

## **ABSTRACT**

Title of Thesis: **THIRD GRADE STUDENTS' WRITING ATTITUDES,  
SELF- EFFICACY BELIEFS, AND ACHIEVEMENT**

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In order to become successful members of society in the United States, students must be able to write effectively. However, many students are unwilling or unable to write by the time they leave high school. Two major factors linked to writing performance include writing attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs. The first objective of this research is an investigation of the effectiveness of an intervention designed to improve writing attitudes, self-efficacy beliefs, and achievement. The second objective is an examination of the relation between those constructs. Participants were given the Writing Attitude Survey, a writing skills self-efficacy scale, and a short writing assessment. Further, 50% of the participants participated in an intervention designed to increase positive writing attitudes, self-efficacy beliefs, and achievement. The study found a significant positive relation between writing self-efficacy and attitudes. The intervention was found to have no effect on the self-efficacy, attitudes, or performance of participants.

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AND ACHIEVEMENT

by

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## **Chapter I: Theoretical Rationale**

### **Writing in the Primary Grades**

In the United States, writing is an important skill in order to be a productive member of society. Yet, more and more students leave high school unwilling or unable to write. This is also true of younger children: according to a report from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, from 2002, students who were tested in the fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades were found to be below grade-level for writing. Only 28% of fourth graders were found to be performing at or above proficient in 2002 (Persky, Daane, & Jin, 2003). In 2007, only 33% of eighth graders were found to be at or above proficient status for writing, and only 24% of twelfth graders were at or above proficient status for writing (fourth graders were not involved in the 2007 study). Proficient status for this study indicates writing competency (Salahu-Din, Persky, & Miller, 2008). Despite this data, writing has not been a focus for school reform, nor is it a focus during the school day, with a median time of 20 minutes spent writing every day (Cutler & Graham, 2008).

Locally, for writing instruction in the primary grades, the focus is generally on the writing process (Montgomery County Public Schools, 2005). The writing process consists of several stages that the writer goes through when producing a piece of writing: pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Writing instruction focuses on guiding students through the process, and helping them acquire the skills needed to accomplish each step. For example, in order to edit, students will learn rules about capitalization and punctuation, so that they can edit their own writing for those two areas. Additionally, in the county where the study took place, instruction also focuses on the six

plus one traits of writing. These six traits are ideas, voice, word choice, conventions, organization and sentence fluency. Students learn how to attend to and improve these six traits in their own writing. The “plus one” refers to the presentation of the writing piece, which corresponds to the publishing step of the writing process.

Writing instruction in the primary grades focuses on both writing products and the writing process. It begins as early as preschool (Cunningham, 2008). As students learn, they start out as novice writers and become more expert. Further, primary students’ skills in all parts of the writing process develop, including planning and revising (see Graham & Harris, 2000). In a study where children were interviewed about their attitudes towards writing, Knudson (1995) found that many first graders view writing as drawing, while others view writing as adult writing. Second graders may also view writing more as printing. However, second graders do understand that the purpose of writing is to communicate, and can also describe many different types of writing tasks (Shook, Marrion, & Ollila, 1989). Second graders focus on writing sentences and begin writing paragraphs, while third grade students continue to focus on writing a clear paragraph, with all of its attendant parts (Matsumura, Patthey-Chavez, Valdes, & Garnier, 2002; Montgomery County Public Schools, 2005).

Teachers in elementary school focus on the mechanics of writing as well as the content. Spelling and handwriting may affect writer’s development (Graham & Harris, 2000). Primary students often center on the mechanics of writing, particularly as a focal point for improving their writing (Knudson, 1995). Students interviewed in Knudson’s study discussed addressing only mechanics or presentation aspects of writing in order to improve. In third grade, mechanics continues to be a focus, where students are expected

to conform more to standard writing practice, in terms of spelling and grammar (Matsumura et. al, 2002).

Teachers also focus on writing strategy instruction. Examples of strategies include using graphic organizers to organize thoughts before writing, conferencing with a peer to determine what to add or change about the writing, and monitoring self-progress during writing. Students also learn general strategies for developing the six traits of writing. Many of the strategies focused on during instruction are self-regulatory strategies. Self-regulated writers monitor and direct their own thinking and writing behaviors (including the use of writing strategies) throughout the writing process, to achieve a particular goal. Graham and Harris (2000) predict that as writers develop, they become more self-regulated, and they also predict that skilled writers are more self-regulated than non-skilled writers. This suggests that primary grade students are developing their self-regulatory strategies. On the other hand, Knudson found that first through third grade students did not report use of specific strategies. However, this makes sense when it is taken into account that students are just learning to use writing strategies in those grades. After guided writing instruction and over a period of three months, Gibson (2008) found that second graders changed in their strategy use from focusing on mechanics to more of a focus on content. The second graders also began to use more resources as time passed. Thus, second graders are learning to utilize their strategies when writing and third graders continue to learn how to incorporate those strategies into their writing. Therefore, in terms of writing instruction, third grade is an integral year. Students will develop a larger knowledge base about writing, increase their grammar and spelling skills, continue developing their ability to carry out the different

stages of the writing process, learn about and utilize more strategies, and gradually develop a different understanding of writing.

**Factors affecting writing performance.** Many different motivational factors can affect writing performance in addition to cognitive factors. Two of the most influential of these factors are self-efficacy beliefs and writing attitudes; these are discussed in detail in subsequent sections. However, teachers do not always focus on motivational factors when teaching writing, but instead focus on the writing process or even just writing products.

Self-efficacy beliefs are exceedingly important in terms of writing and even in everyday life. For example, self-efficacy beliefs can affect health, cognitive factors, career development, and academics (Bandura, 1997). They predict writing performance but also have far-reaching effects. Self-efficacy beliefs can affect perceived usefulness of writing and writing apprehension, both of which are key factors in terms of writing performance (Pajares & Valiante, 1999). To date, there are few studies of writing self-efficacy in young children; the current study addresses this gap in the literature.

Writing attitude is another motivational factor that needs to be researched. Children in first and second grade have preferences and attitudes about writing. Often, these students do have positive attitudes towards writing (Shook et al., 1989). However, attitudes towards writing decline throughout school (Knudson, 1995). Therefore, it is important to investigate writing attitudes in young children and to determine if writing instruction influences young children's attitudes towards writing.

Current research supports the idea that writing motivation can shape the development of writing performance, and it has been found that "individual differences in

motivation predict writing,” (Graham, 2006, p. 467). Indeed, many current theoretical models of writing contain concepts of motivation and self-efficacy (Graham, Berninger, & Fan, 2007; Hayes, 1996; Pajares, 2003). The present study is an intervention study designed to examine how an intervention program to improve children’s self-efficacy for writing impacts their writing self-efficacy, attitudes towards writing, and writing performance.

The following review discusses current literature regarding self-efficacy and attitudes for writing.

### **Self-Efficacy Beliefs**

Bandura (1997) asserts that “people’s level of motivation, affective states, and actions are based more on what they believe than what is objectively true” (p.2). In other words, if a person holds certain beliefs about him or herself, then he or she will act upon those self-beliefs, regardless of their accuracy. Thus, self-beliefs will affect all areas of human life and behavior. For example, a person’s self-efficacy beliefs affect how a person thinks, feels, acts, and is motivated (Bandura, 1996). The importance of self- beliefs is undeniable. These assertions indicate the importance of research in the area of self-beliefs, so that teaching practices will be current and will not neglect this integral concept.

One of the primary components of self-beliefs is self-efficacy. Bandura, who is commonly regarded in the educational research community as the foremost researcher in the subject, put forth the following definition of self-efficacy: “Beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 1997, p.3). Self-efficacy beliefs affect what people do. To

explain, what people choose to do centers on what they believe about what they can accomplish. Self-efficacy acts as a mediator between people's beliefs and their behaviors (Bandura, 1997).

**Sources of self-efficacy beliefs.** Bandura also put forth the idea that self-efficacy comes from four sources (Bandura, 1997). The first, and most influential, of these sources is enactive mastery experience. Enactive mastery experience is based on successes and failures. Successes lead to a stronger belief in a person's self-efficacy, while failures have the opposite effect, weakening a person's self-efficacy beliefs. For example, a student successfully writes a short story for the first time, leading to a stronger sense of self-efficacy for writing short stories. Another influential source is the second, vicarious experience. A person's self-efficacy beliefs can come from observations of actions performed by others. Upon observation, a person accordingly compares his or her abilities to the abilities of others, and uses this information as a social comparison to form his or her own self-efficacy beliefs. For example, the student writing a story notes that another student is able to write her story more quickly than he does, leading to a diminished sense of self-efficacy. The third source is verbal persuasion. While not the most influential of the four sources, as it only somewhat affects self-efficacy, it still remains an important basis for self-efficacy beliefs. Verbal persuasion involves a person receiving feedback from another person that convinces him or her of his or her ability to perform a particular task. An example of this would be the above student's teacher complimenting him on his writing proficiency, leading to improved self-efficacy beliefs. Finally, the last source described by Bandura is physiological and affective states. These, also, are only partly responsible for changes in self-efficacy. In order for a person to



determine his or her ability for a task, the person may look to his or her physiological or emotional condition. He or she takes into account his or her physical feedback as well as mood. For example, when the student above feels “stressed” or unhappy while writing, he interprets this to mean that he lacks competency. These four sources of input constitute the basis of a person’s self-efficacy beliefs.

**Effects of self-efficacy beliefs.** Self-efficacy beliefs influence the extent to which a given student will succeed or progress. They can affect the actions a person chooses to take, the effort a person puts into activities, perseverance in a task, persistence in the face of difficulties, and what a person ultimately accomplishes (Bandura, 1986, 1997; Pajares & Valiante, 1997). Therefore, a person with high self-efficacy beliefs would be more likely to persist at that task, put forth more effort into it, continue working on the task for a longer period of time, and would experience more successes. A person with low self-efficacy beliefs would be more likely to give up when there were difficulties, would not put forth as much effort into the task, and would experience more failures.

The level of a person’s self-efficacy beliefs can have a positive or negative effect on achievement. Bandura (1986) asserted that students with high self-efficacy tend to demonstrate strong achievement, while students with low self-efficacy demonstrate weaker achievement. Various studies have documented this relationship (e.g., Pajares, 1997). A student who possesses positive self-efficacy may tend to view a demanding task as a challenge, while students with negative self-efficacy may tend to avoid tasks they perceive as too challenging (Bandura, 1994; Kim & Lorschach, 2005). Such students also give up easily when faced with difficulties (Bandura, 1997; Kim & Lorschach, 2005).

Additionally, self-efficacy relates to other aspects of motivation. Discussion of it and its impacts can be found throughout many different types of motivational theory, such as goal theory and attribution theory. For instance, Bandura found that self-efficacy beliefs influence causal attributions and the goals people create (Bandura, 1994). As self-efficacy consists in part of a person's perceptions of how well they can accomplish certain tasks, they need to set a standard that would indicate if they were doing well or not. When students achieve or meet the standards or goals they have set, that could lead to increased self-efficacy. In Bandura and Schunk's (1981) study, they examined the effects of proximal subgoals on perceptions of competence, self-efficacy and interest for mathematics for students between seven and ten years of age. Students who made their proximal subgoals increased significantly in their self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura & Schunk, 1981). It seems likely that this would be possible for the area of writing, as well.

The construct of self-efficacy is one that demonstrates influence across many academic domains. Bandura (1997) described how self-efficacy beliefs need to match the domain of performance. That is, self-efficacy beliefs about writing need to match, or measure, writing performance and not reading performance. Bandura would recommend measuring those self-efficacy beliefs, then, at the domain level. Therefore, self-efficacy can be said to be specific to certain domains, such as writing.

### **Writing Self-Efficacy Beliefs**

A primary and most essential academic domain is writing. As previously mentioned, motivational concepts are key for academic success in writing, and one of the most important and influential motivational concepts is self-efficacy. In a study that evaluated students with and without learning disabilities, Graham, Schwartz and

MacArthur (1993) found that, for all students, motivation was most commonly cited as the reason for writing difficulty. Also, a positive relationship has been shown between writing and self-efficacy beliefs (Pajares, 2003; Shell, Bruning & Colvin, 1995); when students believe they can write well, they do write better. However, writing self-efficacy beliefs cannot be defined in exactly the same manner as self-efficacy beliefs. Rather, writing self-efficacy represents a person's beliefs about his or her ability to write, or to produce certain types of text (Hidi, Berndorff, & Ainley, 2002; Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994).

A person's belief in his ability to write is essential to writing motivation and performance (Bruning & Horn, 2000; Pajares, 2003). For example, Pajares and Valiante (1997) conducted a study involving 218 fifth grade students. In this study, they utilized the Writing Skills Self-Efficacy Scale (Shell, Murphy, & Bruning, 1989), an adaptation of Daly and Miller's 1975 Writing Apprehension Test, a writing performance measure, the Perceived Usefulness of Writing scale, and teacher ratings of writing aptitude. They asserted that writing self-efficacy influences students' perceived usefulness of writing. This suggests that if students have greater self-efficacy, they would be more likely to perceive writing as useful when compared with those with lower self-efficacy. Additionally, the researchers found that self-efficacy perceptions of elementary students contributed to the prediction of their writing performance. Further, Shell, Bruning and Colvin (1995), in a study of fourth, seventh, and tenth grade students, found that higher writing achievement was related to positive self-efficacy beliefs. Even among lower achievers, students who had higher self-efficacy beliefs demonstrated higher achievement than those with lower self-efficacy. The students took the Writing Skills Self-Efficacy

scale (adapted from an earlier study by the same authors), outcome expectancy instruments, causal attributions measures for reading and writing, and the California Achievement Test. In a longitudinal study, Kim and Lorschach (2005) examined 18 students from kindergarten to first grade, using interviews, observations, analytic memos, writing samples, and two teacher self-efficacy surveys. The researchers found that generally, the students with greater self-efficacy demonstrated a more advanced writing level than those students with lesser self-efficacy. Pajares (2003) also suggested that self-efficacy beliefs and writing performance are positively related in his review of the literature.

Just as with self-efficacy beliefs in general, self-efficacy beliefs can have a negative or positive impact on writing. Kim and Lorschach (2005) found that students who had high writing self-efficacy beliefs spent more time on a writing task, were motivated to earn a good grade and to participate in writing tasks, were willing to try, and were more willing to take risks than those with low self-efficacy. Students with a higher sense of writing self-efficacy also demonstrated a greater degree of writing development than those with lower self-efficacy for writing. The converse was also true, in that those students who demonstrated a greater degree of writing development were likely to have more enhanced self-efficacy beliefs. Additionally, in Hidi, Ainley, Berndorff and Del Favero's (2007) intervention study, researchers noted that students' self-efficacy for writing was positively related to quality and length of their written compositions. In order to determine this, students were given writing assessments, a computer program which monitored responses to the writing, two self-efficacy for writing tasks, and two

interest measures. Their results suggest that the more self-efficacious a student feels towards writing, the longer and better their compositions will be.

However, students who demonstrate poorer writing achievement possess lower self-efficacy than students who demonstrate higher writing achievement (Shell et al., 1995). In Kim and Lorschach's 2005 longitudinal study, these students with lower self-efficacy exhibited more negative behaviors, including a tendency to be distracted more easily or to quit, task avoidance, rushing through a writing task or taking an extended time to complete the task. An additional assertion made by Kim and Lorschach (2005) is that students who were classified as having low or high self-efficacy were sometimes unwilling to finish the writing tasks, but for different reasons. In certain instances, the high self-efficacy students were unmotivated due to lack of challenge, while the low self-efficacy students were unmotivated because they were too challenged. However, those students with medium levels of self-efficacy for writing did not demonstrate the same unwillingness to complete writing tasks.

