-of-control. Participants also noted their feelings of frustration and helplessness in relation to their school's grade and the grading process, which suggested a decline in their self-efficacy, in terms of their beliefs that they are capable of applying the knowledge gained from the school's grade to their own instruction. Their



outcome expectations were lower when discussing the school grade. Finally, one participant suggested the idea of “boundaries” that are set in place when teachers and administrators interact with the School Report Card.

The first thematic code is, “perceiving self as agent for learning in the classroom.” All of the participants in this study noted a number of internal factors that influence their instructional methods. In this study, “internal factors” refer to factors within the teacher, such as the teacher’s own goals, instructional knowledge, or values. Arthur, for example, saw his instructional values as a factor in shaping his instructional methods. He placed special emphasis on the practice of writing as an instructional method he chooses to use. He noted, “the more we practice, the better we get. That’s why practice is really important, so I have seniors for the most part, I really emphasize writing a lot” (AR30). Other participants expressed the same idea of being in control of their own instructional choices. Amy, being both a teacher and instructional coach, noted her instructional decisions in both singular and collective mindsets. As an independent teacher, she recalled, “I used to have the kids like, use text frames and make, like, poems about themselves and where they come from, um, we just did that as well, I’ll ask them a question and give them the frame and have them fill it in” (AM84). In terms of her collective team, she stated, “the teachers recognize what the kids need and they just, they try, they really do try to give them what they need as an individual writer” (AM125). Even Charmaine, who expressed relatively little sense of instructional control, perceived that teachers can be factors in student writing success if they “start out running” (CM46) with instruction right after the summer break. Arthur, Amy, and Lamont also expressed belief that internal factors influence other elements of the classroom such as their students’ writing. In response to a question about whether or not his students’ writing

quality has improved over the last five years, Arthur replied “probably” (AR95) and stated that this occurred “mainly because I know more about my population of students now than I did five years ago” (AR96). This suggested that Arthur perceived his own instructional skills and knowledge as having a tangible effect on his students’ writing.

It is notable that the participants’ self-efficacy is complicated by factors such as testing and state standards. For example, Amy highlighted how she and her Professional Learning Community (PLC) build assignment rubrics based on what writing elements they would like to assess for a given assignment. She stated “so usually what we do is, if they have a question the kids are going to answer at the end, we talk about like what’s more important when you’re reading the answer. Is it the getting the correct answer, or is it having them cite evidence, or is it that grammar piece” (AM43). Initially, it seemed as if she was expressing self-efficacy – she appeared to be suggesting that, with her PLC, she has the skill, knowledge, and freedom to choose what writing elements they should prioritize for assessment. Then, however, she went on to explain, “it depends on what our standard is at that time. Like when we did evidence they weren’t really worried about grammar at all” (AM47).

The second theme drawn from the coded data is, “perceiving factors other than self as impacting instructional methods and student writing.” As discussed in the previous paragraph, there is often overlapping between the first two themes. Even when teachers reported making their own instructional choices, those choices may be guided by external factors. In this study, “external factors” refer to any factor influencing classroom events that is not the teacher, such as administrative choices, testing, or the multilingual backgrounds of students. One of the most prominent external factors all four participants mentioned is the FSA test. When Amy was asked

what types of writing she does with students, she immediately began an explanation of the FSA test, saying “prior to FSA, it was very formulaic writing. So it was your standard five paragraph essay, um, topic sentence, extension, elaboration. Rinse, repeat. Since the FSA, text based writing, it’s kind of expanded” (AM10). This indicates that she perceived the FSA as influencing the types of writing and instructional methods she needs to use to teach writing in her classroom. When asked to discuss her experiences teaching writing, Charmaine responded with “we do a test. A state test. A state writing test. And basically we prepare the kids for that state writing test” (CM14). Arthur likewise noted that his instructional responsibilities teaching seniors would change in the next year, as “this coming year, I have to prepare for students who have failed the [sic.] FAS in the 10th grade and the 11th grade” (AR131).

These statements are notable because they suggest a shift in teacher locus-of-control when external factors become involved in the classroom. When the participants discussed their internal instructional choices, they often made “I” statements and took positive ownership over their chosen methods and results. For example, when discussing his way of helping students overcome writing challenges, Lamont stated, “I try not to just give them an answer to it. So, if they’re having trouble with something, I’ll encourage them to go on and check the web, talk to their friends, brainstorm, and then I’ll try to give them little hints through questioning, rather than direct answer” (LT47). Similarly, when Arthur was asked the same question, he responded, “I do use a lot of team writing, where, you know, a couple of students will work together on their writing” (AR73). This indicates Arthur’s belief in his own skill and ability to choose instructional methods that will best help students overcome challenges. However, when Arthur began to speak about the effects of the FSA, he did not express this same internal locus-of-

control. When asked about how he builds rubrics for his students, he stated “for the most part, I use rubrics that are established by [the country of research] because they’re required by the county, required to teach according to the standards, Florida State Standards. And there’s a lot of materials that the county had produced and even some that the state has produced about the nature of rubrics” (AR38). Although he still made an “I” statement, Arthur also noted that he is required to use the county and state material. Likewise, when asked if she felt the school has been successful in integrating reading and writing instruction together, Amy noted that the instructional focus is often determined by which test is looming, saying “as the test gets closer, we’re like we really have to address this, and it kind of puts everything on hold, and we go back to strictly writing practice for like a week straight” (AM150). Amy noted that the tests determine what the teachers teach and when they teach it, and that this often requires the separation of key concepts that she believes should be taught together.

Theme 3 relates to “experiencing positive and negative feelings about self and school.” Theme 3 includes discussion about the School Report Card in the form of participants communicating their reactions to it. The School Report Card grade is also an external factor that has the potential to influence instructional methods or other classroom events. In discussing the school grade and the surrounding factors that contribute to the grading process, including testing and graduation rates, participants expressed frustration and helplessness.

The idea of the school grade as an unfair “moving target” was expressed clearly by Lamont. He described his feelings about the school grade by comparing the rapidly shifting standards to running a marathon. He said “right now, we’ve just been running marathon super-speed pace for a couple years, and each time we get to the end, they’re like oh yeah, by the way,

you should have gone another mile. But the finish line was here, but you should have gone to here instead” (LT115). He reflected on the frustration he felt regarding being kept in the dark about the way the school grade is measured, saying “it doesn’t seem like it’s really a fair moving target for us, because often, we don’t even know what the new cut-off score is going to be until after the kids have already taken the test” (LT82). Also, he recounted the helplessness of not even being given the necessary materials to prepare his students for the tests that play a part in determining the school’s grade. He stated, “there were question types that we as teachers had not even seen, that the kids got on the test. So all of a sudden, we’ve been teaching them to do one thing, and this whole new thing pops up. And hopefully we gave them the tools to prepare them just by helping them get overall better, but there’s still the difficulty of we didn’t quite know what to expect” (LT83, LT84, LT85). This expresses helplessness, as Lamont noted that he did not even have a chance to exercise his skill and knowledge as a teacher, as he was misled about what was going to be on the test.

Arthur and Amy also expressed similar feelings regarding the unfairness of the school’s grade. When he asked if he was aware of his school’s most recent grade, Arthur replied, “I think we received a C last year and the year before we had a B. They changed the rules on us” (AR166). He continued by comparing the school grade to a college professor grading a class unfairly. He mimics the voice of a professor, stating, “halfway through, by the way, you guys, you’re doing too well on my work so I’ve decided to make it even harder for you now to do that. And, uh, I won’t let you know until after school’s out what you got. So yeah, I have a lot of problems with that” (AR170). When asked what she knows about the school’s most recent grade, Amy replied “we were a C. Very close to a B, so close. Yeah. They changed the equation” (AM198).

Arthur, Amy, and Lamont also expressed the feeling that the school grade does not reflect the quality of the school, and that it misrepresents the school. When Arthur was asked if he felt that the school's grade accurately reflects the quality of the school's learning, he replied, "No. It doesn't. It doesn't grade the effort there. Because of No Child Left Behind, we have kids at all different grade levels, we have some who are doing really well, and are doing rigorous work, but we have a one grade fits all" (AR177, AR178, AR179). Amy commented on her school's ability to serve students with many diverse backgrounds, and discusses a situation where a student might have a condition such as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), but is able to be successful at their school. She stated, "that kid may not, yeah, he may not get the perfect score on his FSA, but did that kid truly learn and get an education, absolutely. So sometimes, I don't think the school grade captures everything that's going on" (AM210). Lamont expressed the idea that the school's grade ignores the true gains the students make if those gains do not correspond to a higher score on the FSA. When asked if the school's grade is an accurate reflection of the learning that goes on in the school, he replied, "no. And I especially don't think it considers how we get the kids" (LT117).

Notably, Arthur and Lamont both mention the challenges of graduation rates factoring into the school grade. Lamont discussed the frustrations of students' true learning gains not being taken into account, which impacts graduation and the school's grade, saying, "graduation time 30 percent of your kids are still below grade level in reading. Yeah, but 85 were below, and of that 85, like 60 percent of them were below a third grade level. Now those kids are at a ninth grade level. Yeah, they're not at a twelfth grade level. We already got them to move up six, seven years in the three years they've been here. That's still not enough to get them where they need to

graduate” (LT120). He suggested he feels helpless as a teacher, being able to do nothing about the way his students and his school are ultimately measured for success. He said, “it’s painful to see a kid who really has worked hard and really gotten a lot better, but they’re still not there, because they had so far to go,” (LT121). Arthur noted the pressures put on teachers who teach twelfth grade to keep the graduation rate high. He stated, “we’re really affected by graduation rates. That’s probably the number one priority for senior teachers. We have to have a good graduation rate to keep a high grade, or to get a high grade. We did have a B at one time” (AR182, AR183). Interestingly, this suggests an oversimplification of students’ learning as viewed by the school as a whole. Graduation rates are not simply influenced by twelfth grade teachers; students are prepared for graduation over the course of their entire school career. And yet, the pressure to make sure students graduate is, as reported by Arthur, put onto twelfth grade teachers.

The participants also suggested that the School Report Card is a confusing measurement and that it is very difficult to apply the results to the classroom to improve instruction. Arthur noted his frustration, saying “the biggest issue I have with school grades is that there’s a huge lag time between a class and the grade that we get. It’s like if you were taking a course at UCF but you wouldn’t get your grade for two years” (AR158). He continued, saying, “that’s one of my biggest issues with all this testing that we do. It’s all to evaluate, us our teaching and then our kids for graduation, and none of it is to actually diagnose their problems or help them with their writing problems” (AR163). Amy noted, from the perspective of an instructional coach, the challenges that go along with the not understanding what specific FSA scores mean and how they are factored into other measurements. She stated, “it’s also a struggle, for example, with our

FSA rubric, if you ask the state what a proficient or master is, they'll give you a different answer than the district. The district at one point gave us an answer, and it was like, well it's very school by school, so nobody even really knows. When we get the data, like, what is a passing score?" (AM162, AM163). Due to the confusing nature of the school's grade and related data, some teachers have begun to discount them entirely. Lamont noted that he feels the school grade was once a more meaningful measurement than it is now. When he was asked why, he stated, "because we knew what it meant. It's, we can talk about what it means after the fact, and that's all well and good, but when you're working towards a goal, you have to know what the goal is" (LT114).

The idea of the school grade creating "boundaries" was also explored. School grade is a factor that teachers and administrators must be aware of, even if teachers discount it. This creates a situation where teachers are discounting the school grade as a useless measurement, but the administration must still attempt to guide the school towards raising the grade. Lamont, who teaches ESOL, suggested this idea. He stated, "When I first started as a reading teacher, I was actually told, you shouldn't be doing any writing in the classroom. I did anyway, but it was like oh, no, no, that's the language arts English teacher's department, you're reading, just teach them how to read" (LT75). Arthur also expressed that he crossed boundaries in his classroom. He stated, "We do do writing, most of my writing is towards getting them ready for college, because I know they need to have that, and I'm not just gonna, even though we're not graded on it, I'm not just gonna let them struggle in college because they're not prepared" (AR187). Arthur suggested that he is expected to focus less on writing due to the fact that his twelfth graders aren't graded on it. However, he still noted that he chooses to teach writing for college readiness



anyway, because he refuses to let his students be unprepared. This suggests that the external state and district requirements faced by teachers and administration may create boundaries that teachers must decide how to interact with.

While individual teachers may be frustrated by the school's grading process, the school's climate is likely not affected to the same degree. This may be because of the strong administration and teacher support reported to be accessible at the school. Arthur, for example, noted his frustration regarding all the testing he must contend with, saying, "this year I felt more like I was working for a test prep company rather than teaching English" (AR175). He also noted, however, "you know, immigrant schools normally don't do that well because we have so many non-English speakers. But we worked really hard to get there and that means doing well" (AR185). Arthur's use of "we" to talk about his school, and his perception that his school works hard, suggests that he views himself as part of a collective unit working towards a positive goal, despite the uncontrollable challenges of testing, school grade, and even the multilingual backgrounds of his students.

Although the participants expressed helplessness and frustration regarding some of the external factors and school grading systems they must contend with, it is notable that they additionally reported feelings of agency, confidence, and collaboration with each other and with the administration. When asked if she feels the quality of her students' writing has improved, for example, Amy noted that she thinks it has, and that one of the reasons for this is the strong support system in place for teachers at the school. She said, "I think that, um, now though, there's just so much support and like teachers, we've done a lot of training with building relationships with kids" (AM124). In addition to this being an example of an external factor

(support by the administration) that is perceived as having a positive effect on students and teachers, this statement also suggests that Amy feels that the school is improving, despite the struggles and frustration that come from external pressures. Amy also discussed how there was an overall positive shift in the school's goals and strategies when the current principal came in. She stated, "I know, when I started here, we were under a different principal, and it was a lot of, like, strategies. He was an AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) principal and so he was really big on what strategies are you using in your classroom to help these kids, what strategies, what strategies. And then when [the current principal] came in, that was one of her biggest pushes, was building relationships. Because, for our kids, at this school especially, they have not only academic struggles, but struggles outside, so why come to school?" (AM130, AM131, AM132).

In summary, the first finding of this study suggests that the annual School Report Card has an indirect effect on secondary ELA teachers' self-efficacy and locus-of-control. As the participants did not indicate that the school's grade specifically made them feel that they are more capable or less capable of instruction, a direct correlation between the School Report Card and self-efficacy was not suggested. This finding will be further discussed in chapter five.

## Finding Two

Finding two of this study states "At the school site, secondary English Language Arts teachers' perceptions of student writing do not appear to be directly linked to the school's grade." When the participants discussed their students' writing, three out of four of them noted their perceptions that their students writing has improved in the time since the school's grade

improved. They noted a variety of factors perceived as causing this improvement, including the FSA test being superior to the FCAT test, a strong school administration, the addition of technology into the school, and their own individual growth as teachers. This finding suggests that the participants' perceptions of their students' writing are colored by multiple internal and external factors. Additionally, this finding suggests that the participants see an improvement in their students' writing, and yet do not see that improvement correlating to what they believe should be an increase in school grade. They see their students making gains, and yet they still receive a C as a school. This may be responsible for creating frustration amongst the teachers.

Three of the four teacher participants noted a perceived increase in student writing quality over the past five years. Charmaine, however, noted a perceived decrease in student writing quality. When asked if the quality of student writing is better now than it was five or six years ago, Charmaine replied, "I think the quality is not better. I think the quality is, mainly because of the digital technology that is being used in schools. And I also think that students aren't being made to write" (CM66, CM67, CM68). Charmaine noted that the quality of student writing has not gotten better, and she cited the reasons for that as the addition of technology, and also the fact that students aren't being "made to write." Charmaine noted technology several times during her interview as an uncontrollable external force that impacts her students' writing. She noted, "student writing has changed because I think they, um, just being on the computer, I think, just, it's, they're more apt to type less than they were when they were hand writing" (CM86, CM87). Charmaine noted in her interview a feeling that technology negatively impacts student writing quality, but that it is also a factor that is being implemented into schools that she is helpless to control. She stated, "Gone are the days of picking up a newspaper. Gone are the

days of picking up a magazine. They don't do that type of reading, so the background knowledge and the information that they know is just not there for them to pull on when they're writing, whereas back years ago, years ago, it was more so. We brought newspapers into the classroom. We used magazines and stuff. Students were, you know, even the use of the library, that's a whole other topic. It's different" (CM100, CM102). This statement suggests that she views societal change at large as a factor that impacts her instructional methods and the quality of her students' writing. When asked to discuss the difference between student writing from five or six years ago and student writing currently, Charmaine stated, "I just remember it being an easier, better process for it to teach writing" (CM105). She also declined to discuss the school's grade, suggesting a feeling of helplessness in the face of it by stating, "if that's a schoolwide grade and it shows that's where our students are, then, you know, so be it" (CM111).

The other three participants all noted a perceived increase in student writing quality. As previously noted, when Arthur was asked if he felt that the quality of his students' writing has increased, he said, "probably. Mainly because I know more about my population of students now than I did five years ago," (AR95, AR96). When asked the same question Amy noted, "Yes, yeah, definitely. I think that, um, I think the kids have, they're like held accountable more now" (AM119). She also noted, "I think that, um, they're much better this year than last year at the evidence piece," (AM106). Lamont did not outright state that the overall quality of his students' writing has increased or decreased, but he noted, "I think the Common Core has helped to shift writing to more of the areas where it's needed" (LT106). He also noted that he perceived technology as being a helpful tool to help students' writing, stating, "the technology has made a world of difference, especially for my struggling language kids. One of the best things that my

kids who've shot up the most have done is, they read the article in English, their native language, and they read it again in English" (LT48). All three of these participants noted that their students are making gains for a number of internally and externally driven reasons.

However, while the participants note positive changes in the school in the past five years, they also noted that the school grade does not reflect those gains. As previously discussed, Arthur, Amy, and Lamont perceived the school's grade as being unfairly applied and misrepresenting what is going on at the school. Amy noted, "I don't think that the, I don't think school grades in general give you a good gauge of what's going on at a school, because, I grew up in this area. And, a lot of my friends went to a different school in this area, and my parents chose to send me here, and I think that, um, parents are put off by a school grade. They might go, oh this school's an A, so I'm gonna send my kid here. Well this school is a C. But I think that you have to look at the population that we serve. And think about how much more work it took to get us to a C" (AM200). She goes on to note, "like some of those schools that are As, those kids are affluent, they grew up with computers, they grew up with parents who read to them, they have everything they need to know how to do it, whereas we serve a totally different population" (AM204). This speaks to the strong sense of identity that the participants indicated and that is expressed in the codes "recognizing a variety of students, student needs, and a diverse school population" and "perceiving the school as a unit or team."

In summary, the second finding of this study suggests that the school's grade does not appear to be directly linked to the participants' perceptions of their students' writing. However, the participants overall noted gains in their students' writing in the last five years since the

school's grade increased, and are frustrated that the grade is still only at a C due to unattainable goals and the fact that the learning gains may not be reflected in the testing data.

