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An Analysis of the Influence of Writing Workshop Instructional Methodology on Male Student Achievement In a Middle School Language Arts Department

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**An Analysis of the Influence of Writing Workshop Instructional Methodology
On Male Student Achievement in a Middle School Language Arts Department**

BY

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**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education Leadership, Management and Policy
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DEDICATION

“Promise me you'll always remember: You're braver than you believe, and stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think.” -*Christopher Robin to Pooh.*

To Katie, Jill, Kristin and Carolyn, who have relished each move forward and supported me through each challenge over these past few years, there is no replacement for true friendship.

“The family is one of nature's masterpieces.” -*George Santayana*

To my incredibly supportive family, I have been so lucky to grow up with your love all around me. To Marian, Maureen and Colleen, I am convinced that one of the best parts of life is laughing with your sisters! To Daddy, you were right, it all paid off! To Mommy, all of the research in the world is no substitute for your words of wisdom. “The legacy of heroes is the memory of a great name and the inheritance of a great example.” -*Benjamin Disraeli*

To my bookend heroes named Thomas. Grandpa, thank you for showering me with so much love that it made me grow up strong and confident. To my son, you have been with me since the beginning of this process. You have inspired me to believe that I am capable of creating wonderful things, like you. I love you!

“A successful marriage requires falling in love many times, always with the same person.” -*Mignon McLaughlin*

To Richie, my funny, loving, supportive husband. Thank you for believing that this project was worth the all of the weekends away, the hours in the office and the days of discussion about males reading and writing! You make me feel like I can do anything. I love you – and keep falling in love with you – everyday!

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Establishment of the Achievement Gap

Ralph Waldo Emerson (as cited in Goldard, 2004) spoke to a group of teachers in 1850, stating, "I believe that our own experience instructs us that the secret of education lies in respecting the pupil" (¶ 9). In recent years a growing awareness has emerged about the existence of a previously ignored achievement gap in education: the disparity between male and female achievement in school, where females outscore males on virtually every measure of academic achievement. Nowhere is this gap more evident than in the area of writing. In fact, one can find evidence of this growing gender gap in many education journals and news magazines by 2006. Males scored an average of 24 points lower than females on the 2003 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) writing test (Connell & Gunzelmann, 2004). This gender gap in literacy is equivalent to approximately 1 ½ years of school (Gurian, 1998).

Reports from the Educational Testing Service (ETS) (as cited in Newkirk, 2002) that included a meta-analysis of 15 different assessments, including NAEP, determined that the largest gender gap, by far, occurs in the area of writing. By the eighth grade, females are performing at a level that is .6 standard deviations better than their male counterparts; this gap is six times larger than the gap in math concepts, one area where males hold an edge over females (Newkirk, 2002). A comparison of achievement gaps shows that the difference between male and female writing scores "is comparable to that

between Whites and racial/ethnic groups that have suffered systematic social and economic discrimination in this country” (Newkirk, 2002, p. 295).

This disparity in writing achievement has many troubling aspects. First, this gap shows no sign of closing. Even with disclaimers about NAEP data use, the NAEP results from 1998 to 2003 show a steady increase in the gap between males and females on the writing portion of the test (Taylor, 2005). Furthermore, the disparity in achievement grows wider as students move through the school system. Fourth-grade females score 12 points higher on standardized writing tests than do males; eighth-grade females score 21 points higher while 12th grade females score 24 points higher than do males on standardized writing tests (Tyre, 2006). This gap in writing achievement arguably represents larger issues. According to the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, (as cited in Alliance for Excellent Education, 2006) females graduate from high school nationwide at a 7% higher rate than do males. In turn, males represent the minority, at 44%, in the undergraduate student body on college campuses (Tyre, 2006). The number of American males who reported that they did not like school grew by 71% between 1980 and 2001 (Tyre, 2006). Jurgensen (2003) reported while 84% of females responding to a survey stated that it was important to continue education beyond high school, only 67% of responding males concurred. Males are three times as likely to receive a diagnosis of ADHD throughout their school careers, and four times as likely to kill themselves as are females (Rowan, Knobel, Bigum, & Lankshear, 2002).

The gender gap in writing achievement is reflected worldwide. In 1985, the International Association for Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) (as cited in

Taylor, 2005) investigated writing achievement across 14 countries; findings pointed to gender as being the most powerful predictor of performance. “On a 2003 reading test given to 15-year olds around the world, female students outscored males in all but 1 of the 41 countries tested” (Viadero, 2006, p. 16). In a 3-year study in England, researchers found that females, on average, have performed significantly better than males on the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations in terms of the proportion of students achieving passing and top-level grades (Warrington, Younger, & Williams, 2000).

As the “gender wars” heat up, researchers, theorists and educators caution against the development of “binary opposition” between the schooling of males and females where one group wins and the other inevitably loses (Epstein, Elwood, Hey, & Maw, 1998). Rather, educators must work to engage males and females equally in the process of schooling. The U.S. Department of Education (as cited in Sommers, 2000) gauged student engagement using the following criteria: “How much time do students devote to homework each night?” and “Do students come to class prepared and ready to learn?” (Sommers, 2000). According to surveys of fourth, eighth, and 12th grade students, females consistently do more homework than do males and, by the twelfth grade, females complete four times the amount of homework as males complete (Sommers, 2000). This lack of school engagement puts a youngster at risk of school failure. Motivation and engagement are reciprocal relationships (Meece, 2003) and both sides of the equation must be nurtured.

“Active participation in the early grades, accompanied by some degree of academic success, serves to perpetuate continued participation throughout the school years” (Finn, 1993, p. 2). When students feel put down or mistreated by a teacher, one natural tendency is to retreat (Finn, 1993). Unfortunately, much of the literature that males traditionally favor, including non-fiction books, humor, science fiction, comics and action stories, is treated as “subliterature” or something that a competent reader should go beyond in moving toward realistic fiction with thematic weight (Newkirk, 2002). Prizing one genre over another results in the development of many males who read and write texts that are unrecognized by teachers and not incorporated into official school curricula; these males subsequently describe themselves as non-readers and non-writers (Epstein, Elwood, Hey, & Maw, 1998). The undervaluing of preference leads to withdrawal and an inevitable gap in academic success.

Reform Efforts

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) released *A Call to Action: What We Know about Adolescent Literacy and Ways to Support Teachers in Meeting Students' Needs* (2004) in response to the growing concern over the gender gap in writing. In this report, the NCTE urged teachers to recognize and value the multiple literacy resources that students bring to the classroom. Moreover, the report directed educators to create a curriculum that emphasizes self-selection of reading and writing pieces. Respect of vernacular reading is essential to validating the interests of males in order to establish a culture of respect and safety. If males feel “less than” because of their reading and writing choices, they will be reluctant readers and writers in school.

Newkirk (as cited in Taylor, 2005) contended that only when schools define literacy more broadly to include what males are already doing outside of school will their sense of self-efficacy with reading and writing and output of reading and writing increase.

The NCTE report (2004) stressed the importance of making reading and writing tasks authentic and using discussion-based methods of instruction. “In cases where older students need help to construct meaning with text, instruction should be targeted and embedded in authentic reading experiences” (p. 2). Some philosophers and educators have stressed this practice over the years, although student-centered instruction remains an anomaly in American classrooms today. Rousseau claimed that reading did not replace real learning which happened through discovery; likewise, in Dewey’s experimental school all reading was for true purpose leading to a curriculum that had more citations for cookbooks than for long novels (Newkirk, 2002). However, much reading and writing instruction in schools today occurs through silent reading and responding to teacher-generated questions in writing. “If students were to define reading by what they do in classrooms, many would say it is reading a story and answering questions” (Parsons, 2004, p.25). When the real purpose to reading and writing is disregarded, function is lost to form. In fact, it is discussion-based approaches to academic literacy that are linked to student achievement (Applebee, Langer, Nystrand, & Gamoran, 2003). The NCTE (2004) also contends that conversations about how, why and what we read and write are essential to develop content understanding and a love of literacy.

Despite their efforts at reform in 2004, NCTE members continued in 2006 to state that the gender gap in writing was a major issue for our country on many levels. The *NCTE Principles of Adolescent Literacy Reform*, released in April, 2006, stated that, “Economic, social, moral, and political forces all point to the critical role literacy plays in our national culture and economy” (NCTE, 2006, p. 4). However, the bulk of statistics show that America is a nation with a growing under-literate class. The National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) found that the literacy scores of high school graduates have dropped between 1992 and 2003 according to the NCTE (2006); as cited by the NCTE (2006), the Alliance for Excellent Education (AEE) pointed to 8.7 million secondary school students, approximately one in four, who were unable to comprehend material in textbooks. Our economy depends upon developing new generations of workers who are competent practitioners of various forms and levels of literacy. The era of the factory worker has died and without strong literacy skills, many students today will be left out from participating in the global marketplace. One key to creating the type of work force required in the 21st century lies in motivating and engaging our adolescents to become effective and avid readers and writers.

The use of a writing workshop instructional methodology in the classroom was intended to embrace the strategies emphasized by the NCTE (2006) and improve student achievement in the language arts. In writing workshop, students learn to observe their lives and the world around them, and to write pieces that appeal to them using the writing process. Students are encouraged to write in varied genres of their choice and to

incorporate personal interest. In this instructional methodology, the teacher acts as a facilitator and mentors students to build on existing skills, creating strong writers.

Statement of the Problem and Purpose

The public education system in America should meet the needs of all school-aged students engaged in its programs. Under normative conditions, males and females should attain equal or nearly equal academic success in subject areas. Data show that a significant number of male students in the American education system are deemed “under literate” by national standards. Implementation of a writing workshop instructional methodology is one approach to incorporating differentiated teaching strategies in an effort to raise male student achievement in language arts. The researcher’s purpose for this research was to determine the influence of a writing workshop on male student achievement in language arts in one middle school in suburban northern New Jersey.

Significance of the Study

Study results should generate interest in the development and use of more inclusive teaching practices. The traditional use of a whole-class novel and teacher-initiated writing topics as the bedrock of language arts instruction may have contributed to a feeling of disengagement among a large percentage of the student population, specifically males. These methods reflect a philosophy that is out of step with current research and the philosophy of the NCTE. Additionally, traditional methods of instruction may generate a significant number of male students who are deemed “under literate” by national standards and are ill-equipped to contribute in the academic arena or the workplace. As reported by the Alliance for Excellent Education (2006), recent

reports by the National Commission on Writing reveal that “the majority of both public and private employers say that writing proficiency has now become critical in the workplace and that it directly affects hiring and promotion decisions (p. 8). Viewing oneself as a “non-reader” or “non-writer” has far reaching implications including damaging the self-esteem of a student, lessening a student’s chances for lifelong academic achievement, and increasing the likelihood of under employment and dropout potential. “Whatever curriculums, policies, programs, or practices develop from the continuing advance of the boy turn in research, the most imperative need is for independent research ‘on the ground’ in schools” (Weaver-Hightower, 2003, p. 489).

Pressures from the state, media, and community to demonstrate academic achievement have encouraged many district leaders to implement new programs, some of which are costly and time consuming. While some initiatives have shown positive results, many are not evaluated for effectiveness. School leaders need to understand the components of effective programs and determine if a specific program is achieving its stated aims. Results of this study should help to determine if the writer’s workshop methodology is improving the achievement of male students. School leaders and administrators can analyze the resultant data to develop an effective methodology for writing instruction to close the gender gap and align with the standards of the NCTE. As reported in *Science* magazine, “The generally larger numbers of males who perform near the bottom of the distribution in reading comprehension and writing also have policy implications. It seems likely that individuals with such poor literacy skills will have difficulty finding employment in an increasingly information-driven economy. Thus,

some intervention may be required to enable them to participate constructively” (Sommers, 2000, p. 61).

In this study, achievement is defined as academic accomplishment as measured quantitatively in the areas of student motivation, student engagement, and content understanding (test data) (Chinni, 1996). These three components of achievement comprise the theoretical framework of this study as developed in Chapter II. The questions to guide the study contributed to the development of the theoretical framework in Chapter II.

Questions to Guide the Study

1. How do classroom instructors employ writing instructional methods that are non-traditional for language arts classrooms, such as regular sharing of writing, self-determination of writing topic and genre, and conferencing?
2. How do non-traditional instructional methods affect students' writing output (quality and quantity)?
3. How does the implementation of writing workshop in language arts classes affect male students?

Design and Methods of the Study

A cross-sectional explanatory nonexperimental research design is appropriate for this study when considering its stated aims (Johnson, 2001). The researcher conducted action research in one middle school language arts program. The use of a mixed method approach to research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004), produced a holistic picture of the possible influence of the writing workshop program on male student achievement in the middle school language arts program. Using quantitative data from New Jersey's Grade

Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA)¹, test results and teacher observations scored with a rubric, along with qualitative data in the form of teacher interviews, the researcher developed a pluralistic body of research to answer the research questions. The research addressed methodology styles of language arts teachers and their perception of the impact of the writing workshop program in the language arts classroom via coded interviews, and the extent to which they integrate the writing workshop model into daily class activities via an observation rubric. The researcher analyzed the test data to determine what relationship(s) existed between these methodologies and male student achievement in the area of writing.

Delimitations of the Study

In the study of the relationship between a writing workshop program and male student achievement in the area of writing, the researcher delimited the population to male students. The researcher delimited the analysis of test scores to test data obtained from the writing portion only on the eighth grade New Jersey State Test, the GEPA for the school years of 2002-2003 through 2006-2007. The researcher delimited the population to a suburban, upper-middle to upper class population. Finally, the researcher delimited the population of teachers from which a random sample was selected to those at the middle school level who taught writing/language arts.

¹ The analysis of the GEPA conducted by Tienken and Wilson (2006) suggested that sub-scale levels (content clusters) of the assessment demonstrate undesirably low levels of reliability and lack content validity. Educators should not use the results of the GEPA as the sole evaluation tool for curriculum, instruction, or student achievement at the local level. This, however, is the test New Jersey uses to assess student AYP for NCLB.

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. First, during interviews teachers may have over or under represented their efforts at implementing the writing workshop methodology since this is a district-wide initiative. The use of the qualitative method of research relies on interviewee honesty and insight. Second, the study was limited with respect to the number of teacher observations conducted. Each participant was observed two times in the fourth marking period of the school year. These class periods may be weak or strong days for the teacher for a variety of reasons resulting in an inaccurate portrait of the writing workshop program in action. A third limitation is the site-specific group of teachers involved in this research study. Professionals who participated in this study were all members of one language arts department. What works in one school or content area may not be successful in another school or content area. Therefore, this study is limited with respect to the transfer of results to other schools because the researcher studied the writing workshop program in only one middle school. A fourth limitation was the use of GEPA test scores as the sole measurement tool of male student achievement. Criterion-referenced tests provide one window into academic achievement, but are not the only measure of student success. Using only one criterion-referenced test added to the limitations of the study. This study was also limited with respect to the homogeneous population of the community. The population of this community in Northern New Jersey was predominantly Caucasian and Asian. Finally, one limitation was the use of cohort analyses with different students in the cohort each year. The researcher ameliorated this limitation a bit by making comparisons to state and local achievement.

Definitions of Terms

Precision in language is important in any scientific endeavor and in research. The following terms that appear in this study are defined here for clarity and consistency.

Achievement – An academic accomplishment or advancement measured quantitatively in the areas of student motivation, student interest level, student confidence level, and content understanding (Chinni, 1996).

Adolescent Literacy – The knowledge, skills, and plans possessed by adolescents that are needed to participate in literacy practices such as constructing meaning from text and conveying meaning through the use of text (National Council of Teachers of English or NCTE, 2006).

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) - A statewide accountability system mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 which requires each state to ensure that all schools and districts make Adequate Yearly Progress.

Assessment – An instrument used by the education professional to evaluate or appraise a student's evidence of achievement gains in learning (Chinni, 1996).

District Factor Group (DFG)- The NJDOE first developed the DFGs in 1975 for the purpose of comparing students' performance on statewide assessments across demographically similar school districts. The categories are updated every 10 years based on the latest census data. DFGs represent an approximate measure of a community's relative socioeconomic status (SES). There are eight DFGs ranging from A to J with A representing the lowest SES group and J the highest SES group.

Middle School – An educational organization often housing sixth, seventh and eighth grade students. The middle school embraces practices appropriate for the

developmental needs of the students who attend, such as the team concept, a wide range of electives, interdisciplinary units, extra curricular programs and an advisory period.