**Sources of writing self-efficacy beliefs.** Some research has focused on sources of self-efficacy beliefs for the domain of writing. Pajares, Johnson, and Usher (2007) conducted a study involving 1256 students from fourth through eleventh grades, who completed an adapted Sources of Self-Efficacy scale, and whose teachers rated the students on writing competence. Pajares et al. showed that the four sources enumerated by Bandura had a significant correlation with both writing self-efficacy and the other sources. Knowing that mastery experience is the most influential of the sources for general self-efficacy, Pajares et al. found this to be true for writing self-efficacy as well. The sources of mastery experience, vicarious experience, and social persuasions

predicted writing self-efficacy for all students involved in their study. These three sources were also stronger predictors for elementary school than middle or high school. In addition, verbal persuasion plays an important role in writing, since motivational development may be affected when students receive public feedback on their writing performance (Wilson & Trainin, 2007). However, Wilson and Trainin also found, for their sample of 98 first graders from four different schools, that students currently do not receive much feedback during group writing instruction, thereby limiting their ability to make social comparisons and diminishing the influence of this source. Their study employed the Early Literacy Motivation Scale, with subscales about perceived competence, self-efficacy, and attributions, as well as Scholastic Unit Test assessments and district-wide reading and writing assessments.

Writing self-efficacy is also related to other motivational constructs. For example, writing self-efficacy is related to other components of self-belief in general, such as apprehension, perceived value of writing, and self-concept (Pajares & Valiante, 1997; Pajares, Valiante, & Cheong, 2007). Additionally, writing self-efficacy is related to self-efficacy for self-regulation, having mastery goals and grade goals, and processing depth (see Pajares, 2003). Thirdly, in an intervention study investigating writing self-efficacy, interest, and argument writing in children, Hidi et al. (2002) found that interest in writing, writing enjoyment in different genres, and self-efficacy are positively correlated. For these grade six students in Canada, the researchers used a questionnaire developed by themselves, the Interest, Liking and Self-Efficacy Questionnaire, as well as writing prompts given before and after the intervention.

**Changes in writing self-efficacy.** Writing self-efficacy changes over the course of a student's development (Shell et al., 1995). However, current research differs regarding whether self-efficacy increases, decreases, or remains constant with age. In Pajares' (2003) review, some studies indicated that self-efficacy for writing increased with age while others indicated that self-efficacy for writing actually decreased with age. In Shell et al.'s study, students in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades demonstrated higher writing task self-efficacy than students in fourth grade, with the eleventh graders demonstrating higher task self-efficacy than the seventh graders as well. Pajares and Valiante (1999) found students in 6<sup>th</sup> grade to have higher self-efficacy beliefs than older middle school students. Their study involved 742 sixth through eighth graders who completed the Writing Skills Self-Efficacy Scale, Marsh's Academic Self-Description Questionnaire, Daly and Miller's Writing Apprehension Test, and the Self-Efficacy for Self-Regulated Learning Questionnaire, and whose teachers completed ratings of student competence. However, Pajares, Johnson, et al. (2007) found that self-efficacy beliefs declined over time. Pajares, Valiante, et al. (2007) also asserted that writing self-efficacy beliefs declined over time, while remaining steady at high school. Their study involved students from grades four through eleven. They also completed the Writing Skills Self-Efficacy Scale, Miller's Writing Apprehension Test, Marsh's Academic Self-Description Questionnaire and a self-efficacy for self-regulated learning scale, in addition to an adaptation of the Patterns of Adaptive Learning Survey, items from the Student Attitude Questionnaire, and items assessing gender orientation beliefs. In contrast, Graham, Schwartz, and MacArthur (1993), after conducting interviews with fourth, fifth, seventh

and eighth grade students, found no difference in regards to grade level for writing self-efficacy for thirty nine learning disabled students.

Kim and Lorschach (2005) assert that self-efficacy patterns for younger students, or behavior patterns relating to self-efficacy, are similar to those of older students. For example, students with low self-efficacy exhibited work avoidance behavior, gave up easily when faced with difficulty, and were easily distracted. Students with high self-efficacy wanted to try, took risks, took more time with their writing, and were eager to participate in writing tasks. Kim and Lorschach found that this behavior is similar to how older students act.

An age-related concern in writing self-efficacy studies is whether young children can identify their self-efficacy beliefs. Younger children have a tendency to overestimate their actual abilities, as do learning disabled students (Graham & Harris, 1989; Kim & Lorschach, 2005; see Wilson & Trainin, 2007). However, Wilson and Trainin (2007) found that first graders do differentiate self-efficacy in terms of reading, writing and spelling. Kim and Lorschach (2005) found that kindergarten and first grade students were able to describe their own writing self-efficacy beliefs. In Kim and Lorschach's study, teachers and students had similar perceptions of the students' self-efficacy beliefs. Additionally, students in first and second grade have relatively positive self-efficacy beliefs (Shook et al., 1989). All of the students surveyed rated themselves as being in the top or middle third of the class in terms of writing. Thus, these findings indicate that future research relating to writing self-efficacy beliefs is possible with younger children.



While research on self-efficacy beliefs and writing is growing, more studies are needed. As most studies have been conducted with upper elementary and older students, a clear focus now should be on younger children (Pajares & Valiante, 1999; Shell et al., 1995). Relatively little work has been carried out with students in the grades of kindergarten through grade 3, while some work has been done with preschool and younger students (Cunningham, 2008; Wilson & Trainin, 2007). It is important to look at self-efficacy beliefs at the beginning of the educational process, not just the middle or end. Therefore, future research is needed regarding writing self-efficacy beliefs in those primary grades.

### **Attitudes**

Both attitudes and beliefs play an integral role in writing (Hayes, 1996; Graham, 2006). Despite this, there has been little research concerning the writing attitudes of children. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) define attitude as “a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object.” For Fishbein and Ajzen, attitude is caused by a person developing a belief about an object, which then influences that person’s attitude towards the object (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1972). Moreover, Fishbein and Ajzen put forth the idea of attitudes along a continuum, ranging from positive to negative attitudes, an idea adopted by McKenna, Kear, and Ellsworth (1995) in regards to reading (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Also according to McKenna et al. (1995), there are three concepts central to the construct of attitude, although some models contain additional concepts: that there are beliefs a person has relating to an object, there are intentions of behavior relating to that objects, and there are feelings the person experiences due to the object.

Though there are several models of attitude related to reading, there are currently none that concern writing alone. That said, literacy involves both reading and writing, and so it could be assumed that these models of reading attitude may bear some relation to writing attitude. Matthewson's model (1994) involves attitude as a factor that influences a person's intent to read. The outcomes of reading then influence reading attitudes. For Matthewson, attitude is made up of three components: feelings, action readiness, and beliefs, although there are additional factors involved (see McKenna et al., 1995). McKenna's model (1994) proposes that attitude and beliefs are causally related, and that attitude itself is similar to affect. The model also describes the formation of attitudes based on outcomes of reading actions. Alexander and Filler (1976) also include an affective component in their definition of reading attitudes.

For reading attitudes, there is a relationship between attitude and motivation to read. McKenna et al. (1995) conducted a study with 185 students in first through sixth grade. The students were given the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, and teachers were asked to rate reading ability. They discovered a relationship between attitude and ability, with the relationship growing stronger over time. However, attitudes grew more negative as students progressed in grade level. Sainsbury and Schagen (2004), when they gave questionnaires to fourth and sixth graders, also found a decline from fourth to sixth grade in terms of reading attitude. McKenna et al. also found that the most positive attitudes belonged to students who were at the beginning of elementary school. Thus, even though students' reading abilities grew throughout schooling, their attitudes continued to diminish over the same period of time.

**Writing attitudes.** Graham et al. (2007) define writing attitudes as an “affective disposition involving how the act of writing makes the author feel, ranging from happy to unhappy.” There is a strong relationship between student attitudes and literacy abilities (Cunningham, 2008). Cunningham examined 201 preschool students (aged 5 and 6) and the results of the Teacher Rating of Oral Language and Literacy and the Student Attitudes Toward Reading and Writing Survey as well as the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation. She found a strong positive correlation between the attitude measures’ questions and the Teacher Rating of Oral Language and Literacy scores. Additional ANOVA analyses also showed the relation between attitudes and literacy ability.

**Effects of writing attitudes.** Writing attitudes affect writing achievement and writing competence (Graham et al., 2007; Knudson, 1995). Graham et al.’s study involved first and third grade children, utilized the PAL Compositional Fluency subtest, the WIAT-2 Written Expression subtest, and a writing attitude survey, and used structural equation modeling to discover a path from attitude towards writing to achievement. It follows that these positive or negative attitudes are created based on students’ writing ability. For example, success in writing may lead to a positive attitude, while difficulty with writing tasks may lead to negative attitudes toward writing (Graham et al.). In a study whose participants were first through sixth grade students, Knudson (1995) employed two Knudson Writing Attitude Surveys--for Children and for Primary Grade Students, as well as a writing prompt and interviews. Using a stepwise multiple regression analysis, she found that students who have a positive writing attitude are more likely to be superior writers than those who hold a more negative writing attitude. Also,

as students' abilities grow stronger, their literacy self-efficacy beliefs also tend to become more positive (Cunningham, 2008). Graham et al. (1993) found that writers with learning disabilities, who generally demonstrate weaker ability than writers without learning disabilities, were also less positive about writing than their non-learning-disabled peers. However, Cunningham also found that preschool students' attitudes towards writing are more negative than their reading attitudes, indicating a need for further research designed to improve literacy attitudes in young children, in order to investigate these discrepancies.

Attitudes towards writing can affect the actual content and process of writing (Graham et al., 1993). In addition, a student who has a positive writing attitude is more likely to plan writing actions, be more effortful, persevere despite challenges, set goals that will challenge him or herself, and believe in his or her own success (Bandura, 1995; Graham, 2006). Students with a more positive attitude will write more often than those with a more negative attitude. Further, those students with positive attitudes may decide to write even if they are not required to write. Students with negative attitudes, though, may choose to avoid writing tasks and put forth little effort when writing (Graham et al., 2007).

**Changes in writing attitudes.** As students age, their writing attitudes deteriorate, with students in higher grades demonstrating a poorer attitude towards writing. Graham et al. (1993) found that younger students were more positive than older students. However, older students are more likely to be higher achievers in writing, as their understanding of what writing actually is changes as they age and develop (Knudson, 1995). For example, students in first and second grades see mechanics or "surface

features” of writing as the key aspect of improvement in writing, but students past grade two focus on strategies or ideas. These varying ideas about what constitutes writing and what is important in writing could account for the decline in writing attitudes. On the other hand, other researchers, such as Graham et al. (2007), found no differences in writing attitudes based on age between first and third graders (Graham et al., 2007). Thus, this is also an area in need of further research.

**Interest.** Sainsbury and Schagen (2004) put forth the idea that interest in reading is a key component of a definition of reading attitude. Interest, then, could possibly be related to writing attitude, and through attitude, affect performance. Previous research has found that interest relates to writing performance. Albin, Benton, and Khrantsova (1996) found interested writers produced writing with more information and better-developed themes than those who were less interested.

Interest can affect persistence and attention assigned to tasks (Bruning & Horn, 2000), which would also, in turn, affect writing quality. Students who are interested in a particular task are more likely to pay attention, enjoy involvement and persist for longer at that task than students who are uninterested. Interested students are also more focused, effortful and tend to have more positive emotions. Furthermore, the constructs of interest and self-efficacy are related (Hidi et al., 2002). It is clear that interest plays an important role in learning, but little research has been conducted at this point on writing and interest in young children, or investigating the exact relation between interest and attitudes. This would be a beneficial area to research in the future.

Based on this review of literature, it seems apparent that writing self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes influence writing performance, and so it is important to continue

investigating the effects of self-efficacy and attitudes. However, it is also plain that more research needs to be done concerning younger children and these constructs.

### **Writing Interventions**

Instructional practices can have a great impact on different aspects of writing, such as writing performance and motivation to write. It is important, therefore, to look at how best to teach writing so as to improve writing performance and increase students' writing motivation. However, it is also essential that teachers and researchers investigate students who are having difficulty with writing. Sometimes students who experience writing difficulties in class need more help than can be given during regular instruction. A solution to this issue lies with interventions. Interventions can have a positive impact not only on writing performance but on writing motivation as well (for example, Berninger & Hidi, 2007; Chandler, 1999; Graham & Harris, 2005; Graham, Harris, & Mason, 2005; see Graham & Perin, 2007).

While there have been numerous intervention studies regarding writing performance, (for an extensive review, see Graham & Perin, 2007) an area where the body of research is not quite as prolific is writing motivation, and more specifically, writing self-efficacy and attitudes. However, Bruning and Horn (2000) assert that interventions can provide students with the necessary skills to improve writing. This can then lead to greater writing self-efficacy. As students become aware of and integrate the strategies that they learn in interventions, they should experience more successes. The repeated successes that a student experiences should, therefore, lead to an improved sense of self-efficacy.

Many of the studies that have been conducted that focus on improving writing self-efficacy or attitudes either utilize participants with learning disabilities (Lane et al., 2008; Garcia & de Caso, 2006; Garcia-Sanchez & de Caso-Fuertes, 2005; Garcia-Sanchez & Fidalgo-Redondo, 2006) or older students, from upper-elementary grades through adulthood (Berninger & Hidi, 2007; Chandler, 1999; de Caso, Garcia, Robledo, & Alvarez, 2010; Garcia & de Caso-Fuertes, 2005; Garcia & de Caso, 2006; Hidi et al., 2007). There is a critical need for intervention studies involving younger students. It is important to strike at writing problems as soon as possible.

**Self-regulation and strategy development interventions.** One of the most successful writing interventions, which does have some research with younger grades, focuses on self-regulation and strategy development (SRSD) (Garcia-Sanchez & Fidalgo-Redondo, 2006; Graham, Harris, & Mason, 2005; Graham & Harris, 2005; see Graham & Perrin, 2007; Lane et al., 2008; Lienemann, Graham, Leader-Janssen & Reid, 2006). This intervention program, successfully used in numerous studies, involves specific instruction on writing processes and strategies to use when writing, particularly self-regulatory strategies. In the SRSD program, students learn about the writing processes and how to go through each part of the process. They also learn about and develop various self-regulatory strategies, including goal setting and self-monitoring. This instruction provides them with skills and strategies to use when writing. The SRSD program is also designed to improve motivation and increase student knowledge of writing. Some studies investigate the effects of the intervention solely on performance. In a 2008 study concluded with second graders who had a behavioral and emotional disorder, students demonstrated gains in writing quality, length of writing, and

“completeness” of writing following the SRSD intervention. Students were administered a test of written language, descriptive measures, writing prompts, and both teachers and students completed intervention rating profiles in order to determine the effects of the intervention (Lane et al., 2008).

Other SRSD intervention studies have been specifically designed to examine self-efficacy in addition to other factors. In a study by Graham et al. (2005), involving 73 third graders with a SRSD intervention group, a SRSD group with peer support, and a comparison group, students in the SRSD group also spent a longer time on writing and wrote more lengthy texts when compared with the comparison group. In addition, the researchers found that students generally knew more about writing after the intervention. Students were administered writing assessments in four genres, a portion of a writing knowledge survey, and a portion of a writing self-efficacy scale created by Graham and colleagues in 1993. However, in this study, after conducting a one way ANOVA analysis, the intervention was found to have no significant effect on students’ self-efficacy. The researchers posited that this may have been due to the fact that the young writers already had positive self-efficacy beliefs before, and then following, the intervention. The researchers also discuss the idea that young students overestimate or may not be able to assess their writing abilities. These estimates can be difficult to change, and these could have been reasons why the intervention had no effect on self-efficacy. A follow up SRSD intervention study, though, involving 55 second grade students, found that the intervention had positive effects on some aspects of students’ motivation. The teachers involved in this study had to make judgments about student effort and intrinsic writing motivation. It was found that the students in the intervention



group (that also involved peer support) put forth more effort and appeared to be intrinsically motivated to write (see Graham & Harris, 2005).