### Self-Efficacy Surveys

The self-efficacy surveys used in this study (see Appendix D) were modeled after Bandura's teacher self-efficacy survey. Ultimately, the surveys were used to inform the data collected from the participant interviews. During the interviews, the participants indicated that they felt many external factors outside of their control impact their instructional methods and their students' writing. During the interviews, participants noted moments of self-efficacy when they had space free of those external factors to choose their own instructional methods.

It is important to note that the self-efficacy survey data may not be as reliable as the interview data. There were printed instructions on the survey, and the surveys were verbally explained before the participants responded. However, all participants rated their self-efficacy in the "highly certain can do" range for almost every question. There are several possible reasons for this, including the fact that the participants might not have totally understood the survey, or that rating themselves highly on the first couple of questions skewed their perceptions of subsequent questions and answers. Despite the limitations of the survey data, they can still be used to inform the interview data. The surveys and their limitations will be further discussed in chapter five.

### Summary

Much of the data gathered from this study concern the internal and external factors that influence teachers within the classroom, and how teachers feel about these factors. The data were saturated with externally-related codes – participants noted again and again the many external factors they feel impact their instructional methods and their students’ writing. This may have both positive and negative consequences. Participants noted the strong support systems and administration at the school, and how they can influence instructional methods in a positive way. They also noted the challenges that come from state and district testing, and how their instructional methods can be taken out of their own control. Overall, this suggests that the participants feel they do not operate in a vacuum. They are aware of the many factors that influence them within the classroom.

The School Report Card is not suggested to directly influence teacher self-efficacy. That is, it is not a matter of a teacher seeing that her school has a C and therefore feeling less capable as a teacher. Rather, self-efficacy to apply the results of the School Report Card is suggested to be lowered in response to the perceived confusion and constantly changing guidelines. The participants suggested doubt in their own abilities to review the School Report Card, learn where their weaknesses are, and then work with students to raise scores in needed areas. At best, the participants viewed the School Report Card as a meaningless and arbitrary measurement. At worst, they viewed it as a frustrating misrepresentation of their hard work that they are not capable of using in a practical way. In any case, it is notable that the School Report Card is not, at this particular school site, perceived as a tool that helps teachers better meet the needs of students.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS**

### Emergent Theory: Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT)

According to Kain and Wardle (2014), “activity theory gives us a helpful lens for understanding how people in different communities carry out their activities” (p. 275). When applying activity theory, researchers use the concept of the “activity system” to examine relationships between the multiple components of a particular activity. The different components of the system communicate and interact with each other in order for the system to ultimately achieve the desired short-term and long-term outcomes of the activity.

According to Kain and Wardle, an activity system is “a group of people who share a common object and motive over time, as well as the wide range of tools they use together to act on that object and realize that motive” (p. 275). Additionally, an activity system is ongoing, object-directed, historically conditioned, dialectically structured, tool-mediated, and involves human interaction (p. 276). This means that, in order to be an activity system, a group must have a history that can be traced over time, attempt to achieve specific goals, include interdependent elements, use tools to accomplish activities, and have members who interact with one another (p. 276).

The six components of an activity system are: subjects, tools, rules, community, division of labor, and motives. The subjects of the system are the people engaged in an activity who are the focus of a study on the activity (p. 277). The tools are the objects or systems of symbols used by the subjects and community to accomplish the goals of the activity. The rules are the “laws, codes, conventions, customs, and agreements” (p. 277) followed by participants of the activity.



The activity is shaped by the larger community, which includes the people and groups of people who have knowledge, values, and goals that shape the activity. Within the system, the division of labor ensures that participants each have a share in the work of the activity. Finally, the motives of the activity are the reasons the participants are engaging in the activity at all, and can be described in terms of the short-term and long-term goals of the activity (p. 277).

According to Kain and Wardle's definition of activity theory, the school site involved in this study is an activity system. Founded in 1959 and still acting as one of Central Florida's largest high schools, the school site is both ongoing and historically conditioned. The school's multiple departments are dialectic, and all subjects within the school use tools in order to accomplish their goals.

At the school site, the ultimate long-term goal is helping all students acquire the knowledge they will need to be successful outside of high school. To accomplish this goal, the teachers in the school – who, in this study, are the subjects of the system – use physical tools such as computers and books, as well as systems of symbols such as grades. All administrators, teachers, and students in the system have their own roles in the system, indicating a strong division of labor. The school's community is the wider network of high schools within Central Florida, as well as Florida and U.S. policymakers and departments of education. Additionally, all participants in the system follow certain customs, conventions, and rules that facilitate a learning environment.

The findings of this study relate to this activity system primarily through the tools of the system. The findings of the study suggest that the School Report Card is a tool that is being misapplied within the activity system. The overall academic community, especially state and

national policymakers, is responsible for the School Report Card. Within the activity system, the teachers, who had no hand in creating the standards, tests, or school grading criteria, must still deal with them. Therefore, this important tool was created for the use of people within the system by people who are outside of the system. The purpose of a tool within an activity system is to help participants in the system accomplish the goals of the activity. If the activity for teachers is “teaching” and the broad ultimate goal for the activity is “student learning,” then the participants overwhelmingly suggested that they do not view the tool as helping them accomplish that goal. Instead, they view it as a burden that often removes instructional choices from teachers’ hands, misrepresents their school and accomplishments, and ultimately, is constantly shifting and impossible to use for its intended purpose. CHAT is a way to better understand the way the School Report Card functions as a tool. The findings of this study will be further discussed in the following sections, as well as the ultimate implications of those findings for teachers, school policy, and school curriculum.

### Finding One

The first finding of this study states “at the school site, the self-efficacy of secondary English Language Arts teachers may be indirectly influenced by the annual School Report Card.” This was seen in the focused and thematic codes that arose from the interviews, especially the many instances of participants reporting internal and external factors influencing their instructional choices. When the participants discussed the internal factors influencing their instruction, such as their own skills, perspectives, or values, they expressed their self-efficacy as teachers of English by noting their own perceived ability to make informed instructional choices.

The participants in this study noted many instances where they felt that they were making their own instructional decisions. These instances all suggest that the participants are expressing self-efficacy. As defined by Bandura (1997), self-efficacy is a belief in “one’s capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required to produce given attainments” (p.3). The participants’ responses suggest that they often have a degree of self-efficacy when it comes to their own instruction. They feel that, in terms of their own skills and knowledge as teachers, they are capable of choosing which instructional methods to use, executing those methods successfully (which will be explored further in the discussion of the teacher self-efficacy survey data), and eventually influencing their students’ writing.

The participants of this study also explored the external factors, such as state and district testing, administrative decisions, and societal change, that impact their instructional methods. The participants suggested that these external factors can have positive or negative impacts on the classroom, but that they also take away their sense of choice and their ability to make decisions based on their own instructional knowledge and skill. Participants also discussed how their internal teaching decisions are complicated by external factors. This suggests that, even when teachers make their own instructional choices, they understand that they do not do so in a vacuum. Their choices may be guided by external factors such as state standards and the tests that assess students based on those standards. Amy’s statements regarding the separation of reading and writing instruction also suggests that the standards guiding instructional choices may guide teachers towards certain philosophies regarding writing. In the case of the assignment she discusses, Amy and her PLC viewed and taught writing as a collection of elements to be used and assessed separately rather than as a unified process. This is notable, because Amy also

indicated in her interview that she values a process-oriented approach to writing instruction. This may indicate that external factors such as standards can influence how a teacher acts as an agent for learning in her own classroom. Additionally, this speaks to the idea of the School Report Card factoring into boundary-setting for teachers and students. As discussed by Amy, reading and writing are often separated into two distinct subjects due to the way that they are separately tested. Lamont also noted that he was told to only teach reading in his reading classroom, and to not teach writing, which may have been an attempt by the administration to raise the reading test scores of Lamont's students. This created a boundary that Lamont decided to ignore and cross – he states, “I did it anyway,” indicating that he decided not to keep reading and writing separate in his classroom.

External factors were also suggested to impact participants' locus-of-control. Participants suggested that their locus-of-control shifts to be external in the face of external factors. While the participants feel that they have the skills and professional knowledge to appropriately choose and successfully execute instructional methods, they do not feel that they have the opportunity to do so. In the face of testing, participants no longer felt that they had the ability to make choices. They felt as if their decisions were made for them by an outside force they cannot control. This idea leads into the ideas of frustration and a perceived sense of helplessness, both of which were expressed throughout all four participant interviews.

The data collected from the teacher interviews suggest that the participants may be frustrated by both the school grade and the school grading process. When the participants discussed school grade, they usually expressed frustration or helplessness at the process, noting feelings of being unfairly graded and unable to do anything about it. This suggests that the

participants had a lack of self-efficacy for dealing with the school grade. They do not believe they are overly capable of influencing it, but they are aware of how it guides their instructional methods, and how they cannot do anything to change that fact. They also noted frustration at the ultimate grade the school receives, noting that they feel it misrepresents their school. This ties into the idea of collective school efficacy, which, according to Bandura, can be influenced by teachers' sense of lack of voice within the organization. This idea may be represented by the code "helplessness," which participants often expressed when discussing the school's grade and their inability to meaningfully interact with it.

The idea of participants expressing "helplessness" is notable because this may suggest an opposite state to self-efficacy. This, combined with the finding that participants expressed doubt in their abilities to apply the school grade to their own classrooms, discussed below, suggests that school grade may indirectly influence the self-efficacy of secondary ELA teachers. Participants expressed frustration at the sensation that the grade is an unfair "moving target," that it misrepresents their school, and that it is a confusing tool to interpret and apply.

This suggests that, in the face of being helpless to actually apply the school grade data to their own classrooms, or influence the grade of their school in a meaningful way, the participants may instead simply perceive it to be useless and discount it altogether. This also suggests that teachers have lower self-efficacy in terms of their ability to apply the school grade to their classrooms. They may feel that they are unable to accurately adjust their instruction to address the needs indicated by the grade, as the grade is unclear about what those needs are. They may feel, additionally, that they are unable to contribute to raising the school grade. Their overall responses to questions about the School Report Card suggest that they feel it is an overall

hopeless endeavor, and that their outcome expectations are lowered. They suggest that, no matter what their actions, the school's grade will not respond appropriately.

Despite the challenges noted by the participants, they also suggested that the relationships created within the faculty and with the administration and principal helped to create positive situations in the school. It's therefore suggested that while the confusing external factors related to evaluation, testing, and School Report Card may potentially cause frustration, externally placed locus-of-control, or lowered self-efficacy, schools that create strong institutional relationships and provide adequate teacher support can alleviate some of these issues and create positive situations as well. This idea will be further explored during the discussion of finding two.

The first finding of this study suggests that the annual School Report Card has an indirect effect on secondary ELA teachers' self-efficacy and locus-of-control. The participants indicated that many of the external factors, including testing, which factor into the school grading process, do in fact impact their locus-of-control. The participants expressed self-efficacy when discussing their own instructional choices. When discussing testing and the other factors involved in school grade, they instead expressed feeling that they no longer had the ability to make instructional choices. They felt as if their decisions were made for them by an outside force they cannot control. Although participants noted frustration at both the school's grade and the process by which the school is grades, the school grading process is suggested to influence participants' self-efficacy even more than the ultimate grade the school receives. Participants suggested that their outcome expectations were influenced by the School Report Card. When thinking in terms of the School Report Card, they do not feel that they are overly capable of influencing the

outcome. They feel that their actions matter less. They felt that the School Report Card grading process is a moving target that they cannot control, cannot apply to their classrooms, and sets boundaries for their instruction. However, it was noted that the participants still felt their students' writing had improved in the last five years, and that this may be because of a sense of school unity and an overall supportive administration.

### Finding Two

Finding two of this study states "At the school site, secondary English Language Arts teachers' perceptions of student writing do not appear to be directly linked to the school's grade." Charmaine's interview was notable because she was the only participant who had a more negative view of her students' writing. She states that students don't do much writing in the classroom anymore, and that she believes this has played a part in the decline of student writing quality. This is notable in terms of self-efficacy, because as an ELA teacher, Charmaine doesn't perceive her own ability to include more writing in her classroom. She perceives the fact that students aren't being "made to write" as a problem, but doesn't see herself as having the ability to make them write. This may speak to a lack of self-efficacy – she may not believe that she is capable of independently introducing more writing into her classroom, either because the set boundaries will not allow her, or because she does not feel that she has the instructional skills to do so. Additionally, her statements may speak to an externally placed locus-of-control. She may feel that she no longer has a say in the writing events of her own classroom, and that they are instead being dictated by external forces she cannot control.

Throughout her interview, Charmine placed emphasis on technology as an external factor that has decreased the quality of student writing. In terms of self-efficacy and locus-of-control, this suggests that she may view societal change in general as a factor she cannot control but that still has the ability to alter her classroom. Her statements suggest that there are so many external factors influencing her classroom that she no longer has the ability to influence the quality of her students' writing on her own. Charmaine's interview suggests that importance of teachers being flexible and able to change with the educational trends and evolving technologies that color classrooms nationwide. Due to Charmaine's challenges adapting to societal and technological challenges, and the external factors that have infiltrated her classroom, Charmaine views student writing as having declined in quality.

The other three participants all perceived student writing quality as increasing, and they noted a variety of internal and external reasons for those perceived gains. They note personal development as teachers, a school culture of student accountability, Common Core driving writing instruction in a more positive direction than FCAT previously did, and the addition of technology into the classrooms as factors that influence the increase in student writing quality. It is notable that many of these are factors that also influence the school's grade, and a general improvement in terms of these factors is likely why the school grade rose from D's and F's to B's and C's. Therefore, it is suggested that the same factors that influence school grade in a positive direction do so because they influence other factors of the school in a positive direction. Teacher perceptions therefore also rise.

While the participants note positive changes in the school in the past five years, they also feel that the school grade does not reflect those gains. Amy noted her feelings that, although her



school is a C, a student may attend there and still get a strong education. She discusses her belief that although a particular student at her school may not get a good score on the FSA, that student is still learning due to the good teachers and environment of the school. The participants noted the diversity of their students and the challenges that come along with that, and they also perceived the school as a team working together to achieve goals. Likewise, Lamont, as noted previously, also discussed the school's grade not taking into account "how we get the kids," indicating that he perceives the students and teachers make great gains, and yet that does not reflect in the school's grade. This idea that the school grade does not take the hard work of teachers and students into account is reflected in the feelings of frustration and helplessness discussed in finding one. Additionally, it speaks to the notion that a good score on assessments such as the FSA does not necessarily translate to "learning" for all students. Amy, Lamont, and Arthur all perceived their students as making learning gains, even though those gains may not show up directly on standardized assessments. This is another indicator that, for teachers, the school grade may be simply an unfair measurement that does not provide accurate information or accurately reflect the real story of what goes on in the school.

### Self-Efficacy Surveys

In conjunction with the interviews, the self-efficacy surveys suggest that, in terms of their own skills, participants felt very capable of successfully completing the tasks required of them as an ELA teacher of writing. However, they feel that they are not always given the opportunity to exercise those skills. This is seen in the way the participants answered the surveys. All of the participants generally rated themselves as 100s, the highest possible rating on the scale, in terms

of questions directly related to their own skills, such as “I can independently create meaningful writing assignments for students,” “I can create meaningful writing assignments within my PLC,” and “I can successfully complete the writing assignments I give to students.” Participants also rated themselves 80s, 90s, and 100s in other questions relating to what they are capable of doing in the classroom, such as, “I can raise student scores on standardized writing assessments within the school year,” and “I am a meaningful factor in my students’ writing success or failure.” This suggests that the participants may feel they have the skills and the capability to do these tasks and that ultimately, they are an important factor in their own classroom.

The interviews, however, suggest that the participants feel that, although they might have the ability, they do not have as much opportunity to exercise this ability. This is indicated by the high number of external factors participants noted as influencing their instructional methods. Over all four interviews, participants noted 131 (recount) instances of external factors, ranging from administration, to testing, to the literacy abilities and multilingual backgrounds of their students, to technology, as influencing which instructional methods they use in the classroom. This suggests that while teachers feel that they are capable of successfully completing the tasks of an ELA teacher, in practice, they might not have the opportunity to make their own instructional choices and goals.

Notable, one survey question in particular complicates this finding. All participants rated themselves as “highly certain can do” on the question “I can meaningfully contribute to the design of the writing curriculum in my classroom.” The participants may simply be suggesting that they *could*, if given the opportunity, contribute meaningfully to the writing curriculum. However, they may also be expressing a certainty that they already can do this. As the question

may have been unclear, and as the codes drawn from the interview are much more numerous, this question may be considered an anomaly. However, it does warrant further questioning in a later study.

### Implications for Teachers and Administrators

Arthur, the most senior teacher who participated in this study, noted during his interview that, “if it’s not part of what’s graded, even though it might be important, we’re not going to focus on it as hard as we should. Which does bother me because obviously I’ve been around here for a while and I would like to focus more on academics. Not just on passing tests” (AR195, AR196). This statement indicates his historically conditioned perceptions of how school works. Arthur remembers a time when he was able to focus on learning with his students. Now, he feels that he has to shift his focus to “passing tests” instead. This begs one significant question – why are these two things perceived to be mutually exclusive?

When school grades were introduced in Florida schools in 1999, and when standardized testing exploded into schools nationwide through No Child Left Behind in 2002, the idea was not to hinder learning in any way. The goal of school accountability was never to focus on “tests” instead of “learning.” School Report Cards are about “engaging parents and communities in meaningful discussions about the academic challenges and opportunities facing their schools” (U.S. Department of Education, 2013, p. 6). The U.S. Department of Education notes, “In the same way that data enable educators to make better decisions about teaching and learning, data can also help parents and other community members work more effectively with educators and local school officials” (p. 6). In other words, the reasons schools receive rankings such as grades

are so that teachers can use the data to make more informed instructional choices, and so that parents and stakeholders can be informed members of their local educational community. The School Report Card is intended to provide data for all stakeholders to use in a practical way, by informing administrators, teachers, and parents where the gaps in learning are so that they can be addressed.

However, the narratives told by the teacher participants in this study did not speak to this being the case. They told narratives of frustration and feeling helpless in the face of rapidly shifting standards. While they noted that they felt the FSA test was an improvement on the FCAT, they simultaneously told stories of not being aware of what the graded tests mean, and of being kept in the dark about the contents of the test in the first place. Taken as a unit, the participants of this study indicated a feeling of cautious optimism about the direction of education in the U.S. – but they also suggested an underlying feeling that they as teachers might not be fully along for the ride. The data were saturated with codes relating to teachers feeling out-of-control of their own classrooms. This study overall suggests that the School Report Card and surrounding factors misplace teachers' locus-of-control and lower their outcome expectations for what they can accomplish in terms of state and district standards. Teachers may feel that they are chasing moving targets.

Moving forward in the era of standards and accountability, it will be important for administrators and teachers to forge strong relationships in each school. At the school site of this study, the administration, principal, and faculty were perceived overall as being strong, which may help alleviate some of the tension caused by the external factors influencing the school. The strong principal was perceived as helping teachers make as much sense as they could of the

school's grade (AR156, AR194) and directing teachers to meet schoolwide goals, such as building relationships with the students (AM131). The faculty was perceived as being adaptable and willing to learn in order to meet student needs (LT77, AM184). The administration was perceived as offering professional development opportunities to support teachers (AM183). These factors were suggested by participants to be part of a positive schoolwide support system which encouraged teachers to see themselves as part of a team. When facing challenges, school teams will need to form strong and positive relationships so that they work together effectively and provide support for all teachers. In future studies exploring accountability measures such as school grade and assessment, the effects of strong organizational bonds should be further examined.