National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) – The professional association representing over 50,000 English/language arts teachers. This organization is based in Urbana, Illinois and brings valuable insights and resources to the field of education (National Council of Teachers of English).

Reading – A complex, purposeful, social and cognitive process in which readers simultaneously use their knowledge of spoken and written language, their knowledge of the topic of the text, and their knowledge of their culture to construct meaning. Reading is not a technical skill acquired once and for all in the primary grades, but rather a developmental process. A reader's competence continues to grow through engagement with various types of texts and wide reading for various purposes over a lifetime (NCTE Commission On Reading, 2004).

Standards – Expectations of instruction and curricular content knowledge for which students, teachers and schools are accountable; they define optimal performance and the specific level of mastery to which students are expected to attain (Chinni, 1996).

Writing – A complex, purposeful, social and cognitive process in which students simultaneously use their knowledge of spoken and written language, their knowledge of the topic of the text, and their knowledge of their culture to construct meaning. Writing is not only a technical skill, but is a developmental process. A writer's competence continues to grow through engagement with various types of writing and writing for various purposes over a lifetime (National Council Of Teachers Of English, 2006).

Writing Workshop - A structure of classroom instruction writing preferences that include student writing about their own topics, working at their own pace, conferencing in regard to their writing, and sharing writing in various ways with their peers (Moriarty, 2003).

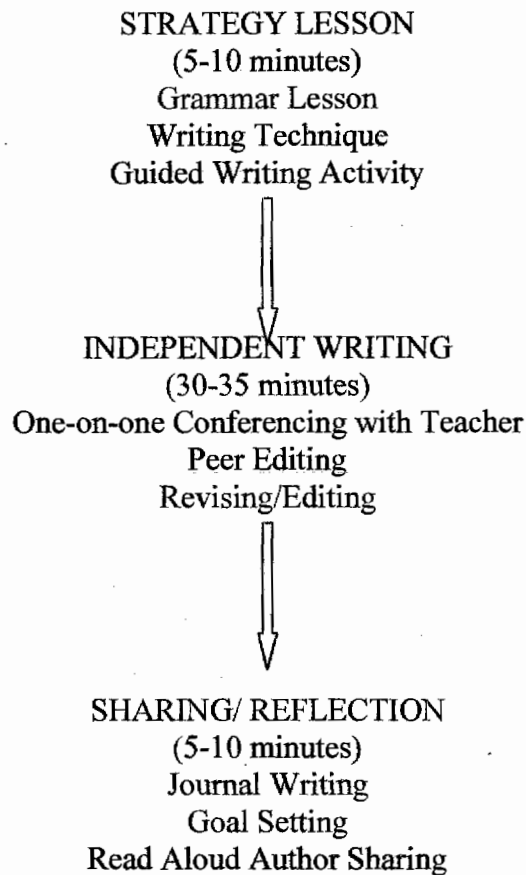


Figure 1. Structure of Writing Workshop. The lesson arc outlined above details the structure of a recommended writing workshop class at the middle school level. An additional piece of the arc often included is the mid-lesson class feedback. This feedback is based on the class-wide issues that a teacher sees during one-on-one conferencing. This arc is intended to be a guide to teachers.

Summary of Chapter One and Organization of the Study

The initial chapter introduced background information and data about the gap in writing achievement between male and female students. Effectively implemented writing workshop programs may have a significant impact on student's achievement. The chapter includes the problem statement, the background and setting of the study, the research questions, delimitations and limitations of the study, definitions of terms and the significance of the study as related to education administration.

Chapter II presents a review of research and literature pertaining to gender and literacy practices, motivation and engagement in school, and the writing workshop program. The literature review presents factors that influence student engagement and motivation and an in-depth analysis of literacy practices as connected to gender. Historical perspectives about writing process and programs provide greater insight into the instruction of writing. A theoretical framework of the study is derived from material presented in Chapter I and in Chapter II.

Chapter III explains the design of the study, as well as the methods and procedures through which data will be collected, compiled and analyzed. Chapter III provides information about the relation of the data to the guiding questions for this research.

Chapter IV presents the data and data analyses. Responses to the interview questions were transcribed and analyzed by the researcher looking for patterns and themes from the responses. These responses were coded and evaluated by a second party trained in the coding system. Data from the observations were analyzed by the researcher and a second, trained party using a holistic rubric. Student data (e.g. test results) from 5

years of GEPA tests by eighth grade students was analyzed to determine if there is any change in the students' writing scores during the years of the writing workshop program.

Chapter V provides a summary of the findings presented in Chapter IV, conclusions and discussion such as relating results of this study to the literature review and previous research findings. Chapter V also includes recommendations for practice, policy, and further research.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH, THEORY AND LITERATURE

An Analysis of Gender and Literacy Practices

Despite the almost unanimous feeling today that males in our schools are falling behind females in some academic areas, only 30 years ago different headlines splashed across the journals of education. The 1972 federal law, *Title IX* (of P.L. 92-318), forced school leaders to provide equal opportunities for females in the classroom and on the playing field; billions of dollars were funneled into projects aimed at helping females achieve (Tyre, 2006). Throughout the 1990's publishers released reports and books detailing the "girl crisis" in education. The American Association of University Women [AAUW] published *How Schools Shortchange Girls* (1992) and a follow-up report, *Gender Gaps: Where Schools Still Fail our Children* (1998). The Sadkers (1994) wrote *Failing at Fairness* the same year that Orenstein (1994) penned, *Schoolgirls: Young Women, Self-Esteem, and the Confidence Gap*.

Although much of the literature portrayed American females as the victims of a school system geared toward the achievement of males, females outperformed males by 14 points in reading and 17 points in writing on the 1996 Nation's Report Card, The National Assessment of Education Progress or NAEP (Sommers, 2000). In fact, in the July, 1995 issue of *Science*, two researchers from the University of Chicago (as cited in Sommers, 2000) observed that females had small deficits in math. However, when discussing the large deficits in males' writing results, they wrote, "The large sex (sic)

differences in writing... are alarming...The data imply that males are, on average, at a rather profound disadvantage in the performance of this basic skill” (p. 61).

The gap has reached a proportion that it should no longer be ignored. Yet, many educators express hesitancy in painting all male students with the same brush. Educators, researchers and policy makers need to be mindful of a gender spectrum and recognize that not all members of a specific gender think, feel or experience the same things (Rowan, Knobel, Bigum, & Lankshear, 2002). There exist two major mindsets on gender: essentialism and anti-essentialism. The essentialist camp claims that natural differences between males and females are tied to different biological and psychological gender make-ups. Meanwhile, anti-essentialists state that differences between behaviors purely are the result of the social and cultural context of the world that the males and females live in (Rowan et al., 2002). Today, scientists are developing new theories about the differences between males and females. Arnold (as cited in Tyre, 2006), a professor of physiological science at UCLA, has stated that during the first trimester, a male fetus begins to produce male sex hormones which bathe his brain in testosterone for the time that he is in the womb. “That exposure wires the male brain differently” (p.48). A Dutch study published in 1994 (as cited in Tyre, 2004) stated that doctors discovered that males given female hormones experienced a decrease in spatial skills and an improvement in verbal skills (Tyre, 2006). The essentialist mindset dominates in these studies.

Other studies support the anti-essentialist point of view on gender differences, such as those conducted by Murphy and Elwood (1998) who interviewed pre-school staff in a day-care center to determine perceptions about gender. The day-care workers

stressed role play for all students, but commented that females showed “maternal instincts” while the male students “liked to play people in authority” (Epstein, Elwood, Hey, & Maw, 1998, p. 163). Basically, the effects of living in a gendered society are cumulative and begin with differences in mothering, to expectations for autonomy, to differences in physiological development and the maturity age (Head, 1996).

Most languages are gendered, for example with English in the use of pronouns such as he or she. Most societies create different roles and expectations for males and females so that the roots of gender identity are established early on and are continuously being reinforced by experiences within and outside school. Even when parents make a conscious effort to treat their children equally, irrespective of gender, this pervasive social influence is likely to thwart such effort (Head, 1996, p. 65). The reinforcement of such ideas apparently leads to males and females cultivating specific skill sets.

To excel in language arts classes in schools in the United States, a student and the teacher must possess a specific skill set that merges with the ideological philosophy and structure of the program. Therefore, the type of activities that a student engages in outside of school inevitably feeds into his/her success in the language arts classroom. Perhaps the largest study of this type was *The Children’s Reading Choices Project* in 1994 – 1995 (Martino & Meyenn, 2001). Researchers asked approximately 8,000 children aged 10, 12, and 14 to complete a survey about out-of-school reading habits. Essentially, the researchers found that among males, the most common texts to read were comics, tabloid newspapers, and football magazines. Among females, the most common text was a popular magazine that featured surveys about friendships and answers to social

problems, followed by fictional texts (Martino & Meyenn, 2001). These survey results suggested that females focus more on reading fiction than do males. This preference serves them well in school since all research from the 1980's onward shows that the most highly valued forms of writing in the language arts classes are the fictional narrative, varieties of the personal narrative, and emotional involvement. Even though males are making meaning with text through reading and writing outside of school, they are doing so in ways that educators do not value in the curriculum (Coles & Hall, 2001).

The strong influences of cultural expectations continue to affect students as they move through school years. Much of the "emotional literacy" stressed in language arts classes runs counter to the "macho" culture that males are taught to prize from a very young age (Rowan et al., 2002). Kindlon and Thompson (1999) found that males do not have the "emotional literacy" to discuss their feelings or those of others, a common motivational activity used in language arts classes and writing prompts. Based on a study of attitudes toward school, researchers found that "boys bring another agenda to the classroom which entails asserting their masculine identity and differentiating themselves from girls" (Barker, 1997, p. 221). This identity does not include expressing interest in or appreciation of reading and writing. Males often voice that reading and writing are female activities because they involve talking about feelings and sitting still (Newkirk, 2002). Some studies indicate that males are reluctant to share feelings because this is a female activity (Taylor, 2005). Many males get the message in school that their contributions to the world of writing are not valuable.

“Evidence abounds that language arts teachers are more likely to select and use narrative fiction that may be less appealing to boys” (Brozo, 2002, p. 77). When researchers asked a group of third and sixth graders to complete stories that came from two distinct story starters, they found that 61% of the stories written by males contained some reference to violence or crime; only 5% of the 3rd grade females and 35% of the sixth grade females wrote stories featuring violence or crime (Newkirk, 2002). Teachers often react to students writing about violence in contemporary schooling with concern and shock. A newly trained teacher is taught to turn over any writing that features violence, on whatever level, to the building administration or counseling team for evaluation. However, two media researchers claimed that violence is “a natural signifier of conflict and difference and without representations of conflict, art of the past and present would be seriously impoverished” (Newkirk, 2002, p. 110). Males are socialized to collaborate through combative play all of their lives (Newkirk, 2002). It would be a mistake to equate the use of violence in writing automatically to a student’s desire to be sadistic or harmful if violence can be mediated, viewed as a form of humor, and used to solidify friendships among males (Newkirk, 2002). Yet, when students reach the schoolhouse door, the influences of a popular culture, which glorifies violence, and socialization, which encourages males to be “tough” and “play hard”, are ignored. Indeed the preference for males to write via cartooning is maligned and the tendency of males to write action or adventure stories is continually disregarded as glorifying simple violence (Newkirk, 2002).

“Sustained literacy habits are based on the confidence and independence which come from seeing yourself as a reader and writer, someone who has the power to use literacy as a tool, as a means of self-expression and as a means of enjoyment” (Coles & Hall, 2001, p. 220). If teachers continue to prohibit drawing, assign uninteresting topics, isolate students, devalue references to popular culture, or prohibit “violence”, they will continue to shut males out from engaging in the world of writing (Newkirk, 2000). Clearly, new strategies which appeal to the preferences of male students must be employed to facilitate male engagement with writing and begin to close the disturbing male-female gap in reading and writing achievement.

Motivation and Engagement in School and the Language Arts Classroom

Student engagement in school is one of the most celebrated hallmarks of academic success (Finn, 1993). Engagement in school is “the attention, interest, investment, and effort students expend in the work of school” (Marks, 2000 as cited in Finn, 2006, p. v). While many factors are related to achievement in school, many cannot be changed by educators in the school alone. However, school-related variables such as students’ academic engagement and perceptions and attitudes are open to change via educational interventions (Singh, Granville, & Dika, 2002). In a study of 8th graders drawn from a nationally representative sample, researchers found that students’ motivation to learn mathematics and science can be increased by using a curriculum that focuses on creating meaning and relevance of the material (Singh et al., 2002). If the writing gap is going to close, educators may need to learn new methods of engaging students and tap into these resources regularly.

Some research has indicated that the gender-related achievement gap in writing widens most significantly between fourth and eighth grades, along with student motivation at this time (Guthrie & Davis, 2003). Middle school appears to be the key change agent. When *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century* was released in 1989, the educators and researchers involved (as cited in Meece, 2003) concluded that middle schools are “potentially society’s most powerful force to recapture millions of youths adrift” (p.109). Some studies have shown that the environment in middle schools, as opposed to elementary schools, is less cognitively demanding, more competitive and evaluative, and provides fewer opportunities for choice (Carnegie Council On Adolescent Development, 1989). Although many middle school reform movements have taken place since the release of this influential 1989 report, the growing gap in writing achievement suggests that the middle school environment is not engaging male students.

Achievement Goal Theory (AGT) is one framework found in much of the research on motivation. Because motivation and engagement can be viewed as reciprocal pieces of the school experience, it is helpful to understand AGT. Generally, two types of goal orientations explain students’ behavior or engagement levels in academic settings: a mastery goal orientation and a performance goal orientation (Meece, 2003). A mastery orientation is defined as the desire to improve one’s ability, master a skill and understand content (Meece, 2003). A performance orientation is defined as the desire to achieve a high level of ability relative to others or gain recognition for ability (Meece, 2003). A strong positive relationship exists between the student’s development of a mastery goal

orientation and achievement behaviors and competency perceptions across all grade levels and subject areas (Meece, 2003). Longitudinal studies have shown that students perceive the classroom environment to be much less focused on developing mastery goals and more focused on performance goals as they reach the middle school level.

“At the same time that intrinsic motivation decreases as students make the transition from elementary to middle school, extrinsic motivation for reading increases” (Guthrie & Davis, 2003, p. 61). The increased emphasis placed on grades, competition and developing strong competencies relative to peers fuels the culture of performance goals. Even more troubling is that the students who feel less competent upon entering middle school actually lose more motivation as they enter the middle school world (Guthrie & Davis, 2003). One reason for this loss is the very nature of student engagement. “Active participation in the early grades, accompanied by some degree of academic success, serves to perpetuate the continued participation throughout the school years. Under optimal conditions, engagement becomes the individual’s habitual form of behavior” (Finn, 1993, p. 2). Males who have been struggling with writing upon entering school, as demonstrated by anecdotal information and by test scores may become habitually disengaged in language arts as one natural fallout of having their preferences ignored. “Others may find school experiences distasteful, especially if they feel ‘put down’ or mistreated by their teachers, and may begin to retreat from participation” (Finn, 1993, p. 2). The answer does not seem to be complex. A survey conducted by Ivey and Broaddus (as cited in Brozo, 2002) clearly showed that the

number one way to make students engaged in literacy is to find things of personal interest for them to read and to write about.

Several classroom instruction practices have shown promise in promoting student motivation and engagement. Although struggling middle school readers and writers tend to be disengaged from literacy, they are highly sensitive to context and can be motivated by the right text, prompt, and peer or teacher support (Guthrie & Davis, 2003). A survey of teachers' beliefs about increasing motivation among disengaged students showed that giving choice is a strong motivational technique (Guthrie & Davis, 2003). A group of struggling inner-city students showed significant increases in engagement in school learning when they were given choice in their learning activities (Teel, Debruin-Parecki, & Covington, 1998). Choice, which can be defined as self-determination, is related to higher degrees of internal motivation, greater conceptual understanding of content, and better recall of skills than when students are assigned a task by the teacher without student input (Brozo, 2002).

A second teaching practice that improves student engagement is strategy instruction. Strategy instruction refers to teaching students specific skills that will empower them as writers. A meta-analysis of research about writing instruction found strategy instruction to have the greatest effect size of all instructional practices in the writing classroom (Graham & Perin, 2007). "Strategy instruction is well supported by research" (Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 16). As students gain ability in these small skill areas, their view of themselves as competent writers grows, leading to an increase in the motivational need for self-perceived competence. Another clear benefit of strategy

instruction, therefore, is an increase in content understanding as well. An increase in motivation and a renewed sense of competence result in improved student engagement in writing (Guthrie & Davis, 2003).