The SRSD model has also been used successfully with learning disabled students. In 2006, Garcia-Sanchez and Fidalgo-Redondo performed an intervention with fifth and sixth grade learning disabled and/or low achievement students, based on the SRSD model. The researchers also utilized a social cognitive model of sequential skill acquisition which focused on scaffolding, social feedback, modeling, self-talk, and different types of models (teacher and peer) for a second intervention group. Results were assessed with essay tasks, which were evaluated with several different measures ranging from productivity to quality, a self-report questionnaire for self-efficacy based on Bandura's guide (Bandura, 2006), and self-report measurements of the writing process. Both types of intervention groups demonstrated improvement in writing quality, length of time spent on writing, and an improvement in writing self-efficacy beliefs. However, only the social cognitive model demonstrated significant total self-efficacy improvement compared with the other intervention groups. The researchers suggest that the different type of modeling found in the social cognitive model (cognitive modeling) may have led to these results, with another possibility being that the social cognitive model focuses on mastery and coping models, rather than just mastery models.

**Additional writing interventions.** Garcia-Sanchez and de Caso-Fuertes (2005) conducted a study in Spain involving 191 fifth and sixth graders who either had a learning disability or were considered low achievers in writing. Their intervention focused on strategy instruction (planning, motivational, and reflexive processes). Students in the intervention groups were more productive and produced writing output of

a better quality than those students in the control group. The researchers utilized the EPPyFPE writing tests, an attitudes toward writing questionnaire developed by Wong et al. in 1996, a self-efficacy towards writing questionnaire, a metacognition towards writing open survey, and writing samples. As for self-efficacy and attitudes, few effects were found, as significant differences were found between the intervention and control groups for only four items in the two measures of self-efficacy and attitudes (both adapted versions of Wong et al.'s 1996 scales). A third study by Garcia and de Caso, also involving fifth and sixth graders in Spain, found no significant differences for their intervention group on one self-efficacy measure (the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire), and only modest, though positive, effects for the other measures (part of the EPPyFPE tests, a series of writing assessments). These students received an intervention program designed to improve self-efficacy and writing skills, utilizing Bandura's four sources of self-efficacy in their design (Garcia and de Caso, 2006). While this research suggests that it is possible to affect motivational variables such as self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes, the extent of the effects are unclear and should be further investigated.

However, Berninger and Hidi (2007) conducted an intervention study designed to improve self-efficacy and writing performance. This study involved 22 children who had just finished grades four through six. Modeling, dialogues, goal setting, feedback, using computers, and specific compositional and spelling instruction were the methods utilized for the intervention. After the three week intervention, children were given a self-efficacy questionnaire. Berninger and Hidi found that the students' quality of writing improved and there was a significant positive change on four of the motivation questions

for the self-efficacy measure. Further, the particular questions indicated less avoidant feelings in terms of writing, a higher self-efficacy belief for writing organization, a more positive perception of the value of writing, and more interest in writing.

An additional intervention resulting in a positive change in self-efficacy beliefs involved eleven eleventh grade students in a 1999 study by Chandler. This intervention had students focus on writing about themselves, based on the idea that self-referential topics would increase participants' self-efficacy. The intervention also included positive peer feedback and an emphasis on content over mechanics. Based on teacher evaluation, facilitator feedback, and evaluations of a short writing prompt, the researchers found that students increased their self-efficacy beliefs following the intervention program.

**Results of intervention studies.** Intervention studies regarding writing self-efficacy have had varied results. Some of the studies have discovered no significant differences after interventions for self-efficacy (Graham et al., 2005); some have only discovered slight differences (Garcia-Sanchez & de Caso-Fuertes, 2005); and others have found significant differences (Berninger & Hidi, 2007; Chandler; 1999). There are several possible reasons for this discrepancy. Some studies that had no effect included studies where the focus was not on self-efficacy, but on strategy instruction. As self-efficacy was not targeted specifically in the intervention, that could explain the effect. Also, several studies with minimal effect on self-efficacy were done with students with learning disabilities. This suggests that interventions may need to be adapted to affect self-efficacy beliefs of learning disabled children, especially since these children tend to have overestimated, and therefore positive, self-efficacy beliefs to begin. However, this may not totally be the case as other interventions targeting students with learning

disabilities did have a significant effect on self-efficacy (Berninger & Hidi, 2007). As for ages, most of the studies involved upper elementary through middle school students, with a few younger or older students. There did not seem to be a relation to age that could have resulted in the different patterns of results. Overall, this suggests that self-efficacy is possibly affected by writing interventions, but that more research is needed to determine the extent of their effectiveness and with what age students.

Still other interventions strive to ensure that students have accurate self-efficacy beliefs. Some students tend to overestimate their writing abilities (Campillo & Pool, 1999; Raedts, Rijlaarsdam, van Waes, & Daems, 2007). At a Flemish university, 144 freshman students underwent an intervention which consisted of an introductory course using models to teach writing. After the intervention, students had more accurate self-efficacy beliefs, but also performed better than the control group on writing quality (Raedts, Rijlaarsdam, Van Waes, & Daems, 2007). Campillo and Pool, in their 1999 intervention involving pre-freshman students in a summer remedial writing program, also found that self-efficacy beliefs became more accurate after an intervention, based on results from a self-efficacy assessment questionnaire. Additionally, using writing proficiency tests and homework assignments as well as the questionnaire, Campillo and Pool found that the writing and self-efficacy beliefs of the students also improved after the intervention, although the authors could not establish a causal relationship between the constructs. This suggests that, if students are more accurate about their abilities, then they will strive to complete activities that are not too challenging for them; leading them to more successes, which will lead to higher self-efficacy beliefs.

Other interventions target self-efficacy in order to improve writing performance. In 2010, de Caso et al. produced a writing intervention, used with 50 fifth and sixth graders, based on Bandura's four sources of self-efficacy (see Bandura, 1997). The researchers focused on instruction in writing processes, use of feedback, modeling, and creating mastery experiences. They also focused on creating a positive connection between participants and teachers. After examining writing samples from before and after the intervention, the EPPyFPE writing assessment tool, and self-efficacy questionnaires, they found significant differences between the control and intervention group in terms of amount of time that students spent on writing tasks, improvement in the quality of the writing product, and the amount of time and how often students revised their essays. While these are significant gains in writing performance, the effect of the intervention on self-efficacy was not discussed.

**Writing interventions for attitudes.** In current research, there have been very few interventions specifically designed to improve writing attitudes, and fewer still designed to improve attitudes in young children. De Bernardi and Antolini (2007) investigated an intervention to augment interest in a particular type of writing: argumentative writing. Interest is a motivational construct, related to attitude, as described above. For the intervention, the researchers used "interesting" topics (deemed interesting by same-age children), schema instruction, collaborative small groups, a range of resources, and specific phases of writing instruction, unfolding in a series of steps. These children were in middle school; there were 120 eighth graders involved. As the design was a pre-posttest design, the researchers found that after the intervention, these children improved in the quality of their writing, but also demonstrated improvement in

writing motivation. The students were observed to be more engaged in the writing activities and they described themselves as having improved in writing. Thus, their self-efficacy for writing should increase, because their beliefs about their ability to write improved.

Some studies examine both constructs. In Hidi et al.'s 2007 study, the researchers examined the effects of a computer-based intervention (with one group receiving only hard copies of information) on interest and self-efficacy for science based expository writing. These 143 grade ten students from Canada were monitored in their responses while working on writing tasks. The students completed an instrument measuring topic interest, self-efficacy for writing task, a prior knowledge measure, a situational interest survey, and a self-efficacy for completed writing task measure. The results indicated that self-efficacy and topic interest are significantly related; there was a positive correlation between topic interest and self-efficacy and between situational interest and self-efficacy. In a 2004 study, with a pre-posttest design, involving 127 fifth and sixth grade Spanish students with learning disabilities or low achievement, students participated in an intervention program focused on writing motivation and planning strategies. The researchers felt that using the planning strategies would enable students to attribute their success to effort; the researchers also focused on positive reinforcement of beliefs. As a result, the students demonstrated an improvement in the quality of their writing as well as their writing attitude, using measures from the EPPyFPE, several writing tests, as well as questionnaires related to writing motivation (the MOES I, II, and III, and another related to goals). However, no differences were found between the control and intervention groups for writing self-efficacy (Garcia & de Caso, 2004).

An additional study investigating interest and self-efficacy was conducted by Hidi et al. in 2002. This intervention focused on writing arguments and utilized a pre-post-test design, as described in the self-efficacy section. There were two types of intervention; one which focused on argument writing and had motivational aspects integrated into the instruction, and the other added an extra motivational element to the argument writing instruction. As with many of the studies, an increase in the quality and length of writing was noted after the intervention, but the intervention with the additional motivational piece only resulted in an improvement in the quality of boys' argument writing, with no additional improvement noted for girls' argument writing. No change in affect was found for the study, although students who showed a lower interest in writing also had lower scores for affect, compared to the other groups. The researchers found only a slightly positive increase in interest and self-efficacy, for some types of writing investigated, although scores were already positive at pre-test. Additionally, the researchers discovered that affect and self-efficacy scores were related for eleven particular writing genres. Hidi et al. also found that writing interest, self-efficacy for writing, and writing enjoyment in different genres are related.

**Factors affecting interventions.** The success of many of these studies indicates that self-efficacy and attitudes can be positively affected by interventions, although most of the studies either looked at only one of the constructs or had an effect on only one of the constructs. The interventions covered a variety of writing tasks, including narrative, argumentative, expository, informative, persuasive, and creative writing (Chandler, 1999; see Graham & Harris, 2005; Hidi et al., 2002). This indicates that the effects of writing interventions targeting these motivational constructs can be far-reaching in terms of

writing instruction. As students need to be able to write in a variety of styles and genres, it is positive to note that these interventions are effective across genres. While all of the studies reviewed had at least some positive effect on the quality of writing, they did not all have an effect on the constructs of self-efficacy or attitudes. This suggests a critical need for additional research in the area of motivational writing interventions, as motivation is a keystone for writing success. Additionally, very few of the current studies involve lower elementary-aged children. As Gottfried, Fleming, and Gottfried (2001) noted in their study, after the age of thirteen, verbal/academic intrinsic motivation becomes increasingly a stable trait. This indicates a need to address motivational issues in writing before the age of thirteen, most notably in those primary elementary years.

Another factor in intervention implementation is the timing of the intervention. Most of the above-mentioned interventions took place during the school day and during the school year. However, interventions can also occur as after-school programs or during summer or winter breaks. Out of school academic interventions have had positive results, but few (to date) focus on writing. Nelson and Manset-Williamson (2006) conducted a reading intervention using reading comprehension strategies. The study took place during summer break and examined two different intervention groups. The guided reading group was based on the guided reading model, and included modeling of specific reading comprehension strategies and guided practice with the students. In the Explicit Comprehension group, students were directly instructed about the different strategies as well as their purpose and value, and also received training in self-regulation. The study did have some marginally significant positive impact on reading self-efficacy for one intervention group (the Guided Reading group), but not for the other (Explicit



Comprehension). Campillo & Pool (1999) conducted a writing intervention program during the summer for 20 students entering college in the fall. In this intervention, students were given writing instruction, tutoring, utilized a computer program focused on practice for specific writing skills, practiced making estimates of their own self-efficacy, and received writing strategy training. Students became more accurate and showed an improvement with their self-efficacy beliefs over the time of the intervention and also demonstrated an improvement in writing achievement compared to students taking the same writing test from the normal summer course. In Lauer, Akiba, Wilkerson, Apthorp, Snow, and Martin-Glenn's (2006) meta-analysis of out-of-school time reading and math intervention programs, from kindergarten through grade twelve, they found that such programs can have a positive impact on students' achievement (based on their populations of at-risk students). They also found that there was no statistically significant difference between the program taking place after school or during the summer time. While the timing does not seem to have a negative impact on the success of the intervention, more research in the area should be conducted in order to have a more thorough understanding of the impact of out-of-school time interventions. Most especially, in regards to this study, research that examines after-school writing interventions needs to be conducted in order to evaluate the effectiveness of such interventions.

Particular themes repeat throughout the successful interventions reviewed, including the use of modeling, feedback, goal setting, and instruction of strategies. Many of the strategies utilized in these studies focus on at least some of Bandura's (1997) four sources of self-efficacy. While most of the studies focus on self-efficacy, there are some

studies and strategies centering on attitudes or related constructs. All of the above-mentioned strategies, as well as others, will be integrated into the intervention described in this study.

To summarize, writing is a crucial skill for success; not only academic success but success in life as well. Today's society is highly literate, and in order to obtain most jobs, the ability to write is critical. However, students going through and graduating from America's high schools are, for the most part, only partly competent in writing. This writing deficit must be addressed, and it must be addressed starting at the beginning of the problem: elementary school.

### **Hypotheses for the Current Study**

As interventions can be quite effective regarding writing, this study proposed an intervention targeting the writing self-efficacy beliefs, attitudes, and performance of third grade students. The intervention includes five self-efficacy lessons and several components integrated throughout everyday writing instruction. A detailed description of the intervention is in the methods section. The study utilized a pre-posttest design.

The first hypothesis is that writing self-efficacy beliefs, attitudes and performance are positively correlated. This seemed feasible due to previous research linking self-efficacy beliefs and performance, attitudes and performance, and self-efficacy beliefs and attitudes (Bruning & Horn, 2000; Graham et al., 2007; Hidi et al., 2002; Knudson, 1995; Pajares, 1997; 2003). While these relations have not all been proven with the writing domain, they have at least been proven with other literacy domains. Therefore, this suggests that the links remain for the domain of writing as well.

The second, third, and fourth hypotheses all relate to the intervention and its predicted effects on the students who receive the intervention. The second hypothesis is that students will demonstrate an increase in self-efficacy beliefs following the intervention. The third hypothesis is that students will increase their attitudes towards writing post-intervention. The final hypothesis is that students will improve in writing performance, after the intervention finishes.

## **Chapter II: Methodology**

### **Participants**

Participants were 40 third grade students enrolled at a public elementary school in Maryland. The sample is representative of the diverse, urban area surrounding the school. The make-up of the school is approximately 12% Caucasian, 45% Hispanic, 33% African American, and 8% Asian. The school involved in the study is a Title I elementary school, with approximately 66% of all students receiving free or reduced lunch. Participants are from mainly working class family backgrounds with some middle income as well. The school has a high military population, with an approximately 34% mobility rate. There is also a high population of students who speak English as a second language, with approximately 40% of all students at the school participating in the ESOL program (English for Speakers of Other Languages).

All 94 students in the third grade received consent forms (see Appendices A through F for parent information letters, permission slips, and consent forms). 40 students signed up to participate in the study, with 20 in the intervention group and 20 in the control group, so 43% of the third graders participated. The four classroom teachers' names were placed in a hat, and were randomly assigned as intervention or control groups. Then, the students in the two intervention classes were given the intervention permission slips, and the students in the two control classes were given the control permission slips. However, during the course of the study, 1 student in the intervention group dropped out. In this study, there were 4 Caucasian (10%), 16 Hispanic (53%), 12 African American (30%), and 6 Asian students (15%). 15 students were male, and 25 students were female. In the intervention group, there were 11 males (55%) and 9

females originally (45%), with 1 female who later dropped out. For the control group, there were 14 girls (70%) and 6 boys (30%), with 1 female who was discounted due to her lack of English speaking ability. In terms of ethnicity, the intervention group consisted of 8 African American students (40%), 9 Hispanic students (45%), 2 Asian students (10%), and 1 Caucasian student (5%). The intervention group consisted of 12 students who were ESOL students (60%, higher than the school average). The control group consisted of 4 African American students (20%), 8 Hispanic students (40%), 4 Asian students (20%), and 3 Caucasian students (15%). The control group consisted of 8 students who were ESOL students (40%). Therefore, the two groups were not similar in gender makeup. In terms of ethnicity, they did have a similar number of Hispanic students, but otherwise were not similar.

### **Procedure**

There were two groups who participated in the study; the control and the intervention group. All participants completed three measures prior to and following the intervention. The control group participants met over the course of four lunch and recess sessions (on two consecutive days prior to the study and two consecutive days at the completion of the study). They ate lunch, and then completed the measures. The measures were administered by the researcher.

### **Intervention**

The intervention group met for seven sessions. During the first and last session, the measures were administered. The intervention took place during the middle five sessions. The intervention consisted of two portions during the five sessions. During each of the five sessions, there was a lesson on writing self-efficacy and an

approximately 30-minute long writing session, with additional components integrated into these writing sessions. The intervention lessons took place every week from the start date, March 28, 2011. The intervention concluded on May 16, 2011. 9 out of the 20 students attended every session; 4 students missed 1 session; 4 students missed 2 sessions; 2 students missed 3 sessions, and 1 student attended the first session and then dropped out of the program.