### Implications for Policy

Currently, the policy for how schools receive a grade is scattered throughout several different assessments and requirements. For example, gains in English language arts are measured through the use of the FSA and the Florida Standards Alternative Assessment (FSAA), which are based on the Florida Standards. Mathematics gains are measured through the FSA, the FSAA, and the End of Course (EOC) Exam, which is used for other subject areas as well and is based on either the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards or the Florida State Standards depending on the discipline. Gains in science are measured through the NGSSS Test, the EOC, and the FSAA (Florida Department of Education, 2016, p. 2). In grades 5 and 8, students are still given the Statewide Science Assessment. Students who still have the Reading FCAT 2.0 as a graduation requirement are required to take the Reading FCAT 2.0 Retake, even though the

FCAT and FCAT 2.0 have been totally removed from every other discipline and replaced with the FSA, FSAA, EOC, and NGSSS.

Participants in this study reported confusion in the face of test results, and Amy suggested that the state and district may not even agree on what they mean (AM163). If the purpose of assessment and the resulting school grade is to engage the community in addressing issues in learning, the data that come from the process must be clear, agreed upon, and usable. The participants in this study overwhelmingly reported that the current data are not usable for classroom and instructional purposes. If teachers are not able to implement the data in a meaningful way, the School Report Card is not being effectively implemented as a tool. In order to be meaningful for teachers, parents, and students, there should be far fewer assessments, and the assessments that do exist should have clearly defined explanations. Assessment should be a clear and concise tool that gives usable results. Teachers and administrators should then work together to decide how to best address any concerns indicated by assessment. However, all should be aware that the quantitative assessment data do not tell the full story. As discussed by the participants of this study, learning gains may occur that do not reflect directly on tests such as the FSA or the EOC. Qualitative measurements should be taken into account and melded with the data gained from quantitative measurements in order for communities to gain a richer picture of what is really going on in any given school. In the future, this study may be expanded to further explore the specific effects so many different types of tests have on student and teacher self-efficacy. This study's results will be also disseminated through local and national publications.

## Limitations

This study had three main limitations. First, the participant pool was very small, with only four teachers participating. Second, the survey data were not totally reliable. Third, the researcher was not able to return to the participants after the initial interview to ask follow-up questions.

The first limitation of this study was the small participant pool. This was due to the challenges the researcher had applying to conduct research in the county, getting in contact with the school site, and identifying teacher participants who met the inclusion criteria. The application to conduct research took several months to complete and have approved. Afterward, it was challenging to get into the school to interview any participants, as it was towards the end of the school year and the county did not want research to interrupt testing by being a distraction. Once testing ended, the researcher worked with an administrator to identify participants who met the inclusion criteria who were willing to participate in the study. It was especially challenging to identify teachers who had been at the school since 2010 or prior, as the school site is very transient for students and teachers. The study finally ended up with four participants. The small participant pool means that this was a case study. The findings of this research apply to the specific case of this school site in this particular county. In future studies, more participants from multiple schools should be included in order for the data to be more generalizable.

The second limitation of this study was the unreliability of the survey data. All four participants took a self-efficacy survey. The survey asked 25 various questions relating to participants' self-efficacy for teaching writing. The survey was printed with written directions included, and a brief verbal explanation was given. However, every participant rated him or

herself as “highly certain can do” for almost every question. Because the survey pool was so small, this renders the survey data less reliable than they would be if more participants had been included. Therefore, the survey data was used only to inform the interview data. In future studies, a greater pool of participants would render any data collected more reliable.

Finally, the researcher was not able to return to the school to ask follow-up questions after the initial interviews were over. This was due to the fact that the academic year ended for summer break only a few days after the initial interviews were complete, before the data had been coded. In future studies, if the researcher conducts interviews earlier in the school year, follow-up questions should be asked once the coding process begins. This is so that the common codes saturating the data can be further explored.

### Conclusions and Future Research

This study sought to uncover how the annual Florida School Report Card influences secondary English Language Arts teachers’ self-efficacy and perceptions of student writing. The study found that ELA teachers’ self-efficacy may be indirectly influenced by the School Report Card. The participants in this study suggested that they do not feel totally capable of applying the information learned from the School Report Card to their own classrooms. The teachers who participated in the study also reported that they have low outcome expectations when interacting with the School Report Card. They do not believe that their actions can influence the School Report Card, and suggested that they see the school grade as a moving target with changing rules they may not be able to keep up with. Finally, the participants suggested that they view the



school grade as an unfair measure of achievement, and a tool that does not take into account the quality of the learning in the school and represents the school poorly.

This study suggests that educational policymakers in the state and national departments of education may soon need to reevaluate the School Report Card system, and question whether or not it is effectively fulfilling its goal of better informing teachers, administrators, and parents in the community. The findings of this study matter because they have the potential to encourage educators, administrators, and district and state officials to take a closer look at the accountability measures implemented in schools every year. Teachers should not have to work against the educational system in order to accomplish their learning goals – the state should work to support teachers by providing clear, relevant assessment measures that can be used by all educators to uncover weaknesses and recognize strengths. When teachers begin to discount accountability measures entirely because they are perceived as useless and unfair, it may be time to start reevaluating the way we measure teacher and student success. Accountability, just like computers, books, and pens, is a tool. To be effective, the tool must be understood and useful to every actor in the complex activity web of the educational community.

In future research, it will be important to continue exploring this issue on a larger scale. As a case study, this research included a small participant pool and focused on exploring only a single school site. In the future, it would be beneficial to conduct similar research with more participants and multiple school sites. As a scholar, I intend to carry on with this research and continue to explore the nuances of school accountability and how the many measurements we use may impact students and teachers. As a teacher myself, this is research I will carry with me into my career as an informed speaker and advocate for educators.

## **APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL OF EXEMPT HUMAN RESEARCH**



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board  
 Office of Research & Commercialization  
 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501  
 Orlando, Florida 32826-3246  
 Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276  
[www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html](http://www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html)

### Approval of Exempt Human Research

**From:** UCF Institutional Review Board #1  
 FWA00000351, IRB00001138

**To:** Elsie L. Olan and Co-PI: Casey Sara Briand

**Date:** March 14, 2016

Dear Researcher:

On 03/14/2016, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review:	Exempt Determination
Project Title:	An Examination of the Impact of School Report Cards on High School English Language Arts Teachers' Self-Efficacy and Perceptions of Students' Writing
Investigator:	Elsie L. Olan
IRB Number:	SBE-16-12124
Funding Agency:	
Grant Title:	
Research ID:	N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the [Investigator Manual](#).

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 03/14/2016 03:48:53 PM EDT

IRB Manager

**APPENDIX B: RESEARCH COUNTY NOTICE OF APPROVAL**



# County Public Schools



## Notice of Approval

Approval Date: 5/4/16

Approval Number: 0040

Project Title: An Examination of the Impact of School Report Cards on Secondary English Language Arts Teachers' Self-Efficacy and Perception of their Students' Writing

Requester: Casey Briand

Project Director/Advisor: Dr. Elsie L. Olan

Sponsor Agency/Institutional Affiliation: University of Central Florida

Thank you for your request to conduct research in [redacted] County Public Schools. We have reviewed and approved your application. This Notice of Approval expires one year after issue, 5/3/17.

If you are interacting with [redacted] staff or students, you should have submitted a Principal Notification Form with your application. You may now email the principals who have indicated interest in participating, including this Notice as an attachment. After initial contact with principals, you may then email any necessary staff. This notice does not obligate administrators, teachers, students, or families of students to participate in your study; participation is entirely voluntary.

[redacted] badges are required to enter any [redacted] campus or building (see the [Security Clearance Flow Chart](#)).

You are responsible for submitting a [Change Request Form](#) to this office prior to implementing any changes to the currently approved protocol. If any problems or unexpected adverse reactions occur as a result of this study, you must notify this office immediately by emailing a completed [Adverse Event Report Form](#). On or before 4/3/17, you must complete a [Request for Renewal or Executive Summary Submission](#). Email all forms to [research@\[redacted\].net](mailto:research@[redacted].net). All forms may be found at [www.ocps.net/cs/services/accountability/Pages/Research.aspx](http://www.ocps.net/cs/services/accountability/Pages/Research.aspx).

Should you have questions or need assistance, please contact Mary Ann White at (407) 317-3201 or [mary.white@\[redacted\].net](mailto:mary.white@[redacted].net).

Best wishes for continued success,

Tavy Chen, Ed.D.

[tavy.chen@\[redacted\].net](mailto:tavy.chen@[redacted].net)

Director, Accountability and Research

[redacted] County Public Schools

Cc: Brandon McKelvey, Senior Director, [brandon.mckelvey@\[redacted\].net](mailto:brandon.mckelvey@[redacted].net)

"The [redacted] County School Board is an equal opportunity agency."

## **APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

## Teacher Interview

(\*) Indicates an immediate follow-up question to be asked if clarification is needed.

### Questions about the Task:

1. What type of writing do you typically do with students?

\*For example, do you teach argumentative writing? Expository writing?

\*Tell me about your experiences teaching this type of writing?

2. How do you feel your students did, in general, when writing a paper?

\*How did you measure student success on this assignment?

### Questions about the present perceptions of student writing:

1. Tell me about your students as writers this past academic year.

\*What are their general strengths? What are their general weaknesses?

2. Do your students enjoy writing?

\*What types of writing tasks do your students like to do?

3. What is the most challenging part of learning writing for your students? When your students encounter challenges in writing, how do you help them overcome those challenges?

4. Do you feel that your students are ready to move on to the next grade/ move on to college-level writing?

5. Do you feel that the overall quality of your students' writing is "better" now than it was five or six years ago?

\*What about it is improved? What do you think are some possible reasons for the improvement?

Questions about past perceptions of student writing:

6. Tell me about how writing instruction has changed in your time at this school. Tell me about how student writing has changed in your time at this school.

7. Tell me about how your students' test scores in writing have changed, if they have changed at all, in your time at this school.

\*If there has been a change, what do you think is the reason for this change?

8. Do you think your students now are generally more prepared to be good writers than your students from previous years at this school?

\*Why or why not?

9. Tell me about the quality of student writing five or six years ago.

\*What is different about it now?

10. Are you aware of the "grade" your school receives on your annual School Report Card?

\*How do you feel about the grade?

\*Do you feel like the grade accurately reflects the quality of the learning in the school?



## **APPENDIX D: SELF-EFFICACY SURVEY**

## Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey

Directions: For each question, please rate your degree of confidence using this scale:

0      10      20      30      40      50      60      70      80      90      100  
Cannot do at all                      Moderately certain can do                      Highly certain can do

Circle the number for each question that most accurately corresponds to your degree of confidence.

1. I can independently create meaningful writing assignments for students.

0-----10-----20-----30-----40-----50-----60-----70-----80-----90-----100

2. I can create meaningful writing assignments for students with my PLC.

0-----10-----20-----30-----40-----50-----60-----70-----80-----90-----100

3. When I am in need of help or guidance, I can find a mentor within my school community.

0-----10-----20-----30-----40-----50-----60-----70-----80-----90-----100

4. If I get stuck while creating a writing lesson, I am able to find help.

0-----10-----20-----30-----40-----50-----60-----70-----80-----90-----100

5. I can keep students on task during difficult or complex writing assignments.

0-----10-----20-----30-----40-----50-----60-----70-----80-----90-----100

6. I can successfully encourage students who are reluctant writers to write.

0-----10-----20-----30-----40-----50-----60-----70-----80-----90-----100

7. I can motivate students to show interest in writing.

0-----10-----20-----30-----40-----50-----60-----70-----80-----90-----100

8. I can successfully complete the writing assignments I give to students.

0-----10-----20-----30-----40-----50-----60-----70-----80-----90-----100

9. I can raise student scores on standardized writing assessments within the school year.

- 0-----10-----20-----30-----40-----50-----60-----70-----80-----90-----100
10. I can successfully encourage parents to be involved with students' writing assignments.  
0-----10-----20-----30-----40-----50-----60-----70-----80-----90-----100
11. I can make my classroom a space where students feel comfortable writing.  
0-----10-----20-----30-----40-----50-----60-----70-----80-----90-----100
12. I can make my classroom a space where students feel comfortable making mistakes.  
0-----10-----20-----30-----40-----50-----60-----70-----80-----90-----100
13. I can get students to write even when there is a lack of support at home.  
0-----10-----20-----30-----40-----50-----60-----70-----80-----90-----100
14. I can increase students' memory of their learning in previous writing lessons.  
0-----10-----20-----30-----40-----50-----60-----70-----80-----90-----100
15. I can meaningfully contribute to the design of the writing curriculum in my classroom.  
0-----10-----20-----30-----40-----50-----60-----70-----80-----90-----100
16. I can successfully encourage students to take responsibility for their own writing success.  
0-----10-----20-----30-----40-----50-----60-----70-----80-----90-----100
17. I can convince administrators to become involved in the writing events of my classroom.  
0-----10-----20-----30-----40-----50-----60-----70-----80-----90-----100
18. I can work with my school's literacy coach or support team to assist struggling students.  
0-----10-----20-----30-----40-----50-----60-----70-----80-----90-----100
19. I am prepared to assist English Language Learners increase their English writing ability.  
0-----10-----20-----30-----40-----50-----60-----70-----80-----90-----100
20. I can create a classroom environment where students are focused and ready to write.  
0-----10-----20-----30-----40-----50-----60-----70-----80-----90-----100
21. I can raise student skills in unpacking and appropriately responding to writing prompts.  
0-----10-----20-----30-----40-----50-----60-----70-----80-----90-----100

22. I can raise student skills in staying on-topic throughout an essay.

0-----10-----20-----30-----40-----50-----60-----70-----80-----90-----100

23. I can raise student skills in conveying a central main idea in an essay.

0-----10-----20-----30-----40-----50-----60-----70-----80-----90-----100

24. I can raise student skills in meeting minimum word requirements for a writing assignment.

0-----10-----20-----30-----40-----50-----60-----70-----80-----90-----100

25. I am a meaningful factor in my students' writing success or failure.

0-----10-----20-----30-----40-----50-----60-----70-----80-----90-----100

\*This survey has been adapted from A. Bandura's "Guide for Constructing Self-Efficacy Scales" (2006).

## **APPENDIX E: CHARMAINE'S CODED INTERVIEW**

Interview 1 Transcript Codes

Charmaine

CB: Hello, my name is Casey Briand. I am a student researcher with the University of Central Florida. I am conducting a research study to learn more about the various factors that affect teacher self-efficacy and perceptions of student writing. This interview is being audio recorded. Only members of the research team will have access to the audio recording. Do you consent to being recorded?

CM: I do.

CB: My phone is on the table keeping time for this interview. Let me start that. My phone is not being used as a recording device. Are you comfortable having my phone on the table?

CM: I am fine with your phone being on the table.

CB: Alright. In any write-up of this study, you will not be identified and no personal information will be shared with anybody outside of the research team. Your participation is confidential. You can withdraw your participation at any time for any reason. This is the informed consent form for this study. Please take your time and ask any questions that you may have. If you consent to participate,

please choose a pseudonym and sign at the bottom.

CM: Ok.

CB: Ok. You've signed the informed consent form. Thank you for your participation. Let's go ahead and begin the interview.

CB: Alright. So, what subject do you teach?

CM: I teach ninth grade English.

CB: Ninth grade English. How long have you been teaching ninth grade English?

CM: I have been teaching ninth grade English for five years.

CB: Five years? What did you teach before that?

CM: Before that, um. (To student who walked in the room: No, I don't have any) Before that, I was a resource person.

CB: Resource person. Okay. Um. How long have you been teaching at this school?

CM: This is my fifth year here.

<p>CB: Ok. And where did you teach before this?</p> <p>CM: Before this – I wasn't teaching, I was a resource person – at an elementary school here in Orlando.</p> <p>CB: Ok. Can you tell me the name of the elementary school?</p> <p>CM: Pine Hills Elementary.</p> <p>CB: Ok. Uh, so, in this class, currently, what types of writing do you typically do with students?</p> <p>CM: We write. We do persuasive essays. And we do expository writing.</p> <p>CB: Ok. So tell me briefly about your experiences doing that.</p> <p>CM: Well, right now, basically, we have a test, for some reason I can't think of it, it's changed. But we do a test. A state test. A state writing test. And basically we prepare the kids for that state writing test.</p> <p>CB: Ok. Um, how do you feel that your students do in general on these persuasive essays and this expository writing?</p>	<p>Perceiving state writing test (external) as shaping instructional methods CM14</p>
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CM: Um, I think that's where they have a hard time. Um. Developing their ideas and putting them down into an actual essay.

CB: Right. Um. Do your students enjoy writing?

CM: I'd say no. They don't. Very few. I'd say the percentage is low. Fifteen, if that.

CB: What types of writing assignments do your students like to do?

CM: They are still stuck in elementary mode, and I call it elementary mode because they like to tell stories. They love to tell stories and share ideas of personal things that have happened to them, which is fine when they're doing elaboration on an essay. But when you're writing on a nonfiction or a, um, topic that has to do with, let's say, history, that's not the appropriate time for them to bring that information in. So I think that's what they like to write on. They like to tell stories.

CB: Ok. Uh. What is the most challenging part of learning writing for your students?

CM: The most challenging part to teach? Or learning?