“Task-related involvement is promoted by making school-based writing tasks more like ‘real world’ writing tasks, ones that allow students to take ownership (or control) of their written work and encourage them to write for audiences other than their teacher. Reportedly, these practices result in higher levels of student engagement with writing tasks” (Spaulding, 1995, p. 210). Using the Learner-Center Model, based on 14 principles derived from educational and psychological research, promoting topics for writing that are relevant and meaningful to the writer is an important instructional practice linked to improving levels of student engagement (Meece, 2003). Students’ ratings on this particular dimension of the Learner-Center Model were positively related to student motivation and engagement with $r = .77$ (Meece, 2003).

The research about male student achievement should push educators to look for new approaches to instruction. The knowledge about the physiological and cultural influences on the male writing preferences and learning approaches leads the educator to believe that a new toolbox of educational strategies is required to close the troubling gap in writing achievement. In addition, “... behavioral risk, in the form of school engagement/disengagement was related to measures of postsecondary education and related... to employment and income” (Finn, 2006, p. viii). Understanding the nuances of student engagement and the practices that promote engagement empowers the educator

to move to a new instructional strategy that encompasses the teaching methods required to gain male success in the world of writing: the writing workshop.

The Emergence of the Writing Workshop as an Instructional Practice

Writing at the middle-school age is developmentally important and appropriate. It forms the backbone of literacy and provides the basis for communication in all content areas. Therefore, educators should present the most effective writing instruction possible to integrate current ideologies for practice and standards and help all learners find basic success in the area of writing. Currently, a large percentage of the male population in school does not engage in writing, perhaps because of the out-dated teaching practices and lack of successful implementations of reforms in this area of instruction.

In the traditional model of writing instruction, teachers teach writing as an isolated set of skills with an accompanying step-by-step process. Stretch (1994) noted that the largest amount of student resistance in the language arts stemmed from writing because of the frustration that students experienced. Students struggled with responding to prompts and getting words down on paper. Two primary movements in writing instruction have resulted in the advent of the writing workshop instructional methodology over the years. The first movement focused on the writing environment and culture of writing instruction (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1986; Graves, 1983). These researchers determined that to help students become successful writers, the following elements of instruction must be in place: the freedom to write about individual interests, the ability to participate in the writing process, and the structure to receive regular, direct instruction based on individual writing needs. The writer's workshop instructional methodology

grew from these tenets. The second movement was the National Writing Project or NWP. By focusing on developing writing competency among teachers, this movement served to legitimize writing as a piece of literacy apart from reading. The NWP engaged teachers in the writing workshop model as students themselves with professional writing teachers mentoring them to become better at their craft and the art of teaching writing. Calkins (1986) claimed that teachers, as well as students, should be involved in the process of understanding the craft of writing as a lifelong, arduous and invigorating process. Both of these movements pushed educators toward adapting current instruction to a new method of writing instruction focused on student choice and self-direction: the writing workshop.

The movement toward implementing the writing workshop instructional methodology spread with varying degrees of success. Many educators promoted the concept because it stressed the dual nature of teaching writing: developing writing skills alongside a sense of student ownership around writing. Graves (1986) asserted that students wrote more and in an improved style when writing on a self-selected, rather than assigned, topic. Choice is a key instructional strategy to improve student engagement overall, and this proves to be true in the realm of writing instruction as well. "According to Deci and Ryan (1985, as cited in Spaulding, 1995), such feelings of autonomy and self-determination account for the increased levels of intrinsic motivation that result when student writers chose their own topics and audiences" (p. 210). Clearly, creating a classroom environment via writing workshop that features student choice in writing topic

and genre can be a key component of engaging more learners, specifically male students, in the process of writing.

Another key piece of both the writing workshop instructional methodology and the research on student engagement is one-on-one conferencing. Throughout the writing process, the student guides the progress of the writing piece and directs the content of the instruction based on his or her specific learning needs. The teacher acts as the facilitator and regularly conferences with individual students in an effort to address individual needs. The writing conference becomes time when teacher and student discuss progress on a specific piece of writing and where it is going. "When conferences are predictable they can be replicated with other children in the room. Children will learn how to help each other. The teacher's model is distinctive, informing, and helpful. The children will use the predictable model to receive each other's pieces as well as to initiate effective questions" (Graves, 1983, p. 274). One-on-one conferencing and mini-lessons as prescribed by Atwell (1986) address small strategy skills that will build competency confidence, an essential precursor to student motivation and engagement. By focusing on specific student needs in small groups or a one-on-one setting, the teacher moves away from whole group instruction, male disengagement, and teaching toward a subset of students.

The writing workshop instructional methodology stresses the relevance of writing. The personal link between writing and living is central to the writing workshop instructional methodology (Calkins, 1986). One key to engaging students is connecting the learning to the outside world. "...If schools make no place for the cultural materials

that children find meaningful, they risk reinforcing societal divisions in children's orientations to each other, to cultural art forms, and to school itself" (Newkirk, 2002, p. 84). Judgments that teachers make about what type of writing is worthy of academic review and what writing falls into the category of "subliterature" may alienate many male students. Without feeling validated and safe to share their inner thoughts and creative ideas, male writers may resist writing. One way to counter this problem is to encourage a broad-spectrum of writing genres and suggest that students carry a writing journal with them all the time to jot down ideas (Atwell, 1986). The writing workshop instruction methodology is built upon the premise that pieces of writing must have relevance to the student in order to be meaningful.

The implementation of the writing workshop methodology may have been unsuccessful at some sites because of a continued reliance on teacher-directed writing prompts, a lock-step method of instruction and ineffective teacher training. Teachers continue to promote implicit criteria about what constitutes "good writing topics" (Newkirk, 2002, p. 79). Teachers pressure students to write about adult topics, to write autobiographies, and to construct personal narratives, all topics which cater to the interests of many females. There remains a bias against television as a legitimate source of writing topics, despite that many students are inspired by this part of mainstream society (Newkirk, 2002). Teachers, uncomfortable with nonrealistic fiction, deride the implausible action sequences that male students often construct (Smith & Wilhelm, 2002). The structure of a writing workshop may be difficult for some teachers to handle. Many teachers find it difficult to provide for the differentiated learning in strategy lessons

and conferences and the lack of deadlines fosters procrastination among some students (Sudol & Sudol, 1991). Additionally, the Alliance for Excellent Education's report, *Writing Next* (as cited in Graham & Perin, 2007), detailed the findings of a meta-analysis of research on writing instruction. "Explicit teacher training was a major factor in the success of the process writing approach. When teachers had such training, the effect was moderate, but in the absence of training the effect was negligible" (p. 20).

John Locke wrote about his young, male students in his 1693 education treatise, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (as cited in Epstein et al., 1998). In this work, Locke expressed concern that students demonstrated an inability to master Latin despite years of studying it and learning the grammar rules. However, he saw that young females learned French rapidly simply by "prattling" it with their governesses. His frustration provides a summary of the issues related to male achievement in the language arts. To Locke, the key to success rested in the instructional method and he saw clearly that in order to improve male achievement in Latin, the method of instruction needed to be revisited. Over 300 years later, educators are struggling with the same issue.

Theoretical Framework

The review of research and literature leads to a theoretical framework. This framework serves as the conceptual base for the present study. Additionally, the framework connects this work to the larger body of research and theory in such areas as engagement, developmental timing, instructional processes and curriculum content.

The theoretical framework for this study is presented in Figure 1. Three elements of a writing program should promote male student achievement based on a review of related literature. Student Motivation [SM] in a writing program is fueled by Achievement Goal Theory (AGT), strategy instruction, and peer editing and review. SM is improved when the teacher promotes a mastery orientation within the classroom encouraging students to aim to improve ability, master a skill, and understand content rather than compete. Student Engagement (SE) increases when the teacher allows for males to choose topics of interest to them (for reading and writing) and does not ignore their preferences. Choice and topic-relevance are key aspects of a writing instruction that fuel SE. The third element is Content Understanding (CU). By providing instruction on specific writing skills that are differentiated appropriately to individual student needs, teachers increase student understanding of writing. Daily mini lessons and one-on-one conferencing both work to increase CU in the language arts classroom. Figure 1 provides a pictorial view of the theoretical framework for this study.

Summary of Chapter II and Organization of Study

Chapter II has presented a review of research and literature pertaining to gender and literacy practices, motivation and engagement in school, and the writing workshop intervention. The review includes the factors that influence student engagement and motivation and an in depth analysis of literacy practices as connected to gender. Finally, historical perspectives about writing process and programs provide greater insight into the instruction of writing.

In Chapter III the researcher explains the design, methods, and procedures through which data were collected, compiled, and analyzed by describing the data analysis plan. Chapter III provides information about the relation of the data to the established guiding questions for this research.

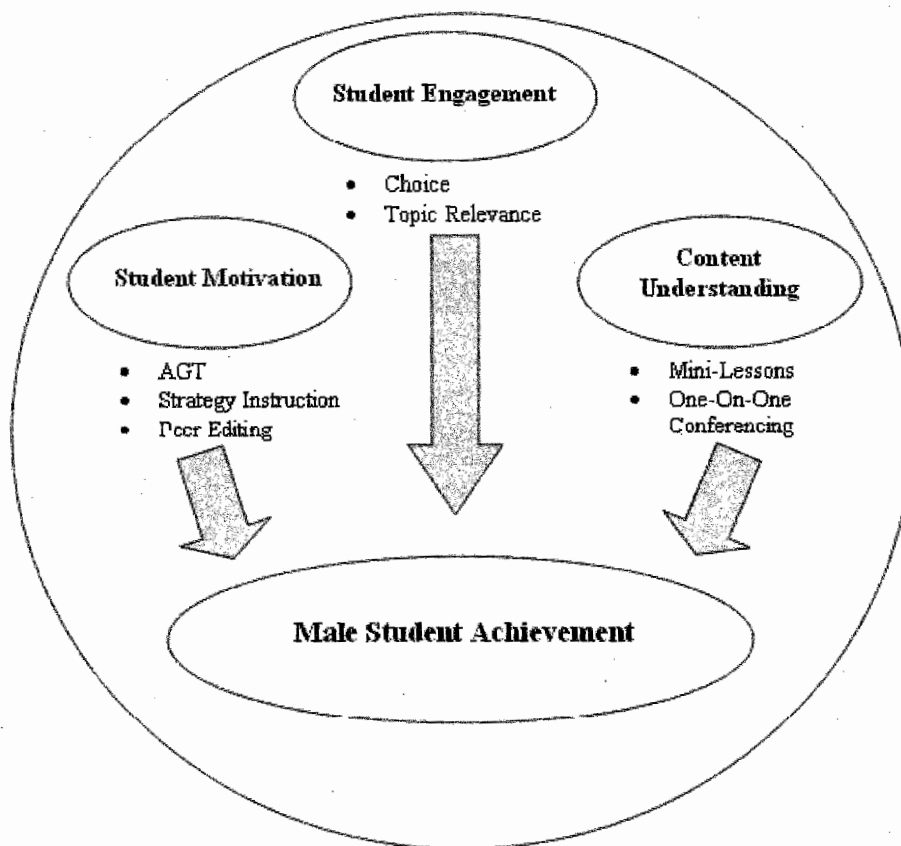


Figure 2. Theoretical Framework. This framework ties this study to a larger body of work and research. This framework guides the development of the study, helps to frame the research and interview questions, and will help to explain the results. If these elements are present (observable), then one could anticipate improved writing outcomes

by male students on the standard state assessments, such as the New Jersey Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA)?

Chapter III

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The researcher's purpose for conducting this action research was to determine the influence of a writing workshop program on male student achievement in the language arts program. The setting was one middle school in one suburban town in Northern New Jersey. The gap in writing achievement between male and female students on local, national, and international levels suggests that instruction methods currently employed by teachers of writing should be examined. Writing workshop methods, as outlined by Atwell (1987), Graves (1983), and Calkins (1986) differ from traditional approaches to teaching writing in the language arts. The writing workshop program, when implemented correctly, follows the recommendations of the National Council of Teachers of English [NCTE] in 2004 and honors the findings of contemporary researchers.

The public education system in America should meet the needs of all school-aged students engaged in its programs. Under normative conditions, males and females should attain equal or nearly equal academic success in subject areas. Data show that a significant number of male students in the American education system are deemed "under literate" by national standards. Implementation of a writing workshop instructional methodology is one approach to incorporating differentiated teaching strategies in an effort to raise male student achievement in language arts. The researcher's purpose for this research was to determine the influence of a writing workshop on male student achievement in language arts in one middle school in suburban northern New Jersey.

The questions that guided the research are:

1. How do classroom instructors employ writing instructional methods that are non-traditional for language arts classes, such as regular sharing of writing, self-determination of writing topic and genre, and conferencing?
2. How do non-traditional instructional methods affect students' writing output (quality and quantity)?
3. How does the implementation of writing workshop in language arts classes affect male students?

The present study complements the extensive research which suggests the need to alter current instructional methodologies when teaching writing. The researcher evaluated the implementation of the writing workshop to determine what relationships exist between this program and writing achievement among male students as well as to evaluate whether the program has been implemented successfully. The use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods allowed the researcher to present a holistic portrayal of the data.

Research Design

The problem and purpose focus the design of the study, and the design dictates methods. The design of a study gives a logical sequence to the intended research procedures. The research design should achieve the most valid and reliable results possible. The design places this study within a particular framework that will give

significance to the findings so that the resulting analysis or interpretation can be presented clearly, and perhaps can expand the present knowledge in the field.

A cross-sectional, explanatory, nonexperimental design was appropriate for this evaluation study for the following reasons. The difficulty of engineering experiments in a school setting prompt the use of a nonexperimental design. “Nonexperimental quantitative research is an important area of research for educators because there are so many important but nonmanipulable independent variables needing further study in the field of education” (Johnson, 2001, p. 3). Gender, the categorical independent variable in this study, cannot be manipulated; therefore, the nonexperimental research design in this study approaches a causal-comparative study (Campbell & Stanley, 1963).

“Were the researchers trying to explain how the phenomenon operates by identifying the causal factors that produce change in it? If the answer is ‘yes’ (and there is no manipulation) then the term explanatory nonexperimental research should be applied” (Johnson, 2001, p. 9). The researcher intended to test the theory that the implementation of a writing workshop program would impact male student achievement in the area of writing. Therefore, the most appropriate design was for an explanatory study.

The researcher collected data “during a single, relatively brief time period” (Johnson, 2001, p. 9). Comparisons were made across the variables of interest. This cross-sectional research design was appropriate to structure the methods used order to answer the guiding research questions. The cross-sectional, explanatory, nonexperimental study design was derived from the theoretical framework with the time and purpose of the study foremost in mind (See Chapter 2, p. 32).

A second component of the research design was a program-implementation evaluation. The purpose of this evaluation was to gather “information on the extent to which a program’s operations conform to those specified in the program plan... The outcome of an evaluation comparing planned and observed operations acts as a link between program objectives and actual program outcomes” (Kremper & Achilles, 1979, p. 21). In the program-evaluation piece of this study, the researcher focused on whether or not the program was being carried out rather than the cause and effect.

The techniques associated with most program-evaluation are non-experimental and typically include “direct observation, interviews, and inventories of materials and facilities used” (Kremper & Achilles, 1979, p. 21). The researcher intended to determine if the program was being implemented in accordance with the original plans. Therefore, the most appropriate approach for this aspect of the research was a program-implementation evaluation.

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis (H_0) statement was as follows: There is no difference in male student achievement in writing before and after the implementation of the writing workshop instructional methodology in the middle school language arts class. If the null hypothesis is supported, then the researcher can assume that there was no positive association between the variables and that implementation of writing workshop did not systematically change male student achievement in writing. However, if the null hypothesis is not accepted, then the implementation of a writing workshop instructional methodology would relate to the probability of a positive rise in male student achievement in writing in the middle school language arts class.

Prior to the data collection, the researcher engaged in a rigorous process of analyzing research, theory, and literature. Discussions and interviews with the expert consultants along with an exploration of prior research and theory served to inform the development of the aforementioned theoretical framework (see Chapter II). This framework established the methods of data collection.