Several previous interventions also utilized similar methods, at least in part. One popular method used in interventions was a method of instruction of specific strategies (Garcia & de Caso, 2004; Garcia-Sanchez & de Caso-Fuertes, 2005; Garcia-Sanchez & Fidalgo-Redondo, 2006; Hidi, Berndorff, & Ainley, 2002; Lane et al., 2008). Another popular method was the use of a considerable amount of teacher-child and/or peer interaction (Chandler, 1999; Garcia & de Caso, 2004; Hidi, Berndorff, & Ainley, 2002). Garcia and de Caso's 2004 study also contained a success jar, where students received a token to put in the jar for every successful writing task they completed.

**Lessons.** For the first lesson, the objective was to enable students to become more self-aware of their own self-efficacy. The researcher led the class to discuss the meaning of the word self-efficacy in terms that a third grader could understand. After asking if the students knew what self-efficacy meant, the researcher discussed confidence in ability to accomplish tasks and came up with a definition that the students could understand. For example, self-efficacy is how sure I am that I can do something—read a book, write a sentence, tie a shoe. Then, the students and researcher discussed how self-efficacy can vary based on the task. The students and researcher brainstormed tasks and discussed how confident they were that they could accomplish those tasks. As many of these

students are English language learners, the language used for this task was simplistic. Students tended to use words such as, “I feel good,” “I feel excellent,” and “I feel bad,” to describe their confidence level, as in, “I feel good about my ability to do this task.” As students continued to discuss this, they started to make their own self-efficacious statements, and then began to make the connection between their own words and the idea of self-efficacy. Then, the researcher discussed with the class that how a student thinks about his or her abilities can affect how and what he or she does. For example, if a student does not think that he or she can do something, he or she may be unable to do so, but if he or she is confident in his or her ability to do something, that student would be more likely to accomplish it. Finally, the researcher modeled the following activity, and the students completed it. The students were given a piece of paper, where they each drew a picture of their head (to symbolize their thoughts and feelings). In that head, students wrote 3 self-efficacy statements. These statements were related to the topic of writing. They wrote how sure they are that they can do three different tasks. Examples of these statements are, “I feel good about writing a sentence,” “I am good at putting punctuations (sic),” and “I feel bad about editing my writing.” Once they finished, these were saved to review at the last lesson of the intervention, to see if the students’ beliefs changed.

The second lesson focused on goal-setting for writing. The researcher led the class to discuss what goals are. She asked students for their definition of what a goal was, and received responses such as, “something you need to accomplish,” and, “what you need to do.” After further discussion of the definition of goals, she asked for examples of goals that the students had in the past. Responses ranged from, “I wanted to

tie my shoes,” to “I wanted to learn how to divide.” A discussion ensued of goals and how they can be domain-specific. Then, the researcher and students discussed how to create goals that are challenging but still attainable. After explaining that it is necessary to do so, the researcher gave an example of a goal that was too challenging, and asked the students’ opinions of that goal (whether it was attainable or not, and why). The researcher’s example of a too-challenging goal was, “...if a kindergartner wanted to read a chapter book that had 700 pages.” After that discussion, students brainstormed goals that would be more appropriate, such as that kindergartner reading a picture book that had 7 pages. The session focused mainly on proximal (short-term) goals, so that students would be able to set their goals and see themselves making progress more quickly than with distal goals. The researcher also helped students understand the connections between the goals they set and their self-efficacy and that having high self-efficacy can help set more challenging goals. The researcher modeled the process for creating goals during the discussion. At the end, students created two individual writing goals to meet by the end of the intervention. Examples of goals that the students set are, “A goal that I would like to accomplish is to write a sentence more than 4 words,” “I want to get people to ask me to write for them,” “My writing goal is to make a 3 page fiction story in 4 weeks.”

The third self-efficacy lesson centered around self-efficacy for ideas; one of the six traits of writing that the school system in the study focuses on. The researcher and students discussed strategies for coming up with good ideas for writing. For example, students discussed using the world around them, and using events that happened to them or to someone close to them. Then, students brainstormed ideas and each student wrote



one or more good ideas on a lightbulb cut out. Examples of good ideas that the students generated are, “The first time I ever rode a rollercoaster,” “A football game for Steelers vs. Cowboys,” “The time I went to a trip to North Carolina to see my cousin Bella and Lilly,” and “When I went to summer school to learn about third grade.” At the beginning and then again at the end of the session, we discussed their self-efficacy for good ideas. Students made a statement about how well they thought they could come up with good ideas. Additionally, throughout the lesson, the researcher gave oral positive feedback designed to improve self-efficacy, targeted at good ideas.

The fourth self-efficacy lesson focused on self-efficacy for word choice, another of the six traits of writing. The teacher and students discussed weak and strong word choices, and how to transform weak sentences into strong ones. For example, the teacher gave the students an example of a simple sentence, such as, “I see a dog.” Then, the teacher repeated the sentence with interesting words added, such as, “I spotted a large, ferocious brown dog barking at a tiny gray kitten.” The students and teacher discussed which sentence was the most interesting, and the teacher gave them more simple sentences to transform. Then, the teacher and students discussed words such as, “bad,” “good,” and “said.” Together, they brainstormed a few more interesting synonyms for each word. Then, all students were given an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to create a strong sentence. The students wrote weak words and sentences on a piece of paper, such as “I see a tree,” and took turns “throwing away” the weak words/sentences in the recycling bin. Next, the students wrote two strong sentences and some students (who wanted to share) shared one with the class. Examples of strong sentences that the students wrote are, “Joel showed a lot of potential,” “He was determined to get a 100%

on his spelling and math test”, “Someone screamed in the dark,” and “I eliminated a chocolate bar.” Students were able to confirm that they could make good word choices. At the beginning and then again at the end of the session, we discussed their self-efficacy for word choice. Students made a statement about how well they thought they used strong words in their writing. Additionally, throughout the lesson, the researcher gave oral positive feedback designed to improve self-efficacy, targeted at word choice.

The last self-efficacy lesson was about celebrating successes and embracing mistakes. The researcher described several famous people who made mistakes, and the successes they achieved despite (or because) of those mistakes. Some of the people described were Winston Churchill, who failed sixth grade; Albert Einstein, who did not speak until he was four and was expelled from school; and Michael Jordan, who was cut from his high school basketball team. Students had a chance to share the success chart and discuss the successes they made in writing over the past 7 weeks. Students revisited the self-efficacy statements made on the first lesson, and discussed whether their feelings were the same or different.

**Integrated aspects of the intervention.** Several components of the intervention were integrated throughout the writing sessions, which focused on using the Writer’s Workshop method and the six plus one traits method to produce a piece of narrative writing. In the Writer’s Workshop method, there is a short mini-lesson, followed by guided practice and peer conferencing, guided writing groups, conferences, or independent writing, sharing and then checking for understanding (Montgomery County Public Schools, 2005). The six plus one traits simply focus on the following traits of writing: voice, word choice, organization, conventions, ideas, sentence fluency and

presentation. For the intervention, students kept a “success chart” where they kept track of each step of the writing process for each piece of writing on this chart (see Appendix L). Each step they completed was another “success” to put on the chart. As students achieve more “successes” in writing, this should build up their self-efficacy beliefs.

For the five writing sessions, students began by planning, or prewriting, their piece of work. After whole-group discussion of the assignment (write a personal narrative or piece of fiction), and opportunity to share ideas of what to write about with others in the group, students completed a graphic organizer to help compose their thoughts. Students could fold the paper in 3 parts (beginning, middle, and end), or they could choose to complete a web with the main story events written on it. Once students completed that stage of writing, they moved on to writing their first draft of their story. This consisted of students writing without regard to grammar, spelling, or punctuation. After they concluded their first draft, students shared their stories with each other and the teacher to receive ideas about what they could add to their writing to make it even better (the revising stage of writing). After the revision stage was completed, students entered the editing phase, which is when they looked up the correct spellings of words and changed their punctuation and grammar. The final stage of writing is the publishing stage, when students rewrote their stories in nice handwriting on a final copy paper. They then illustrated their stories. This was spread across the five different sessions, as students spent different amounts of time on each stage. Some students took longer to write their drafts, for example. Students completed each stage at their own pace. At the start of each session, the stages of the writing process were reviewed and the researcher

took note of who was at what stage. Students met with the researcher at least once during each session to receive support and feedback, and to learn or work on writing strategies.

One additional component of the intervention, seen during the writing lessons, is feedback. Feedback relates to the self-efficacy source of verbal persuasion. Feedback on performance can raise self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). For the intervention, the researcher provided specific feedback on student writing and strategy use, in addition to encouraging, positive remarks. The specific feedback not only allowed students to gain a more realistic understanding of their capabilities, but should also have assisted them with enhancing their writing. Two types of feedback were used: verbal and written. An example of verbal feedback would be, “I like the way that you used the strategy of using a web to organize your writing.” A written feedback example is, “The word choices you made here are excellent! They make your story more interesting and easier to read.”

The final integrated component is specific learning strategies. Students were taught specific learning strategies geared to writing, such as using a graphic organizer to organize thoughts prior to writing, revising writing for grammar and content, and using different sentence starters and transitions to add variety and depth into the writing piece. These strategies give students the tools they need in order to improve their writing performance. Additionally, as students use these tools, and their performance increases, so should their self-efficacy. Further, since students have tools readily available to them, they should be able to enjoy the writing process more, rather than feeling concerned about how to write.

## Measures

There are three different measures; one that measures writing self-efficacy, one that measures writing attitude, and one that measures writing performance.

**The writing self-efficacy scale.** The Writing Self-Efficacy Scale (see Appendix F) is a researcher-created measure designed to discover how a student feels about their ability to complete specific writing tasks. This measure is related to published writing scales in that it addresses particular writing tasks that students will encounter in writing (as Shell et al., 1995 did). It also relates because it uses a four point Likert scale (with pictures added) as did Graham et al. (1993). I chose to develop my own measure because, by developing my own scale, the questions relate more closely to the actual writing curriculum that the students learn. The ten questions of the scale relate to the ten most important concepts that the students learn in writing. Scales developed by other researchers do not match the Montgomery County curriculum so closely. There are ten questions, covering topics from basic composition to mechanics and revision. These questions cover the basic skills learned in the second grade at this elementary school. The questions were reviewed by an additional second grade teacher to determine their appropriateness, both in content and word choice. Each question asks the child to judge their confidence in their abilities, based on a four point Likert Scale. The responses range from “Not sure at all” to “I am a little sure” to “I am mostly sure” and finally, “I am definitely sure.” Each response is accompanied by a picture of a face demonstrating an emotion, from puzzled to straight-faced to two different degrees of smiles. It was decided to use pictures in addition to words so that the children could understand the idea of a Likert scale, as well as assisting them in comprehension of the responses. Students

completed this survey as a group, with the researcher/trained teacher reading each item aloud. Students' responses to the ten items were summed to form a total score on this measure. Cronbach's Alpha for this scale was .791.

**The writing attitude scale.** The Writing Attitude Scale was created by Kear, Coffman, McKenna, and Ambrosio (2000) (see Appendix G). The Writing Attitude Scale has reliability coefficients that range from .85 to .93 in Kear et al.'s work. Many procedures used to develop this scale were adapted from McKenna and Kear's (1990) Elementary Reading Attitude Survey. The Writing Attitude Scale consists of 28 questions asking students how they feel about doing specific writing tasks. The responses are based on a four point Likert scale, but consist only of pictures. Each picture is of a cartoon character, Garfield (his use was approved by creator Jim Davis) demonstrating a particular emotion, ranging from very happy to somewhat happy to somewhat upset to very upset. Students' responses to the 28 items are summed to form a total score. In the present study students' responses were summed to form a total score; scores on each item range from one (for the very upset Garfield) to four (for the very happy Garfield). Students also completed this survey as a group, with the researcher/trained teacher reading each item aloud. In this study the Cronbach's alpha was .855.

**The writing assessment.** The writing assessment is a researcher-created scale designed to measure third graders' writing performance. This is a 30 minute assessment. Students were given the topic of, "My Best Day Ever." This topic was chosen based on the fact that students would have considerable background knowledge on the subject and

that it was personally relevant, making it more meaningful and potentially interesting to the students.

Each assessment was read by two raters, both of whom were second grade teachers. They did not know the students' identity or class. Scoring was based on a four point scale, as utilized by the public school system to grade writing assessments. When the two raters' scores differed, the raters discussed the differing score until they could come to an agreement. The percentage of initial agreement was 78.9%. After discussion of the pieces that the raters did not initially agree upon, the rate of agreement was 100%.

Students received a score for writing to express personal ideas, and a score for grammatical use, capitalization, and punctuation. This scale is presented in the Montgomery County Public Schools Grade 2, Quarter 1 curriculum guide, pages 346-347 (2006) (See Appendices J and K). Since the original goal was to work with second graders, the approved rubric for the writing assessment comes from the second grade curriculum. However, the school district did not allow the researcher to work with second graders, and so the project was completed with third graders. The basic rubric to grade a piece of narrative writing was appropriate for both second and third graders, though, and so was used to assess the third graders' writing. For writing to express personal ideas, a score of 4 includes: "uses the writing process to develop a story (express personal ideas) with a beginning middle and end. Pre-write, first draft, revise, edit, final product, with some attention the 6-traits." A score of 3 includes: "Writes a story with a beginning, middle, and end with developing use of the writing process and some attention to 6-traits." A score of 2 includes: "Writes multiple sentences in a story with no attention to the writing process. Sentences are in a logical sequence, but story lacks development

of beginning, middle, and end.” Finally, a score of 1 includes: “Writes a story using simple sentences in a logical sequence.”

For grammatical use, capitalization, and punctuation, there are 7 criteria. To obtain a score of 4, students must meet 6-7 of the criteria; for a score of 3, students must meet 4-6 of the criteria; for a score of 2, students must meet 2-3 of the criteria; and for a score of 1, students meet 1 of the criteria. The criteria are: “Uses capital letters (at the beginning of the sentence, when writing I in isolation, for proper nouns); Uses periods correctly (at the end of sentences, for numbered lists, for abbreviated words); Uses quotation marks when writing simple dialogue; Uses commas correctly (in dates, in salutations and closings, for items in a series, for addresses); Identifies and uses various parts of speech (Adjectives, verb forms, verb tenses); Writes a simple sentence with subject and verb agreement; and Recognizes when personal nouns and pronouns agree.”

### **Research Design and Analyses**

This study used a pre-posttest design. At pre-test participants responded to all items, with the exception of 4 students who skipped an item on the attitude scale at pretest. For the control group, students were given the writing attitudes and self-efficacy scale at one session, and the writing assessment at the following session. Students in the intervention group completed all measures during one session. Students also completed all measures at post-test, during the seventh and final session for the intervention group, and during the same week for the control group.

The first research question was: is there a relation between writing self-efficacy beliefs, attitudes and performance? The corresponding hypothesis is that writing self-efficacy beliefs, attitudes and performance are positively correlated, and this was



assessed by computing Pearson's correlations at both pretest and posttest to examine the strength of the relations among the variables. In addition, for each measure, pre- and post-test correlations were assessed, for all students, the intervention group, and the control group.

The second research question was: will the intervention lead to a difference in writing self-efficacy beliefs between the intervention and control groups? The second hypothesis proposed that students would demonstrate an increase in self-efficacy beliefs following the intervention. This research question was addressed by one analysis. A one-way ANCOVA was performed, with the posttest scores as the dependent variable, the group as the independent variable, and the pretest scores as the covariate. A one way ANCOVA was chosen for this and the following two research questions, as the covariate analysis takes into account differences among the groups at pretest. As the groups were different in terms of ethnicity, gender, writing skills, and percentage of ESOL students, the use of ANCOVA helps control for these pre-existing differences.

The third research question was: will the intervention lead to a difference in writing attitudes between groups? The study proposed that students would increase their attitudes towards writing post-intervention, and this was also assessed as the second research question was, with a one-way ANCOVA, with the posttest scores as the dependent variable, the group as the independent variable, and the pretest scores as the covariate.