<p>CB: Let's do both. Let's start with them. What do you think is the most challenging part of learning?</p> <p>CM: The hardest part for them is getting those ideas and being able to think outside of the box and being able to pull that information out of their brain, basically, to write to a topic. So I think just being able to gather those ideas, you know, and being able to formulate sentences and give the supporting details to whatever their topic may be. That's hard for them.</p> <p>CB: What is the most difficult part of teaching, for you?</p> <p>CM: That's hard to teach. Because when kids are, um, when you give them a topic of any, um, type, you cannot tell kids what to write. You can give them a million ideas, but the thing about it that they have to be able to come up with their own ideas. So, teaching kids to be able to come up with ideas on what the topic is asking them to do, and asking them to do, and asking them to actually sit down and write about, it's hard to help students process. You know, because of their thinking. You know, and I have a hard time with sharing ideas. Because when you give students ideas, they use them. And that defeats the purpose of writing. As soon as you shoot out two or three ideas, they want to use the ideas that you gave them.</p>	<p>Identifying personal challenge working with student writing process CM37</p> <p>Identifying personal difficulty in helping students achieve purpose of writing CM38</p>
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<p>CB: Um. Do you feel that your current students are ready to move on to the next grade?</p> <p>CM: In writing, or period?</p> <p>CB: As writers.</p> <p>CM: I would say, honestly, no. I would say no. If they had to be graded on just writing, I think they're just okay. I think between the beginning of the year and now, maybe half of them, so my little number did go up a little. That's my personal opinion. But, um, no. If they don't jump on these writing skills as soon as they get to their sophomore year, you know if you don't use those skills, you lose them.</p> <p>CB: Um. What do you think teachers, their next teachers, will need to do to get them ready?</p> <p>CM: Start out running. Start out running. I mean, with the summer coming, and with the kids not doing any type of work throughout the summer, and I mean, for instance, we took the test in February, March? So we haven't actually spent a lot of time on writing. Um. You know, it was more-so reading.</p> <p>CB: Ok. So you say you took the test in February or</p>	<p>Interpreting student writing growth as personal ("my little number"); taking ownership for student growth CM44</p> <p>Perceiving teacher (internal) as factor in student success CM46</p> <p>Identifying test (external ) as influencing instructional methods CM48</p>
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<p>March.</p> <p>CM: Yes.</p> <p>CB: That was the writing test?</p> <p>CM: The writing test, yes, right. I think it was February.</p> <p>CB: Ok. So, um, tell be about what you've done with writing, how your writing instruction went before and after the test.</p> <p>CM: Before the test, we basically did serious boot camps in preparation for the test. You know, we honed in on the skills, we did assignments that focused on exploring the topic, breaking down the topic, understanding the topic, looking for key words and clue words to help them understand the topic. Uh. Helping them devise a plan to write and to get their thought process going, and then actually getting it down on paper.</p> <p>CB: How about after the test?</p> <p>CM: After the test, it hasn't been so much of the writing, unfortunately.</p> <p>CB: How do your students feel about the test?</p>	<p>Perceiving test (external) as guiding instructional methods CM51</p> <p>Perceiving test (external) as guiding instructional methods CM56</p>
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<p>CM: About taking the test or having taken the test?</p>	
<p>CB: Uh, how do they feel about taking the test?</p>	
<p>CM: Uh, taking the test, I think going into it, starting out, when we first started all of our writing focus, I think they feared the test. You know. But then, I think things changed when they started learning the process that we were using here and learned how they could master the writing test. So, um, they felt better going into it and being well prepared, and students even told me they felt prepared taking the test or whatever. So I'd be interested seeing our scores. I can't wait until they come back.</p>	<p>Interpreting activities in the classroom as influencing student emotions CM60</p>
<p>CB: Why is that?</p>	
<p>CM: Just to see how well we did. How well my students did.</p>	<p>Perceiving school as unit or team (How well "we" did); taking ownership over students CM65</p>
<p>CB: Um. Do you feel, and, you've been teaching writing for five years, so I'll ask, do you feel that the overall quality of your students writing is better now than it was five or six years ago?</p>	
<p>CM: I think the quality is not better. I think the quality is, mainly because of the digital technology that is being used in schools. And I also think that</p>	<p>Noting perceived decline in writing quality CM66 Citing external reason for decline in writing quality (addition of technology) CM67</p>

<p>students aren't being made to write. Prime example being today, students were giving their computers back, turning them in, and I gave a quiz, written, and I heard a little girl say, I almost forget how to write. I mean, how do you forget to write? You know. Not to mention the thought process used behind writing. So, I think it's different for them.</p> <p>CB: Do you feel, um, how do you feel about the use of the laptops, because, um, this school is a technology demonstration school now. How do feel that has impacted their writing, now as opposed to when before that was a factor at this school.</p> <p>CM: I think it has impacted our students in different ways, okay. And I'll say that to say that, first of all, everyone is not used to using a computer. Even though we are in a technology digital age, everyone does not have access to that. So the fact that the students are given a laptop to take home and to work on and to use, and, you know, it takes a lot to even process when you are reading something and when you are actually typing up an assignment, um, doing any type of work on a computer as opposed to doing it by hand. We have different types of learners, and I think computer, um, is not always for every type of learner. Some people do better, some students do</p>	<p>Citing internal reason for decline in writing quality (teachers don't make students write)CM68</p> <p>Noting frustration with students and technology</p> <p>Noting difficulty students have CM69</p> <p>Perceiving student circumstances (external) as factor in challenge using writing technology CM73</p> <p>Recognizing variety of learners CM76</p>
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<p>better, with a pencil and a piece of paper.</p> <p>CB: So that's one way, not every student is that kind of learner, for a computer.</p> <p>CM: Right.</p> <p>CB: Is there anything else?</p> <p>CM: I just also think that, along with what I'm saying, just the processing, is very different. It takes, let's go back to writing the actual essay, um, it takes more processing for a student to process in their head and then transfer it to the computer. So I think that takes more work, especially for our, you know, when you're trying to differentiate instruction, and I think it also takes more time. I don't want to say more work. It's more of a time process, I think, for kids. So it may take them longer because the process is moving from your brain to the computer. You know, the actual typing of it (13:40).</p> <p>CB: Um. So tell me a little bit about how writing instruction has changed in your time at this school.</p> <p>CM: At this school? Well, it's changed just from the mere fact that it's gone from paper pencil to digital, which was a huge transition.</p>	<p>Perceiving technology as influencing differentiation instructional methods (external) CM80</p> <p>Identifying technology (external) as influencing instructional methods CM81</p>
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<p>CB: How have teachers responded to that transition?</p> <p>CM: I think pretty good. I mean, it is what it is. This is where we are with our society. And with our society being like this, this is where we're going, and you really either have to jump on the wagon or you miss out.</p> <p>CB: Uh. Tell me about how student writing has changed in your time at this school.</p> <p>CM: That's the same question you just asked me.</p> <p>CB: Is it? Oh.</p> <p>CM: Yeah, you just asked that.</p> <p>CB: Oh, I asked how has writing instruction changed, now how has student writing changed.</p> <p>CM: Student writing. Student writing has changed because I think they, um, just being on the computer, I think, just, it's, they're more apt to type less than they were when they were hand writing. You know, because of the fact that they're on the computer. I think the use of jargon, or text message language, is very different, um, because they include that in their writing. And I think that made it difficult too, because they haven't been</p>	<p>Expressing helplessness to changing Society ("it is what it is") CM82</p> <p>Perceiving shift in quality of student writing CM86 Citing external factor as reason for change in student writing (technology) CM87</p>
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<p>CM: <b>It's consistent.</b> I mean, that's really it, I mean students learning to be focused on the particular topic and not all over the place and being able to support what they're talking about, and not just giving, um, and when we talk about support, really give the support and elaboration and details when they're writing.</p> <p>CB: Uh, so, my next question is, if there has been a change, what do you think is the reason for that change. You've told me this aspect of supporting details is consistent. So, do you think there's a reason for that?</p> <p>CM: I think it's just lack of background knowledge. Lack of, um, you know. Because typically, people write from experience or from what they're used to or what they know. And if you don't have that experience and that background knowledge, you know, what can you write about?</p> <p>CB: Uh, do you think your students now are generally more prepared to be good writers than students from previous years at this school?</p> <p>CM: I think they're not as prepared as they've been in the past.</p> <p>CB: Can you elaborate on that?</p>	<p>Perceiving (external) lack of student background knowledge as cause for consistent student challenges CM98</p> <p>Perceiving decline in student preparedness CM99</p>
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<p>CM: I just think students aren't, we don't have, we live in such a digital age that students are used to looking at videos, everything is visual to them. Gone are the days of picking up a newspaper. Gone are the days of picking up a magazine. They don't do that type of reading, so the background knowledge and the information that they know is just not there for them to pull on when they're writing, whereas back years ago, years ago, it was more so. We brought newspapers into the classroom. We used magazines and stuff. Students were, you know, even the use of the library, that's a whole other topic. It's different. Students aren't reading like, they're reading, but they aren't reading things they probably should.</p> <p>CB: Tell me about the quality of your students writing five or six years ago, from what you remember.</p> <p>CM: <b>I just remember it being an easier, better process for it to teach writing.</b> Then again, it was just a set way to write. It was just boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. We used a specific writing curriculum. The writing curriculum was, you know, used by all the teachers, and everyone followed this one way to write. So, which is very different from now.</p>	<p>Perceiving (external) societal change as influencing instructional methods CM100</p> <p>Perceiving external shift in society as influencing student reading challenges CM102</p> <p>Noting frustration with current processes of teaching writing/ wishing to return to old methods CM105</p> <p>Perceiving writing curriculum given (external) as impacting instructional methods CM107</p>
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<p>CB: How is it now?</p> <p>CM: It's different because we use the computers. Which makes it very different.</p> <p>CB: You mention that there used to be one set curriculum. Is that the same or is that different now?</p> <p>CM: It's different now, I don't remember what we used to use. I taught at a middle school before, we used a different curriculum. It's also trends, too. Everyone may use something different.</p> <p>CB: Um. So are you aware of, um, the grade that this school receives on the annual School Report Card? Is that something that you are aware of?</p> <p>CM: I believe we received a C. Yes.</p> <p>CB: How do you feel about, uh, that grade?</p> <p>CM: I don't. I mean. It is what it is. Schoolwide, I mean. If that's a schoolwide grade and it shows that's where our students are, then, you know, so be it.</p> <p>CB: Do you feel that the grade accurately reflects the quality of the learning in this school?</p>	<p>Perceiving educational trends as shaping instructional methods (external) CM109</p> <p>Perceiving helplessness in face of external factors ("it is what it is," "so be it.") CM111</p>
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<p>CM: The quality of the learning? I don't think I can speak of that. Because I don't know the quality. I don't know other subjects. I know the data, I know what's been shown to me, but as far as the quality of the learning that's taken place, I hope it's taken place, in everybody's room, and throughout our different departments.</p> <p>CB: Is there every any discussion between you and administration and other teachers about the school grade, or not?</p> <p>CM: The school grade is discussed. Um. Quite a bit actually, because of the goals and objectives that are put into place. You want to see growth, that's the bottom line. You want to see some type of growth from our students. You want to see that they are improving. So they come in, with, of course, deficiencies, and the idea is to move them up, even if its small steps, you want to see growth. So as long as we're moving forward, that's good for me. As long as we're not moving backwards. Growth is the key.</p> <p>CB: Alright, and, I think that just about wraps everything up. So I am going to go ahead and stop the interview.</p> <p>CM: Ok.</p>	<p>Expressing hopelessness in regards to being a factor for change in the school as a whole CM114</p> <p>Noting school as team reaching goals/objectives CM115</p>
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## **APPENDIX F: ARTHUR'S CODED INTERVIEW**

## Interview 2 Transcript Codes

Arthur

CB: Hello, my name is Casey Briand. I am a student researcher with the University of Central Florida. I am conducting a research study to learn more about the various factors that affect teacher self-efficacy and perceptions of student writing. This interview is being audio recorded. Only members of the research team will have access to the audio recording. Do you consent to being recorded?

AR: I do.

CB: My phone is on the table – not yet, it will be – for this interview. My phone is not being used as a recording device. My phone is only keeping time for this interview. Are you comfortable having my phone on the table?

AR: Sure.

CB: Ok. In any write-up of this study, you will not be identified and no personal information will be shared with anybody outside of the research team. Your participation is confidential. You can withdraw your participation at any time for any reason. This is the informed consent form for this study. Please take your time and ask any questions



that you may have. If you consent to participate, please choose a pseudonym and sign at the bottom. We've already done that.

AR: Ok.

CB: Ok. So you've signed the informed consent form. Thank you for your participation. So let's go ahead and begin the interview.

CB: Uh, so what subject do you teach?

AR: I teach, uh, dual enrollment ENC 1101/ 1102 through Valencia. I also teach English 4 through ESOL. I also teach English for college readiness. At least that's what I've been teaching there. Next year, we'll see.

CB: And how long have you been teaching these subjects?

AR: These subjects I've been teaching the ESOL the longest one, I've been teaching that six years.

CB: What about the other ones?

AR: The uh, dual enrollment I've been teaching for two years here, I also taught the same courses at Valencia East campus for four years, back in the early 2000s. The English 4 for college readiness I've

<p>taught for two years, it's only been around for two years.</p> <p>CB: Ok. Uh, how long have you been teaching at this school?</p> <p>AR: At this school, for six years.</p> <p>CB: Did you teach at another school before this?</p> <p>AR: I taught at Jackson middle school and Valencia East campus.</p> <p>CB: Ok. What types of writing do you typically do with students?</p> <p>AR: Mostly, we work on essays. We work mostly on personal, the personal essay, the college essay, and essay analyzing elements of literature. They also do essay exams and there's also some creative writing that we do from time to time, like stories.</p> <p>CB: Uh, tell me about your experiences teaching this type of writing, these different types of writing.</p> <p>AR: Uh, I would say that writing is the thing that students enjoy the least about English. It takes a lot of work. A lot of practice, to do that. It's not something that you can fake, or copy and paste,</p>	<p>Noting confidence in own teaching skills AR19</p>
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<p>even. Because we do a lot of writing in class, so I get an opportunity to see what students' actual voices are like in their writing, so if they try to copy and paste something that's not their voice, it's pretty easy to tell.</p>	
<p>CB: Is that something that happens?</p>	
<p>AR: Oh yeah. A lot of them are working for deadlines, some by college, dual enrollment classes in particular, are usually involved in AP, club courses, and other classes, and they have a lot of output to do there, so if they had the opportunity they would shortcut a lot. Um, my ESOL students are not real proficient in English. Or, there are a range in proficiencies from newcomers that don't know any English to students who have been in the country for eight or nine years even. And they have more problems uh, sometimes it's easier for them to copy and paste something than to try to translate from their home language to um English.</p>	<p>Identifying student workload (external) as Influencing writing quality AR23</p> <p>Recognizing variety of learners AR27</p> <p>Recognizing multiplicity of learners; learning challenges AR28</p>
<p>CB: How do you feel that your students do in general in writing papers?</p>	
<p>AR: There's really a range in writing abilities. The more we practice, the better we get. That's why practice is really important, so I have seniors for the most part, I really emphasize writing a lot. In</p>	<p>Acknowledging range of students AR29</p> <p>Identifying influence of own instructional goals to mold instructional methods (internal) AR30</p>

<p>my college course I make my students, in the first semester they have to write ten essays, and in the second semester, which is really more writing about literature, they read more and they have to write four essays. So with my regular English classes they do a lot of writing um, usually shorter pieces.</p>	
<p>CB: Um, how do you measure student success on your writing assignments?</p>	
<p>AR: We use, uh, rubrics, for the most part. Um, we talk about the importance of writing in complete sentences and using proper punctuation. And they know that they'll lose points if they don't do that, if they write like a text message type of piece with no capital letters and run-on sentences that will cost them points. And I give them feedback on their work, early on, so they understand what's expected of them.</p>	<p>Perceiving importance of teacher feedback on student work (internal) AR37</p>
<p>CB: Who constructs the rubrics that you use?</p>	
<p>AR: Uh, for the most part, I use rubrics that are established by [the county] because they're required by the county, required to teach according to the standards, Florida State Standards. And there's a lot of materials that the county had produced and even some that the state has produced about the nature of rubrics.</p>	<p>Identifying county and state as factors that shape instructional methods (external) AR38</p>



<p>students. Or to the college students if I was too easy on them (9:46).</p> <p>CB: Uh, as we go along, I want to clarify, when you say college students, do you refer to the dual enrollment students here?</p> <p>AR: Yes.</p> <p>CB: Ok.</p> <p>AR: Because they've been accepted to Valencia, they're technically college students. They can take courses out there. And many of them do, some of them take other college classes here at ORHS, we have hospitality program here that Ms. Goodman teaches, it's a Valencia college course.</p> <p>CB: Ok. Tell me about your students as writers this past academic year. Tell be about their strengths and their weaknesses.</p> <p>AR: Ok, strengths are that they work very hard to master writing, because they know this is their senior year, and I make it really clear to them and I show them examples from my college courses that this is what you have to do when you are accepted. The vast majority of students here at [school name] go to Valencia as their first college, and so I show them some examples so they can</p>	<p>Perceiving internal factor (own judgement) as influencing instructional methods AR52</p> <p>Perceiving own judgement and goals (internal) as</p>
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<p>see, this is what we have to do at the end of this year, when we're in August you're gonna be sitting in a classroom and you're gonna be writing those essays. Sometimes I have students come back and speak in front of the class and talk about their writing experiences, because writing is such an important component in college; it's required for most courses. And so they have that expectation and they work really hard to improve. Uh. That's probably the positive side. The negative side, is that they're not really well prepared. This is the last year, this senior class of 2015/2016 was the last class to have FCAT Writes. Although some of the classes that are here now had the early versions like it, elementary and middle school. And that's a really poor test, writing exam. They've had teachers teach to the test for FCAT Writes, so there's a certain standard five paragraph essay that they come to expect that's the kind of essay that we should write, and we have to retrain them to say, no, that's not what your college professors are going to want from you. Which I spend a lot of my time, I have up until now, we'll see how the FAS works, but, I've spent a lot of my time re-teaching my students to not necessarily make everything about a five paragraph essay. And to focus on evidence and their writing, which is not something that FCAT really worked on. Focus on grammar, again, which isn't something they learned for FCAT, it wasn't required of them until</p>	<p>influencing instructional methods AR54</p> <p>Perceiving past tests (external) as factor in current student preparedness AR57</p> <p>Perceiving other teachers reaction to test (external) as factors in current student preparedness AR58</p> <p>Identifying external purpose for teaching (that's not what your college professors want) AR60</p> <p>Perceiving instructional goals (internal) as shaping instructional methods AR61</p> <p>Perceiving test (external) as shaping instructional methods AR62</p>
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<p>the last couple of years. So we have to spend a lot of time, you say that's remediation, just getting them to a stage where they can write for college, college level writing essays and exams.</p>	
<p>CB: Uh, what is the most challenging, um, I'm sorry, I jumped ahead of myself a little bit there. Do your students enjoy writing?</p>	
<p>AR: For the most part, no. Some of them are natural writers and they're good at it. And I encourage them to do it. I give extra credit for students that want it, to write about things. I try to choose topic where they can express themselves, write about themselves, their families, their friends. Um, many of them have interesting stories to tell because they come from other countries. [school name] is a very heavy immigrant population of students. So, we have students from all over the world. So you can focus on telling those personal stories. They like that part. That's probably the most encouraging part of it (14:34).</p>	<p>Perceiving natural talent (external) as a factor in student success AR64</p> <p>Perceiving own goals for student motivation as influencing instructional methods (internal) AR65</p> <p>Appreciating student diversity and circumstances AR66</p> <p>Identifying student diversity as influencing instructional methods (external) AR67</p> <p>Identifying source of personal encouragement as students sharing personal stories AR68</p>
<p>CB: Uh, what is the most challenging part of learning writing for your students?</p>	
<p>AR: I think, uh, developing um, first off, using grammar correctly, is difficult for ESOL students, or even if they're out of ESOL, some of my college students were originally in the ESOL program, that</p>	<p>Identifying time in country as factor in student</p>