Methodology

The researcher gathered and analyzed information to understand more about the phenomenon of the gender achievement gap in writing (males/females) to determine the influence of a writing workshop project on writing achievement among males. Cross-sectional data was collected from participants during a short time, during classroom observations and interviews, and analyzed. The researcher obtained outcome information from results on the New Jersey Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment [GEPA] test scores over a 5e-year period. This 5-year period represents the year before the implementation of the writing workshop program and the entire time that the writing workshop program has been implemented in this middle school language arts program.

The use of GEPA test scores from the past 5 years disaggregated by gender, classroom observations, and interviews of trained practitioners currently implementing the program in their language arts classrooms provided triangulation to help establish believability and consistency (validity and reliability) in this mixed-methods study.

The aforementioned triangulation of data collection was a key aspect of the methodology of this study. Triangulation is broadly defined by Denzin (as cited in Maanen, 1983) as the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon (p. 135). The basic idea behind triangulation of research data is to give the

researcher varied viewpoints about the same topic of interest. “The effectiveness of triangulation rests on the premise that the weaknesses in each single method will be compensated by the counter-balancing strengths of another” (Maanen, 1983, p. 138). The use of a mixed-method approach to research is encouraged because of its inclusive, pluralistic nature that requires a researcher to take an eclectic approach to thinking about the greater purposes of the research. “Today’s evaluator must be sophisticated about matching research methods to the nuances of particular evaluation questions and the idiosyncrasies of specific stakeholder needs” (Patton, 2002, p. 68). Quantitative research methods focus on deduction, confirmation, hypothesis testing, and statistical analysis (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Qualitative research methods focus on induction, discovery, exploration, and qualitative analysis (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). One benefit of collecting and analyzing multiple data using multiple methods is not simply corroboration of a finding, but also an expansion of understanding. “By using quantitative and qualitative techniques within the same framework, mixed methods research can incorporate the strengths of both methodologies” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 23).

The researcher applied the mixed-methodology as espoused by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) to draw from the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. The use of an open-ended interview allowed the participants to voice their views freely about implementing a writing workshop methodology and the influence this instruction has on male student achievement in the area of writing. The observation of participants engaged in the real-world classroom setting gives the researcher an authentic view of how the writing workshop instructional methodology was being

implemented and its possible impact on male student achievement in the area of writing. The statistical analysis of GEPA scores from a 5-year period enabled the researcher to determine the relationship between the implementation of a writing workshop methodology and male student achievement in the area of writing. Taken together, these three sets of data provided answers to the research questions.

Participants

Study participants were language arts teachers ($n=6$) randomly selected from one middle school in one suburban town in Northern New Jersey. Teachers were all members of the public school district with a district factor grouping (DFG) classification of J, as categorized by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE). The NJDOE first developed the DFGs in 1975 for the purpose of comparing students' performance on statewide assessments across demographically similar school districts. The categories are updated every 10 years based on the latest census data. The DFGs represent an approximate measure of a community's relative socioeconomic status (SES). The eight DFGs range from A to J with A representing the lowest SES group and J the highest SES group. The middle school reflected a 6-8 grade-level environment.

Teacher participants were currently employed as full-time middle school teachers. The six teacher participants were all members of the current language arts department of one middle school. The teachers participated in the open-ended interview and observation portion of the study.

Research Procedures

The researcher was granted approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Seton Hall University to conduct this research study (see Appendix A). The favorable

decision by the IRB testified that the researcher established procedures to protect any study participants and maintain appropriate anonymity.

The researcher requested permission from the Interim Superintendent of Schools of one school district to conduct research with the language arts teachers currently teaching in one of the two district middle schools. The researcher met with the Interim Superintendent of Schools to describe the goals and objectives of this research project. In addition, the researcher submitted an informative letter to the superintendent which described the goals of the objectives of this study as well as formally (see Appendix A).

The researcher provided the middle school principal with an informative letter to describe the goals and objectives of the study and formally requested permission to contact the language arts teachers (see Appendix A). The researcher mailed to each teacher an informative letter which described in detail the goals and objectives of the study and requested their willingness to participate in the study. Included in this mailing was an Informed Consent Form (see Appendix A) which described the purpose and methodology of the study, guaranteed anonymity and explained the right to withdraw from the interview at any time during the study, and offered a reproduction of the results of the research upon individual request. Those who agreed to participate in the study were required to sign and return the necessary documentation.

The researcher provided each teacher participant a form on which to schedule an appropriate time for the interview. The interviews were conducted in the individual middle schools and took place in a location suggested by the participant. The researcher considered such factors as interview length, confidentiality, and environment. Each interview made use of an audio recording to capture stated perceptions, thoughts, and

expressed beliefs of participants regarding the implementation of the writing workshop instructional methodology and male student achievement in writing. The use of an open-ended interview allowed the researcher to use the expertise of a practitioner to inform the research.

Observations were scheduled during the regular school day. Each observation took place during a regularly scheduled, 45-minute class period. Observations allowed the researcher to explore things which may escape the detection of the day-to-day practitioner. Additionally, observations allowed the researcher to see things that the teacher participant may have been hesitant to speak about during the interview. Finally, the use of an observation rubric (see Appendix B) allowed the researcher to develop personal knowledge and experience as a tool to understand the methodology (Patton, 1990).

Data Collection and Analysis

Descriptive data collected for the purpose of this study consisted of background information. For example, the researcher collected information about the DFG of the school district, the background of the teacher participants, and the demographics of the student body.

Quantitative data collection in this study consisted of the GEPA scores from 2003 through 2007. The test is administered each year in March to all students in grade eight in New Jersey public school systems. Only the scores from the writing portion of the GEPA were analyzed to explore a possible relationship between the implementation of a writing workshop program in the language arts classes beginning in September, 2003 and

male achievement on the writing portion of the GEPA. These data were evaluated using one-way and independent samples t-tests, with level of significance set at $p \leq .05$. The GEPA mean scores were also used to calculate effect size (Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs, 2003, p. 247) for the independent variable of gender and the implementation of a writing workshop instructional methodology. These results added to the study for practical application and interpretation of the student scores. Effect sizes were calculated using the following equation.

$$\text{Effect size}(d) = \frac{\text{the mean of the differences (male mean - female mean)}}{\text{the standard deviation of the male group}} \quad (1)$$

Collection of qualitative data in this study consisted of open-ended interviews and in-class observations. Patton (1990) noted “there is a very practical side to qualitative methods that simply involves asking open-ended questions of people and observing matters of interest in real-world settings in order to solve problems, improve programs, or develop policies” (Patton, 1990, pp. 89-90). The researcher employed a rigorous process to develop the following research questions for the teacher participants. Based on the thorough review of related literature and prior research, the researcher developed a theoretical framework for this study. Then, a panel of experts reviewed the questions and provided feedback to ensure that the interview questions (see Appendix C) supported both the research questions and theoretical framework of the study. Finally, the researcher conducted a trial of the questions on two language arts teachers from another middle school in the same district. This strenuous process ensured the validity of the guiding interview questions, enumerated below:

1. How do you structure class sessions that are focused on writing instruction?
2. How do you alter your instruction to meet the needs of different students?
3. What is your definition of effective writing instruction?
4. How would you compare male and female student writers?
5. What influence does the writing workshop instructional methodology have on students of middle school age in regard to performance (achievement) in the language arts class? Their motivation? Their content understanding? Their interest level?
6. How would you describe the change in motivation level or achievement gains of middle-school age male students since the implementation of the writing workshop instructional methodology?

The researcher obtained the information from participants during an open-ended interview process. The participants responded with remarks in their own words.

Validity of Research Instruments and Reliability of Results

One quantitative portion of this study involved the analysis of student GEPA scores from the years 2003 through 2007. This test is administered each March to all students enrolled in grade eight in a public school in New Jersey. The district results are a matter of public record. The GEPA is a criterion-referenced test aligned with the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards [NJCCS]. The researcher analyzed the NJ GEPA test scores of all eighth grade students from 2003 through 2007. The scores were obtained through the cooperation of district administrative personnel. All student names were removed by the district test coordinator and replaced with a number representing the student's gender (1= male; 2= female). There was no direct student participation in this

study. The GEPA is accepted as valid because (a) experts in the field of education and writing instruction have created this instrument, and (b) the GEPA is the statewide measure currently used to meet No Child Left Behind (NCLB) "AYP" standards. As stated in the *GEPA 2005 Technical Report* (NJDE, 2005), the reliability estimate, based on Cronbach's coefficient alpha measure of internal consistency, was .64 for the writing portion of the GEPA. This reliability estimate reflects the most recent estimate available. Appendix D contains a table with the average student score on the writing portion of the GEPA by DFG from 2002-2006. Without exception, the average student performance increases as one progresses through DFG classifications from low SES to high SES districts.

In a second quantitative part of this study, the primary researcher and an educator trained in the writing workshop (secondary researcher) conducted six direct observations each; each teacher participant was observed by the primary and secondary researcher one time each. The validation of the teacher observation rubric instrument involved its mutual creation by the researcher and a consultant from a major university working with practitioners to implement the writing workshop methodology. Prior to engaging in research for this study, the primary and secondary researcher observed two teachers using the holistic rubric together. The consistent scores on the rubric between the primary and secondary researcher after each observation supported the validity of the instrument and its potential for generating reliable results. Reliability estimate of the teacher observation instrument consisted of inter-rater agreement of 87.5% between the primary and the second observer.

Validation of the teacher participant question instrument involved review by a panel of experts. Reliability potential of the teacher participant question instrument, in the sense of rater agreement, was provided by the second scorer. The researcher coded the responses using the achievement indicators of SM (Student Motivation), SE (Student Engagement), and CU (Content Understanding). "... Coding serves as an important bridge between the data collected and the validity of the theory developed" (Franklin, 2002, p. 68). After independently coding the teacher participant interview responses, the researcher and the second scorer had an inter-rater agreement of 98% in coding the achievement indicators; 44 of 46 indicators also matched categorically. Both the interview and observation instruments were piloted by two non-participant teachers to ensure inter-rater agreement and clarity of the instrument. The purpose of piloting the interview instrument was to ensure that the interview subjects understood the wording of the questions, and that the questions were effectively designed to garner information relating to the guiding research questions and theoretical framework. The purpose of piloting the observation instrument was to ensure that the observation rubric was clear and focused on essential points of writing workshop instruction as explained in the literature review.

Summary of Chapter III and Description of Chapter IV

In Chapter III the researcher explained the design, methods, and procedures through which data were collected, compiled, and analyzed by describing the data analysis plan. Chapter III provided information about the relation of the data to the established guiding questions for this research.

Chapter IV presents the data and data analyses. Responses to the interview questions were transcribed and analyzed by the researcher looking for patterns and themes from the responses. These responses were coded and evaluated by a second party trained in the coding system. Data from the observations were analyzed by the researcher and a second, trained party using a holistic rubric. Student data (e.g. test results) from 5 years of GEPA tests by eighth grade students were analyzed to determine if there was any change in the students' writing scores during the years of the writing workshop program.

Chapter IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

The public education system in America should meet the needs of all school-aged students engaged in its programs. Under normative conditions, males and females should attain equal or nearly equal academic success in subject areas. Data show that a significant number of male students in the American education system are deemed “under literate” by national standards. Implementation of a writing workshop instructional methodology is one approach to incorporating differentiated teaching strategies in an effort to raise male student achievement in language arts. The researcher’s purpose for this research was to determine the influence of a writing workshop on male student achievement in language arts in one middle school in suburban northern New Jersey.

The questions guiding this research were:

1. How do classroom instructors employ writing instructional methods that are non-traditional for language arts classrooms, such as regular sharing of writing, self-determination of writing topic and genre, and conferencing?
2. How do non-traditional instructional methods affect students’ writing output (quality and quantity)?
3. How does the implementation of writing workshop in language arts classes affect male students?

Responses to the interview questions were transcribed and analyzed by the researcher looking for patterns and themes from the responses. These responses were

coded and evaluated by a second party trained in the coding system. Data from the observations were analyzed by the researcher and a second, trained party using a holistic rubric. Student data (e.g. test results) from 5 years of GEPA tests by eighth grade students were analyzed to determine if there was any change in the students' writing scores during the years of the writing workshop program. Table 1 contains a summary of the steps for data collection and analysis.

Table 1

Summary Table of Steps for Data Collection and Analysis

Question	Data source	Steps for analysis
How do classroom instructors employ writing instructional methods that are non-traditional for language arts classrooms?	Observations Interviews	Rubric Coding
How do non-traditional instructional methods affect students' writing output?	Observations Interviews GEPA	Rubric Coding t-test
How does the implementation of writing workshop in language arts classes affect male students?	Observations Interviews GEPA	Rubric Coding t-test

In this study the researcher examined the insights of the language arts teachers in relation to their work in implementing the writing workshop instructional methodology into the classroom. Qualitative data were obtained from six teacher participant interviews and 12 classroom observations (each teacher participant was observed two times). The interview questions were grounded in the theoretical framework (see Chapter II) of the study and focused on the academic achievement of the students, defined as

student engagement, student motivation, and content understanding. The researcher also observed teacher participants looking closely at how the writing workshop instructional methodology was being implemented into the regular class day. The district did not have a previously established rubric to ensure fidelity of implementation. In concert with a consultant from a major university working with teacher participants in the school district to implement the writing workshop methodology, the researcher mutually developed a rubric to guide the observations of teacher participants' classrooms. A district employee responsible for coaching and coordinating the training of district teachers in the writing workshop instructional methodology, along with the researcher, field tested the rubric to ensure the clarity and validity of the instrument.

The quantitative data collection method for this study consisted of gathering student test results from 2003 to 2007 on the New Jersey GEPA from the district test coordinator. The researcher analyzed test data from the GEPA from 2003 – 2007 for evidence of potential growth of writing skills after the formal implementation of the writing workshop instructional methodology into the language arts department in September, 2003. All students in grade eight enrolled in a public school in New Jersey take this test every year. The researcher analyzed the writing test scores of 1,074 eighth grade students attending one public middle school from 2003-2007.

Descriptive Statistics

For the 5 years involved in the study (2003-2007) Table 2 shows that specific demographic characteristics were consistent, and thus similar during the years of the study. Enrollment (*N*) in the grade ranged from 204 to 228. Students receiving special education services dictated by and Individualized Education Plan (IEP) were from 9% to

14% of the *N* for this same period. During the study, gender and race were stable: the percentage of males enrolled in the eighth grade at the school ranged from 46 to 55; the percentage of Caucasian students ranged from 69 to 77. Finally, the percentage of students documented as economically disadvantaged remained stable from .4% to 2%.

Table 2

Grade 8 Demographics for Comparison (2003 – 2007) as reported on the GEPA Report Card for Participant School

Demographic	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2003-2007
N	204	213	228	228	209	5
% Male	50	55	53	50	46	-4
% White	70	77	69	73	72.2	2.2
% Special Education	9	13	14	9	12	3
% Economically Disadvantaged	2	.4	2	.9	1	-1
% Migrant	0	0	0	0	0	0

To find answers to the research questions in this study, teacher participants were identified in the language arts department of one middle school. All teachers were invited to participate in the study; the researcher randomly selected 6 teachers from the volunteer pool of 10 teachers. The teacher participant group was six adults trained in the writing workshop instructional methodology; all were tenured teachers. Teachers were all members of the public school district with a district factor grouping (DFG) classification of J, as categorized by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE)

(see page 16). The middle schools reflected a 6-8 grade-level environment. The researcher conducted a one-sample t-test on the mean scores of the students in the study and the J districts; there was no statistically significant difference between these scores.

The growing pressures to meet (AYP) and the scarcity of resources led district leaders to question whether writing workshop instructional methodology was a worthwhile investment for improving student achievement in the area of writing in language arts, particularly for males. In the present study the researcher examined the relationship between participation in the writing workshop instructional methodology and male student achievement in the area of writing. The researcher determined that significant differences in writing performance in the writing portion of the GEPA existed between males and females within the participating school. To determine the existence of an achievement gap, the researcher compared the GEPA scores of male and female students within the participating school from 2003, the year before the introduction of the writing workshop instructional methodology at the study site (see Appendix E).