Finally, the fourth research question was: will the intervention lead to a difference to in writing performance? The final hypothesis proposed that students would improve in writing performance, after the intervention finished. This hypothesis was assessed in the same way as the second and third hypotheses. A one-way ANCOVA was performed,

with the posttest scores as the dependent variable, the group as the independent variable, and the pretest scores as the covariate.

### **Chapter III: Results**

The hypotheses were tested by conducting ANCOVAs and Pearson's correlations. ANCOVA was used because it allows the means to be adjusted for differences in the pretest among the groups. Before presenting the results for each research question, basic descriptive statistics for each variable are presented, first for all of the students, and then broken down into each group (intervention and then control).

Means for the whole group are presented in Tables 1 and 2. The mean score of the writing attitude assessment at pretest was 80.97 (based on a total score of 112 possible points), with a standard deviation of 14.01. At posttest, the mean was slightly lower with a score of 78.13, and a similar standard deviation of 14.12. For the writing self-efficacy assessment, the mean score at pretest was 32.78 (out of a total possible score of 40), and a standard deviation of 5.35. At posttest, the self-efficacy mean was slightly higher with 33.36 and a smaller standard deviation of 4.68. For the writing assessment itself, there were two sections, ideas and grammar, both with a possible total score of 4. The mean score for ideas at pretest was 1.86, with a standard deviation of .74. Then, at posttest, the mean score was slightly higher with 2.15 and a standard deviation of .86. Finally, the grammar section had a mean score of 2.05 at pretest (SD=.77) and a slightly higher mean score of 2.23 at posttest (SD=.68).

Table 1

*Overall Means and Standard Deviations for the Pretest Variables*

	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Attitude	80.9706	14.00538	34
Efficacy	32.7895	5.34819	38
Performance Ideas	1.8684	.74148	38
Performance Grammar	2.0526	.76925	38

Table 2

*Overall Means and Standard Deviations for the Posttest Variables*

	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Attitude	78.1316	14.11568	38
Efficacy	33.3684	4.69284	38
Performance Ideas	2.1579	.85507	38
Performance Grammar	2.2368	.67521	38

Pre and posttest means for the intervention group are presented in Tables 3 and 4. For the intervention group, the mean score of the writing attitude assessment was 80.17 at pretest with a standard deviation of 12.80 (again out of 112 possible points) and slightly lower at posttest, 77.63, with a standard deviation of 11.13. For the self-efficacy assessment, the mean score was 31.94 at pretest with a standard deviation of 5.83 and slightly higher at posttest, 33.00 with a standard deviation of 4.60, again with a possible total score of 40. The mean score for the writing performance assessment in terms of ideas was 1.73, with a standard deviation of .85 at pretest, and was slightly higher at posttest, with a mean score of 2.21 with a standard deviation of .85 (with a total possible

score of 4.0). Lastly, for writing performance in terms of grammar, the mean score at pretest was 1.94 with a standard deviation of .70, and was marginally higher at posttest, with a mean score of 2.05 and a standard deviation of .62.

Table 3

*Intervention Group Means and Standard Deviations for the Pretest Variables*

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Attitude	17	80.1765	12.80740
Efficacy	19	31.9474	5.82594
Performance Ideas	19	1.7368	.73349
Performance Grammar	19	1.9474	.70504

Table 4

*Intervention Group Means and Standard Deviations for the Posttest Variables*

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Attitude	19	77.6316	11.13658
Efficacy	19	33.0000	4.60676
Performance Ideas	19	2.2105	.85498
Performance Grammar	19	2.0526	.62126

Pre and posttest means for the control group are presented in tables 5 and 6. For the control group, the mean score of the writing attitude assessment was 81.76 at pretest with a standard deviation of 15.47 and slightly lower at posttest, 78.63, with a standard deviation of 16.88. For the self-efficacy assessment, the mean score was 33.63 at pretest with a standard deviation of 4.83 and almost the same at posttest, 33.74 with a standard

deviation of 4.87. The mean score for the writing performance assessment in terms of ideas was 2.00, with a standard deviation of .75 at pretest, and was almost the same at posttest, with a mean score of 2.11 with a standard deviation of .88. Lastly, for writing performance in terms of grammar, the mean score at pretest was 2.16 with a standard deviation of .83, and was marginally higher at posttest, with a mean score of 2.42 and a standard deviation of .69.

Table 5

*Control Group Means and Standard Deviations for the Pretest Variables*

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Attitude	17	81.7647	15.46581
Efficacy	19	33.6316	4.83288
Performance Ideas	19	2.0000	.74536
Performance Grammar	19	2.1579	.83421

Table 6

*Control Group Means and Standard Deviations for the Posttest Variables*

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Attitude	19	78.6316	16.88264
Efficacy	19	33.7368	4.87445
Performance Ideas	19	2.1053	.87526
Performance Grammar	19	2.4211	.69248

## Correlations

The first research question was: is there a relation between writing self-efficacy beliefs, attitudes and performance? The corresponding hypothesis is that writing self-efficacy beliefs, attitudes and performance are positively correlated. This was assessed by computing Pearson's correlations at both pretest and posttest to examine the strength of the relations among the variables. These analyses were done on the whole sample, then again conducted for the control and intervention groups separately. The correlations for the whole sample are presented in Tables 7 and 8.

The results of the correlational tests indicate a significant positive relation between writing self-efficacy and attitude at pretest of  $r=.66, p<.01$ . Writing ideas and grammar were also significantly positively related at pretest,  $r=.39, p<.05$ . At posttest, there continued to be a significant positive relation between writing self-efficacy and attitude,  $r=.61, p<.01$ . However, the relation between writing ideas and grammar changed at posttest. It was no longer significant and the correlation was negative instead of positive. Overall, the results partially support the hypothesis, in that there is a relation between self-efficacy and attitude. However, there was no significant linear relation between performance and either self-efficacy or attitude at pretest or posttest.

When the analyses were done separately for the control group, a significant positive relation was found between self-efficacy and attitude at pretest,  $r=.63, p<.01$ , and at posttest,  $r=.63, p<.01$ . Additionally, attitudes at pretest and self-efficacy at posttest were significantly positively related,  $r=.51, p<.05$ . The reverse was also significant, with self-efficacy at pretest and attitudes at posttest having a positive relation,  $r=.49, p<.05$ . Further, the performance for ideas was significantly positively related to

performance for grammar at pretest, with  $r=.72, p<.01$ . Performance for ideas at posttest was significantly positively related to self-efficacy at posttest, with  $r=.49, p<.05$ .

When the analyses were done for the intervention group, a significant positive relation was found between self-efficacy and attitude at pretest,  $r=.73, p<.01$ , and at posttest,  $r=.62, p<.01$ . Additionally, attitudes at pretest and self-efficacy at posttest were significantly positively related,  $r=.81, p<.01$ .

Table 7

*Correlations for the Pretest Variables*

		Attitude	Efficacy	Performance Ideas	Performance Grammar
Attitude	Pearson Correlation	1	.662**	.124	-.008
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.486	.964
	N	34	34	34	34
Efficacy	Pearson Correlation	.662**	1	-.075	-.030
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.653	.858
	N	34	38	38	38
Performance Ideas	Pearson Correlation	.124	-.075	1	.392*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.486	.653		.015
	N	34	38	38	38
Performance Grammar	Pearson Correlation	-.008	-.030	.392*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.964	.858	.015	
	N	34	38	38	38

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\*.Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).



Table 8

*Correlations for the Posttest Variables*

		Attitude	Efficacy	Performance Ideas	Performance Grammar
Attitude	Pearson Correlation	1	.613**	.063	-.040
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.706	.811
	N	38	38	38	38
Efficacy	Pearson Correlation	.613**	1	.302	.176
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.066	.289
	N	38	38	38	38
Performance Ideas	Pearson Correlation	.063	.302	1	-.020
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.706	.066		.906
	N	38	38	38	38
Performance Grammar	Pearson Correlation	-.040	.176	-.020	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.811	.289	.906	
	N	38	38	38	38

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Pretest to posttest correlations.** Pearson's correlations were also computed for each of the variables, pretest to posttest, both in terms of the overall group and then broken down into the intervention and control groups. For the overall group, for writing attitude, there was a significant positive relation between the measure at pretest and the measure at posttest,  $r=.75$ ,  $p<.01$ . There was also a significant positive relation between the self-efficacy measures at pretest and posttest,  $r=.66$ ,  $p<.01$ . There was a significant positive relation between performance ideas at pretest and posttest,  $r=.38$ ,  $p<.05$ .

However, for performance in terms of grammar, the correlation between pretest and posttest was not significant.

For the control group, there was a significant positive relation between the attitude measures at pretest and posttest,  $r=.77, p<.01$ . There was also a significant positive relation between the self-efficacy measures at pretest and posttest,  $r=.58, p<.01$ . There was no significant relation between the performance for ideas measure at pretest and posttest, nor was there a significant relation between the performance for grammar measures at pretest and posttest.

For the intervention group, there was a significant positive relation between the attitude measures at pretest and posttest,  $r=.73, p<.01$ . There was also a significant positive relation between the self-efficacy measures at pretest and posttest,  $r=.73, p<.01$ . There was a significant relation between the performance for ideas measure at pretest and posttest,  $r=.54, p<.05$ . There was no significant relation between the performance for grammar measures at pretest and posttest.

### **Writing Self-Efficacy**

The second research question was: will the intervention lead to a difference in writing self-efficacy beliefs between the intervention and control groups? The second hypothesis proposed that students will demonstrate an increase in self-efficacy beliefs following the intervention. This research question was assessed with a one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA), with the posttest efficacy scores as the dependent variable, group as the independent variable, and the pretest efficacy scores as the covariate. Additionally, the homogeneity of regression assessment was conducted, with the

resulting  $F$  value of .001 with a significance value of .971, indicating homogeneity of regression was present and therefore it was appropriate to use the ANCOVA analysis.

Means and standard deviations for each group are presented in Table 9, and results of the ANCOVA are presented in Table 10. The group effect in the ANCOVA was not significant,  $F(1, 35) = .04$ . There was no significant difference between the groups after the intervention. Thus, the results do not support the hypothesis that the intervention would lead to a difference in writing self-efficacy beliefs favoring the intervention group. The results demonstrate that the intervention did not affect the self-efficacy beliefs of the students.

Table 9

*Self-Efficacy Means and Standard Deviations at Posttest*

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Intervention	33.0000	4.60676	19
Control	33.7368	4.87445	19
Total	33.3684	4.69284	38

Table 10

*ANCOVA on Self-Efficacy Beliefs*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Efficacy_Pre	350.399	1	350.399	26.702	.000
Group	.555	1	.555	.042	.838
Error	459.285	35	13.122		
Corrected Total	814.842	37			

a. R Squared = .436 (Adjusted R Squared = .404)

## The Writing Attitudes Scale

The third research question was: will the intervention lead to a difference in writing attitudes? The study proposed that students would increase their attitudes towards writing post-intervention. This was also assessed with a one way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA), with the posttest attitude scores as the dependent variable, group as the independent variable, and the pretest attitude scores as the covariate. Additionally, the homogeneity of regression assessment was conducted, with the resulting  $F$  value of .027 with a significance value of .870, indicating homogeneity of regression was present and therefore it was appropriate to use the ANCOVA analysis.

Means and standard deviations for each group are presented in Table 11, and results of the ANCOVA are presented in Table 12. The group effect in the ANCOVA was not significant,  $F(1, 31) = .14$ . The means for both groups (control and intervention) were exactly the same for attitude, at 78.71. There was no significant difference between the groups after the intervention. Thus, the results do not support the hypothesis that the intervention would lead to a difference in writing attitudes favoring the intervention group. These results indicate that the intervention did not affect the writing attitudes of the students.

Table 11

*Attitude Means and Standard Deviations at Posttest*

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Intervention	78.7059	11.19578	17
Control	78.7059	13.58200	17
Total	78.7059	12.25618	34

Table 12

*ANCOVA on Writing Attitudes*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Attitude_Pre Group	2828.395	1	2828.395	41.190	.000
Error	9.369	1	9.369	.136	.714
Corrected Total	2128.664	31	68.667		
	4957.059	33			

a. R Squared = .571 (Adjusted R Squared = .543)

**Writing Performance**

Finally, the fourth research question was: will the intervention lead to a difference to in writing performance? The final hypothesis proposed that students would improve in writing performance after the intervention finishes. This hypothesis was assessed in the same way as the second and third hypotheses. The results are broken down into the two sub-scores for the writing assessment, writing ideas and grammar in the writing. Additionally, the homogeneity of regression assessment was conducted, with the resulting *F* value of .794 with a significance value of .379, indicating homogeneity of regression was present and therefore it was appropriate to use the ANCOVA analysis.

For writing performance in terms of ideas, the group effect in the ANCOVA was not significant;  $F(1, 35)=.72$ . Means and standard deviations for each group are presented in Table 13, and results of the ANCOVA are presented in Table 14. The results do not support the hypothesis that the intervention would lead to a difference in writing performance, favoring the intervention group (in terms of ideas). This finding shows that the intervention did not affect the writing performance (for ideas) of the students.

Table 13

*Means and Standard Deviations at Posttest for Writing Performance: Ideas*

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Intervention	2.2105	.85498	19
Control	2.1053	.87526	19
Total	2.1579	.85507	38

Table 14

*ANCOVA on Writing Performance: Ideas*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Performance Ideas__Pre	4.163	1	4.163	6.395	.016
Group	.471	1	.471	.723	.401
Error	22.784	35	.651		
Corrected Total	27.053	37			

a. R Squared = .158 (Adjusted R Squared = .110)

For writing performance in terms of grammar, the group effect was not significant;  $F(1, 35)=2.87$ . Means and standard deviations for each group are presented in Table 15, and results of the ANCOVA are presented in Table 16. The homogeneity of regression assessment was also conducted, with the resulting  $F$  value of .008 with a significance value of .928, indicating homogeneity of regression was present and therefore it was appropriate to use the ANCOVA analysis.

The results do not support the hypothesis that the intervention would lead to a difference in writing performance, favoring the intervention group (in terms of grammar). This finding demonstrates that the intervention did not affect the writing performance (for grammar) of the students in the intervention group.

Table 15

*Means and Standard Deviations at Posttest for Writing Performance: Grammar*

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Intervention	2.0526	.62126	19
Control	2.4211	.69248	19
Total	2.2368	.67521	38

Table 16

*ANCOVA on Writing Performance: Grammar*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Performance Grammar__Pre	.002	1	.002	.005	.946
Group	1.279	1	1.279	2.874	.099
Error	15.577	35	.445		
Corrected Total	16.868	37			

a. R Squared = .077 (Adjusted R Squared = .024)

Overall, the intervention did not have the intended effect; that is, to improve the writing self-efficacy beliefs, attitudes, and performance of the third grade students. This may be due to a variety of factors, later discussed in the limitations section. However, one of the research hypotheses was confirmed, in part; that writing attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs are, in fact, related.

## Chapter IV: Discussion

The goal of the study was to investigate the relation between self-efficacy, writing attitudes, and writing performance, as well as to determine the effectiveness of an after-school writing intervention on these variables. 40 third graders at a public elementary school were involved with the study at the start, with one student dropping out during the study and another eliminated due to her not speaking English. 20 students participated in an after-school intervention which met once a week for seven weeks. The other 20 students served as a control group. Both groups of students completed assessments before and after the actual intervention. Students in the intervention group participated in the intervention for the remaining five sessions. Each session consisted of a lesson that focused on self-efficacy in writing (between 30 and 45 minutes) and a writing session of approximately 30 minutes, where students participated in the writer's workshop method of writing. During that time period, students progressed through the different stages of writing in order to produce a personal narrative.