<p>might be several years, they still don't have the natural feel for how English is used idiomatically, so that's something that takes a lot of practice, and a lot of modeling. Um, and I do my best to help them with that by modeling ways they can express themselves.</p>	<p>success (external) AR69</p>
<p>CB: Are there any other challenges for students?</p>	<p>Perceiving own goals for students as factor in choosing instructional methods (internal) AR70</p>
<p>AR: Um, we've been using technology this year. So at the beginning of the year it was a challenge for them to write using the computers. I did about half my assignments on paper and pencil, the other half on computers. And then as the year wore on, we focused more on the computers, and they did better and better, and the nice thing about it was by the end of the year, they didn't want to give up their computers. They had gotten used to them.</p>	<p>Identifying technology (external) and own reaction to technology (internal) as influencing instructional methods (I+E) AR71</p>
<p>CB: When your students encounter challenges in writing, how do you help them overcome those challenges?</p>	
<p>AR: For the most part, practice and feedback. Um. We do some workshopping, but it's very difficult. I do it more in my college course than in the ESOL classes, because it's understanding the rules of workshopping and not turning it into a criticism, trying to be helpful to each other, is very hard. I do use a lot of team writing, where, you know, a</p>	<p>Perceiving own instructional methods as helping students overcome challenges (internal) AR72 Perceiving own instructional goals of meeting student challenges as shaping instructional methods (internal) AR73</p>

<p>couple of students will work together on their writing. They each have to turn in their own assignment, but they help each other out, and that's been very successful. They do like to work together, and sometimes if you pair them well, then they can both benefit from that.</p> <p>CB: Do you, uh, feel that your students are ready to move on, for you, since your students are seniors, to college level writing? Your students from this year?</p> <p>AR: For the most part, yes. I think that's been borne out by the fact that they've written their application essays and scholarship essays. Um, our seniors this year, they got more than 6 million dollars in scholarships, which is a new height for [school name]. In order to do that, they had to write a lot of essays. And, uh, they had a lot of resources devoted to helping them improve their writing there. So I think they've reached that point where they're able to at least get a start. Now, are they polished writers, for the most part, no. But my impression just from teaching at college, is that that's probably the number one complaint from all professors for all students, is that their students aren't very good writers. I'm sure if you talk to your professors, you'd hear the same thing. I just read a Chronicle of Higher Education article that was complaining, saying we should just do away</p>	<p>Perceiving writing practice outside classroom (external) as reason for preparedness AR76</p> <p>Perceiving school as unit (our seniors) AR77</p> <p>Perceiving resources (external) as reason for student preparedness AR79</p>
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<p>with essay assignments.</p> <p>CB: Interesting.</p> <p>AR: Yeah, I was very surprised to read that there (18:38).</p> <p>CB: Um, you say there's been a lot of resources dedicated to helping students with writing. Tell me about some of those resources.</p> <p>AR: Well, we have after school tutoring every day. We have the AmeriCorps volunteers, you may have saw some of them. Uh, I'm not sure when you were students teaching there if you had AmeriCorps or City Year.</p> <p>CB: City Year, yeah.</p> <p>AR: City Year, so you had the ninth and tenth graders, they have City Year people. The AmeriCorps are more polished with kids because they're older. Most of them have graduated from high school. From college. They graduated and they're doing this year of volunteer service. They've worked closely with a lot of students and they've really helped with their writing and their test taking skills. I also have students come after school. Students who want to do things like work on a college admission essay or scholarship essay,</p>	<p>Perceiving school as unit or team AR85</p> <p>Perceiving resources (external) as having positive influence on student writing AR91</p> <p>Perceiving own choices and goals as choosing instructional methods (internal) AR92</p>
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<p>they can come and see me after school and we'll work on it together. And I do provide models for most of my writing for my ESOL students. So they can get an idea of what the assignment looks like. If I have them write a personal essay, I'll write my own essay. And then they can see it and they can see, alright, this is what Mr. Hall did.</p> <p>CB: Um, do you feel that the overall quality of your students writing now is better than it was five or six years ago, or when you first came here?</p> <p>AR: Probably. <b>Mainly because I know more about my population of students now than I did five years ago.</b> Previous to that time I taught IB students in middle school. I taught a lot of gifted students, I'm a gifted teacher, one year I had 45 gifted students in my, that's about half the size of all my students in my class. Those students respond differently, even though they're younger, many of them are very sharp, and they get help from their parents, they're still at an age where the parents can help and want to help. Coming to [school] here, and having a face of population of students who are immigrant students, who have different home languages, whose parents are usually working two jobs or three jobs and don't have the time or the education level to really help them out. So everything they get they have to get here at school. So that's one of the things Dr.</p>	<p>Noting positive shift in student writing quality AR95</p> <p>Perceiving own knowledge and professional skill (internal) as factor in student writing quality AR96</p> <p>Noting variety of student learners AR97</p> <p>Perceiving student circumstances (external) as factor in student performance AR98</p> <p>Perceiving school as unit or team AR99</p> <p>Perceiving principal (external) as having impact on</p>
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<p>Bradshaw has done, is created a system where they can get all those things, they can get after school help. They can get tutoring. We try different practice exams, practice work. And so all of those things you know, help prepare them for being successful. <b>It's a slow process, but I think this year has been their best year because we've learned a lot of lessons.</b></p> <p>CB: Um, so, my next question was going to be, if you said yes it has improved, what do you think are some possible reasons for the improvement. Uh, what I hear you telling me, it is because, uh, it has been because of these after school resources and extra things have been implied.</p> <p>AR: We've incorporated a system, yeah. And it's not just after school, the AmeriCorps volunteers will come in and they will take students during the day, who are, you know, at the point of being ready for college, aren't quite there yet, they're ready, and they mentor them, and they help them, and show things and point things out for them, and they talk to them about what the college experience is, because high school students have no idea what do you do when you go to college. It's a big mystery to them. So they get help during the day and after school.</p> <p>CB: Tell me about how writing instruction has</p>	<p>school and meeting student needs AR100</p> <p>Identifying knowledge and growth of faculty and staff as a whole (I+E) as impacting student writing quality and success AR101</p> <p>Perceiving school as unit AR102</p>
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<p>changed in your time at this school.</p> <p>AR: Um. Like I said, I think it's a bit more systematic now, with more resources. We identify because we're doing a lot of testing, we identify the students who need help, and get them focused and pushed into the right program for them, the right tutoring, and help during the day. We also are always thinking ahead, like what can we do to help out. Like Ms. McGee next door is going to, they're letting her teach a creative writing class next year for students who need an elective, which is a good elective. I've taught that myself, but not for a while. So that they can have fun with writing, encourage the ones who are good writes to improve on their writing.</p>	<p>Perceiving instructional systems and administrative decisions of school (external) as influencing instructional methods AR107</p> <p>Identifying teachers as unit (we) as tool for change AR109</p> <p>Seeing self as part of larger team AR110</p> <p>Seeing administrative decisions as influencing instructional methods (external) AR111</p>
<p>CB: Tell me about how student writing has changed in your time at this school.</p> <p>AR: Well, as I said, probably the biggest change has been to move from paper and pencil to computers. Students are now doing a lot of composing on their computers, their Lenovos, and they've gotten very, um, comfortable doing it. The use of Google, the Google drive system, allows me for example, to give them feedback on what they're doing while they're doing it, and I can collaborate with them and I can point things out for them. And we can really, it's an easier way for</p>	<p>Identifying technology as change factor in student writing (external) AR115</p> <p>Identifying technology as change factor in instructional methods (external) AR116</p> <p>Perceiving own use of technology (internal) as influencing instructional methods AR117</p>

<p>me to read more, because student handwriting can be very difficult. Some students write very well, but some, they're future doctors and pharmacists, you can't understand what they're writing.</p> <p>CB: That's me. So, how would you say that the staff and administration has responded to the use of the Lenovos?</p> <p>AR: Um, there's a lot of skepticism when we talked about doing that last year. We sort of field tested it, the Junior Achievement Academy had, they didn't have lenovos, they had the iPads last year and the year before, and uh, they didn't hold up very well by the way, they're just, kids and iPads...</p> <p>CB: Don't mix.</p> <p>AR: No, they didn't mix at all. But they started working with that back then, and this year I think has been a learning process, they're skeptical. Teachers were skeptical, kids were skeptical, we heard a lot from, we had visitor speakers come from Ocoee High School, which used it the year before, they were really the first people in the county to use it. And they talked about how this is going to improve, your kids are going to like this, they're going to write more, they're going to do better. Um, you'll like it, it will be easier for you,</p>	<p>Noting teacher challenge of reading handwriting AR119</p>
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<p>and so they convinced the teachers to do it. There were a couple of people who retired at the beginning of the year, they didn't want to go through learning all this, but they convinced the teachers to give it a try, and it was true, they did respond and they did better when they could do their own work on the computer. There's something about typing it in and getting quick feedback as far as grammar and spelling check. Although they still have a terrible time with homophone words.</p> <p>CB: Tell me about how your students test scores have changed, if they have changed at all, in your time at this school.</p> <p>AR: We don't test writing in 12<sup>th</sup> grade. That's part of the new FAS test. There's a writing component to that, which I've seen but I've never had, this coming year, I have to prepare for students who have failed the FAS in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade and the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. But from what I understand, it's basically, you read two articles and then you write an essay that compares and contrasts the two using evidence from them. That's something that's really doable. We did a lot of that this year just in, I had a couple of units where we did comparison contrast. It's really a good form to get students to be thinking more deeply about what they're reading.</p>	<p>Identifying technology as change factor in student Writing (external) AR127</p> <p>Perceiving FSA as shaping instructional methods (external) AR130</p> <p>Perceiving past student scores as shaping instructional methods (external) AR131</p>
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<p>CB: Do you think your students now are generally more prepared to be good writers than your students from previous years at this school?</p> <p>AR: Um. Difficult to say. Again, some of them come from, have recently come over. This year I got a lot of Puerto Rican students because of the financial difficulties on the island. Um, I've had seniors show up that didn't speak a word of English, you know, newcomers, and uh, a lot of the students have only been here for four or three or two years as well, and, so they, I have to treat them as though they're learning from scratch, and that's one of the things about the ESOL program. With my other students, I think they are better prepared to write, mainly because of their experience with technology, and because we used the computers a lot, but they still suffer from issues such as texting their work. You know, they can do a lot, they can do it really quickly, but then they don't capitalize any of the letters and run-on sentences, all those sloppy things you don't worry about when texting a message, but when you have to write a paper I have to constantly remind them this is not a text message you're sending (30:40).</p> <p>CB: Um. So my next question, as a follow-up, to that, is why or why not are your students generally more prepared, and you answered that with...</p>	<p>Identifying shifting student population as complicating factor in measuring growth AR134</p> <p>Noting complex student and school circumstances</p> <p>Identifying student and personal challenge AR135</p> <p>Perceiving positive shift in non-ESOL student writing ability AR139</p> <p>Perceiving self (internal) as factor in student writing quality AR142</p>
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<p>AR: Technology. Yes.</p> <p>CB: So, in that same kind of vein, tell me about the quality of student writing five or six years ago.</p> <p>AR: Well, um, everything was paper and pencil. Students had difficulties writing lengthy work. They didn't want to do it. I had to sort of cajole them, work with them, instead of writing an essay, we would do parts of it, and put them together. Some of them, they never saw, until they got to the end, they never had to say well you have to sit there and write a whole essay. They'd say well I can't do that. Well you can write a paragraph today and tomorrow we'll write a different paragraph and we'll, eventually we'll link all of them up. That's pretty much the way I taught it, um, to do that. So it's that sort of think that we call chunking, where you take the work and split it up into pieces and do it that way. And they would write, but the papers would, managing the papers, not losing the papers, getting frustrated and tearing up the papers, all those things, or writing so illegibly the teacher has a hard time reading the papers, those were all issues probably five issues, when I first came here I taught both junior and senior ESOL, I was the only qualified ESOL teacher, so that was all my classes.</p> <p>CB: Uh, so, what is different about those issues</p>	<p>Noting self (internal) responding to student needs as factor in instructional methods AR145</p>
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<p>now?</p> <p>AR: Well, as I said, technology makes a big difference. We are doing, I think, more practicing of writing, we no longer have the FCAT, which gives students the false understanding of what essay writing is like, what you're supposed to write about. Um. I've learned more about working with a population of ESOL students, to help them bring out their best, to motivate them. With writing, motivation is such a huge thing, because they just don't want to write. So you have to bargain with them, like I said, to convince them that, alright, let's just work on this one part now, tomorrow we'll come back and work on a different part.</p> <p>CB: Um. Are you aware of the grade that your school receives on your annual School Report Card?</p> <p>AR: Yes. It's been, uh, Dr. Bradshaw briefs us on it. The biggest issue I have with school grades is that there's a huge lag time between a class and the grade that we get. It's like if you were taking a course at UCF but you wouldn't get your grade for two years.</p> <p>CB: Oh.</p> <p>AR: To try to figure out, you know, how do I, how</p>	<p>Identifying internal factor (practice) as significant to change in student writing quality AR151</p> <p>Identifying external factor (testing method) as significant to change in student writing quality AR152</p> <p>Identifying internal factor (own learning) as significant to change in student writing quality AR153</p> <p>Confident in own ability to motivate students AR155</p> <p>Noting administration communication; school as unit AR156</p> <p>Identifying un-usability of grades as frustration AR158</p> <p>Noting helplessness to use data AR161</p>
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<p>well am I doing, did I do okay? You know, I can't come back and see that teacher from two years ago. A lot of the grades we get, especially as senior teachers, are from classes that are already gone, already vanished, and so we can get some positive feedback that way, but we can't really apply it to our kids. That's one of my biggest issues with all this testing that we do. It's all to evaluate, us our teaching and then our kids for graduation, and none of it is to actually diagnose their problems or help them with their writing problems. We have to do that informally in the classroom (35:15).</p> <p>CB: Um. Are you, do you, know at all what grade this school received this past year?</p> <p>AR: I think we received a C last year and the year before we had a B. They changed the rules on us, which is a big source of frustration to Dr. Bradshaw, because we work really hard to set up the system, and it's like you were, if you were to take a class (Interruption from custodian) but uh, so yeah, when they change it on us, that make it really hard, <b>and it's sort of like changing the rules in the middle of the game.</b></p> <p>CB: Right. You were saying it would be like taking a class, and then...</p> <p>AR: Yeah, halfway through, by the way, you guys,</p>	<p>Noting frustration at evaluation not being used in a productive way AR163</p> <p>Noting agency to diagnose problems on own AR164</p> <p>Noting source of frustration as changing rules AR166</p> <p>Perceiving inability to predict changes AR169</p> <p>Describing feeling of frustration in face of changing rules AR170</p>
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<p>you're doing too well on my work so I've decided to make it even harder for you now to do that. And, uh, I won't let you know until after school's out what you got. So yeah, I have a lot of problems with that. Plus all the days that we spend testing. There's way too much, too many things involved. Because our kids need the pass, you know, either the FCAT or, next year it will be the FAS, but they need the pass that test or they need to pass an ACT or SAT exam. So we learn that a lot of them, if we help them, basically, if we tutor them on how to do well on those tests, that more of them can take and pass those tests. There's a writing component to it, but the biggest component is the reading component. So we spend a lot of time just working on that preparation, test preparation, this year I felt more like I was working for a test prep company rather than teaching English. But you know, you can't argue with the results. <b>We had a lot of students graduate that I didn't think were going to graduate, because they learned how to take the test.</b></p> <p>CB: Um. Do you feel like the grade of the school accurately reflects the quality of the learning in this school?</p> <p>AR: No. It doesn't. It doesn't grade the effort there. Because of No Child Left Behind, we have kids at all different grade levels, we have some</p>	<p>Perceiving unfairness of test to own specific population of students? ("Our kids need the pass") AR172</p> <p>Perceiving testing (external) as influencing instructional methods AR173</p> <p>Perceiving testing (external) as influencing instructional methods AR174</p> <p>Noting helplessness over having instructional methods dictated and inability to change that AR175</p> <p>Perceiving test as influencing instructional methods (external) AR176</p> <p>Noting frustration at school grade misrepresenting school AR177</p> <p>Noting variety of learners/ students AR178</p> <p>Noting blanket standard applied to all regardless</p>
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<p>who are doing really well, and are doing rigorous work, but we have a one grade fits all. Again, going back to the classroom analogy, it's like, okay, we're going to write papers and then I'm going to give the whole class one grade. The good students who are doing really well, you get the same grade as the students who are goofing off in the back row.</p> <p>CB: Um. So, you mentioned a minute ago that it feels sometimes like working for a test prep company.</p> <p>AR: Yes.</p> <p>CB: What are some of the ways, if any, you feel these tests have influenced the way you teach writing.</p> <p>AR: Well, not so much with writing. It's mostly like I said, our issue with graduation, we're really affected by graduation rates. That's probably the number one priority for senior teachers. We have to have a good graduation rate to keep a high grade, or to get a high grade. We did have a B at one time. In the, like I said, they made the rules harder, now we've gotten a C and we're trying to get back to that B or A, which for the type of school we are is unprecedented. You know, immigrant schools normally don't do that well because we have so many non-English speakers.</p>	<p>of level of effort AR179</p> <p>Noting frustration at school grade misrepresenting effort AR180</p> <p>Expressing helplessness at school graded due to factor not entirely within control AR182</p> <p>Noting administrative pressure (external) as influencing instructional goals/methods AR183</p> <p>Noting frustration at grade misrepresenting school and work of the school AR184</p> <p>Perceiving self and school's hard work as important AR185</p>
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<p>But we worked really hard to get there and that means doing well. Yes, the FAS is probably going to be an important issue and we're probably going to spend a lot of resources on developing it, because that writing test is part of passing that overall test. But, uh, this year, I haven't had to worry about that, so we've focused more on passing the reading portion. We do do writing, most of my writing is towards getting them ready for college, because I know they need to have that, and I'm not just gonna, even though we're not graded on it, I'm not just gonna let them struggle in college because they're not prepared. But there's no grade incentive at this point to help me focus on the writing to the exclusion of the other things like the reading in particular (40:51). There, so that's another issue we have with testing. Testing tends to focus teachers laser-like on what gives them a good grade or a good score. You know our salaries are now tied to our students' success, right, so you have teachers who are only teaching to the test, and leaving out really important elements that they need to have, and writing is one of those elements, so, um, not enough time. It used to be after the tenth grade, eleventh grade, there'd be virtually no focus on writing, because it wasn't evaluated. You'd take and pass your 10<sup>th</sup> grade FCAT, then you're done. But now at least there's going to be a focus on 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade on writing because of the FAS.</p>	<p>Predicting that testing will continue to impact instructional methods (external) AR186</p> <p>Identifying own knowledge and priorities as shaping instructional methods (internal) AR187</p> <p>Perceiving testing as impacting instructional methods (external) AR190</p> <p>Perceiving teacher salary (external) as impacting instructional methods AR191</p> <p>Perceiving testing as impacting instructional methods (external) AR192</p>
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<p>CB: How does the staff respond to discussing the grade of the school, would you say?</p> <p>AR: Well, like I said, we do have meetings on it. Dr. Bradshaw has broken it down pretty well into different areas. She's very good with analytics. That's one of her strengths. That's why she's now becoming an area principal. And, uh, she breaks it down so that different departments know where they need to improve, what elements they need to improve on to impact the school grade. Um, like I said, that's everything that impacts the grade. If it's not part of what's graded, even though it might be important, we're not going to focus on it as hard as we should. Which does bother me because obviously I've been around here for a while and I would like to focus more on academics. Not just on passing tests.</p> <p>CB: Was that something that you were able to do previously, was focus more on academics?</p> <p>AR: Yes. And it still is when I teach at Valencia. My students don't take any of those exams. They take their own and I actually create their final exams, they aren't created by the county or the state.</p> <p>CB: Alright, that is all I had, I'm going to go ahead and turn this off.</p>	<p>Perceiving school as unit working together toward goal AR194</p> <p>Perceiving instructional methods as impacted by school grade (external) AR195</p> <p>Identifying frustration and helplessness due loss of teacher input/ direction (F+H) AR196</p> <p>Noting agency to choose more instructional methods (internal) when teaching at school not impacted by state external factors AR197</p>
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## **APPENDIX G: AMY'S CODED INTERVIEW**

## Interview Three Transcript Codes

Amy

CB: Hello, my name is Casey Briand. I am a student researcher at the University of Central Florida. I am conducting a research study to learn more about the various factors that affect teacher self-efficacy and perceptions of student writing. This interview is being audio recorded. Only members of the research team will have access to the audio recording. Do you consent to being recorded?