Analysis of achievement gap in participating school. The mean GEPA score for male students in 2003 ($\mu_1 = 10.881$) was 1.075 points lower than the mean score for female students in 2003 ($\mu_2 = 11.956$). This difference was statistically significant ($t = -4.204$, $p = .000$). Additionally, the effect size of this difference was .56, meaning that gender had a moderate effect on test scores. This finding established a baseline of preexisting differences in writing achievement between the male and female students prior to participation in the writing workshop instructional methodology. The mean GEPA score for male students in 2007 ($\mu_1 = 10.851$) was .819 points lower than the mean score for female students in 2007 ($\mu_2 = 11.670$). This difference was statistically significant ($t = -$

3.327, $p = .001$). The effect size of this difference was .44. Although gender continued to have an effect on test scores, this effect in 2007 was .12 less than in 2003, an educationally important finding. Gender had less of an effect on writing test scores in 2007 than in 2003. Figure 1 displays the mean scores of male and female students from 2003 to 2007.

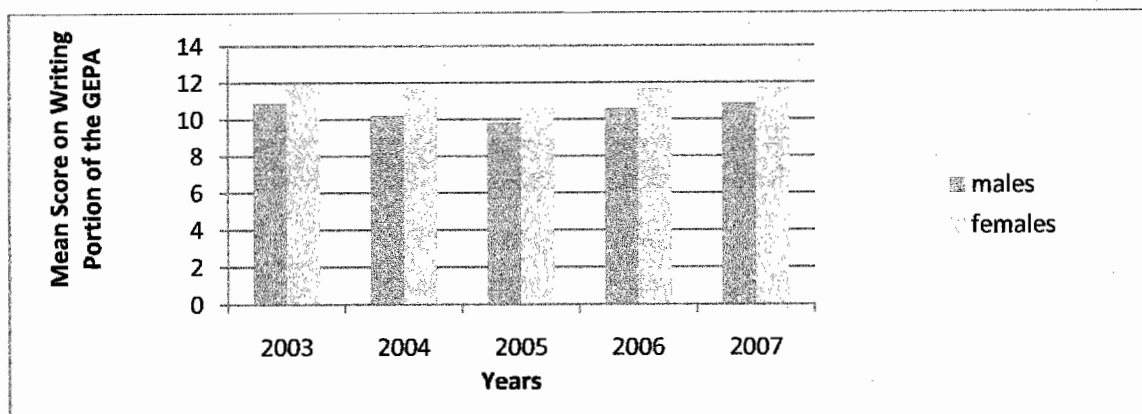


Figure 3. Mean scores for the writing section of the GEPA in the participant school. The mean difference between years for males and females was comparable with both groups showing a dip in test scores for the 2005 test administration.

Inferential Statistics

Analysis of male test scores within participant school. Using a series of t-tests for statistical significance (see Appendix E), the researcher analyzed the test scores of male students from 2003 –2007 to determine if there was a significant change in the academic achievement of males on the writing portion of the GEPA. The analysis showed that of the pairs of years compared, four demonstrated statistically significant changes in male test scores on the writing portion of the GEPA; all four pairs of years also had moderate or high effect sizes. The mean test scores for male students from 2003 ($\mu_1 = 10.88$) decreased by .67 points in 2004 ($\mu_2 = 10.22$), a statistically significant change ($p = .012$)

with a small effect size of .35. The mean test scores of male students decreased from 2003 ($\mu_1 = 10.88$) to 2005 ($\mu_2 = 9.82$) by 1.07 points, a statistically significant change ($p = .000$) with a moderate effect size of .55. The mean test scores of male students increased from 2005 ($\mu_1 = 9.82$) to 2006 ($\mu_2 = 10.60$) by .78, a statistically significant change ($p = .000$) with a moderate effect size of .50. The mean test scores of male students increased from 2005 ($\mu_1 = 9.815$) to 2007 ($\mu_2 = 10.851$) by 1.04 points, a statistically significant change ($p = .000$) with an important effect size of .67. These appear in Table 3.

Table 3

Statistical Analysis of Male Test Scores on the Writing Portion of the GEPA in Participant School, 2003-2007

Years of Comparison	Mean Scores, Males	Mean Difference in Scores	Significance of Difference	Effect Size
2003 – 2004	10.88,10.22	-.67	.012	.35
2003 – 2005	10.88, 9.82	-1.07	.000	.55
2005 – 2006	9.82, 10.60	.78	.000	.50
2005 – 2007	9.82, 10.86	1.04	.000	.67
2003-2007*	10.88,10.86	-.03	.911	N/A

*Comparison included to showcase any change in student achievement before and after the program implementation

Analysis of female test scores within participant school. The researcher analyzed the test scores of female students as well using a t-test for statistical significance (see Appendix E). The mean test scores of female students on the writing portion of the

GEPA decreased from 2003 ($\mu_1 = 11.96$) to 2005 ($\mu_2 = 10.59$) by 1.37 points, a statistically significant change ($p = .000$) with an important effect size of .78. The mean test scores of female students decreased from 2004 ($\mu_1 = 11.68$) to 2005 ($\mu_2 = 10.59$) by 1.10 points, a statistically significant change ($p = .000$) with a moderate effect size of .57. Female test scores increased from 2005 ($\mu_1 = 10.59$) to 2006 ($\mu_2 = 11.64$) by 1.06, a statistically significant change ($p = .000$) with a high effect size of .69. The female test scores increased from 2005 ($\mu_1 = 10.59$) to 2007 ($\mu_2 = 11.67$) by 1.09 points, a statistically significant difference ($p = .000$) with a high effect size of .70.

Table 4

Statistical Analysis of Female Test Scores on the Writing Portion of the GEPA in Participant School, 2003-2007

Years of Comparison	Mean Scores, Females	Mean Difference in Scores	Significance of Difference	Effect Size
2003 – 2005	11.96, 10.59	-1.37	.000	.78
2004 – 2005	11.68, 10.59	-1.10	.000	.57
2005 – 2006	10.59, 11.64	1.06	.000	.69
2005 – 2007	10.59, 11.67	1.09	.000	.70
2003 - 2007	11.96, 11.67	-.29	.709	N/A

Advanced proficient standings. The aforementioned data reflect the mean scores of male and female students in the participant school from 2003 to 2007. New Jersey's Statewide Testing System assesses each student's performance and rates his/her achievement as being in one of three categories: Partially Proficient, Proficient and

Advanced Proficient. The researcher analyzed the percentage of students in the participant school in the Advanced Proficient category of Language Arts by gender in each testing cycle beginning with the year before the implementation of a writing workshop instructional methodology, 2003, and ending with the most current test year, 2007. The results showed that the percentage of male students scoring Advanced Proficient dipped from 12.9% in 2003 to 3.5% in 2004 and remained relatively stable at 3.3% in 2005. The percentage jumped dramatically to 8% in 2006 and then 16% in 2007. Likewise, 26.2% of female students scored Advanced Proficient in 2003 and then this number dipped to 19.6% in 2004. In 2005 17.1% of females scored Advanced Proficient, mirroring the stable male scores. The percentage of Advanced Proficient females in 2006 was 22.1% and 25.9% attained Advanced Proficient standing in 2007. Figure 4 below displays this change graphically.

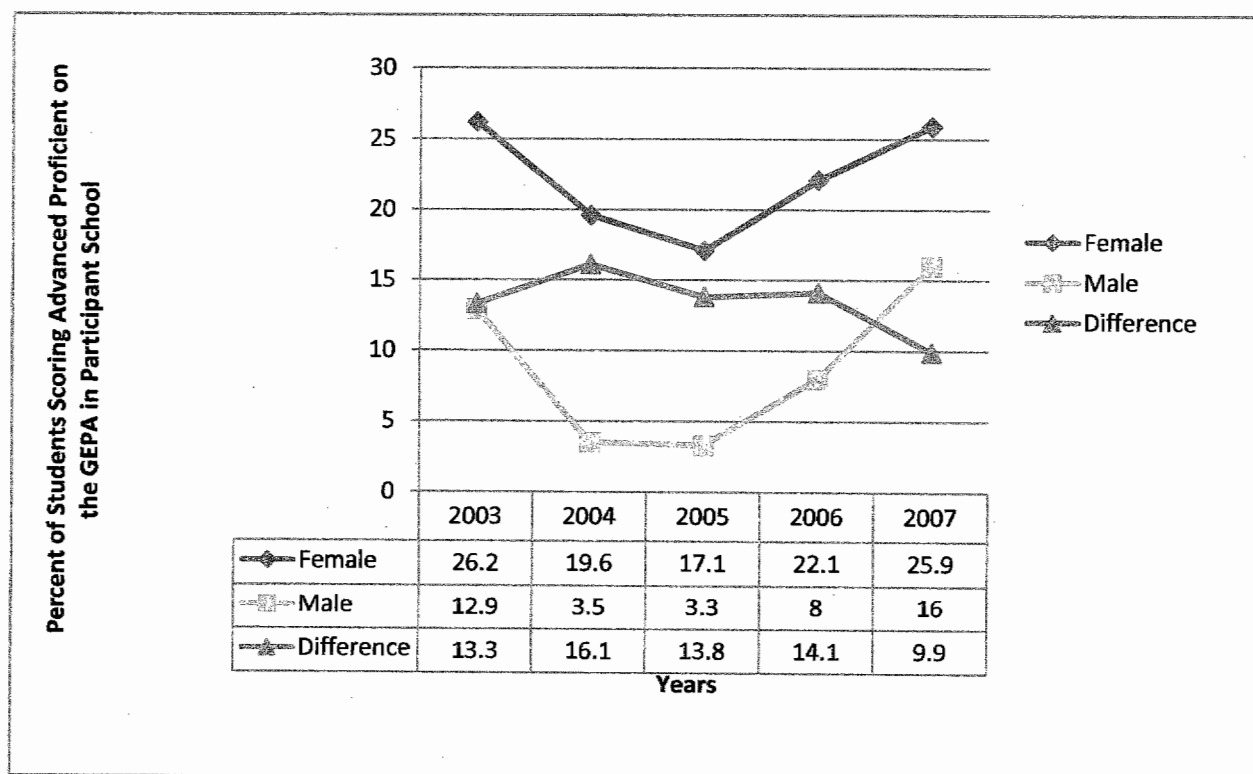


Figure 4.

The percentage of students by year and gender scoring Advanced Proficient on the Language Arts portion of the GEPA in the participant school. Both male and female student groups dramatically improved in the percentage of students scoring Advanced Proficient after the 2005 tests administration.

Analysis of DFG scores. The researcher analyzed the mean score of J districts on the language arts portion of the GEPA, which includes the writing section, from 2003 to 2007 in comparison to the test scores of the participant school. While the researcher found a statistically significant change in test scores for both male and female students during some years within the participant school, there was no similar change reflected in the mean scores of male and female students within the DFG of the participating district for the years that the state disaggregated scores by gender at the DFG level, 2005 through 2007.

Table 5

*Statistical Analysis of Test Scores on the Language Arts Portion of the GEPA in DFG J, 2005-2007**

Years of Comparison	Mean Difference in Scores	Significance of Difference	Effect Size
2005 - 2006	-1.60	.848	N/A
2006 - 2007	-1.40	.859	N/A
2005 - 2007	-3.00	.726	N/A

*Data unavailable by gender prior to the 2005 test administration.

Observations

The primary and secondary researchers conducted 12 observations of the teacher participants. Each observer conducted two observations of each teacher participant. The

primary researcher included these observations in this study to help with understanding and describing the implementation of a writing workshop instructional methodology in the language arts classes of one middle school. Patton (1990) supported the use of naturalistic observations as a method of data collection. Patton stated that, “The value of observational data in evaluation research is that evaluation users can come to understand program activities and impacts through detailed descriptive information about what has occurred in a program and how they people in the program have reacted to what has occurred” (p. 203).

The researcher and a consultant from a major university working with teacher participants in the school district to implement the writing workshop methodology mutually developed an observation rubric (see Appendix B). The purpose of developing a rubric was to focus the researcher during the observation on examining specific components of an effective writing workshop. The four categories within the rubric were: Teacher Directed Instruction (TDI), Student Activities/ Engagement (SAE), Classroom Management (CM), and Physical Environment (PE). Prior to engaging in research for this study, the primary and secondary researcher observed two teachers using the holistic rubric together. After analyzing the data, the researcher then determined the frequency of each rubric score through the use of a frequency table developed for the purpose of this study. The frequencies are displayed in Table 5.

Table 6

*Frequency Totals of Rubric Scores from Language Arts Teacher Participant**Observations by Two Observers*

<i>Rubric Category</i>	<i>Ineffective</i>	<i>Marginal</i>	<i>Effective</i>	<i>Exemplary</i>
TDI (Strategy Lessons)	1	5	4	2
SAI (Topic relevance, Choice, Peer editing)		4	6	2
CM (Achievement Goal Theory, One-on-one conferencing)		3	6	3
PE (Achievement Goal Theory)		10	2	
Totals	1	22	18	7

Teacher directed instruction. The primary and secondary researcher looked for several distinct components of an effective writing workshop instructional methodology when observing the teacher participants. Strategy lessons (TDI), in particular, were a critical element. All teacher participants began with teacher-directed instruction in the front of the room; six observations featured a focused strategy lesson with a substantial link to student needs and activities. One teacher participant never tied the teacher talk at the beginning of the class to any particular strategy, lesson or student focus. The five observations that received a “marginal” rubric score in the area of TDI consisted of a lesson in the beginning of the class that the teacher participant did not tie to any student work or goal. The strategy lesson lacked clarity and the teacher participant did not give the students time or direction to practice the skill.

Student activities/ engagement. The primary and secondary researcher found this area of the writing workshop instructional methodology to be strong: in 8 of the 12

observations, the researchers saw effective or exemplary implementation of this aspect. Students in these classrooms were familiar with the writing workshop structure, worked well with peers, and were applying the teaching points to some degree. Some teacher participants distributed peer-editing checklists and some teachers encouraged open dialogue between peers regarding writing. The students were self-directed and understood that writing workshop meant putting strategies to use, receiving feedback and engaging in the process of revising and editing. The primary and secondary researchers discovered that some classes were weak in this area. In one class the students did not write at all; in this class session the teacher spent the class instructing the students and engaging students in a question-answer session. In another class students worked on completing a work sheet rather than on a writing piece; the students were not engaged in a workshop methodology at all.

Classroom management. An extensive review of research and theory led the researcher to a Theoretical Framework (pp. 29-31) that structures the elements that should help explain that the management of a writing workshop classroom is a part of student achievement in writing. Nine of the 12 observations yielded the finding that teacher participants were successfully managing a classroom in a way that fosters student growth. Proponents of Achievement Goal Theory [AGT] suggest that a mastery orientation, defined as the desire to improve one's ability, master a skill and understand content (Meece, 2003), is the preferred orientation for a student to have in order to foster long-term growth. A performance orientation is defined as the desire to achieve a high level of ability relative to others or gain recognition for ability (Meece, 2003). Some strong classes in the area of classroom management featured teacher participants who

interacted in a warm manner with the students, praised positive peer editing experiences, and modeled student work. One part of fostering an environment that breeds a mastery orientation among students is the one-on-one conference. Observations that received a strong score in classroom management contained teacher participant conferences that were individualized to specific student needs. Classroom activities viewed in the observations that were marginal in this area emphasized whole group instruction for a large portion of the time and featured teacher feedback that consisted of “You’re right,” or “I didn’t have this problem with the other class.”

Physical environment. A classroom’s physical environment sends messages to the students and can foster either a mastery or performance orientation. Overall, the primary and secondary researcher found that the classroom environments did not signal effective implementation of a writing workshop instructional methodology. In several classrooms no student work was on display and the environment lacked any evidence of class goals in writing or recent strategies. In fact, the primary and secondary researcher found that many classrooms lacked any demonstration of the writing process. Research suggests that students should have access to models of work in different genres, dictionaries, thesaurus, and other writing tools (e.g. computers, paper, highlighters). These work stations were not clearly identified or were absent. Two observations of classes facilitated by teacher participants found charts posted with relevant information, a meeting space for students, and demonstration of student work on one bulletin board.

Interviews

The teacher participant interviews were a planned data collection strategy to obtain qualitative data. Each interview question was designed around the six research

questions initially proposed by the researcher. The researcher used several probes throughout the interview process. The data obtained from the interviews were converted to patterns and themes that collaborated with rubric data collected from classroom observations. The teacher participant interviews helped the researcher understand the writing workshop instructional methodology and its influence on male student achievement. The teacher participant interviews consisted of six open-ended questions.