The major results of the study were as follows. A significant positive relation was found between writing attitude and self-efficacy, both at pretest ( $r=.66$ ) and at posttest ( $r=.61$ ). These results suggest that students who tend to rate themselves as having a higher writing attitude would also tend to rate themselves as having a higher self-efficacy for writing. Another significant positive relation was found between writing ideas and grammar ( $r=.39$ ) at pretest but not at posttest. This result suggests that students who achieved higher scores in writing ideas would also tend to achieve higher scores on the writing performance test in terms of grammar (at pretest). There was no significant relation at posttest, however. The correlational tests did not indicate any significant



relation between self-efficacy or attitude and performance, at either pre or posttest times. As for the intervention, the results of the ANCOVA tests indicate that the intervention did not, overall, affect writing attitude, writing self-efficacy or performance. For all of the variables, there was no difference between the groups after the intervention. The next sections offer explanations of the results, limitations of the study, and directions for future research.

### **Relations Among the Variables**

Self-efficacy has been shown to be related to many different motivational variables, including attitudes, goals, self-concept, perceived value of writing, and apprehension (Pajares, 2003; Pajares & Valiante, 1997, Schunk & Swartz, 1993; Shell, Murphy, & Bruning, 1989, Tabassam & Grainger, 2002). Few studies, however, have directly examined the relation between self-efficacy and attitudes for writing. The findings of the current study support previous research in the area of self-efficacy and attitudes, thus adding to the current body of research on the matter. This study found a significant positive correlation between writing self-efficacy and attitudes. In previous research, learning disabled students in Graham, Schwartz, and MacArthur's (1993) study held positive self-efficacy beliefs in terms of their ability to complete composing processes (though the results also showed that those students overestimated their self-efficacy beliefs) as well as positive writing attitudes, after their intervention. Hidi, Berndorff and Ainley (2002) conducted an intervention study designed to improve argument writing and to investigate the link between interest, liking and self-efficacy for writing. They found that affect and self-efficacy scores for writing were closely related for different aspects of writing, including stories, diary writing, and argument writing, to name a few. Again,

there are few studies which investigate these constructs in terms of writing, but this study does support what has been discovered thus far, with a younger group of children.

Although previous research has shown that both writing attitudes and self-efficacy relate to performance, in this study the results did not support the previous research. There are several possible explanations for this result. Although the self-efficacy scale was created according to the guidelines suggested by Bandura (1997), it was researcher created and was not evaluated prior to the study through research to determine its strength as a measurement tool. It was reviewed by another second grade teacher, not a third grade teacher, even though the intervention was based on third graders, due to time constraints and constraints by the school system. This could have had an effect on the appropriateness of the measurement tool. As for the writing performance measure, that too was researcher created. It was based on Pajares and Valiante's 1997 study (which, in turn, followed Shell et. al's 1989 study procedures), where they gave students a 30 minute timed essay to write entitled, "My Idea of a Perfect Day." In the current study, students were given 30 minutes to write an essay entitled, "My Best Day Ever." While this is not an identical topic, the researcher felt that this topic was better suited to the younger children. Holistic scoring for the areas of ideas and grammar was used, on a 4 point scale, as opposed to Pajares and Valiante, who used a 5 point scale and did not separate the essay into ideas and grammar. However, the researcher used a generic writing rubric for the school system to score this essay. Perhaps using a rubric that was more specific to the actual essay would have been more appropriate than the generic rubric. This, too, could account for the lack of results for this study.

## **Effects of the Intervention**

The intervention was not successful in terms of its stated goals. It did not have an effect on self-efficacy beliefs, writing attitudes, or writing performance. There are a few differences between this intervention and previous successful writing interventions that have been previously conducted that may explain why this occurred. Though it has been found that students as young as first grade are able to differentiate between self-efficacy beliefs for different subjects, as well as identify their self-efficacy beliefs, perhaps age was a factor (Wilson & Trainin, 2007). Most intervention studies designed to improve self-efficacy or attitudes have been conducted with students who are fifth grade students or older (Campillo & Pool, 1999; Chandler, 1999; de Caso et al, 2010; Garcia & de Caso, 2006; Garcia-Sanchez & Fidalgo-Redondo, 2006; Graham et. al, 1993). One study that was conducted with third graders was successful in terms of enhancing different aspects of writing performance and knowledge about writing, but did not have an impact on self-efficacy (Graham, Harris, & Mason, 2005). Since intervention studies designed to improve writing performance have been effective with students in the primary grades, and studies designed to improve self-efficacy and attitudes have been effective with students in the older grades (as stated above), perhaps students in the primary grades are not yet ready for a writing intervention that targets those constructs in terms of their development (Graham & Harris, 2005; Lane et. al, 2008; Lieneman et. al, 2006). It is difficult to determine at this point, with the current research, exactly how well third grade students are able to understand the concept of self-efficacy, and how their perception and understanding of the concept may differ from that of the older students. While the students in the intervention group were able to define the concept and make self-efficacy

statements about themselves, they used simplistic language such as, “I feel good about writing a sentence.” Older students would most likely have a more complex understanding of the concept and would be better able to articulate their understanding of self-efficacy than the third graders. That is not to say, however, that the third graders did not understand the lessons or the concept, but that their understanding could be different. Perhaps the difference in understanding is a factor that caused the lack of results. It is possible that third graders have not developed enough of a clear understanding of self-efficacy that it would be affected by an intervention. Perhaps the students would need to be at a deeper level of understanding, in order for the intervention to have been successful. One way to address this issue would be to implement checks for understanding throughout the intervention, to see how well the students understand the concepts. That way, the researcher could return to concepts that the students do not understand, and explain the concepts more fully and in a more developed manner.

Another possible explanation for the lack of results is the short period of time available for the intervention. Students participated in five sessions, each of which was approximately sixty minutes in length. Most writing interventions that have been previously conducted took place over a longer period of time or met more often than once a week (i.e., Campillo & Pool, 1999; Garcia & de-Caso, 2004; Garcia and de Caso, 2006; Garcia-Sanchez & de-Caso Fuertes, 2005; Graham, Harris, & Mason, 2004; Lane et. al, 2008). While there does not seem to be an agreed-upon most effective length of time for an intervention, it follows as though more time would have been beneficial in this case. The intervention was originally designed to be approximately two and a half months long, with the self-efficacy lessons every two weeks. The additional components of the

intervention would have been embedded into daily writing instruction for those two and a half months. Thus, the researcher would have been able to work with the students daily. However, the school district would not allow this schedule and so the intervention became an after-school seven-week long program, meeting once weekly. In addition, the self-efficacy lessons all took longer than the expected 30 minute period of time to complete. This shortened the amount of time that the students had to be able to write their personal narrative pieces, as well as the amount of time that the researcher had to implement the integrated aspects of the intervention, such as the feedback.

In the future, conducting the study with more time would allow researchers to discover if the shorter amount of time involved in the current intervention could account for the lack of significant positive results. Given more time, the students would have been able to complete more than one piece of writing. They would have had more time to be exposed to the positive feedback, explore their own senses of self-efficacy as writers (guided by the researcher/teacher), and utilized the writing strategies and content of the self-efficacy lessons in their own writing. Having the feedback and writing instruction from the researcher daily could have resulted in a larger impact than just interacting with the researcher once a week.

Commonly, in the interventions which have been successful, students had to meet a certain set of requirements, such as performing at a certain level on a standardized test (i.e., Garcia & de Caso, 2004; Garcia-Sanchez & Fidalgo-Redondo, 2006; Graham, Harris, & Mason, 2005; Lane et. al, 2008). This often means that the students that are in interventions are at a similar academic level, but often that level is lower than that of many students. The students in this intervention ranged from above grade level to

severely below grade level in terms of writing ability. Some of the students could not write independently at all, while others were able to write paragraphs without any assistance. During the self-efficacy lessons, it became clear that several of the students were lacking many of the skills that the students should have acquired at that point in the school year. While all instruction is differentiated, this did pose a difficulty in conducting the intervention. A good deal of time was spent explaining concepts that the students should have already learned by that point in third grade. That is one reason why the self-efficacy lessons took longer than planned. This wide range of writing ability also caused difficulties with the students completing their writing pieces. Many of the students needed constant one-on-one attention to progress with their writing. As there was only one researcher, this became difficult at times. Again, giving more time to the intervention could assist with this difficulty.

Another possible explanation for the lack of success of the intervention lies within the high number of students who are English Language Learners. The successful interventions previously reviewed, while many targeted students with learning disabilities, did not focus on students who are learning English as their second (or other) language. For this study, however, the intervention group held a majority of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) students, with 60% of the group classified as ESOL. This was higher than the school average of 40%. For the control group, 40% of the group was classified as ESOL, which is the same as the school average. While the county in which the study took place has many different levels of ESOL, from students just entering the United States to students who are mostly fluent in English, the students in this study were not the first level of ESOL. None of the students were just entering the

United States, or known as ESOL “level one” (very beginning ESOL). It is not possible to say exactly where the students are from, but the majority of the ESOL students in the school come from Spanish speaking countries in Central and South America. Many of the students were born in another country, while many others have parents who were born in another country, but they were born in the United States. While ESOL students are generally spread out evenly throughout the classes in each grade, there was a higher percentage of ESOL students in the intervention group than the school percentage.

As other intervention studies have not investigated this factor, the impact of this factor is unknown and so it is possible that it significantly impacted the results. This impacted the intervention in a few key ways. Mainly, more time had to be spent going over the steps of the writing process and working with vocabulary. Many of the ESOL students needed a lot of assistance to write a single grammatically correct sentence, when third graders can usually write several grammatically correct sentences independently. Additionally, during the self-efficacy lessons, more time had to be spent reiterating the teaching points in different ways and breaking down the vocabulary being used to ensure that the ESOL students understood the lesson.

There are other possible ways that the high ESOL percentage could have affected the results. ESOL students may not be proficient in reading or in listening comprehension skills. While the measures were read to the students, the students may still have had difficulty understanding what the questions were asking. In addition, the lack of reading and listening comprehension skills could have affected the students’ ability to understand the lessons and participate in the writer’s workshop sessions. The ESOL students may have had difficulty not only understanding the language, but may have had difficulty with

being able to construct a clear understanding of the concept of self-efficacy. If the ESOL students could not come to the same understanding of the concept as their non-ESOL intervention counterparts, perhaps that affected the intervention results as well. While the researcher worked with the students individually and included accommodations such as the extra vocabulary work described above, the high proportion of ESOL students may have had a substantial impact on the success of the intervention. Future research needs to look at how to promote successful writing in ESOL students.

This intervention and more successful interventions had several aspects in common. For example, feedback and teaching specific writing strategies were two main features of this intervention, and have also been featured in successful interventions (Berninger & Hidi, 2007; de Caso et. al, 2010; Chandler, 1999; Garcia-Sanchez and de Caso-Fuertes, 2006; Schunk & Swartz, 1993; Wilson & Trainin, 2007). However, there are a few main differences, which could account for differences in the results. First, no other interventions have had self-efficacy lessons such as the ones focused on in this intervention, as they are researcher-developed. While the first and last lessons are very clear and focus on self-efficacy, the other three lessons focus on a writing concept and pull self-efficacy into the instruction of that concept. If the lessons focused solely on self-efficacy for all five lessons, rather than integrating self-efficacy and writing instruction, it is possible that the self-efficacy scores would have increased. However, it is also possible that students would only become more accurate in their self-efficacy beliefs, which may or may not lead to an increase, as younger children tend to overestimate their self-efficacy beliefs (Wilson & Trainin, 2007). Additionally, writing attitudes were targeted through integrated aspects of the intervention, such as feedback,



and making instruction engaging and “fun.” Writing attitudes were not targeted specifically in the lessons, so it is possible this had an impact on the results. If self-efficacy and attitudes were both targeted in the lessons specifically, then perhaps an improvement in both constructs would have occurred. Thirdly, this intervention was designed to take place during normal classroom instruction, and utilized the Writer’s Workshop method of writing instruction. The use of this Writer’s Workshop method has not been investigated in regards to self-efficacy instruction. Different aspects of the intervention were integrated into the Writer’s Workshop sessions, such as feedback and specific learning strategies (although feedback is a key part of the Writer’s Workshop method anyway). While the intervention study did emulate everyday writing instruction, it took place after school, and so, outside of the school day. Both of these factors could have impacted the results of the study.

There are a number of additional limitations of the study that could have potentially contributed to the lack of significant effects. Further limitations are explored in the following section.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

There are important limitations to this study which should be addressed and taken into account when considering the results and thinking about further research. First, one limitation of the present study relates to the attendance of the students. Very few students were able to attend every session of the intervention. Students had appointments after school; they stayed home sick, and so on. It is also possible that some of the students may not have taken the intervention as seriously as if it were in school because it was an after school program, and so did not affect their grades. This potential attitude could

have had an effect on the students' performance, as well as being a possible reason for their inconsistent attendance. Had the intervention been conducted during school hours, then the researcher could have waited until all students were present in order to conduct the self-efficacy lessons. However, since the intervention was conducted as an after-school program, the researcher had to continue with the self-efficacy lessons regardless of the attendance of all students. Thus, not all of the students experienced the full impact of all five self-efficacy lessons as well as the writing instruction with embedded aspects.

It would be important to take this inconsistency of attendance into consideration for future research. Conducting the intervention during school could alleviate this concern, since researchers could ensure that all students were present before conducting the self-efficacy lessons. However, if the intervention had to be conducted after school (as this one was), then one possible solution to this difficulty would be to meet with parents to discuss the importance of attending every session. While this would take care of conflicts such as appointments, it would not address the issue of absences due to illness. One possibility to address this issue in future research would be to build in more sessions of the after-school program. Instead of having two sessions for the pre- and post-testing, and five sessions of actual intervention, there could be ten sessions for the actual intervention. Then, the self-efficacy lessons could be conducted when all students were present, and the additional sessions could be devoted solely to the writing instruction and working on the personal narratives. That way, students would have more time to complete the personal narratives, work with the researcher one-on-one, and receive the feedback and other writing strategies that are integral to the intervention.

A second limitation is one that is not often discussed in intervention literature. This limitation has to do with the make-up of the group of students in terms of behavior. This particular group of students had several conflicts of personality within the group, which then became apparent in their behavior. Their personality conflicts were so severe that a good deal of time (approximately 10-15 minutes per session) was spent managing the students' behavior. This also could have impacted the effectiveness of the intervention, though it is a variable that would be difficult to measure. Some of the students had prior conflicts in their homeroom classes that they carried into the intervention after school, and others did not mix well. In homeroom classes, personalities that conflict can be separated into different classes. However, as this was an after school program, some of these personalities were put together in the intervention group. Also, the short amount of time and the nature of the intervention did not give students a lot of time in order to become accustomed to each other as a small group. Many of the students were in the same homeroom class, but this particular intervention group was a mixture of two homeroom classes. Perhaps in the future, more time could be spent conducting getting-to-know-you activities designed to cultivate a sense of classroom community. If the intervention was conducted as originally designed, in a classroom during the school day, then that sense of classroom community would already be present.

One possible alteration to the intervention would be to add another qualification requirement to be able to participate in the writing intervention (other than being in third grade). For example, only students who are underperforming in writing would be eligible to participate, or students who earned a particular grade in writing would be eligible to

participate, or students could take a writing assessment and then be considered and then selected or not selected for the intervention.

With respect to future research, one possible idea would be to change the self-efficacy instruction. Instead of having the intervention concentrate on self-efficacy, attitudes, and performance, perhaps limiting the intervention solely to self-efficacy would lead to an improvement in that area. More time could be spent on describing and examining the construct of self-efficacy, to make certain that students really understand the concept and how it can affect their own lives. A check for understanding could be added into the intervention, in the beginning, to determine whether students are understanding the concept and, perhaps, to capture their particular understandings along the way. Implementing a check for understanding at the end of each session, for closure, would also give the researcher a better idea of what the students took away from each lesson, what areas the researcher might need to go back over or present in a different manner, and what ideas the students had already internalized. Another change could be to include having the students make self-efficacy predictions, and then evaluating their self-efficacy after the tasks. The students could do this at each stage of the writing process. In Campillo and Pool's (1999) study, students made predictions of their self-efficacy prior to homework assignments and writing tests. Students became more accurate with their self-efficacy estimates and also showed an increase in self-efficacy scores. Perhaps including this practice into the intervention would help students to become more aware of their own self-efficacy, what self-efficacy means, and could possibly improve their actual self-efficacy. A final change in the instruction would be to ensure that the self-efficacy messages do not get overshadowed by the writing

instruction. When implementing both aspects of the intervention, it can be difficult to balance and integrate the two areas. As students are more used to the regular writing instruction, they may tend to focus on the writing strategies without focusing on the self-efficacy instruction or messages. The researcher needs to make certain, through questioning, repetition of ideas, and returning to the topic throughout the intervention session, that students are receiving all aspects of the intervention equally.