AM: Yes, I do.

CB: My phone is on the table for keeping time during this interview. My phone is not being used as a recording device. Are you comfortable having my phone on the table?

AM: Yeah.

CB: Cool. In any write-up of this study, you will not be identified and no personal information will be shared with anybody outside of the research team. Your participation is confidential. You can withdraw your participation at any time for any reason. This is the informed consent form for this study. Please take your time and ask any questions that you may have. If you consent to participate,

please choose a pseudonym and sign at the bottom. We've already done that.

AM: Yep.

CB: Ok. So you've signed the informed consent form. Thank you for your participation. So let's go ahead and begin the interview.

CB: So, uh, what subject do you teach?

AM: English Language Arts.

CB: Uh, and how long have you taught that?

AM: Six years.

CB: Six years. Uh, have you taught all those six years at this school, or have you taught at another one previously?

AM: All here.

CB: All here?

AM: Yep.

CB: Ok. So, um, what grade levels do you teach?

AM: I started out teaching ninth and I taught that

<p>for a year and then I taught tenth grade. And now I work with ninth and tenth grade as an instructional coach.</p>	
<p>CB: Ok. What types of writing do you typically do with students?</p>	
<p>AM: So, prior to FSA, it was very formulaic writing. So it was your standard five paragraph essay, um, topic sentence, extension, elaboration. Rinse, repeat. Since the FSA, text based writing, it's kind of expanded. So now teach really the analysis part. Really, before, it wasn't analytical writing. It was regurgitation. And now we teach true, like, text analysis type writing.</p>	<p>Perceiving FSA (external) as shaping instructional methods AM10</p>
<p>CB: Uh, what is that like, text analysis?</p>	
<p>AM: So the kids are given, I'm just speaking with like the state test, but even when they do stuff in class they'll be given multiple pieces of text, and they'll be given like an overarching prompt that will ask them either choose a side or explain a subject, but they can't, whereas with FCAT they used to be able to say I think and I believe, it's now what does the evidence say and how did you interpret the evidence to prove what you're trying to say.</p>	<p>Perceiving FSA (external) as shaping instructional Methods AM11</p> <p>Perceiving FSA (external) as shaping instructional methods AM14</p>
<p>CB: So tell me a little bit about your experiences</p>	

<p>teaching this type of writing.</p> <p>AM: So with the FCAT style of writing, the very formulaic, it was really easy to teach to our students, even though they have deficits in reading, because it didn't require any reading, and if they could remember the formula, they could do a pretty good job, and they're good at talking about themselves, so they could do a pretty good job, um, but when the text based writing kind of came into the picture, we were doing some of it, but it's much more in-depth. <b>It's harder to overcome those reading deficits because you can always tell your struggling reader in their writing, because they're so closely linked</b> (3:41). It's been a lot of trying to figure out the best way to introduce it and the best way to like scaffold up. So we started, I know this year we did something a little bit different where we taught like smaller chunks. So maybe they read two articles but they only respond in one paragraph. And then worked our way up to what does a full essay look like with this type of writing.</p> <p>CB: How did the students respond to that?</p> <p>AM: Um, it was mixed. We had a lot of students that, we feel like, a lot of the kids just wanted to write an essay. Like, they wanted to show us they could write one. Um, they don't understand the</p>	<p>Perceiving testing (external) as influencing instructional methods AM 16</p> <p>Identifying reading deficit as teaching challenge AM21</p> <p>Perceiving own skills and goals as influencing instructional methods (internal) AM22</p> <p>Perceiving school as unit AM23</p> <p>Perceiving internal factor (own knowledge and goals) as influencing instructional methods AM24</p> <p>Perceiving student understanding of writing as</p>
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<p>analysis piece, so they're still, because they've come up in education in that FCAT formula, um, they still write like that, and they don't understand that when you use evidence from a text, you then have to explain how it relates back to what you're talking about. So, that connection has been something that this year we kind of identified as next year, this needs to be explicitly taught how to do from the beginning. Because we just kind of assumed kids probably knew that, but they didn't.</p> <p>CB: Uh, how do you feel that your students do in general, uh, when writing this year?</p> <p>AM: I think that, uh, we're a digital school, and I think that has some implications on their writing. Because the test is also on the computer, and, um, they're so used to autocorrect and things like that that sometimes they don't go back and reread. So that's been a big, a really big eye opener. I spent the last five weeks in this classroom, because the teacher went on maternity leave, and it's just incredible to see that they will turn something in and then there's red squiggly lines underneath every single thing that they wrote, and they just don't, they just don't have the awareness sometimes to go back and reread. It's kind of like, it's done and in their mind they've cleared out. It's been really hard to talk about the writing process with them, and I know in talking with teachers this</p>	<p>being shaped by test (external) AM26</p> <p>Perceiving goals for next year (internal) as influencing instructional methods AM27</p> <p>Perceiving technology (external) as impacting student writing quality AM30</p> <p>Expressing frustration at student misuse of digital tools AM31</p> <p>Expressing frustration at student writing process as task-based AM33</p>
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<p>year, because kids don't see writing as a process, they see writing as a grade. So they just want to get it done to get the grade.</p>	
<p>AB: Absolutely. Do you think that, um, the digital writing has impacted the way the students view the writing process?</p>	
<p>AM: Yeah, because you're, I think the drafting process, like the planning process, when you write, totally changes when you're both reading and drafting an essay on a computer. Whereas were you to just sit down with a pen and a paper and do it, um. So that, I think, has been confusing for them. We're basically trying to undo, for ninth and tenth graders, the last seven or eight years of their schooling, and we're trying to be like we know that was meaningful, but now you're doing this totally different approach. And so it's been trying to learn how to ride a bike, I guess, because it's totally different.</p>	<p>Perceiving technology as influencing student writing process (external) AM35</p> <p>Perceiving self and other teachers as choosing instructional methods to suit student needs (internal) AM37</p>
<p>CB: How do you measure student success on assignments? Writing assignments?</p>	
<p>AM: Writing assignments? Rubrics. So we try, um, with our, when we give a prompt that resembles the FSA writing, we use obviously the FSA rubric. Here at [school] we actually took that rubric and kind of pared it down so it's more student friendly,</p>	<p>Perceiving FSA (external) as shaping instructional methods AM39</p> <p>Seeing school as unit AM40</p> <p>Perceiving own professional judgement as shaping</p>

<p>because there's a lot of very um, elevated language or concepts that kids might not get. So we tried to make it a little bit more friends. But we always use that rubric when we're scoring essays for like a mock test, just so there's kind of uniformity. But in our PLCs, if we're going to give writing for a common assessment, we come up with our own rubric with what we're looking for.</p> <p>CB: Um, tell me a little bit about that process of coming up with your own rubric. How does that work?</p> <p>AM: So usually what we do is, if they have a question the kids are going to answer at the end, we talk about like what's more important when you're reading the answer. Is it the getting the correct answer, or is it having them cite evidence, or is it that grammar piece. So the teachers kind of say here's the things I want to see mastery, and we talk about what a perfect, kind of ideal paper would look like, and then kind of pare down from there to see what maybe the different levels would be. So sometimes teachers might choose, like especially at the beginning of the year, to say, I really want them to get the concept, I'm not too worried about the grammar, and so we might use that as part of the rubric and really focus on did they have the concept and were they able to back it up. Um. It depends on what our standard is at</p>	<p>instructional methods (internal) AM41</p> <p>Perceiving own goals for instruction as shaping instructional methods (internal) AM42</p> <p>Perceiving own goals for instruction as shaping instructional methods (internal) AM43</p> <p>Identifying standard (external) as shaping</p>
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<p>that time. Like when we did evidence they weren't really worried about grammar at all. It was always could they provide evidence. And then as the year moved on they kind of added the grammar in there, because at that point they should have developed a little bit more. So it's really in the PLCs and what those teachers want to look at. And it changes. Sometimes our honors teachers say from the beginning, I'm gonna have the requirement that grammar's gonna be in there. So their rubric might differ a little bit. But for the most part, they're pretty much exactly the same (9:31).</p> <p>CB: Uh, so tell me about your students as writers this past academic year.</p> <p>AM: So, how so, like so, like what did their writing look like?</p> <p>CB: Um, yes. Let's start with that, what did their writing look like?</p> <p>AM: So, we get a lot of, um, in the writing, the kids are pretty strong at giving a thesis. It might not be the best worded thesis, but they can usually get like a central idea down. It's in the body where we struggle the most. Because the writing typically, the kids can make a point, but it's just, they'll make a point, and then they'll just copy and paste</p>	<p>instructional methods AM47</p> <p>Perceiving teacher goals and expectations (internal) as shaping instructional methods AM50</p>
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<p>a whole chunk of text and think that's like, they're like yay I made a paragraph, and you're like, okay but what does that text mean, and they're like well I told you in the first sentence. So there's a disconnect with that kind of flow or fluidity in the writing. Like, explaining the things that you use. We've seen a disconnect, it's just a lot of copy and pasting. Or, with our most struggling readers, it's a lot of misinterpretation of the text, so, uh, I'm thinking like, <b>they had a mock test that was about the electoral college, and a lot of our students didn't grow up in the United States, so they had no idea.</b> A lot of adults don't understand the electoral college. But a lot of these kids had no idea what it was and it really came out in their writing, so there's some struggles I think we face because of our population and that like, maybe other schools don't have to deal with. <b>We just pray sometimes, please don't have anything on U.S. history or U.S. government.</b> There's kids, a majority of our kids come from other places. So a lot of the times, you talk about something very specific to our country, they don't know. Because they just got here, and they're just winging it.</p> <p>CB: So my follow up question to that is what are their strengths and weaknesses, and so that's kind of what you're just talking about there, they have that kind of strong, they can make a main idea, but they have trouble kind of backing it up.</p>	<p>Identifying variety of student abilities and skills AM62</p> <p>Perceiving cultural background (external) as impacting student writing AM63</p> <p>Recognizing diverse student circumstances AM64</p> <p>Seeing school population as unique frustration AM65</p> <p>Noting feeling of helplessness in face of test AM66</p> <p>Noting variety of student experiences AM67</p> <p>Perceiving background knowledge/ lived experiences as important AM68</p>
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<p>AM: Yeah. And we found that, um, we feel like they are much better at the argumentative writing than that informational or explanatory writing because of that, because it's in their nature as teenagers to be able to kind of prove a point. They got, it's a little more formulaic when you deal with argument writing, because it's you know you have to prove a point, prove a point, address a counterclaim, so they get it. But when we ask them to explain, or analyze literature, it's just like, does not connect right now. For a majority (12:24).</p>	<p>Perceiving natural student attitudes (external) as shaping student writing success AM70</p> <p>Identifying frustration of students only being able to write with formula AM72</p>
<p>CB: Do your students enjoy writing?</p>	
<p>AM: It varies. I think it varies. Uh, six years ago, I would have said the girls tend to enjoy writing more than the boys, but I've noticed a flip, that boys tend to enjoy it a little bit more. Um, but, I think that writing for them, writing's scary, because it's right in front of you, like all of the flaws are right in front of you, so it's a very scary process. And for kids that have always viewed education punitively because of their struggles or because of their background, um, it's they don't want to put anything on paper, in front of somebody that that person can then pick apart. So it's, uh, it's, I think they enjoy it once they're confident, but since they don't have the confidence, they, um, resist quite a bit.</p>	<p>Noting variety of students and learners AM73</p> <p>Noting confrontational nature of writing (external) as influencing student willingness to write AM75</p> <p>Recognizing diverse student backgrounds AM76</p> <p>Perceiving student background as influencing willingness to write (external) AM77</p>

<p>CB: Um, you mention that you think previously girls tended to enjoy it more, and now boys do. Do you think that there's a reason for that?</p>	
<p>AM: I don't know. I've just noticed, being, especially being in this classroom, that I can usually get, like if we do any type of writing, the boys usually jump right into it, the boys, they'll share their answers, where the girls are a little more hesitant. Um. I don't know. I think it's like the rise of social media, like people share how they feel more, so like boys are more socially, it's like more socially acceptable for boys to be in touch with their emotions. So, yeah, the boys get into it now. And they competitive, so they like to like read their answers and then, somebody else tries them, and they're like no, look at mine, I was better, so they always have competitions in here about who gave the best answers, which I guess is a good thing.</p>	<p>Perceiving social media as factor affecting student writing motivation (external) AM81</p> <p>Perceiving student willingness to compete as factor in student motivation (external) AM82</p>
<p>CB: Yeah. Um. You also mentioned that they start to enjoy it more once they build their confidence. Um. What are some activities, or are there any activities you do to build confidence?</p>	
<p>AM: Yeah, um. We've, we've done a couple of different things. I know, um, when I was teaching tenth grade, I used to have the kids like, use text</p>	<p>Identifying own goals and decisions as shaping instructional methods (internal) AM84</p>

frames and make, like, poems about themselves and where they come from, um, we just did that as well, I'll ask them a question and give them the frame and have them fill it in, to like scaffold. But we've looked through like songs and we try to bring in music and things they can connect to and analyze how did this person say it, because um, once they see that once they're allowed to put their own spin on things, and they don't, we don't expect them all to be like little robots and everything to look exactly right, I think that builds their confidence. Um, I always like to tell my students too, like in writing there is no right answer. If you can prove what you're saying, or if you can gather enough evidence, you're not wrong, and so they, that kind of builds their confidence too. But trying to make them see that it is a process, and everyone's going to be awful at the beginning, and it's all about getting better, I think helps them. Quite a bit.

CB: What is the most challenging part of learning writing for your students?

AM: I think it's the process. Because, again, they view writing as a grade and not as a process, so when they do write something, and then I ask them to revise it or give them that feedback, they just take it and they're like okay, and I'm like okay revise, and they're like you mean I have to write it

Perceiving self as factor in building motivation  
(internal) AM90



<p>CB: Um, do you feel that yours students this year are ready to move on to the next grade?</p>	
<p>AM: That's a hard question. I think that, um, they're much better this year than last year at the evidence piece. Like, they can find some evidence all day long. It just worries me because that analysis piece is still missing. And, when they get into eleventh grade it's very much ACT and SAT and that's, that analysis and evaluation piece is kind of what they're, they're going to be doing, so. Kinda makes me worry because I'm like, oh, God, they're gonna be behind, again. And we're gonna have to build that confidence. And also they're going to be, if they take the SAT and the ACT, it's a different style of writing again, so it kind of worries me that they're going to get frustrated and having to learn something else that's a new style.</p>	<p>Perceiving shift in student writing quality AM106</p> <p>Perceiving tests (external) as shaping writing curriculum AM109</p> <p>Expressing helplessness for students once they leave own class AM110</p>
<p>CB: Do you find that, um, that having to shift styles is challenging for students, or do you think that they kind of adapt to it after a time?</p>	
<p>AM: No, they, it's difficult. They don't see purpose. If they, if it doesn't flow, like naturally flow, um, the, I can remember teaching the ninth graders last year, or the year before, when FSA first came out, we spent all of ninth grade teaching them this formulaic FCAT style writing, and then it went to</p>	<p>Expressing frustration at teaching constantly shifting styles AM113</p> <p>Perceiving test (external) as shaping instructional methods AM114</p> <p>Perceiving test (external) as influencing student</p>