Responses of the teacher participant interviews were encoded for patterns and themes as they related to the guiding research questions (Patton, 1990). Questions prepared for the interviews appear in Appendix C. The researcher first developed a coding system which consisted of the three achievement indicators relevant to the research questions, as well as an abbreviated code. The abbreviations and their associated meanings are: (a) SM – Student Motivation, (b) SE – Student Engagement, and (c) CU – Content Understanding. Using this list of codes, the researcher recorded the abbreviations next to each teacher response which exemplified the specific topic. After analyzing and coding the data, the researcher then determined the frequency of each response through the use of a frequency table which was developed for the purpose of this study. The frequencies are shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Frequency Totals of Achievement Indicators Referred to by Teacher Participants During the Open-Ended Interview Process

<i>Achievement Indicators</i>	<i>Frequency Totals</i>
SM	16
SE	13
CU	17

SM – Student Motivation; SE – Student Engagement; CU – Content Understanding

Student motivation (SM). An analysis of the transcription of the teacher participant interviews revealed seven references to Achievement Goal Theory (AGT) and the positive impact of creating a classroom environment where mastery orientation is valued and promoted. Teacher participants stated that the writing workshop instructional methodology promoted this orientation and, therefore, lead to greater student success and increased motivation. One teacher stated, “In workshop it is all within yourself; it’s about your own improvement. I’m not judging two kids against each other. I’m judging them against their own work. Everybody can be successful then.” Another teacher echoed this thought, “... But the one thing is that kids have to feel that it is a possibility. That they are able to do it. That it is in them.”

Peer editing to help students improve writing skills was an important component of the writing workshop instructional methodology. However, throughout interviews the researcher found three positive references to peer editing, three negative references, and three references to the power of peer sharing as opposed to peer editing. One teacher

mentioned, "The quality comes out when we spend some time examining each other's or our own [writing] in more depth." When asked directly about peer editing as a motivational strategy, one teacher replied, "Yes, they like that. I do see a lot of kids that really use it." On the other hand, there were references to students being distracted when working with peers. One teacher stated, "I am surprised that 12 or 13 year olds really know enough about the structure... But, to really tell people what to do? I mean, it has taken me a long time to figure that out myself." In terms of male students in the classroom, one teacher mentioned they are not motivated by the peer editing process. "Boys tend not to be as thorough in the [peer editing] process; they are not meticulous about it. They just want to hand it in." Three teacher participants stated that peer sharing was a positive part of the classroom environment. "They're actually very proud when they're done."

Student engagement (SE). A review of research and theory revealed that choice is a factor in student engagement (SE). The statements made by teacher participants in the interviews supported this theory. The coding process revealed six references to choice as a positive component to the writing workshop instructional methodology and a major key to student engagement (SE). Several responses linked choice to student enthusiasm. "It is important to have choices where they select from two or three different things. It generates enthusiasm," and "If choice is involved, that allows for enthusiasm." One teacher participant shared examples of how a system of choice works in her classroom. "When we were doing realistic fiction, they could write anything that they wanted... it should be a problem that you have some kind of experience with, otherwise it doesn't come out true. It makes them more comfortable." Another participant stated, "We did a

critical analysis of lyrics so they took a song that they liked and broke it down. They like that because it was their choice. You have to give them a choice of what to do.” The teacher participants mentioned that “kids are enjoying that freedom [in writing]” and attributed the existence of choice in their classroom to the writing workshop instructional methodology. “... Writer’s Workshop kind of lends itself to encouraging writing because as soon as they can write about whatever it is, they can take off with it.” One teacher participant stated, “giving them [males] choice is essential. Many males are not readers, so they are not writers. You have to give a choice if you are going to hook them [male students].”

As referenced in the Theoretical Framework, topic relevance is another large contributor to student engagement (SE). Topic relevance is closely related to choice and becomes a large issue when teachers assign whole-class writing tasks. During the interviews, teacher participants referenced topic relevance seven times. “I guess it is really the topic that motivates kids to write. Lots of times they’re very charged up on a certain topic and other topics don’t interest them so much.” According to several teacher participants, topic relevance was a key component to giving students the confidence that they have something to say. “Kids are motivated when they have something to say. They have to have something to say.” One teacher participant referred to keeping gender in mind when assigning topics to read or write about. “Well, interests are very different between the genders. When we did the Reading Workshop all year, I kind of kept the boys together and the girls together. Then when we did the mystery genre, I mixed them up. A mystery is a mystery; you really don’t have to worry about male or female interest there.” Another teacher participant echoed that thought, “The boys are enthusiastic

depending on what the topic is. They don't like to verbalize emotions, so you have to keep that in mind."

Content understanding (CU). The teacher participants referred to strategy lessons eleven times as a positive part of a writing workshop instructional methodology, making strategy lessons the most mentioned positive component of the writing workshop instructional methodology. Several teachers mentioned that learning about strategy lessons and implementing them into class forced them to "crystallize" and "clarify" their goals. "Let's get it down, button it up and do a 5-minute strategy lesson. This is what I am teaching. This is how you do it... It forced me to do a whole unit like that and it came out pretty well." The same teacher participant continued on to state, "... it really forced me to go back and say 'Ok, what is the skill and what is the strategy that leads to it?'" Teacher participants referred to one positive aspect to strategy lessons repeatedly: providing models of work. "I think that pointing out to kids what good writers do is a great strategy. Modeling it. Showing it in model pieces. I think that is what it is all about." Another teacher participant referenced the power of sharing a model of student work, "When I show them a student example, they learn a lot.... All of a sudden, for some reason, it makes so much more of an impact."

A common thread in the interview responses was the effectiveness of strategy lessons in breaking down learning into smaller, more accessible, chunks of information. "I think since the strategies are outlined and they work on the strategy, it seems that everyone can meet success... If you keep it small and keep it strategy based and say this is what I'm looking for in each piece, this is what you are going to be held accountable for, they respond well." Another teacher participant's response supported this view point,

“As long as the learning is broken down and they don’t feel overwhelmed by it, then they do okay.” One teacher mentioned that strategy lessons do not always apply to all students in a class and differentiating the lessons can be challenging.

All six teacher participants mentioned the positive impact of one-on-one conferencing in terms of content understanding. “I like to sit with them and work with them on one paragraph. That is really an ideal situation, so they can see that process. Have them attempt to re-work it with me.” “I have an aide in the class, so between the two of us, each kid gets one-on-one at some point during the period and I think it makes a huge difference.” Although every teacher believed in the power of this type of instruction, three teacher participants stated that fitting this type of conferencing into a 42-minute class period was a challenge. “I conference with students who need it and I also feel that I’m big with the peer editing... I’ll walk around the room and facilitate discussion and I’ll always try to get at least one kid. The road to hell is paved with good intentions when you try to conference with every kid; it’s just physically impossible to do in the kind of structure that we have.” Despite the difficulties, each teacher participant praised the merits of one-on-one conferencing as a plus to the writing workshop instructional methodology and the acquisition of content by students. “You might have 30-days of real instruction with one kid, rather than 180 days of shallow education with them all.”

Other Findings

The researcher found two themes from the teacher participant interviews that did not directly relate to the achievement indicators developed a priori. The first theme centered on general weaknesses of the writing workshop instructional methodology as it

is currently implemented in the participant middle school. Two teacher participants spoke of a lack of structure in the program. This absence of structure was hampering the students' growth as writers. "I think that some children may need a really structured kind of thing and may get a little lost... it is tough for the weaker writers to work in that kind of setting." Similarly, another teacher participant said, "I think the special education students need a little more structure and a little more walking to it than the workshop gives." The other weakness that three teacher participants referred to was a lack of time. "42 minutes to try to get in reading and writing and all the goals for different students and get them ready for the GEPA? It's almost impossible. The way that writing workshop is set up, you are supposed to have this chunk of time. But we don't. It is very frustrating."

The second theme that the researcher discovered centered professional development. Every teacher participant stressed the benefit of the district training in terms of learning more strategies as an instructor. "You have a wealth of information to draw from." "I have taken many of the ideas and absorbed them mixed with other things that I have done." Three teacher participants mentioned the lack of consistency and pre-planning for the training. "I feel that it has been all over the place," commented one teacher. Another teacher stated, "I know that we are trying to do the best with what we can, but to have this one day, and then have nothing, and then be bombarded again – it's difficult." Reinforcing both previous statements, one teacher remarked, "To come in and give me piecemeal information? Then, tell me to bring back evidence in three months? What do you want me to do with that?" Table 7 contains a review of pertinent quotes obtained by the researcher during teacher interviews.

Summary of Chapter IV and Description of Chapter IV Contents

Chapter IV presented the data and data analyses. Responses to the interview questions were transcribed and analyzed by the researcher looking for patterns and themes from the responses. These responses were coded and evaluated by a second party trained in the coding system. Data from the observations were analyzed by the researcher and a second, trained party using a holistic rubric. Student data (e.g. test results) from five years of GEPA tests by eighth grade students was analyzed to determine if there is any change in the students' writing scores during the years of the writing workshop program.

Chapter V provides a summary of the findings presented in Chapter IV, discussion and conclusions such as relating results of this study to the literature review and previous research findings. Chapter V also includes recommendations for practice, policy, and further research.

Table 8

Sample of Quotations from Teacher Participant Interviews by Achievement Indicator

Indicator	Quote
SM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Some kids are locked up in terms of writing, but I don’t see it as much. I think that kids are pretty open to writing. Because if you are giving them some choice – if they are writing a persuasive piece, they usually have an opinion on something. If choice is involved, that allows for enthusiasm.” • “I don’t really know what goes on in other classrooms, but I think they can really thrive in this class. Because, it’s all within yourself. It’s about your own improvement. I’m not judging two kids against each other. I’m judging them against their own work. Everybody can be successful then.” • “I feel strongly that there are so many ways to get there. One thing is that the kids have to feel that it is a possibility. That they are able to do it. That it is in them.”
SE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Kids are motivated to write when it is a topic that they feel strongly about. That’s with anything. When they find a picture they really like, they take off. Then they are interested in it. If they have a personal interest in it, it’s definitely going to be much more powerful for them.” • “Having a ton of ideas to write about is what the Writing Workshop lends itself to: always writing down your ideas. The boys are definitely less apt to put it in their writer’s notebook. You know, it’s just ‘Oh, it’s an idea. It’ll stay in my head. I don’t need to write it down.’”
CU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I think Teachers’ College forced me to go back and do that a little bit more. To iron it out and say, ‘How am I going to teach this skill’ rather than just have a discussion with the class.” • “I think since the strategies are outlined and they work on the strategy, it seems that everyone can meet success. So, I find that small pieces helps the kids to learn.” • “You have the opportunity to get to more kids. When I work one-on-one or in small groups, they are paying attention much more. There are less kids for them to hide behind.”

SM – Student Motivation; SE – Student Engagement; CU – Content Understanding

Chapter 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Although the public has heard for years about the troubling achievement gaps between the races, another gap has existed and been widely ignored: the gap between males and females in the area of language arts. A comparison of achievement gaps shows that the difference between male and female writing scores “is comparable to that between Whites and racial/ethnic groups that have suffered systematic social and economic discrimination in this country” (Newkirk, 2002, p. 295). Stunning statements such as this one, coupled with the demands of NCLB and meeting AYP, have compelled educators to seek solutions to close the gender achievement gap.

Currently, a large percentage of the male population in school does not engage in writing, perhaps because of the out-dated teaching practices and lack of successful implementations of reforms in this area of instruction. In the traditional model of writing instruction, teachers teach writing as an isolated set of skills with an accompanying step-by-step process. Stretch (1994) noted that the largest amount of student resistance in the language arts stemmed from writing due to the frustration that students experienced. Students struggled with responding to prompts and getting words down on paper.

The writing workshop instructional methodology emerged during the 1980’s and focused on the writing environment and culture of writing instruction (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1986; Graves, 1983). Researchers determined that to help students become

successful writers, the following elements of instruction must be in place: The freedom to write about individual interests, the ability to participate in the writing process, and the structure to receive regular, direct instruction based on individual writing needs. The writer's workshop instructional methodology grew from these primary tenets. Many of the primary features of a writing workshop instructional methodology stem from the dual goals of student engagement and motivation. Strategy lessons, peer editing, and one-on-one conferencing are key aspects of this methodology that have been linked to boosting student engagement, motivation and content understanding.

The participant school began the formal implementation of the writing workshop instructional methodology in the 2003-2004 school year. In partnership with professionals from a leading university, the district leaders had trained teacher participants and adopted this method of instruction in the classrooms. Many goals were attached to this implementation and one of the primary goals was to close the achievement gap between male and female students in the area of writing. District and school leaders anticipated that all students in the district, specifically male students, would demonstrate academic improvement after learning via a writing workshop instructional methodology in their regular language arts program. Implementation of a writing workshop project is one approach to incorporating differentiated teaching strategies in an effort to raise male student achievement in language arts.

The researcher's purpose for this research was to determine the influence of a writing workshop on male student achievement in language arts in one middle school in suburban northern New Jersey. Study results should generate interest in the development

and use of more inclusive teaching practices. For the purpose of this study, student achievement was measured qualitatively and quantitatively through observations, interviews and an analysis of GEPA scores in the area of writing. The three achievement indicators that focused the study were: (a) Student Motivation (SM), (b) Student Engagement (SE), and (c) Content Understanding (CU).

The public education system in America should meet the needs of all school-aged students engaged in its programs. Under normative conditions, males and females should attain equal or nearly equal academic success in subject areas. Data show that a significant number of male students in the American education system are deemed “under literate” by national standards. Implementation of a writing workshop instructional methodology is one approach to incorporating differentiated teaching strategies in an effort to raise male student achievement in language arts. The researcher’s purpose for this research was to determine the influence of a writing workshop on male student achievement in language arts in one middle school in suburban northern New Jersey. The researcher developed the following questions to guide the study.

1. How do classroom instructors employ writing instructional methods that are non-traditional for language arts classes, such as regular sharing of writing, self-determination of writing topic and genre, and conferencing?
2. How do non-traditional instructional methods affect students’ writing output (quality and quantity)?
3. How does the implementation of writing workshop in language arts classes affect male students?

This study had several limitations based upon the design and methodology. The

use of qualitative interviews of teacher participants as a method of research relied on interviewee honesty and insight. Additionally, the researcher and second observer each observed one class led by a teacher participant; these class periods may have been weak or strong days of instruction for a variety of reasons resulting in an inaccurate portrait of the writing workshop instructional methodology in action. The researcher explored the implementation of the writing workshop instructional methodology in one language arts department in one middle school. The resultant findings may not be transferable to other schools or content areas. Finally, the use of the GEPA test scores as the sole measurement tool of male writing achievement provides only one window into male writing achievement. Perhaps the researcher would have discovered different results had a performance-based assessment or other tool been used as a measurement tool.

Summary of Findings

The emphasis of this study focused upon the original research questions stated in the study. The researcher utilized teacher participant responses from the interviews, findings during classroom observations and analysis of GEPA scores to answer these guiding questions. The following is a list of the research questions and summarized results from all data sources.

Research question I. The six teacher participants in this study revealed in their interview responses that all employed non-traditional methods of writing instruction in the classroom. However, the extent to which these non-traditional instructional methods were integrated into the daily class activities varied. Every teacher participant referred to strategy lessons throughout the interview; some teachers mentioned this non-traditional technique multiple times. Additionally, all six teacher participants stated that they

employed one-on-one conferencing with their students regularly and peer-editing on occasion, although two teachers mentioned they found peer-editing to be an ineffective instructional method. Again, all six teacher participants referred to giving students choice in topic and genre selection on occasions throughout the school year. Each teacher participant emphasized at some point in the interview that topic and genre choice promote student interest, effort and enthusiasm. While all six teacher participants revealed a sincere attempt to implement the writing workshop instructional strategies, all also stressed that they would “pick and choose” the strategies they felt most comfortable with and sensed to be the most effective in terms of fostering student achievement. Four teachers indicated they were not wholly satisfied with their past efforts to implement the writing workshop instructional methodology. They attributed this to a lack of class time, curricular pressures and inconsistent professional development.

The classroom observations illuminated many of the statements made by the teacher participants during the interviews. While the researcher and the second observer found many non-traditional methods of instruction taking place in classrooms, the degree to which the writing workshop instructional methodology appeared to be integrated into regular classroom activities varied. Although all six teacher participants mentioned strategy instruction in the interviews, the researcher and second observer only found effective or exemplary demonstration of this instructional method in 6 of 12 observations. Eight of the 12 observations contained the effective or exemplary use of choice and/or peer editing as an instructional methodology and 9 of the 12 observations showed the effective or exemplary employment of one-on-one conferencing as an instructional methodology. The greatest area of weakness was in the physical environment, an area

where teachers have the opportunity to promote Achievement Goal Theory (AGT) through the demonstration of individual student improvement and goal setting. Only two of the observations showed effective use of the physical environment as an aspect of the writing workshop instructional methodology. It became obvious through the observations that there was disconnect between the teachers understanding and endorsement of the writing workshop instructional methodology during the interviews, and actual implementation in the classrooms. This disconnect might be a function of the lack of consistent professional development or the time constraints that several teachers referred to during the interviews.