An additional possible idea for future research would be to investigate other aspects of motivation in writing interventions. The most common motivational construct that has been researched to date seems to be self-efficacy. While other constructs are examined, the studies are wide-ranging. The current study measured writing attitudes, and it is important to continue research into this idea. Perhaps including lessons or strategies into the intervention that specifically target writing attitudes could lead to an increase in the same. While this study did measure writing attitudes, there was no specific lesson geared towards writing attitude improvement; it was all integrated into the lessons and writing practice. Having a separate intervention with lessons that are designed to improve attitudes specifically could lead to an increase in both attitude and performance. This study did strive to improve attitude, by including more motivating and “fun” activities, but the students did not take a deep look at their own writing attitudes beyond completing the measure. Perhaps if students were to engage in a discussion about their writing attitude (similar to the discussion about writing self-efficacy), and then completed lessons targeting attitude, then there would be an improvement in writing attitude. It has been proven that writing attitudes can have an impact on writing performance, but it has not been extensively researched (Graham et al., 1993).

Therefore, this is a construct that should be examined more thoroughly in the future.

Additionally, a construct related to attitude is interest. A future intervention could try to increase interest in writing. Interest does relate to writing performance, but has also not been thoroughly researched (Albin, Benton, & Khramtsova, 1996). An intervention that includes interest or specifically targets interest could be a possible idea for the future.

To conclude, this study furthered the current research on the relation between self-efficacy and attitudes in writing, demonstrating a significant positive relation between the two constructs. While the intervention was not successful in improving the writing self-efficacy, attitudes or performance of the third graders, the study did expose several valuable areas of future research. Writing in the younger grades is an important skill, and writing self-efficacy and attitudes play a role in writing performance. However, little research has been conducted concerning these areas for younger children. Particularly, few interventions designed to improve self-efficacy or attitudes have been conducted with younger children. It is possible that third graders are too young to be affected by such an intervention. It is imperative that this is explored further, to see if interventions can improve the efficacy and attitudes of children as young as third grade, or if those constructs have not yet developed enough to be improved by interventions at this age. Additionally, it is important to investigate how outside factors such as behavior can impact the effectiveness of interventions. In this case, behavior was a possible factor in the lack of results of this intervention. It is rarely considered in the current literature, however. Regardless, the area of interventions for writing self-efficacy and attitudes, while proven to be important, have nonetheless not been thoroughly investigated up to the present time, and so should be a focal point for the future.



## Appendix A Consent Form A

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### CONSENT FORM A

<b>Project Title</b>	<i>Writing Beliefs, Attitudes, and Achievement</i>
<b>Why is this research being done?</b>	<i>This is a research project being conducted by Heather Williams, second grade teacher at Glen Haven Elementary and graduate student at the University of Maryland, College Park at the University of Maryland, College Park. We are inviting your child to participate in this research project because your child is a third grader at Glen Haven Elementary School. The purpose of this research project is to examine the relation between writing attitudes, self-beliefs, and achievement, and also to investigate the effectiveness of a writing intervention designed to target writing attitudes, self-beliefs, and achievement.</i>
<b>What will I be asked to do?</b>	<i>Your child will be assessed by their classroom teacher, who has been trained by the researcher. First, your child will be asked to fill out a questionnaire on their feelings about writing and a questionnaire on their feelings about how well they write, in addition to completing a short writing assessment. The questionnaires are intended only to give the researcher an idea of the writing attitudes, self-beliefs, and motivations of your child. Then, your child will participate in a writing intervention designed to improve his or her writing beliefs, attitudes, motivation and ability. The intervention consists of five weekly lessons about self-efficacy beliefs and writing attitudes, a focus on writing successes, and work on writing strategies, integrated within the Montgomery County Public Schools third grade writing curriculum. The lessons will occur after school and last one hour each. There will also be a parent information session. After the intervention, students will re-take the questionnaires and assessment to determine the effectiveness of the intervention.</i>



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<p><b>What about confidentiality?</b></p>	<p><i>We will do our best to keep your child's personal information confidential. To help protect your confidentiality and that of your child, all information will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the department of Education and Human Development at the University of Maryland. Your child's name will not be included on any of the data collected. A code will be placed on the collected data. Through the use of the participant ID, the researcher will be able to link your child's data to your child and only the researcher and your child's teacher will have access to the participant ID. If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity and that of your child will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your information and that of your child may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you, your child, or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.</i></p>
<p><b>What are the risks of this research?</b></p>	<p><i>There are no known risks associated with participating in this research project.</i></p>
<p><b>What are the benefits of this research?</b></p>	<p><i>The benefits to your child include possible improvement in writing attitude, self-belief, and achievement. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of children's attitudes about writing and methods to improve those attitudes, children's self-beliefs about writing, and writing achievement.</i></p>
<p><b>Do I have to be in this research?        May I stop participating at any time?</b></p>	<p><i>Your child's participation is completely voluntary. You may choose for your child to not take part at all. The decision whether or not to participate in the study will not affect your child's grade. Prior to the questionnaires and assessment, your child will be asked if he or she wants to participate in the survey and will be free to stop at any time during the questionnaires. If you agree to his/her participation, you or your child can withdraw consent at any time.</i></p>





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<p><b>What if I have questions?</b></p>	<p><i>This research is being conducted by Heather Williams, a graduate student in the Department of Education and Human Development at the University of Maryland, College Park. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Heather Williams at Glen Haven Elementary School, 10900 Inwood Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20902. (e-mail) <a href="mailto:Heather.M.Williams@mcpsmd.org">Heather M Williams@mcpsmd.org</a>; (telephone) 301-649-8051. You may also contact Allan Wigfield at the University of Maryland, College Park. (e-mail) <a href="mailto:awigfiel@umd.edu">awigfiel@umd.edu</a>; (telephone) 301-405-2827. If you have questions about you or your child's rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: <b>Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742; (e-mail) <a href="mailto:irb@umd.edu">irb@umd.edu</a>; (telephone) 301-405-0678</b></i></p> <p><i>This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.</i></p>	
<p><b>Statement of Age of Subject and Consent</b></p>	<p><i>I _____, give my consent for my child, _____ who was born on _____(Month) _____(Day) _____(Year), to participate in the research entitled Writing Beliefs, Attitudes, and Achievement. Your signature indicates that:</i></p> <p><i>you are at least 18 years of age;,          the research has been explained to you;          your questions have been fully answered; and          you freely and voluntarily choose for your child to participate in this research project.</i></p> <p><i>Or</i></p> <p><i>_____I do not give my consent for my child, _____, to participate in this study.</i></p>	
<p><b>Signature and Date</b></p>	<p><b>NAME OF SUBJECT</b></p>	
	<p><b>SIGNATURE OF SUBJECT'S PARENT OR GUARDIAN</b></p>	
	<p><b>DATE</b></p>	



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### **Forma de Consentimiento A**

<b>Título del proyecto</b>	<i>Las Creencias, las Actitudes, y el Logro de Escribir</i>
<b>¿Por qué se hace esta investigación?</b>	<i>Esto es un proyecto de investigación realizado por Heather Williams, maestra del tercer grado en Glen Haven Escuela Primaria e estudiante graduada en la Universidad de Maryland, College Park. Invitamos a su niño a tomar parte en este proyecto de investigación porque su niño es un alumno del tercer grado en Glen Haven. El propósito de este proyecto de investigación es revisar la relación entre escribir actitudes, las auto-creencias, y el logro, y también investigar la eficacia de una intervención de escritura que concentra en actitudes de la escritura, las auto-creencias, y el logro.</i>
<b>¿Qué tengo que hacer?</b>	<i>Su niño será analizado por su maestra, que ha sido entrenado por el investigador. Primero, su niño será pedido llenar un cuestionario sobre sus sentimientos acerca de escribir y un cuestionario sobre sus sentimientos acerca de cuán bien escriben, además de completar una evaluación corta de escritura. Los cuestionarios son sólo para dar al investigador una idea de las actitudes de escritura, de las auto-creencias, y de los motivos de su niño. Luego, su niño tomará parte en una intervención de escritura diseñado para mejorar sus creencias de escritura, las actitudes, el motivo y la capacidad. La intervención consiste en cinco lecciones semanales acerca de creencias de auto-eficacia y actitudes de escribir, un foco en éxitos escritos, y trabajo en estrategias de escribir, integrados dentro del plan de estudios del tercer grado del condado de Montgomery. Las lecciones ocurrirán después de la escuela por una hora. También habrá una reunión informativa para los padres. Después de la intervención, los estudiantes volverán a contestar los cuestionarios y la evaluación para determinar la eficacia de la intervención.</i>



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<p><b>¿Qué tal la confidencialidad?</b></p>	<p><i>Haremos lo mejor que podremos para mantener confidencial la información personal de su niño. Para ayudar a proteger su confidencialidad y la de su niño, toda la información será mantenida en un archivador cerrado con llave en el departamento de Educación y Desarrollo Humano en la Universidad de Maryland. El nombre de su niño no será incluido en cualquiera de los datos completos. Un código será colocado en los datos completos. A través del sistema de identificación del participante, el investigador podrá ligar los datos de su niño a su niño y sólo el investigador y el maestro de su niño tendrán acceso al código de identificación. Si escribimos un informe o un artículo acerca de este proyecto de investigación, su identidad y la de su niño serán protegidas a la extensión máxima posible. Su información y la de su niño pueden ser compartido con representantes de la Universidad de Maryland, College Park o autoridades gubernamentales si usted, su niño, u otra persona este en peligro o si somos requeridos a hacer así por la ley.</i></p>
<p><b>¿Cuáles son los riesgos de esta investigación?</b></p>	<p><i>No hay riesgos conocidos asociados con participar en este proyecto de investigación.</i></p>
<p><b>¿Cuáles son los beneficios de esta investigación?</b></p>	<p><i>Los beneficios a su niño incluyen una mejora posible en actitudes acerca de escribir, en la auto-creencia, y en el logro. Esperamos que, en el futuro, otras personas quizás beneficien de este estudio por la comprensión mejorada sobre las actitudes de niños acerca de escribir y métodos de mejorar esas actitudes, las auto-creencias de niños acerca de escribir, y acerca del logro en escritura.</i></p>
<p><b>¿Tengo que estar en esta investigación? ¿Puedo parar participar en tiempo?</b></p>	<p><i>La participación de su niño es completamente voluntaria. Puede escoger que su niño no participa en todo. La decisión de participar o no participar en el proyecto no afectará el grado de su niño. Antes de los cuestionarios y la evaluación, su niño será preguntado si él o ella quiere participar en la inspección y el/ella podrá parar en cualquier tiempo durante los cuestionarios. Si acepto la participación de su niño/a, usted o su niño puede retirar consentimiento a cualquier momento.</i></p>



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<p><b>¿Qué hago si tengo preguntas?</b></p>	<p><i>Esto es un proyecto de investigación realizado por Heather Williams, estudiante graduada en la Universidad de Maryland, College Park. Si tiene cualquier pregunta acerca del estudio de investigación mismo, contacta por favor a Heather Williams en Escuela de enseñanza primaria de Glen Haven, 10900 Inwood Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20902. (Correo electrónico) Heather_M_Williams@mcpsmd.org; (teléfono) 301-649-8051. Usted también puede contactar Allan Wigfield en la Universidad de Maryland, College Park. (Correo electrónico) awigfiel@umd.edu; (teléfono) 301-405-2827. Si tiene preguntas acerca de los derechos de usted o acerca de los derechos de su niño como un sujeto de investigación o desea informar de una herida relacionada a la investigación, por favor contáctese con: <b>Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742; (Correo electrónico) <a href="mailto:irb@umd.edu">irb@umd.edu</a>; (teléfono) 301-405-0678</b></i></p> <p><i>Esta investigación ha sido revisada según los procedimientos de IRB la Universidad de Maryland, College Park para investigaciones que implican sujetos seres humanos.</i></p>	
<p><b>La declaración de la Edad de Sujeto y Consiente</b></p>	<p><i>Yo, _____, doy mi consentimiento para mi niño, _____, quien nació _____(Mes) _____(Día) _____(Año), para participar en la investigación titulado <i>Las Creencias, las Actitudes, y el Logro de Escribir</i> . Su firma indica que: Usted tiene por lo menos 18 años de la edad; la investigación le ha sido explicada; sus preguntas han sido contestadas completamente; y usted escoja voluntariamente y libremente para su niño para participar en este proyecto de investigación.</i></p> <p><i>O ___No doy mi consentimiento para mi niño, _____, de participar en la investigación.</i></p>	
<p><b>Firma y Fecha</b></p>	<p><b>Nombre del Sujeto</b></p>	
	<p><b>Firma del padre o guardián del sujeto</b></p>	
	<p><b>Fecha</b></p>	

## Appendix B Cover Letter for Consent A

Dear Parent(s) and/or Guardian(s),

Your child is being invited to participate in a research project! Ms. Williams, second grade teacher at Glen Haven Elementary School, is conducting a research project in order to complete her master's degree at the University of Maryland, College Park. Ms. Williams is going to be researching how your child feels about doing writing activities, how confident your child is when writing, and how well your child writes. In addition, Ms. Williams will be leading an after school writing program (for students in Ms. Olson's and Ms. Stevenson's classes) designed to improve your child's feelings and confidence about writing, as well as his or her writing ability. This program matches the MCPS writing curriculum, so they will be learning third grade MCPS writing skills. Students in Ms. Mendes' and Ms. Calkins' classes will be asked to participate in several "lunch bunch" sessions with Ms. Williams, where she will give the students assessments designed to measure the child's feelings and confidence about writing, and his or her writing performance. The decision whether or not to participate will not affect your child's grade.

The writing program will take place on Fridays after school until 4:45, and will last for 7 weeks. A snack will be served each week. Attached to this letter is a consent form, which explains the project in greater detail, as well as a permission slip so your child may stay after school. Please return the consent form to school by \_\_\_\_\_, whether or not you allow your child to participate. You may send the consent form in to school with your child, who should give it to their homeroom teacher, or you may turn the consent form in to the main office. Thank you very much for your support.

There will be a parent informational night coming soon, where you can hear more about the project and ask Ms. Williams any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

Ms. Heather Williams  
Second Grade Teacher

Estimados Padres y/o los Guardianes,

¡Su niño es invitado a participar en un proyecto de investigación! La Srta. Williams, maestra del grado segundo Glen Haven, realiza un proyecto de investigación para completar su título de master en la Universidad de Maryland, College Park. La Srta. Williams investigará cómo su niño se siente acerca de hacer actividades de escritura, cuánto confianza tiene su niño cuando escribe, y que tal escribe su niño. Además, la Srta. Williams participará en un programa de escritura después del día escolar diseñado para mejorar los sentimientos y la confianza de su niño acerca de escribir, así como su capacidad de escribir (para los estudiantes de las clases de Sra. Stevenson y Srta. Olson). Este programa conforme con el plan de escritura de MCPS, así que ellos todavía aprenderán habilidades del tercer grado de escritura según MCPS. Los estudiantes de las clases de Srta. Mendes y Srta. Calkins participarán en varias “reuniones del almuerzo” (“lunch bunches”), donde ellos tomarán evaluaciones diseñados a medir sus sentimientos y nivel de confianza acerca de la escritura, y también, la ejecución de la escritura. La decisión de participar o no participar en el proyecto no afectará el grado de su niño.

El programa de la escritura ocurrirá los lunes después del día escolar hasta los 4:45 y durará 7 semanas. Se sirve una merienda cada semana. Adjunto con esta carta hay una forma de consentimiento, que explica el proyecto en más detalle, además una hoja de permiso para que su niño se quede a la escuela después del día escolar. Por favor devuelve la forma de consentimiento a la escuela antes de \_\_\_\_\_, incluso si decide no permitir que su niño participe. Puede mandar la forma de consentimiento con su niño, que lo debe dar a su maestro, o puede entregar la forma de consentimiento a la oficina. Gracias tanto para su apoyo.