<p>FSA, which was text-based analysis, and they were like well then why did we just spend a whole year doing that, and a lot of them were just, no, I'm gonna write an essay like you taught, like these people taught me last year. Because why would they do that? And to explain to them that there's multiple different types of writing, you're growing as a writing. And yeah, it just, it trips them up. They don't see the value. They're like then why did we spend all this time. And sometimes I'm like I don't know.</p> <p>CB: Do you feel that the overall quality of your students writing is better now than it was five or six years ago?</p> <p>AM: Yes, yeah, definitely. I think that, um, I think the kids have, they're like held accountable more now. Um, so I mean, you still have those kids who are gonna do the bare minimum to get by, and you still, like, language arts is really hard, language arts and reading, especially if you struggle with language or reading or anything like that, it's a hard class. For a lot of our kids, they have language arts and reading. And so, they're almost like, literaried out by the time the get to you in language arts. And so, I think that, um, now though, there's just so much support and like teachers, we've done a lot of training with building relationships with kids. So the teachers recognize</p>	<p>motivation AM115</p> <p>Noting challenge convincing students of multiple types of writing AM117</p> <p>Feeling helpless to control/ explain external decisions AM118</p> <p>Perceiving shift in student writing quality AM119</p> <p>Perceiving variety of student learners AM122</p> <p>Perceiving teacher training as factor in instructional methods (external) AM124</p> <p>Perceiving teacher knowledge as shaping</p>
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<p>what the kids need and they just, they try, they really do try to give them what they need as an individual writer. Sometimes too much, sometimes we have to tell teachers they have to do all of the work, but I think it's a good problem to have when you have teachers who just really want to help the kids. And the kids feel that, and so I think they'll write, they'll practice more and they'll do the things you ask them to do. They may not do them great, but they definitely do them, because they respect the teacher and they know that the teacher is just wanting to help (21:25).</p> <p>CB: Um, so teachers building relationships, is that something that has been focused on more in the past years, or?</p> <p>AM: Yeah.</p> <p>CB: Yeah?</p> <p>AM: I know, when I started here, we were under a different principal, and it was a lot of, like, strategies. He was an AVID principal and so he was really big on what strategies are you using in your classroom to help these kids, what strategies, what strategies. And then when Dr. Bradshaw came in, that was one of her biggest pushes, was building relationships. Because, for our kids, at this school especially, they have not only academic struggles,</p>	<p>instructional methods (internal) AM125</p> <p>Perceiving variety and diversity of student needs AM126</p> <p>Perceiving school as unit AM127</p> <p>Perceiving students writing as responsive to personal relationships (internal) AM128</p> <p>Perceiving principal as factor shaping instructional methods (external) AM130</p> <p>Perceiving principal as factor shaping instructional methods (external) AM131</p> <p>Identifying variety of student learners AM132</p>
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<p>but struggles outside, so why come to school?</p> <p>Like, when you don't have power or food or anything like that, why, like, this essay doesn't matter to me, because I don't have anything to eat at home. And so, she was really big on, build those relationships because you can get the most disconnected kid involved again and reengaged again, if you just have a relationship can pull them aside and be like, hey, you need to do X, Y, and Z. So that's been like a huge push the last five years here.</p> <p>CB: How do you feel that building relationships, that new focus, changes things?</p> <p>AM: I think that, um, you, the teachers that really take the time to get to know their kids, there's a 150 kids in their class, they can only do so much, but taking the time to get to know them, even just one thing about them, um, they connect with them and there's that level of accountability for that kid. No longer can a kid just sit in your class and just be ignored. We really focus on the relationship part but also on like monitoring every single kid, and there's different forms of monitoring going on, like as a teacher, I know that if I see a kid that's just not doing what they're supposed to do, I try to walk up and talk to them. Not about like hey you're not doing your work, just about anything to get them engaged, and then be</p>	<p>Identifying variety of student challenges AM133</p> <p>Perceiving teacher (internal) as having significant impact on student engagement AM134</p> <p>Perceiving positive shift in holding students accountable AM137</p> <p>Perceiving self and personal relationships as influencing instructional methods (internal) AM138</p>
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<p>them the way you learned, teach them to write an essay. But that's so, like, subjective because people could learn all these different ways. And then, we brought in a consultant one year that really focused on different strategies, and that seemed to help, but now, with the FSA style, the writing, the writing process depends so much on the reading process. And so it's evolved because we used to teach writing – we'd teach reading, reading, reading, and then stop everything and teach writing, and we're really trying to learn how to integrate them, so they're meaningful, because that's the type of writing, like you know, that we do as adults, and in grad school and in college, you never just write an essay. You read something, respond to it, or you are arguing a point and you use this expert to kind of back it up. It's like, we're trying to kind of figure out that flow here. Because of all the reading comprehension struggles. How do you, how do you scaffold for reading comprehension, and scaffold for writing at the same time, it's like a lot of scaffolding without like giving them the answer. So that's been, it's been a fun journey.</p> <p>CB: Um, so you say you're, the push is to try to have that integration. Overall, do you think you've been successful with that?</p> <p>AM: Not really. I think that we, as teachers, really</p>	<p>Perceiving outside administrator (external) as influencing instructional methods AM144</p> <p>Perceiving FSA (external) as influencing instructional methods AM145</p> <p>Perceiving understanding of future writing needs as influencing instructional methods (internal) AM146</p> <p>Noting variety of student learners AM147</p> <p>Expressing frustration with student deficits in multiple areas (factor outside of control) AM148</p> <p>Perceiving teacher knowledge of craft as factor</p>
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<p>are, we're having to relearn our own craft, our own way of teaching the process. So I think that it still kind of comes off sometimes like reading, reading, reading, stop everything now we're gonna focus on writing. And that, in part, is like, we tend to not address the problem because there's like seven other problems and we're trying to address those. And then as the test gets closer, we're like we really have to address this, and it kind of puts everything on hold, and we go back to strictly writing practice for like a week straight. So, we've tried a couple of different things this year, some went really great, some didn't go so great. Some things went really well in ninth grade, didn't go so well in tenth grade, and vice versa. So it's, um, it's still a process. I think we're getting better than we've done in the past.</p> <p>CB: Um. So, tell me about how your students test scores in writing have changed, if they have changed at all, in your time here.</p> <p>AM: They're um, they've changed drastically with the FSA. Because with the FCAT, they would get two different scores. With the writing test, and the reading test were completely different. So they would get a reading grade, or a reading score, sorry, or level, and then they would get one for writing. But with the FSA it's a composite score, so they get kind of smushed together. And that's</p>	<p>that shapes instructional methods (internal) AM149</p> <p>Perceiving test (external) as factor that shapes instructional methods AM150</p> <p>Perceiving gains and growth (AM211)</p> <p>Noting challenge engaging with new test AM155</p>
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<p>been the hardest part this year, and last year, but really this year for us. Because we're such a data-driven school and we don't like to just take numbers. Like, we'll take our data from, like, even those relationships the teachers have. This kid scored really poorly on this assessment, what's going on. The teacher will usually be like, he's been absent a lot, he's got some stuff going on, so we might then take an older writing sample and compare them and kind of see, but it's been really hard to do that, because the data was so raw when we got it. It was either a Y or an N. Actually, it was just a Y, this kid passed. We didn't know, did they pass the reading, did they not pass the writing. And we're still trying to differentiate that, because of the way that the score report came out. So it's really hard. We used to use that old FCAT writing data, and now we don't really know what it's going to look like. So it's like, we're having to create our own. And that's been a struggle. It's also a struggle, for example, with our FSA rubric, if you ask the state what a proficient or master is, they'll give you a different answer than the district. The district at one point gave us an answer, and it was like, well it's very school by school, so nobody even really knows. When we get the data, like, what is a passing score? And how is that being equated. Because it's three domains. Some schools do, it's a weird, weird scale. One to four, and then the last domain is zero to two.</p>	<p>Perceiving school as unit using system AM156</p> <p>Noting frustration with data not being useful AM159</p> <p>Noting helplessness in knowing where students needed help AM161</p> <p>Noting helplessness to use data to drive methods AM162</p> <p>Noting helplessness at ambiguity of data AM163</p>
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<p>Right? So the idea is domain one, domain two, if you got a perfect score, four, four, and a two, you get a ten. But that, to me, like, when schools report data like that, here, we report it as a domain score. Domain one, they got a three. Domain two, they got a two, domain one, maybe they got a zero, because then we can look and see which domain is the domain we have to focus on in instruction. And when you kind of clump them all together, or if the state reports it clumped all together, we're not gonna even know where to start instruction the next year, we're just kind of gonna have to start from the beginning. So the way that we, the data we're using to kind of drive our instruction is kind of up in the air right now (30:28). Kinda crazy.</p> <p>CB: So you say that this is a data driven school. Um. Tell me a little bit more about that.</p> <p>AM: So, it's, uh, it's a system. We have very strongly implemented systems when it comes to how we look at student progress or student achievement. So, to give you an example, um, we meet as coaches. At this school we have, we try to have at least one person represent every single subject area. So we have a nine ten ELA coach, we have an eleven twelve ELA coach, we have a reading coach, we have a social studies coach, math coach, science coach, literacy coach, so we</p>	<p>Identifying how test scores (external) shape instructional methods AM166</p> <p>Noting helplessness to know how to use test data AM167</p> <p>Noting the use of (external) data to drive instructional methods AM169</p> <p>Seeing school as unit working towards student achievement AM170</p>
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<p>have lots of coaches. We have an instructional coach who kind of leads us. Then we have an assistant principal that is in charge of like directing instruction. And she kind of heads up our coaching PLCs. And what we do every Friday, we do what we call a Friday folder for Dr. Bradshaw. So we take a snapshot, she likes to explain it like, I want to kind of get a snapshot of what you did that week. So we might take PLC agendas, if that's like the thing we really want to showcase, maybe it was we worked on a lesson plan or we worked on an assessment, and we'll gather these things up and we put it in a folder, and the folders are kind of like ELA, reading, science, and um, she and the district officials all have access to that. Then, once a month, we take all those Friday folders and, as coaches and our APs, we comb through them, and we create a PowerPoint presentation that Dr. Bradshaw uses at her principal's meetings. So we report, we give a narrative, just a brief narrative, hey, here's what's been going on in ELA. Then we give her data that we've collected, where we've collected it. Was it an assessment that we took from a textbook, did we create it? Um, I like to let her know if we created it what was the process that we went through, what were the standards we were focusing on, those things. So we report the data. Then we give, uh, strengths and weaknesses, according to that data, and the observational data we've had, talking to teachers,</p>	<p>Identifying assistant principal (external) as factor that drives instructional methods AM171</p> <p>Noting teachers and coaches agency to decide what's important to share AM172</p> <p>Noting coaches' agency to choose what to report AM174</p>
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<p>walking around, getting student samples, and then we create next steps. What are we going to do next month to try to address all these things we've seen this month. And so we compile all that, and it's like a 300 slide show by the end of it, because it's just so much that we get into, and, um, we report out. So that's where we start to see, like, at the beginning of the year, when you went through and you looked at ELA and you looked at science and you looked at math, you saw that the low scores were, it was struggling with the technology. So we realized we really needed to put systems in place so that the kids were comfortable with the technology. And once we addressed that, okay, maybe the next month we looked at it and you might see different trends across different departments. But it kind of helps us all keep track of what's going on.</p> <p>CB: Um, ok. So, do you think that your students now are generally more prepared to be good writers than your students from previous years at this school?</p> <p>AM: Yes. I think it's, I think yes, and in a way, um, yes. Because I think the type of writing we're teaching them now is more valuable, in the long term than that formulaic writing, um, that we taught them in the past. Because even in our most, like, your most technical jobs, or, you know, I'm</p>	<p>Using data (external) to drive instructional decisions AM175</p> <p>Perceiving shift in student writing preparedness AM177</p> <p>Appreciating variety of student goals and motivations AM179</p>
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<p>thinking of like some of our students don't go to college, they go straight into a career, and never, as a motorcycle mechanic are they gonna be like let me tell you how I feel. No, they're gonna say here's what I think is wrong and here's why. And that's really what we're teaching them. Here's the point I'm trying to make, here's why I'm making it, here's some evidence to prove it, just like if you were to go to your motorcycle technician, they might have a manual or they might show you. So I think it's way more valuable. The struggle is that we have a very young faculty. So like, our tenth grade team is seven teachers, and at one point I counted up their total combined experience and it was like four years. It was like really low. Like, three of them were brand new to teaching, two of them had taught half a year last year, so this was like their first full year, and one of them has been here for four years, so I think it was like six years total. And, to have a team of seven that has less than six years of experience, it's scary because they don't know the new test either. If they went to school in Florida, they took FCAT. And so, it's been really important to provide the development, like the professional development, training, and let teachers look at this stuff, because they need to know what they're teaching. It's good and bad. It's good because new teachers will like, they just want to learn, and they will go to the trainings and they're gonna absorb it because they don't know</p>	<p>Identifying young faculty (external) as having impact on instruction AM181</p> <p>Noting helplessness in the face of new types of test writing AM182</p> <p>Perceiving school as unit with responsibility AM183</p> <p>Perceiving attitudes of teachers (internal) as influencing instructional methods AM184</p>
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<p>anything else, but it's also kind of a negative, because veteran teachers tend to be more confident in their teaching of writing...</p> <p>CB: Um. Oh sorry, go ahead.</p> <p>AM: No, it's just. They embrace it more.</p> <p>CB: Do you think that, um, the experience of the teacher has an impact on student writing?</p> <p>AM: Yeah. And I think the teacher's own comfort level with writing has an impact. If that teacher has some of the struggles that our kids have, it's such a great opportunity to like, kind of exploit (looks at phone; sees Amber Alert) Uh oh, Amber Alert. Um to kind of exploit it and say I have the same issue and look what I can do. But a lot of times it's just, it's the scary place so the teacher tries to rush through it and like, to, because they're scared, they're scared their kids are going to kind of call them out on things. <b>So I think that the kind of teacher confidence or almost the teacher's self-efficacy in the writing process, has a big impact on the students, because they do what they see.</b> So if they see a teacher that's kind of second guessing themselves, they then do that (37:19).</p> <p>CB: Um. Tell me about the quality of student writing five or six years ago.</p>	<p>Perceiving teacher's attitude and comfort (internal) as impacting student writing and confidence AM185</p> <p>Perceiving teacher's own comfort level with material (internal) as shaping instructional methods AM186</p> <p>Perceiving teacher's self-efficacy (internal) as impacting student writing and attitudes towards writing AM187</p>
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<p>AM: It was very short. Um. I'm, I have a picture in my mind, even the handwriting, maybe it's because I taught ninth grade, but, um. It was very brief. We had some fantastic writers my first year, but the kids, I know, that were in my classroom six years ago. They struggled. I could barely get them, sometimes, to like just put the heading and their name on a piece of paper. And it was lots of grammatical errors. We saw a lot of writing how they speak, like colloquially to their friends. Um. Yeah, it was very informal.</p>	<p>Noting variety of students and student abilities AM189</p> <p>Noting frustration engaging students AM190</p>
<p>CB: What is different about it now?</p>	
<p>AM: I think the kids have, like, they've learned that, they're starting to see, especially in ninth and tenth grade, that there's a different register or different tone that they have to use. So we definitely still see some grammatical errors, for sure, but we see them attempting to, they don't write like they speak. Some of them do, sometimes we do see it, but for the most part, we, I see them trying. Like if I put a sample on the board, they will go and they will try to replicate that voice in their own, so they've kind of corrected that um, that tone of very informal writing. They also stopped using emoticons, that was a big problem six years ago. They like to put, like, they'd write a paragraph and put a smiley</p>	<p>Perceiving students own learning as impacting student writing (external) AM191</p>

<p>face. I'd have to explain, I should know that you're happy by your tone, you don't have to put the smiley face, and so they've kind of caught on now. They get what they're supposed to do, it's the execution that sometimes just, kind of, not so hot.</p> <p>CB: Are you aware of the grade that your school receives on your annual School Report Card?</p> <p>AM: Yes.</p> <p>CB: Uh, do you know what is was this last year?</p> <p>AM: We were a C. Very close to a B, so close. Yeah. They changed the equation. Last year's School Report Card, too, I'm sure you know, they changed the way they were kind of weighting things. They used graduation rate from the year before, so it's, you know, but.</p> <p>CB: So how do you feel about the grade?</p> <p>AM: I don't think that the, I don't think school grades in general give you a good gauge of what's going on at a school, because, I grew up in this area. And, a lot of my friends went to a different school in this area, and my parents chose to send me here, and I think that, um, parents are put off by a school grade. They might go, oh this school's an A, so I'm gonna send my kid here. Well this</p>	<p>Noting frustration at school grade lowered AM198</p> <p>Noting frustration of school grade not accurate AM200</p>
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<p>school is a C. But I think that you have to look at the population that we serve. And think about how much more work it took to get us to a C. Like some of those schools that are As, those kids are affluent, they grew up with computers, they grew up with parents who read to them, they have everything they need to know how to do it, whereas we serve a totally different population. And so, I always warn people when they're talking about where to send their kids, like, go visit. Go. You can go visit, you can talk to teaches that work there, because your kid, I think of myself. I have ADD, and so, that kid, like a school that is not used to serving that population is going to be labeled as that kid in the class and pushed aside. Whereas if you have a school where that's something they're used to serving and they know how to provide the resources and services for that kid to help them succeed, <b>that kid may not, yeah, he may not get the perfect score on his FSA, but did that kid truly learn and get an education, absolutely. So sometimes, I don't think the school grade captures everything that's going on.</b></p> <p>CB: Alright, and I'm going to, good on time, go ahead and stop this.</p>	<p>Perceiving circumstances (external) as influencing student preparedness to succeed in school AM204</p> <p>Perceiving school as being competent at dealing with diverse situations AM208</p> <p>Noting frustration over disconnect between FSA scores and education AM209</p> <p>Perceiving frustration of school grade as incomplete picture AM210</p>
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## **APPENDIX H: LAMONT'S CODED INTERVIEW**

Interview Four Transcript Codes

Lamont

CB: Hello, my name is Casey Briand. I am a student researcher with the University of Central Florida. I am conducting a research study to learn more about the various factors that affect teacher self-efficacy and perceptions of student writing. This interview is being audio recorded. Only members of the research team will have access to the audio recording. Do you consent to being recorded?

LT: Yes.

CB: My phone is on the table for keeping time during this interview. My phone is not being used as a recording device. Are you comfortable having my phone on the table?

LT: Yep.

CB: In any write-up of this study, you will not be identified and no personal information will be shared with anybody outside of the research team. Your participation is confidential. You can withdraw your participation at any time for any reason. This is the informed consent form for this study. Please take your time and ask any questions that you may have. If you consent to participate, please choose a pseudonym and sign at the