Research question II. In order to increase levels of student writing achievement, classroom teachers must emphasize a writing workshop instructional methodology featuring topic and genre choice, peer editing, strategy instruction and one-on-one conferencing. Student achievement in this study was measured by three critical factors (student motivation, student engagement and content understanding) as suggested by pertinent literature and outlined in the Theoretical Framework. According to the National Council of Teachers of English (2006), effective teachers stimulate students to enjoy writing through the implementation of the aforementioned techniques.

Results from the six participant interviews reinforced the statement released by the NCTE in 2006. Interview findings were organized in a frequency table categorized by the three factors influencing student achievement (see Table 7). The participants made reference to the relationship between increased student motivation and the implementation of the writing workshop instructional methodology on 16 occasions; increased student engagement and the implementation of the writing workshop

instructional methodology on 13 occasions; and increased content understanding and the implementation of the writing workshop instructional methodology on 17 occasions.

This finding clearly supports the use of writing workshop instructional methodology as a means to foster higher individual student achievement in the area of writing. In addition, the findings support the notion that students who routinely fill out grammar worksheets and respond to teacher generated topics through a writing template do not develop as writers as much as those students who are part of a learning environment that supports active student participation, inquiry and self-direction via a wide range of non-traditional instructional methods (Guthrie & Davis, 2003).

The findings from the 12 classroom observations also reinforced the evidence from the review of literature that a writing workshop instructional methodology promotes student achievement. Classroom observations showed that those students who were actively engaged in a class featuring many elements of a writing workshop were interested, motivated and confident about their writing. In these classrooms, most students remained on task without intense teacher monitoring or supervision. The researcher and the second observer found students discussing writing with peers, revising and editing, and writing with interest. There were greater levels of participation and self-determination in the classrooms with a strong writing workshop program taking place. The results of the classroom observation reinforce a positive relationship between the utilization of a writing workshop instructional methodology and increased student motivation and engagement. Data gathered during the classroom observations made reference to this relationship a total of 25 times (SM – 17; SE – 8).

Research question III. District leaders anticipated that participation in a classroom featuring a writing workshop instructional methodology would improve the academic performance of male students, and they hoped this assumption would be supported by statistical evidence that the participant group would improve performance on the writing portion of the GEPA over time. To address the third research question, the researcher compared the writing achievement of male students to that of: (a) female students from the years 2003-2007 in the participant school, (b) male students from the years 2003-2007 in the participant school, and (c) DFG norms.

The first comparison provided two main findings. First, male students scored significantly lower than did female students on the writing section of the GEPA before the implementation of the writing workshop instructional methodology. Second, although male students scored significantly lower than did females on the writing portion of the GEPA in 2007, the final year of this study, the effect size of the difference was less than in 2003. Therefore, the impact of gender on test scores had decreased from 2003 to 2007, an educationally important finding.

The findings from the second comparison yielded two main findings. First, the test scores of male students dipped in the first 2 years of the program implementation; this decrease in scores is often seen in the first years of a new program and is commonly referred to as an “implementation dip.” However, from 2005 onward the test scores of male students improved significantly and with an important effect size. Second, the percentage of male students receiving Advanced Proficient marks on the writing portion of the GEPA increased markedly from 12.9% in 2003 to 16% in 2007; this rise to 16%

came after a low of only 3.3% in 2005. Therefore, the writing workshop instructional methodology did improve male student performance over time.

The findings of the third comparison yielded one main finding. Overall, the change in test score from year to year for male students, female students and the general education total for DFG “J” districts did not change significantly at any point in time. This finding strongly suggests that the change in test scores in the participant school was in response to the implementation of the writing workshop instructional methodology rather than with a test administration, content or scoring change.

The null hypothesis was not accepted based on the data analysis and findings for research question 3. The hypothesis stated that there would be no change in male student achievement in writing before and after the implementation of the writing workshop instructional methodology. Clearly, the rise in male test scores and the percentage of males scoring Advanced Proficient demonstrate that there was a change in male student achievement in writing. Furthermore, interview and observation data supported this finding through the large number of interview references to an increase in male student motivation and student engagement, and observations of such engagement in lessons.

Discussions and Conclusion

The researcher began this study with the intent of determining the influence of implementing a writing workshop instructional methodology on male student achievement in language arts in one middle school in suburban northern New Jersey. Intentionally, the researcher gathered data from a triangulated group of sources: teacher participant interviews, classroom observations, and GEPA test scores. The researcher used the rich data to answer the three guiding research questions.

All students from the 2003-2004 school year onward participated in a writing workshop class environment. The researcher compared the writing performance of male students over a 5-year period to one another and their female counterparts. Findings from these comparisons added to the current body of research indicated an educationally important improvement in performance over time. Gains were modest so the researcher cautions leaders in making curriculum decisions based only on the appearance of small gains. The female students were also beneficiaries of the writing workshop instructional methodology and that district leaders desired and expected gains in their performance as well. The fact that the test scores of female students increased during the time of this implementation is another testimony to the positive aspects of implementing a writing workshop program. In light of the female test score gains, the fact that the male students shrunk the gap slightly and improved their own standing as Advanced Proficient writers on the GEPA are more notable (see Figure 3). While these findings are from one school in one district, the observable trends provide evidence of positive academic achievement that district leaders should explore.

Test scores are only one way of evaluating the results of a program; there are many other long-term benefits to educational initiatives, such as an increase in student confidence levels, improved motivation and engagement, and enthusiasm for the content area. The data from teacher participant interviews and classroom observations indicated that these other benefits were present. Singh, Granville, and Dika (2002) noted that students' academic engagement and perceptions and attitudes are open to change via education interventions. The researcher found this theory true since teacher participants stated that the attitude and enthusiasm of male students for writing improved over time.

In Chapter IV, the researcher reported the scores that classroom observations received in four specific areas on the holistic observation rubric. It is clear from these scores that there are several areas of weakness in the implementation of writing workshop in the participant school. Teacher Directed Instruction and Physical Environment were two areas that received particularly low scores. Therefore, the small gains made by male students in the area of writing achievement might be improved upon as teachers become more proficient in the facilitation of a workshop program. Furthermore, two teacher participants specifically noted the need for more frequent and planned professional development opportunities. Any new program must be evaluated periodically to ensure that it is being implemented appropriately; district leaders need to consider strongly the possibility that greater gains would be made if the program was implemented more evenly and effectively in the classrooms. The use of the rubric developed by the researcher and a consultant to the district would ensure fidelity in the implementation of the instructional practice.

Recommendations for Practice, Policy and Future Research

The following recommendations are based on findings of this research.

Professional colleagues within the field should consider the following actions concerning the implementation of a writing workshop instructional methodology in middle school language arts programs. Researchers within the field should consider the following recommendations for future study to improve student achievement in writing.

Program evaluation. Program evaluation and implementation fidelity were two critical elements of the present study. The researcher developed a rubric with the assistance of a staff developer from a major university working with the participant school district on

writing workshop professional development in an effort to fully assess the implementation of this instructional methodology in the classroom. Atwell (1987), Calkins (1986) and Graves (1983) determined that to help students become successful writers, the following elements of instruction must be in place: The freedom to write about individual interests, the ability to participate in the writing process, and the structure to receive regular, direct instruction based on individual writing needs. The writer's workshop instructional methodology grew from these tenets. This type of instruction is best evaluated through observations. District leaders should conduct frequent classroom walk-throughs for the purpose of insuring implementation fidelity. Walk-throughs provide opportunities to observe and evaluate other components outlined in the Theoretical Framework for the present study.

The researcher interviewed the practicing teachers to ascertain their assessment of the writing workshop instructional methodology in terms of meeting its goals. The researcher found the teachers did not have a common vision of a goal, indicating the need for district leaders and staff developers to better articulate the goal of implementing this new program. Huang (2001) stated, "By creating an evaluation plan that focuses on clear goals, program managers set a course for ongoing improvement in which goals and plans are continually monitored and improved over time" (p. 57). The evaluation plan should be well-devised as "[e]valuation starts at the beginning of a program – even during the program planning (Kremper & Achilles, 1979, p. 20). This evaluation plan should include initiation evaluation, program operations and program outcomes (Kremper & Achilles, 1979).

Lengthen class time. A crucial element of implementing a writing workshop instructional methodology is time for teachers to conference regularly with students, conduct mini-lessons on specific strategy skills and foster an environment where peer conferencing occurs. All of these elements require more time than do traditional teaching methods. Currently, the class time in the participant school is 42 minutes. Several teachers noted that this time is insufficient for working closely with 24 – 28 students in a class period. The researcher strongly recommends lengthening the class period to accommodate the needs of the writing workshop program.

Longitudinal cohort analyses. In the present study, the researcher examined male student achievement in writing. The researcher interviewed teachers, observed classrooms and analyzed GEPA scores from 2003, the year before the implementation of a writing workshop instructional methodology, through 2007. Comparison of male and female test scores and of male scores over time showed modest improvement in writing among the male students. However, the results reflect the infancy of the program and the level of teacher ability around implementing a writing workshop. The practice of writing workshop program evaluation should be on-going longitudinal analyses of the performance of cohorts of children. The researcher analyzed a “snapshot” of a new group of eighth grade students each year which may not have provided sufficient information for district leaders to evaluate the program. It would be beneficial to analyze if a group of students exposed to writing workshop improve standardized test scores over time.

District leaders should continue to keep anecdotal and statistical data, on the writing performance of new and current students to determine if there are any lasting

effects of participation over multiple years. District leaders may look at the study results with skepticism because the male student writing achievement gains were not robust, but the researcher suggests that leaders invest more time in the program and in professional development so that the program is implemented correctly and fully.

Small class size. Implementing a new approach to writing instruction is one obvious way of improving male writing achievement. However, other factors may contribute to the success of male students such as increased individual attention. The Tennessee STAR experiment provided strong evidence that consecutive years of participation in small classes in the primary grades is a relevant factor to improve the academic achievement of students (Achilles & Finn, 2001). Just as the negative effects of poor writing achievement in the middle-school years linger throughout life, the positive effects of small class sizes lasted into high school and beyond regardless of socioeconomic status (Finn, 2006; Finn, Fox, McClellan, Achilles, & Boyd-Zaharias, 2006; Finn, Gerber, & Boyd-Zaharias, 2005; Krueger & Whitmore, 2001).

Small class sizes enable teachers to modify instruction to meet individual student needs and conference effectively with students. One troubling finding in relation to student achievement is that the students who feel less competent upon entering middle school actually lose motivation as they enter the middle-school world (Guthrie & Davis, 2003). One reason for this loss is the nature of student engagement. "Active participation in the early grades, accompanied by some degree of academic success, serves to perpetuate the continued participation throughout the school years. Under optimal conditions, engagement becomes the individual's habitual form of behavior" (Finn, 1993, p. 2). Males who have been struggling with writing upon entering school,

as demonstrated by anecdotal information and by test scores may become habitually disengaged in language arts as one natural fallout of their preferences being ignored. Smaller class sizes engender greater student engagement.

The researcher strongly recommends that district leaders consider implementing small classes for the language arts class period. The benefits of small classes may eliminate the need for remedial programs currently in place, such as Read 180 and basic skills instruction. By addressing the needs of male students in the regular class period, the district may avoid costly “quick fix” programs in the high school.

Future Research.

In the present study, the researcher examined the test results of all eighth grade students in one school over a 5-year period. However, there was no effort to follow a cohort through the middle school writing workshop program to assess its impact via student interviews and a longitudinal data analysis. To the extent possible, future researchers should follow a cohort of students beginning in late-elementary school through middle school to assess their perceptions of the program and academic progress in the area of writing.

In the present study, the researcher analyzed data collected from one school in one school district. The population of the school was relatively homogeneous. Future studies should incorporate more schools and/or districts, thereby increasing and diversifying the sample. The demographic make-ups of the schools should be considered to insure ample representation of minority and economically disadvantaged students. Additionally, studying schools from a different DFG would provide a more diverse sample.

Future studies might include more classroom observations and teacher interviews linked to the observations. In the present study, the researcher and trained observer each observed each teacher participant one time. The teacher participant interviews were conducted at a separate time and were not connected to the classroom observation. The researcher recommends that future researchers increase the number of classroom observations to obtain a thorough view of the writing workshop program in action. Linking the teacher interviews to the observation by conducting the interview immediately following the observation may be difficult, but this effort should provide getting immediate, genuine feedback.

Future research should address male student achievement through the use of a battery of assessment tools that are criterion-referenced, aligned to the curricula taught, and have high validity and reliability estimates. These instruments might include performance-based assessment tools that feature authentic tasks and the opportunity to showcase individual writing growth. Using a writing portfolio maintained over the course of a student's middle school career as an assessment instrument would be a valuable tool to show individual progress that a standardized testing instrument cannot demonstrate.

Although research is inconclusive as to the effectiveness of professional development in improving student achievement, Achilles (2003) found that small positive gains are associated with well-planned, small-group and ongoing professional development programs. The present researcher found that teacher participants sought a thoughtful professional development program that featured one-on-one coaching, weekly reflection and planning periods, and working with a trainer in the classroom. Future

research might include an evaluation of training programs to assess if these features do result in higher outcomes at the end of a program implementation.

The present investigation has produced some additional questions to be addressed by future research:

1. What optimal amount of time spent in a writing workshop setting each day produces the greatest academic gains? Students in the participant school received 42 minutes of instruction daily, divided between reading and writing workshop. How might more time have led to greater academic gains?
2. How important is teacher continuity? All students were taught by three different teachers over the 3-year period they attended the participant school. How might having teachers loop with cohorts of students produce greater academic gains?
3. What is the optimum class size for a writing workshop program? Most students in the present study attended language arts classes between 20 – 28 students. How might smaller class sizes have led to greater academic gains?
4. The average score on the language arts portion of the GEPA increases as one progresses through DFG classifications. How might the implementation of writing workshop impact the test scores of students in different DFGs?
5. What is the optimum gender make-up for a language arts class in the middle school? Students in the present study attended heterogeneous language arts classes. How might the implementation of single-sex classes influence writing achievement among male students?

Summary

The existence of an achievement gap between male and female students is an undeniable fact in the participant school, the nation and around the world. According to Rothstein (2004),

“[p]olicy makers almost universally conclude that these existing and persistent achievement gaps must be the results of wrongly designed school policies – either expectations that are too low, teachers who are insufficiently qualified, curricula that are badly designed, classes that are too large, school climates that are too undisciplined, leadership that is too unfocused or a combination of these” (p. 22).

Educators have a moral mandate to meet the needs of all students, including males, as well as a mandate from the federal government via NCLB to meet Annual Yearly Progress each year in terms of male and female student achievement. Education leaders must develop innovative ways to reach all students but leaders cannot stop at the idea phase. Implementation and assessment of new programs are essential to provide data for decisions.

The writing workshop instructional method is a start at addressing the needs of male students. Through the construction of a class environment that stresses individual choice, one-on-one conferencing and strategy instruction, educators can begin to reduce the existing achievement gaps between males and females so all students will achieve to their best potential. The researcher hopes that educators will not stop in their quest to meet the needs of all students through innovative programs, great teaching and a school culture that appreciates the unique qualities of all learners.

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Appendix A
Required Forms

Date

Superintendent of Schools Name

Address

Dear (Superintendent's Name):

As indicated in our telephone conversation, I am a doctoral candidate at Seton Hall University working on the dissertation portion of my degree program. The topic of my study involves an investigation of the relationship between the writing workshop instructional methodology and male student achievement in writing. This area is one in which I have been interested since I began my career as a middle school social studies and writing teacher in (District Name) in 1999. At this time I would like to request your permission to conduct this research in your district. Your cooperation in this matter will be deeply appreciated.

The nature of this portion of my study will consist of both quantitative and qualitative research. The methods of data collection will include individual open-ended interviews with staff members. In addition, I will be conducting direct observations of six language arts classes within the middle school. Finally, I will be analyzing the GEPA scores from 2003 through 2007. Please be assured that no individual, school, or district will be identified in this study. All information acquired through this research will be treated in a very confidential manner in order to guarantee anonymity. Each of the participants maintains the right to withdraw from this study at any time.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to confer with me at your convenience.

Thank you very much in for your cooperation in this matter,
Sincerely,

Name

Unit Administrator

Home #

cc: Advisor Name

Date

Principal Name
Address

Dear (Principal's Name):

I am a doctoral candidate at Seton Hall University working on the dissertation portion of my degree program.

The topic of my study involves an investigation of the relationship between the implementation of a writing workshop instructional methodology and male achievement in writing at the middle school level. I have been interested in this area since I began my career as a middle school social studies and writing teacher in (District Name) in 1999. At this time I would like to request your permission to conduct this research in your school. Your cooperation in this matter will be deeply appreciated.

The duration of the time commitment for teacher participants will be limited, including two classroom observations and one formal interview lasting approximately thirty minutes.

The nature of this portion of my study will consist of both quantitative and qualitative research. The methods of data collection will include individual open-ended interviews with staff members. In addition, I will be conducting direct observations of six language arts classrooms within the middle school. Finally, I will be analyzing the GEPA scores from 2003 through 2007.

Please be assured that no individual, school, or district will be identified in this study. All information acquired through this research will be treated in a very confidential manner in order to guarantee anonymity.

Each of the participants maintains the right to withdraw from this study at any time and with no risk or penalty.

All data will be stored electronically on a password protected flash drive stored in a safe.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please to confer with me at your convenience. Thank you very much in for your cooperation in this matter,

Sincerely,

Name
Unit Administrator
Home Phone #

cc: Advisor Name

Date

Dear (Teacher's Name):

I am a doctoral candidate at Seton Hall University working on the dissertation portion of my degree program.

The topic of my study involves an investigation of the relationship between the implementation of a writing workshop instructional methodology and male achievement in writing at the middle school level. I have been interested in this topic since I began my career as a middle school social studies and writing teacher in (District Name) in 1999. At this time I would like to request your permission to conduct this research in your classroom. Your cooperation in this matter will be deeply appreciated.

The duration of the time commitment for teacher participants will be limited, including two classroom observations and one formal interview lasting approximately thirty minutes.

The nature of this portion of my study will consist of both quantitative and qualitative research. The methods of data collection will include individual open-ended interviews with staff members. In addition, I will be conducting direct observations of six language arts classes within the middle school. All participation is voluntary. Finally, I will be analyzing the GEPA scores from 2003 through 2007.

Please be assured that no individual, school, or district will be identified in this study. All information acquired through this research will be treated in a confidential manner to guarantee anonymity.

All data will be stored electronically on a password protected flash drive stored in a safe. Each participant maintains the right to withdraw from this study at any time and with no risk or penalty.

If it is your decision to honor this request, then I ask you to please complete the attached Informed Consent Form so that I can schedule times at your convenience to conduct the interview and the observation. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please confer with me at your convenience. I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you very much in for your cooperation in this matter,

Sincerely,

Name

Unit Administrator

Home Phone #

cc: Advisor Name

Informed Consent Form

Title: An Investigation of the Relationship Between the Use of a Writing Workshop Instructional Methodology and Male Student Achievement in Middle School Writing

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of a writing workshop instructional methodology on male student achievement in the language arts program of two middle schools in one suburban town in Northern New Jersey. The research will address methodology styles and personalities of the language arts department faculties and the extent to which they integrate the writing workshop model into daily class activities. Then, this study will determine the relationship between these methodologies and male student achievement in the area of writing.

Methodology

The methods of data collection to be used in this study will consist of open-ended interview questions, direct observation, and an analysis of GEPA scores in the area of writing from 2004-2007. The researcher will follow the procedures listed below:

- All interviews will be audio taped and conducted individually and privately;
- The anonymity of your responses will be guaranteed through the use of a coding system in which subjects will be referred to as Participant A, B, C...;
- Audio tapes and other documents will be secured in a locked filing cabinet throughout the duration of the study and then destroyed at its completion;
- All interviews will be conducted in an appropriate location identified by the participating administrator;
- All interviews will be during the school's functioning day;
- The interview will be approximately 20-25 minutes in length;

- The standardized open-ended interview questions will consist of questions which will be constructed in an effort to reveal the participants' experiences, opinions and knowledge of the writing workshop instructional methodology;

- Each participant reserves the right to withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice;
- A reproduction of the results of the research will be made available to each participant upon individual request;
- Subjects are to refrain from using proper names in their responses;

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject's privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research Services. The telephone number of the Office is I have read the material above, and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realizing that I may withdraw without prejudice at any time.

Subject

Date

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH, DEMONSTRATION OR RELATED ACTIVITIES INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

All material must be typed.

PROJECT TITLE: An Analysis of the Influence of Writing Workshop Program on Middle School Student Achievement in a Middle School Language Arts Department

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT:

In making this application, I/we certify that I/we have read and understand the University's policies and procedures governing research, development, and related activities involving human subjects. I/we shall comply with the letter and spirit of those policies. I/we further acknowledge my/our obligation to (1) obtain written approval of significant deviations from the originally approved protocol BEFORE making those deviations, and (2) report immediately all adverse effects of the study on the subjects to the Director of the Institutional Review Board, Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ 07072.

[Signature] RESEARCHER(S) OR PROJECT DIRECTOR(S) 1/9/07 DATE

Please print or type out names of all researchers below signature. Use separate sheet of paper, if necessary.

My signature indicates that I have reviewed the attached material and consider them to meet IRB standards

C.M. Achilleo RESEARCHER'S ADVISOR OR DEPARTMENTAL SUPERVISOR 1/9/07 DATE
C.M. Achilleo, Ed.D.

Please print or type out name below signature

The request for approval submitted by the above researcher(s) was considered by the IRB for Research Involving Human Subjects Research at its 7th meeting on 1/16/2007

The application was approved not approved by the Committee. Special conditions were set by the IRB. (Any special conditions are described on the reverse side.)

Mary Z. Ruzicka, Ph.D. DIRECTOR, SETON HALL UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH 3/13/07 DATE

Benjamin Franklin Middle School
Ridgewood Public Schools
335 N. Van Dien Ave.
Ridgewood, New Jersey 07450

Anthony Orsini
Principal

(201) 670-2695
aorsini@ridgewood.k12.nj.us

October 30, 2006

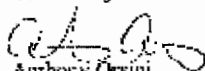
Laura Jane Oates-Santos
87 Highland Avenue
Kearney, New Jersey 07032

Dear Laura:

Permission has been granted for you to conduct research for the dissertation portion of your doctoral degree at the Benjamin Franklin Middle School. The topic of your research will involve the investigation of the relationship between the writing workshop instructional methodology and male student achievement in writing. I understand all information acquired through this research will be treated in a confidential manner and anonymity is guaranteed. In addition, each participant maintains the right to withdraw from this study at any time.

I wish you much success with this project.

Yours truly,


Anthony Orsini
Principal

AO:ac

bf.school.ridgewood.k12.nj.us



P.O. Arlotta, I.M.F.
Interim Superintendent of Schools

RIDGEWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1000 North Woodland Hills, NJ
301 670 2700
Fax: 301 670 2668

October 18, 2008

Lorna-Jean Ocas-Santos
87 Highland Avenue
Kearney, New Jersey 07032

Dear Lorna:

Permission has been granted for you to conduct research for the dissertation portion of your doctoral degree at the Benjamin Franklin Middle School. The topic of your research will involve the investigation of the relationship between the writing workshop instructional methodology and male student achievement in writing. I understand all information acquired through this research will be treated in a confidential manner and anonymity is guaranteed. In addition, each participant maintains the right to withdraw from this study at any time.

I wish you much success with this project.

Sincerely,

Paul Arlotta
Interim Superintendent of Schools

PA/kk
cc: Mr. Anthony Orsini, Principal, BFMS

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Completion Certificate

Approved
8/13/06
[Signature]

This is to certify that

Lorna Oates-Santos

has completed the **Human Participants Protection Education for Research Teams** online course, sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), on **03/20/2006**.

This course included the following:

- key historical events and current issues that impact guidelines and legislation on human participant protection in research
- ethical principles and guidelines that should assist in resolving the ethical issues inherent in the conduct of research with human participants.
- the use of key ethical principles and federal regulations to protect human participants at various stages in the research process.
- a description of guidelines for the protection of special populations in research.
- a definition of informed consent and components necessary for a valid consent.
- a description of the role of the IRB in the research process.
- the roles, responsibilities, and interactions of federal agencies, institutions, and researchers in conducting research with human participants.

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Appendix B
Observation Rubric

OBSERVATION RUBRIC FOR WRITING WORKSHOP

Event	Ineffective	Marginal	Effective	Exemplary
Teacher Directed Instruction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Feedback is not provided or is of poor quality 2. Teacher did not follow the conference architecture (research, compliment, teach, link, record) 3. Lesson has no clearly defined structure or is slow or rushed 4. Strategy lesson is missing or is not based on needs of students 5. Whole class mini lesson is missing or is not based on needs of student or unit objectives. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Feedback is not timely nor consistent in quality 2. Teacher inconsistently follows the conference architecture 3. Lesson has a recognizable structure but not uniformly maintained. Pacing of lesson is inconsistent. 4. Strategy lesson is loosely related to student needs 5. Whole class mini lesson is loosely related to student needs or unit objective. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Feedback provided is consistently timely and of high quality 2. Teacher follows the conference architecture. 3. Lesson has a clearly defined structure. Activities are in alignment with objective attainment. 4. Strategy lessons are tied to student needs. 5. Whole class mini lesson is loosely related to student needs or unit objectives. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Feedback is consistent, timely and of high quality and provides opportunity for student use in learning. 2. Teacher follows the conference architecture and adjusts the content to enhance individual student learning. 3. Lesson structure is highly coherent allowing for reflection and closure as appropriate. Pacing is appropriate for all students. 4. Strategy lessons are held to meet the needs of diverse groups of students. 5. Whole class mini lesson is loosely related to student needs or unit objective
Student Activities/ Engagement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Activities/ assignments are inappropriate; students are not engaged cognitively. 2. Teacher adheres to instructional plan even when a change would clearly improve the lesson. 3. There is no evidence that students are putting teaching points to use and applying strategies appropriately. 4. Students do not understand or feel comfortable with the workshop structure; there is no routine. 5. Students are unable to talk about writing with peers or the teacher. There is no excitement around the writing process. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Activities/ assignments are inconsistent in engaging students. 2. Attempts are made to adjust lesson with mixed results. 3. Few students are putting teaching points to use and applying strategies appropriately. 4. Few students understand or feel comfortable with the workshop structure; there is no routine. 5. Few students are able to talk about writing with peers or the teacher. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Activities/ assignments are appropriate to students; students are cognitively engaged. 2. Adjustments are made which assist learning. 3. Most students are putting teaching points to use and applying strategies appropriately. 4. The routine structure of the workshop is understood by the students. 5. Students are encouraged to discuss their writing on a regular basis with peers and the teacher. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students are cognitively engaged in activities/ assignments. Students initiate or adapt activities and projects to enhance understanding. 2. Seizes major opportunities to enhance learning building upon spontaneous events. 3. The majority of students are putting teaching points to use and applying strategies appropriately; students openly discuss these teaching points with peers and the teacher during conferences. 4. Students are very comfortable with the goals and objectives of the workshop routine and self-regulate. 5. The classroom structure features built-in time for student sharing of writing on a regular basis.
Classroom Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interactions with some students are negative, demeaning, sarcastic or inappropriate to the age of students 2. Does not provide a climate that encourages students' participation 3. Does not take time to have meaningful conferences about writing 4. Does not foster a class culture that values peer partnerships 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Generally interacts appropriately but may reflect occasional inconsistencies, favoritism or disregard 2. Inconsistently provides a climate that encourages student participation 3. Inconsistently manages time with students to have meaningful conferences about writing 4. Inconsistently fosters a culture that values peer partnerships 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interacts in a friendly, warm and respectful manner with students 2. Provides a climate that encourages student participation 3. Maintains personal pacing that allows for meaningful conferences with students about writing 4. Evidence of a culture that values peer partnerships 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrates genuine concern and respect for individual students 2. Provides a climate that encourages students to participate and inspires students to incorporate positive attitudes into their behavior 3. Actively engages in meaningful conferences with students about their writing on a regular basis 4. Strong peer partnerships are evident
Physical Environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does not match physical environment to instructional purposes. 2. There is no organized, accessible classroom library or display of student writing that reflects multiple genres. 3. There is no evidence of ongoing teaching and learning in the classroom (charts, student work). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inconsistently matches physical environment to instructional purposes. 2. The classroom library and display of student writing does not reflect multiple genres. 3. There is little evidence of ongoing teaching and learning in the classroom. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Matches physical environment to instructional purposes to meet students' needs. 2. The classroom library and display of student writing is organized, accessible and features multiple genres. 3. The bulletin boards and displays feature student and teacher generated work that reflects ongoing teaching and learning. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creates physical environment that stimulates and increases students' engagement in the instructional program. 2. There is a large classroom library and multiple displays of student writing that is accessible to read and respond to, as well as reflects multiple genres. 3. There are multiple, varied, and updated displays of teaching and learning throughout the classroom. Students reference these areas often.

Appendix C
Interview Questions

1. How do you structure class sessions that are focused on writing instruction?
2. How do you alter your instruction to meet the needs of different students?
3. What is your definition of effective writing instruction?
4. How would you compare male and female student writers?
5. What influence does the writing workshop instructional methodology have on students of middle school age in regard to performance (achievement) in the language arts class? Their motivation? Their content understanding? Their interest level?
6. How would you describe the change in motivation level or achievement gains of middle-school age male students since the implementation of the writing workshop instructional methodology?

Appendix D

DFG Scores, 2002 - 2007

DFG	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
A	201.0	202.0	204.2	205.8	202.4
B	213.4	214.1	220.4	220.0	213.4
CD	217.2	216.6	224.7	226.4	218.1
DE	221.9	221.1	229.0	230.5	221.3
FG	224.9	223.7	233.1	234.0	224.0
GH	227.8	227.1	236.1	237.1	228.4
I	233.4	232.2	241.8	242.9	232.5
J	238.5	238.5	246.9	248.4	237.3

Table 1. This table shows the average general education student score on the language arts portion of the GEPA from 2002 – 2005. Without exception, the average student performance increases as one progresses through DFG classifications, from low SES (A) to high SES (J).

Appendix E
Data Analysis of Statistics

Year	Mean M	SD M	Mean F	SD F	M(F) – M(M)	Significance	Effect Size
2003	10.88	1.91	11.96	1.74	1.08	.000	.56
2004	10.22	1.93	11.68	1.91	1.46	.000	.76
2005	9.82	1.56	10.59	1.53	0.77	.001	.39
2006	10.60	1.64	11.64	1.41	1.04	.000	.53
2007	10.85	1.86	11.67	1.67	0.82	.001	.44

Year	Difference of Means (M)	Significance	SD	Effect Size
2003 – 2004	0.67	.012	1.91, 1.93	.35
2003 – 2005	1.07	.000	1.91, 1.56	.55
2003 – 2006	0.28	.771	1.91, 1.64	.15
2003 – 2007	0.03	.911	1.91, 1.86	.44
2004 – 2005	0.40	.420	1.93, 1.56	.21
2004 – 2006	0.38	.483	1.93, 1.64	.20
2004 – 2007	0.64	.077	1.93, 1.86	.33
2005 – 2006	0.78	.000	1.56, 1.64	.50
2005 – 2007	1.04	.000	1.56, 1.86	.67
2006 - 2007	0.25	.845	1.64, 1.86	.15

Year	Differences of Mean (F)	Significance	SD	Effect Size
2003 – 2004	0.28	.763	1.74, 1.91	.16
2003 – 2005	1.37	.000	1.74, 1.53	.78
2003 – 2006	0.31	.629	1.74, 1.41	.18
2003 – 2007	0.29	.709	1.74, 1.68	.17
2004 – 2005	1.10	.000	1.91, 1.53	.57
2004 – 2006	0.04	1.00	1.91, 1.41	.02
2004 – 2007	0.01	1.00	1.91, 1.68	.00
2005 – 2006	1.06	.000	1.53, 1.41	.69
2005 – 2007	1.09	.000	1.53, 1.68	.70
2006 - 2007	0.03	1.00	1.41, 1.68	.02