<p>bottom. We've already done that.</p> <p>LT: Mm-hm.</p> <p>CB: Ok. So you've signed the informed consent form. Thank you for your participation. So let's go ahead and begin the interview.</p> <p>CB: So, um, what subject do you teach?</p> <p>LT: I teach DLA reading.</p> <p>CB: Ok, what is DLA?</p> <p>LT: Direct Language acquisition, I believe. It's a pseudonym that the county came up with. Basically it means that I teach the English Language Learners.</p> <p>CB: Got it. They really just keep coming up with...</p> <p>LT: That's it.</p> <p>CB: Goodness, ok. And how long have you been teaching that subject?</p> <p>LT: I think four or five years.</p> <p>CB: Ok. Did you teach anything before that?</p>	<p>Indicating county (external) as force that shapes language LT5</p>
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<p>LT: Um, I've taught non-DLA reading, and I've taught English Honors, English Regular, and English to students with, Exceptional Ed.</p> <p>CB: Ok. Um, so how long have you been teaching total?</p> <p>LT: Nine or ten years.</p> <p>CB: And how long have you been teaching at this school?</p> <p>LT: Six or seven. It all kind of starts to blur together.</p> <p>CB: Ok. So this past academic year, what types of writing have you typically done with students?</p> <p>LT: Uh, I've done essay writing, short response writing, journal, a little bit of journaling, not a whole lot, but. I've, there's just been a lot of different kinds and it's hard to kind of categorize one from the other.</p> <p>CB: Uh, tell me, tell me about your experiences teaching writing, briefly.</p> <p>LT: So, with my language learners, I focus more on encouraging them to write more and understand exactly how much they should be, and</p>	<p>Perceiving own instructional goals (internal) as force in shaping instructional methods LT12</p>
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<p>encouraging, at first, having them just put something on paper. For a lot of the kids, especially my kids from Haiti, that's really difficult. Some of them might not have written before, because they might not have had any kind of formal education. After we've gotten that benchmark down, I start working with some writing frames to show them how to properly write and how to put grammar together, how to put together a little bit more of a natural flow. But typically since it's a reading class, we've been working with below grade-level readers, the focus is on you can write, feel good about your writing, and then let's tweak the small stuff.</p> <p>CB: Um, how do you feel that your students do, in general, on their writing assignments?</p> <p>LT: I think they start to do better and better, again, I start with the lowest level readers on campus, with them being in the bottom 25 percent of reading and language learners. Typically by the time we're done, my kids write more on their essay segments than the other reading teachers. In the past years, we've done things where we grade each other's tests together, so we have a core sampling, and the other teachers usually complain that my kids write more than theirs do, and by the end of the year they're typically writing a bit better when comparing the samples.</p>	<p>Noting different students backgrounds LT14</p> <p>Noting importance of background knowledge (external) in student success LT15</p> <p>Identifying own instructional goals (internal) that shapes instructional methods LT16</p> <p>Taking ownership of students, showing confidence LT20</p> <p>Perceiving own students as more successful than students from other classes LT21</p>
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<p>CB: Ok. Uh, how do you measure student success?</p> <p>LT: I measure student success based on where they come from to where they are now. So, for example, we do a lot of Lexile testing. And, we'll look, ok, this kid started off as a BR 25, which is basically a negative 25, and they end the year at a 300. That's awesome gains, that's shooting through the roof, that happens a lot. But that's still nowhere near passing. So that's the way I'm going to measure. As far as writing goes, I like to compare early writing samples with later, which becomes, thanks to computers, a lot easier now. I like to have that conversation with kids. One of the really great ways I've done it recently is through our data tracking forms. So our students track their own data after every major test, I have them write a note of what are they going to work on, what are they going to do. And that small, really one two three sentence snippet at the beginning of the year, turning into a paragraph actually evaluating what they do, and at the end of the year we talk about what changes that happen, they don't even realize that can be an authentic writing assignment, because it only took them five minutes. But it can really show their difference in level.</p> <p>CB: Tell me about your students as writers this</p>	<p>Choosing instructional method of measuring student success (internal) LT22</p> <p>Seeing large student gains as common LT23</p> <p>Identifying own instructional preferences (internal) as influencing instructional methods LT26</p>
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<p>past academic year.</p> <p>LT: So, very wide range. Some of my students have written very well. Have done, and we've been trying to move a lot of those students out of the reading classroom or the ESOL classroom. Other kids, I've worked with some really basic levels of writing, to the point where, it's a sentence, fill in the blank of what word you think should go here, and it's one really simple word. And that's where some of them need it, so that's where we work on it.</p> <p>CB: What are some of their strengths and weaknesses that you've seen?</p> <p>LT: Most of the time, a majority of my ESOL kids are strong with knowing that, okay, we're going to be writing, we have hard work to do, I understand what I want. The weakness comes in, I don't know how to put this on paper in English. I don't know where to go with this. Or, I'm putting my, uh, nouns and my verbs in the wrong order because that's the way it is in my native language. So that definitely comes in. Or this word looks really close to this word in my language, but they mean completely different things, so I'm a little bit confused.</p> <p>CB: So you find that you have struggles with</p>	<p>Noting range of students and learners LT28</p> <p>Perceiving own response (internal) to student needs (external)) as driving instructional methods/ choices (I+E) LT29</p> <p>Perceiving native languages (external) of students as influencing student writing challenges LT32</p>
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<p>English acquisition and usage?</p> <p>LT: Yeah. But that's very specialized to who I work with.</p> <p>CB: Absolutely.</p> <p>LT: I'm a sheltered ESOL room, so that have to be a language learner to be in my classroom.</p> <p>CB: I've never heard that term before, sheltered ESOL. That's another new one.</p> <p>LT: That's a pretty old one, though.</p> <p>CB: Ok. It's new to me. Um. Do your students enjoy writing?</p> <p>LT: Not at first. But normally by the end of the year they do.</p> <p>CB: What types of writing assignments do they like to do?</p> <p>LT: They like to write, usually come up with their own type of writing assignments. Like, I've done a lot of assignments where I tell them, I want to see five really good sentences. Write about whatever you want. If you need something, here's something you can write about. But you can write</p>	<p>Seeing self as helping students enjoy writing LT36</p> <p>Seeing own instructional goals as influencing instructional methods (internal) LT37</p>
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<p>about whatever you want. If you don't give them the, if you need something thing, they'll be, I don't know what do write about. But if you tell them, write about this if you can't think of anything else, then they'll come up with their own stuff. And when they do that, when they do their own stuff, it usually come out a bit longer than five sentences, and they get more excited about it.</p> <p>CB: Um. So what methods, um, have you used, to kind of get them to enjoy that writing assignment?</p> <p>LT: A lot of sentence, or paragraph, sentence frames, to start with. I try to do high interest subjects or controversial subjects, something that they'll have a strong opinion on one way or the other. And then I'll also build in a little competition with it, where, never bring a kid down, but being oh my gosh, you gotta see how amazing this is, I wish everybody had done something like this. And then the kids try to emulate that. And it's just something that naturally, it brings out the competitiveness in all of them. Posting up really good papers by the door, and telling everyone, hey, take a look at that on your way out.</p> <p>CB: What is the most challenging part of learning writing for your students?</p> <p>LT: It's the language. And English is such a weird</p>	<p>Perceiving student motivation as influencing student writing (external) LT39</p> <p>Perceiving own instructional preferences (internal) as shaping instructional methods/ assignments LT40</p> <p>Noting variety of student challenges for population</p>
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<p>language, with so many bizarre rules. Where, okay, this time, this word can go here, but in a normal sentence that would never work like that, and all the colloquialisms.</p>	<p>LT44</p>
<p>CB: Uh, when your students encounter challenges in writing, how do you help them over those challenges?</p>	
<p>LT: I try not to just give them an answer to it. So, if they're having trouble with something, I'll encourage them to go on and check the web, talk to their friends, brainstorm, and then I'll try to give them little hints through questioning, rather than direct answer. That way they're thinking about it, which in the future, leads to them not needing to have that question answered. Because they had to work for it, and therefore they remember it.</p>	<p>Perceiving instructional goals as influencing instructional methods (internal) LT47</p>
<p>CB: Have you found that, the, um, technology from, that was implemented this year, helps?</p>	
<p>LT: Oh, yeah. The technology has made a world of difference, especially for my struggling language kids. One of the best things that my kids who've shot up the most have done is, they read the article in English, their native language, and they read it again in English. And they write their response in English, write their response in Spanish, and translate both to see which one look</p>	<p>Perceiving technology as impacting student writing quality (external) LT48</p> <p>Perceiving own use (internal) of technology (external) as impacting student success(I+E) LT50</p>



<p>better. And it means a lot more work, but they get better a lot faster. And the ones that are willing to do that, because that's not something you can force a kid to do, but the ones who are have seen how quickly they've improved (9:52).</p>	
<p>CB: Do you feel that your students from this year are ready to move on to the next grade?</p>	
<p>LT: Most of them. I would say a majority of them. There's always going to be a couple kids who think they just don't want to. And you can do a lot of different little tricks, but in the end, if they persist with nope, I'm just not gonna do it, you can't force them.</p>	<p>Perceiving self as unable to force students (helplessness) LT53</p>
<p>CB: How do you measure readiness to move on?</p>	
<p>LT: So I look at a few different things. I, because my kids are ESOL kids, they are probably going to be socially promoted whether I think they're ready or not. What I look for is more the recommendation of, hey, are they ready to leave ESOL. And there I look at how well can they speak, how well can they communicate, how well can they write. Is, are they writing on level now with a kid who is not struggling with the language. So, they're having the standard reading difficulties or the standard writing difficulties, I'm like, okay this kid is ready to move on, and doesn't need the</p>	<p>Seeing system as promoting kids even if they aren't ready LT54</p> <p>Seeing self as tool in recommending students for promotion/ leaving ESOL LT55</p> <p>Trusting own judgement LT56</p>

<p>services anymore. But if they're still making the common ESOL mistakes, then okay, we might want to hold them back in that area. But again, their grade promotion wise, they're probably going to be socially promoted. And as far as I assign grades, I always assign by are they getting better. I have kids that come in reading below first grade level, they're not going to be on ninth grade level by the time they finish my year. But if they're up to fifth grade level, that's an A for me. That's a huge jump.</p> <p>CB: Uh, do you feel that the overall quality of your students writing was better now than it was five or six years ago?</p> <p>LT: That one's a little bit harder for me to answer. Five or six years ago, I was teaching non-ESOL kids. Their writing was better, but I think that has more to do with the they weren't struggling with language acquisition. So.</p> <p>CB: Absolutely. Yeah, that probably does have a lot to do with it. Um, how long have you been teaching ESOL? Four or five years?</p> <p>LT: Yeah, somewhere in that range.</p> <p>CB: Ok. Have you seen any changes in the range that you have been teaching ESOL?</p>	<p>Seeing social promotion as happening ready or not (out of own control?) LT57</p> <p>Perceiving instructional choices and values as factor in guiding instructional methods (internal) LT58</p>
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<p>LT: Well, every year it's different. Some years, my first year was actually the year I had the strongest kids. That group, they just worked really hard, they were really excited. The year after that, it went down a little bit, and then it picked back up, I had a couple really good years, this year has been really good as well. It's just, it comes down to the kids, and their motivation. I've noticed since we've been on the newer campus, and we've been implementing more and more technology, the kids are doing better and better. So. I mean, having a little red squiggly like underneath telling you you've got a grammatical mistake definitely helps fix that.</p> <p>CB: For sure. So my next question was going to be, what about it is different, but I hear a lot about the technology, the new campus. Um. You're actually the first to mention the new campus.</p> <p>LT: Well, the big thing about the new campus, it tells the kids something really important. It tells the kids we care enough about you that we're gonna put something as nice as everywhere else. I went to a school that was, [Lamont's previous school name]. When I went there, it was a really old school, it was falling apart. And that definitely impacted us. And when our first group of kids moved from that old campus onto the new one, it was holy cow, these people really care about us.</p>	<p>Noting variety of students and student skills LT62</p> <p>Perceiving student motivation(external) as shaping writing quality LT63</p> <p>Noting new campus and technology as positively impacting student writing (external) LT64</p> <p>Citing new campus as contributing to student motivation (external) LT65</p>
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<p>They really want us to do better, and I see that carrying on. I see less graffiti at our school, I mean you always get some of it, but I see less kids writing on walls and things like that than anywhere I've ever been. Our kids seem to genuinely care about it. They're still kids, and they still act foolish, but they see, they genuinely care about what they receive here.</p> <p>CB: Um, I don't want to waste too much time on this, but just so that I have a picture, tell me, very briefly, some of the differences between the old campus and the new campus.</p> <p>LT: So the old campus we had a lot of mildew problems, we didn't have the technology because there wasn't a way to put it even anywhere. It was a very sprawling campus, very wide. So, whereas now we're fairly condensed with the different buildings. Uh, and it was just falling apart. You might walk in and, you know, your ceiling tiles fell out in the middle of the night, and you just gotta hop up and put them back in there.</p> <p>CB: Uh, tell me about how writing instruction has changed in your time at this school.</p> <p>LT: So, when I first started, the idea, I remember I was trying to pitch using sentence and paragraph frames to teachers, and they were like, oh, the</p>	<p>Perceiving physical school environment as impacting instructional methods (external) LT69</p> <p>Perceiving own knowledge influence on fellow teachers and instructional methods (internal) LT70</p>
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<p>kids aren't going to learn anything from that, that's just fill in the blank. Now people, studies have come out that show that actually does help, especially for ESE, ESOL kids. Uh, there's more of a focus on what kind of writing they're doing. We don't really spend as much time doing fiction, and writing cute little short stories. We're more focused on academic writing and looking at what's really important, how do we build that up, and I think we're moving more towards college-style writing with citations, understanding whether a source is valid or reliable. And there is more of a focus on writing. When I first started as a reading teacher, I was actually told, you shouldn't be doing any writing in the classroom. <b>I did anyway</b>, but it was like oh, no, no, that's the language arts English teacher's department, you're reading, just teach them how to read. So that's a big shift away.</p> <p>CB: Yeah, definitely. How has, um, the staff generally responded to those changes?</p> <p>LT: For the most part, really well, I think. And a part of that is people who didn't like it have had a tendency to go elsewhere. And I can't say that that's been a negative thing. We have our, our stronger faculty now than we did when I first started here, that's for sure.</p> <p>CB: Um, this might be a little bit different for you</p>	<p>Perceiving academic studies as influencing instructional methods (external) LT71</p> <p>Perceiving self as instrumental in shaping own instructional methods/ agency / confidence LT75</p> <p>Seeing school as strong unit LT77</p>
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<p>as an ESOL teacher, but I'll ask anyway, um. Tell me about your students' test scores in writing have changed, if they have changed at all in your time at this school.</p> <p>LT: They fluctuate. Because, again, like you said, the ESOL kids, it all depends on when they're coming in at. So sometimes you'll have a kid who, they'll just jump up immediately, and that's just a really smart kid. I've had one previously, who really sticks out in my mind, he started off, he did not speak a word, by the end of the year he was reading and better than almost any kid on campus, it was absolutely amazing. He just had an awesome brain. So with the ESOL kids it's a bit of a shift. <b>I think overall whole, we're seeing them get, the writing is getting stronger, but the scores aren't necessarily matching that correlation, because every year the test is getting harder.</b> And it doesn't seem like it's really a fair moving target for us, because often, we don't even know what the new cut-off score is going to be until after the kids have already taken the test.</p> <p>CB: Tell me a little bit more about that, uh, how the test is getting harder.</p> <p>LT: So, they keep making, and I'm thinking more about my reading test, at least this past year the FSA, it was a reading and kind of writing section.</p>	<p>Perceiving test scores as being influenced by students' starting levels (external) LT78</p> <p>Perceiving student intelligence as factor in student success LT79</p> <p>Perceiving test scores as moving target outside of teacher control LT81</p> <p>Feeling frustration/ lack of agency in regards to interacting with test LT82</p>
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<p>gonna do really well no matter what. We have the same groups of low performing students who are gonna struggle and need the help no matter what. And it's all about what we provide assistance for them. One thing that's stuck in my head when I used to work in Marion county, we used to do uh, the teachers would get pulled to grade the county standardized tests. And one particular test we had come through, I rated the kid at the highest possible score. I thought he did an amazing job. His writing style reminded me of Hemingway, I mean it was just beautifully well-written. Everybody else in the room scored him as off-prompt. The prompt was what do you want to be when you grow up. And he wrote it about he wanted to be a homeless person. And again, he talked about the reasons why he wanted to be homeless, and the essay was very well-written. The essay prompt was kind of stinky. Especially for a test as important as this one was. But every other teacher said, well nobody would want to be a homeless person, so therefore he did not understand the prompt and he is wrong and he does not get a score. And I sat there, and I argued and argued of no, he's given his reasons of why being homeless would allow him to be free and think freely, well then maybe he wanted to be a writer, he should have said that. No. He talks about why he wants to live in a box. And he actually went through and explained it really well. And gave very nice descriptions. But the other</p>	<p>Perceiving student population as outside of teacher control (agency) (external) LT90</p> <p>Perceiving instructional methods as inside control (agency) (internal) LT91</p> <p>Noting frustration about test prompt LT93</p>
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<p>teachers couldn't see past, no, nobody wants to be homeless. <b>So, I see that happening a lot, where we look at things and oftentimes miss how intelligent something is because we don't like the content.</b> We don't like what the kid's trying to say and we can't oftentimes separate that from what the writing assignment is. So I think that kind of thing happens a lot, where we have an expectation, the kids go outside of our expectation, it's still just as good, but because it doesn't meet our exact expectation we say it's worse (21:14). Or, when I was in school, back in the olden days, everything was about writing the short stories. Always let's write this short story, let's write this short story. And then I went to college and my language arts degree had nothing to do with writing short stories. I was a literature major and it was all about writing in serious papers. None of that prepared me for what I had to do. Now we prepare kids for it. <b>And yeah, it's a lot harder, so it might not always look as good, but it's a lot harder and they're doing it.</b></p> <p>CB: Um. Do you think that your students now are generally more prepared to be good writers than your students from previous years at this school?</p> <p>LT: I don't know necessarily that they're more prepared to be better writers, I think they're more prepared to move on to whatever it is that they're</p>	<p>Perceiving teacher bias as impacting student success (internal) LT94</p> <p>Expressing frustration at fellow teachers and school culture LT95</p> <p>Perceiving teacher expectations as shaping student work/ holding back student work? (internal) LT96</p> <p>Perceiving grading/testing system as unfairly representing school LT97</p> <p>Perceiving difference between being better writers and being prepared to do things in life LT99</p>
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<p>quality of writing was okay. Again, I was teaching like, at the time, tenth graders, and they wrote fairly well for kids in reading. The kids that weren't in reading that I worked with after school, I would often help them with their projects, some of them wrote phenomenally. But it was a range. The kids in the honors and AP classes were able to write really well, the kids who weren't, didn't write as well. Now those same kids in the honors and AP still were having some struggles with writing for real scholarly pursuits rather than their short stories, and that was still a struggle then, that was before Common Core was really starting to take hold and move in. Which I know we say we have Florida State Standards, but they're still based on the Common Core. Uh, the Common Core really has moved the kids to be more prepared to write for real-world situations (24:38).</p> <p>CB: Would you, um, would you cite the Common Core as one of the reasons for um, a shift in quality of writing, or has there been a shift in quality of writing?</p> <p>LT: I think the Common Core has helped to shift writing to more of the areas where it's needed. And I know a lot of educators look at the Common Core as a dirty word, especially now that it's been politicized, but if we took out the test part of it, and just taught the higher end of thinking, which is</p>	<p>Noting range and variety of students and learners LT103</p> <p>Identifying Common Core (external) as shaping instructional methods/ classroom writing activities LT104</p> <p>Perceiving Common Core (external) as factor that impacts student preparedness LT105</p> <p>Identifying Common Core (external) as guiding instructional methods LT106</p> <p>Perceiving test (external) as impacting student preparedness and writing quality LT107</p>
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<p>really what Common Core pushed to do, I think our kids would get better even faster.</p> <p>CB: Are you aware of the grade that your school receives on its annual School Report Card?</p> <p>LT: Yes.</p> <p>CB: Uh, do you know what grade it received this past year?</p> <p>LT: I believe it was a C again. I do know that, by older standards, we would have had a higher grade. Which, again, we didn't know the standards until afterwards. And this year they're kinda doing that same thing, we really don't know what will make it. So I'm aware of them, I've kind of started discounting them until we know what that grading standard is going to be, before we're graded on it. I've, it's just a number. Letter. And when you start looking at things like how much our graduation rate has improved, and how much more prepared our kids are, how many more of them are passing AP tests, one of the, this was just an awesome moment, it had me in tears a couple years ago. I had a kid who I had in my class who didn't speak English, and he came up to me and was just so excited because he just found out he passed his AP language arts exam. He was actually going to get to skip some of his English classes in college. And</p>	<p>Identifying helplessness to prepare for test LT108</p> <p>Noting frustration at lack of usefulness LT110</p> <p>Perceiving grade as not accurately measuring school improvement LT111</p>
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<p>that.</p> <p>CB: So, my next question was, do you feel that the grade accurately reflects the learning...</p> <p>LT: No.</p> <p>CB: In your school.</p> <p>LT: No. And I especially don't think it considers how we get the kids. A lot of times, it's like, oh you have this many kids who came in, I'm trying to remember what it was two years ago, because that's the one that's stuck out for me. 85 percent of our kids that year came in below grade level in reading. And that same 85 percent at the end of the year was down to like 65. Well, as the years go on it's like, well, you know, graduation time 30 percent of your kids are still below grade level in reading. Yeah, but 85 were below, and of that 85, like 60 percent of them were below a third grade level. Now those kids are at a ninth grade level. Yeah, they're not at a twelfth grade level. We already got them to move up six, seven years in the three years they've been here. That's still not enough to get them where they need to graduate. And it's painful to see. It's painful to see a kid who really has worked hard and really gotten a lot better, but they're still not there, because they had so far to go.</p>	<p>Noting frustration at school grade not taking growth into account/ misrepresenting school LT117</p> <p>Expressing frustration at unattainable standards LT120</p> <p>Expressing helplessness in face of system impacting students who have grown (external) LT121</p>
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<p>CB: And I believe that is all I had for us today. Twenty-nine minutes. I'm going to turn this off.</p>	
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