Pronto, habrá una reunión informativa de noche, donde usted puede oír más acerca del proyecto y preguntar a Sra. Williams cualquier pregunta que usted quizás tenga.

Sinceramente,

La Srta. Heather Williams  
Maestra del segundo grado

**Appendix C Permission Slip for Group A**

Permission Slip—Writing Program

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes! My child may participate in Ms. Williams' after school writing program. My child may stay after school on Fridays until 4:45 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_ No, my child may not participate in Ms. Williams' after school writing program.

My child will be a:

\_\_\_\_\_ walker

\_\_\_\_\_ car rider

My child will:

\_\_\_\_\_ walk alone

\_\_\_\_\_ be picked up by: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to child \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Permiso—Programa de la escritura

Nombre del niño \_\_\_\_\_ Maestro/a: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ ¡Sí! Mi niño tiene permiso para participar en el programa de la escuela después del día escolar. Mi niño puede quedarse en la escuela los lunes hasta las 4:45 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_ No, mi niño no tiene permiso para participar en el programa de escritura de Srta. Williams.

El niño/a mío/a:

\_\_\_\_\_ caminará al hogar

\_\_\_\_\_ será recogido por \_\_\_\_\_

Relación al niño: \_\_\_\_\_

Número de teléfono: \_\_\_\_\_

Información del contacto en caso de emergencia:

Nombre: \_\_\_\_\_ Número de teléfono: \_\_\_\_\_

Nombre del padre \_\_\_\_\_ Firma del padre: \_\_\_\_\_

Número de teléfono del padre: \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix D Consent Form B



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### CONSENT FORM B

<b>Project Title</b>	<i>Writing Beliefs, Attitudes, and Achievement</i>
<b>Why is this research being done?</b>	<p><i>This is a research project being conducted by Heather Williams, second grade teacher at Glen Haven Elementary and graduate student at the University of Maryland, College Park. We are inviting your child to participate in this research project because your child is a third grader at Glen Haven Elementary School.</i></p> <p><i>The purpose of this research project is to examine the relation between writing attitudes, self-beliefs, and achievement, and also to investigate the effectiveness of a writing intervention designed to target writing attitudes, self-beliefs, and achievement.</i></p>
<b>What will I be asked to do?</b>	<p><i>Your child will be assessed by the researcher. First, your child will complete a questionnaire on their feelings about writing and a questionnaire on their feelings about how well they write, in addition to completing a short writing assessment. The questionnaires are intended only to give the researcher an idea of the writing attitudes, self-beliefs, and motivations of your child. There will also be a parent information session. At a later time in the year, students will re-take the questionnaires and assessment.</i></p>
<b>What about confidentiality?</b>	<p><i>We will do our best to keep your child's personal information confidential. To help protect your confidentiality and that of your child, all information will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the department of Education and Human Development at the University of Maryland. Your child's name will not be included on any of the data collected. A code will be placed on the collected data. Through the use of the participant ID, the researcher will be able to link your child's data to your child and only the researcher and your child's teacher will have access to the participant ID. If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity and that of your child will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your information and that of your child may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you, your child, or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.</i></p>



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<p><b>What are the risks of this research?</b></p>	<p><i>There are no known risks associated with participating in this research project.</i></p>
<p><b>What are the benefits of this research?</b></p>	<p><i>We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of children's attitudes about writing and methods to improve those attitudes, children's self-beliefs about writing, and writing achievement.</i></p>
<p><b>Do I have to be in this research?        May I stop participating at any time?</b></p>	<p><i>Your child's participation is completely voluntary. You may choose for your child to not take part at all. Prior to the questionnaires and assessment, your child will be asked if he or she wants to participate in the survey and will be free to stop at any time during the questionnaires. If you agree to his/her participation, you or your child can withdraw consent at any time. You understand that your child's participation in this study will not affect their class grade.</i></p>
<p><b>What if I have questions?</b></p>	<p><i>This research is being conducted by Heather Williams, a graduate student in the Department of Education and Human Development at the University of Maryland, College Park. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Heather Williams at Glen Haven Elementary School, 10900 Inwood Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20902. (e-mail) <a href="mailto:Heather_M_Williams@mcpsmd.org">Heather M Williams@mcpsmd.org</a>; (telephone) 301-649-8051. You may also contact Allan Wigfield at the University of Maryland, College Park. (e-mail) <a href="mailto:awigfiel@umd.edu">awigfiel@umd.edu</a>; (telephone) 301-405-2827.</i></p> <p><i>If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:</i></p> <p><b>Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742; (e-mail) <a href="mailto:irb@umd.edu">irb@umd.edu</a>; (telephone) 301-405-0678</b></p> <p><i>This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.</i></p>



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<p><b>Statement of Age of Subject and Consent</b></p>	<p><i>I _____, give my consent for my child, _____ who was born on _____ (Month) _____ (Day) _____ (Year), to participate in the research entitled Writing Beliefs, Attitudes, and Achievement. Your signature indicates that:          you are at least 18 years of age;          the research has been explained to you;          your questions have been fully answered; and          you freely and voluntarily choose for your child to participate in this research project.</i></p> <p><i>Or</i></p> <p><i>_____ I do not give my consent for my child, _____, to participate in this study.</i></p>	
<p><b>Signature and Date</b></p>	<p><b>NAME OF SUBJECT</b></p>	
	<p><b>SIGNATURE OF SUBJECT'S PARENT OR GUARDIAN</b></p>	
	<p><b>DATE</b></p>	



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<b>Título del proyecto</b>	<i>Las Creencias, las Actitudes, y el Logro de Escribir</i>
<b>¿Por qué se hace esta investigación?</b>	<i>Esto es un proyecto de investigación realizado por Heather Williams, maestra del tercer grado en Glen Haven Escuela Primaria e estudiante graduada en la Universidad de Maryland, College Park. Invitamos a su niño a tomar parte en este proyecto de investigación porque su niño es un alumno del segundo grado en Glen Haven. El propósito de este proyecto de investigación es revisar la relación entre escribir actitudes, las auto-creencias, y el logro, y también investigar la eficacia de una intervención de escritura que concentra en actitudes de la escritura, las auto-creencias, y el logro.</i>
<b>¿Qué tengo que hacer?</b>	<i>Su niño será analizado por su maestra, que ha sido entrenado por el investigador. Primero, su niño será pedido llenar un cuestionario sobre sus sentimientos acerca de escribir y un cuestionario sobre sus sentimientos acerca de cuán bien escriben, además de completar una evaluación corta de escritura. Los cuestionarios son sólo para dar al investigador una idea de las actitudes de escritura, de las auto-creencias, y de los motivos de su niño. También habrá una reunión informativa para los padres. Más tarde del año, los estudiantes volverán a contestar los cuestionarios y la evaluación otra vez.</i>
<b>¿Qué tal la confidencialidad?</b>	<i>Haremos lo mejor que podremos para mantener confidencial la información personal de su niño. Para ayudar a proteger su confidencialidad y la de su niño, toda la información será mantenida en un archivador cerrado con llave en el departamento de Educación y Desarrollo Humano en la Universidad de Maryland. El nombre de su niño no será incluido en cualquiera de los datos completos. Un código será colocado en los datos completos. A través del sistema de identificación del participante, el investigador podrá ligar los datos de su niño a su niño y sólo el investigador y el maestro de su niño tendrán acceso al código de identificación. Si escribimos un informe o un artículo acerca de este proyecto de investigación, su identidad y la de su niño serán protegidas a la extensión máxima posible. Su información y la de su niño pueden ser compartido con representantes de la Universidad de Maryland, College Park o autoridades gubernamentales si usted, su niño, u otra persona este en peligro o si somos requeridos a hacer así por la ley.</i>



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<p><b>¿Cuáles son los riesgos de esta investigación?</b></p>	<p><i>No hay riesgos conocidos asociados con participar en este proyecto de investigación.</i></p>
<p><b>¿Cuáles son los beneficios de esta investigación?</b></p>	<p><i>Los beneficios a su niño incluyen una mejora posible en actitudes acerca de escribir, en la auto-creencia, y en el logro. Esperamos que, en el futuro, otras personas quizás beneficien de este estudio por la comprensión mejorada sobre las actitudes de niños acerca de escribir y métodos de mejorar esas actitudes, las auto-creencias de niños acerca de escribir, y acerca del logro en escritura.</i></p>
<p><b>¿Tengo que estar en esta investigación?</b>  <b>¿Puedo parar participar en tiempo?</b></p>	<p><i>La participación de su niño es completamente voluntaria. Puede escoger que su niño no participa en todo. La decisión de participar o no participar en el proyecto no afectará el grado de su niño. Antes de los cuestionarios y la evaluación, su niño será preguntado si él o ella quiere participar en la inspección y el/ella podrá parar en cualquier tiempo durante los cuestionarios. Si acepto la participación de mi niño/a, usted o su niño puede retirar consentimiento a cualquier momento.</i></p>
<p><b>¿Qué hago si tengo preguntas?</b></p>	<p><i>Esto es un proyecto de investigación realizado por Heather Williams, estudiante graduada en la Universidad de Maryland, College Park. Si tiene cualquier pregunta acerca del estudio de investigación mismo, contacta por favor a Heather Williams en Escuela de enseñanza primaria de Glen Haven, 10900 Inwood Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20902. (Correo electrónico) Heather_M_Williams@mcpsmd.org; (teléfono) 301-649-8051. Usted también puede contactar Allan Wigfield en la Universidad de Maryland, College Park. (Correo electrónico) awigfiel@umd.edu; (teléfono) 301-405-2827. Si tiene preguntas acerca de los derechos de usted o acerca de los derechos de su niño como un sujeto de investigación o desea informar de una herida relacionada a la investigación, por favor contáctese con: <b>Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742; (Correo electrónico) <a href="mailto:irb@umd.edu">irb@umd.edu</a>; (teléfono) 301-405-0678</b></i>  <i>Esta investigación ha sido revisada según los procedimientos de IRB la Universidad de Maryland, College Park para investigaciones que implican sujetos seres humanos.</i></p>



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<p><b>La declaración de la Edad de Sujeto y Consiente</b></p>	<p><i>Yo, _____, doy mi consentimiento para mi niño, _____, quien nació _____ (Mes) _____ (Día) _____ (Año), para participar en la investigación titulado Las Creencias, las Actitudes, y el Logro de Escribir . Su firma indica que: Usted tiene por lo menos 18 años de la edad; la investigación le ha sido explicada; sus preguntas han sido contestadas completamente; y usted escoja voluntariamente y libremente para su niño para participar en este proyecto de investigación.</i></p> <p><i>O ___ No doy mi consentimiento para mi niño, _____, de participar en la investigación.</i></p>	
<p><b>Firma y Fecha</b></p>	<p><b>Nombre del Sujeto</b></p>	
	<p><b>Firma del padre o guardián del sujeto</b></p>	
	<p><b>Fecha</b></p>	

## Appendix E Cover Letter for Consent B

Dear Parent(s) and/or Guardian(s),

Your child is being invited to participate in a research project! Ms. Williams, second grade teacher at Glen Haven Elementary School, is conducting a research project in order to complete her master's degree at the University of Maryland, College Park. Ms. Williams is going to be researching how your child feels about doing writing activities, how confident your child is when writing, and how well your child writes. The decision whether to participate or not will **not** affect your child's grade.

Students in Ms. Mendes' and Ms. Calkins' classes will be asked to participate in four "lunch bunch" sessions with Ms. Williams (two next week and two in eight weeks). At these "lunch bunches," the students will have the opportunity to eat their school lunch with Ms. Williams, and then they will be given assessments designed to measure the student's feelings and confidence about writing, and his or her writing performance. This will take place during students' recess time, so the students will miss their recess for a total of four non-consecutive days. Students in Ms. Olson's and Ms. Stevenson's classes will be asked to participate in an after school writing program designed to improve children's feelings and confidence about writing, as well as their writing ability.

Attached to this letter is a consent form, which explains the project in greater detail, and permission slip so that your child may have the lunch bunches with Ms. Williams. Please return the consent form to school by \_\_\_\_\_, whether or not you allow your child to participate. You may send the consent form in to school with your child, who should give it to their homeroom teacher, or you may turn the consent form in to the main office. Thank you very much for your support.

There will be a parent informational night coming soon, where you can hear more about the project and ask Ms. Williams any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

Estimados Padres y/o los Guardianes,

¡Su niño es invitado a participar en un proyecto de investigación! La Srta. Williams, maestra del grado segundo Glen Haven, realiza un proyecto de investigación para completar su título de master en la Universidad de Maryland, College Park. La Srta. Williams investigará cómo su niño se siente acerca de hacer actividades de escritura, cuánto confianza tiene su niño cuando escribe, y que tal escribe su niño. La decisión de participar o no participar en el proyecto no afectará el grado de su niño.

Les preguntará a los estudiantes en las clases de las Srtas. Mendes y Calkins si quieren participar en cuatro reuniones del almuerzo (“lunch bunches”) con Srta. Williams (dos en la próxima semana y dos más en ocho semanas). A las reuniones del almuerzo, los estudiantes tendrán la oportunidad de comer el almuerzo de la escuela con Srta. Williams. Mientras tanto, ella les dará evaluaciones y cuestionarios diseñados para medir sus sentimientos y nivel de confianza acerca de la escritura, y también, la ejecución de la escritura. Estas reuniones ocurrirán durante el recreo, y los estudiantes van a perder su hora del recreo por 4 días no consecutivos. Los estudiantes en las clases de Sra. Stevenson y Srta. Olson les pedirá participar en un programa de la escritura que es diseñado a mejorar los sentimientos y confianza de los estudiantes acerca de la escritura, y también para mejorar la habilidad de escribir.

Adjunto con esta carta es una forma de consentimiento, que explica el proyecto en más detalle, y la hoja de permiso para que su niño pueda participar en las reuniones del almuerzo con Srta. Williams. Por favor devuelve la forma de consentimiento a la escuela antes de \_\_\_\_\_, incluso si decida no permitir que su niño participe. Puede mandar la forma de consentimiento con su niño, que lo debe dar a su maestro, o puede entregar la forma de consentimiento a la oficina. Gracias tanto para su apoyo.

Pronto, habrá una reunión informativa de noche, donde usted puede oír más acerca del proyecto y preguntar a Sra. Williams cualquier pregunta que usted quizás tenga.

Sinceramente,

La Srta. Heather Williams  
Maestra del segundo grado



**Appendix F Permission Slip for Group B**

Permission Slip—Lunch Bunches

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes! My child may participate in Ms. Williams' lunch bunches. I understand that my child will miss four recesses in order to participate.

\_\_\_\_\_ No, my child may not participate in Ms. Williams' lunch bunches.

Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Permiso—Reuniones del almuerzo

Nombre del niño \_\_\_\_\_ Maestro/a: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ ¡Si! Mi niño puede participar en las reuniones del almuerzo de la Srta. Williams. Yo entiendo que mi niño va a perder sus horas del recreo cuatro veces para que se participe.

\_\_\_\_\_ No, mi niño no puede participar en las reuniones del almuerzo de la Srta. Williams.

Nombre del padre \_\_\_\_\_ Firma del padre: \_\_\_\_\_

Número de teléfono del padre: \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix G Writing Self-Efficacy Scale

Writing Self-Efficacy Scale

Directions: Circle the face that matches how you feel.

Sample: How sure are you that you can tie your shoe?



Not sure at all



I am a little sure



I am mostly sure



I am definitely sure

1. How sure are you that you can write a complete sentence?



Not sure at all



I am a little sure



I am mostly sure



I am definitely sure

2. How sure are you that you can write a paragraph about one topic?



Not sure at all



I am a little sure



I am mostly sure



I am definitely sure

3. How sure are you that you can write a topic sentence?



Not sure at all



I am a little sure



I am mostly sure



I am definitely sure

4. How sure are you that you can write supporting details to match a main idea?



Not sure at all



I am a little sure



I am mostly sure



I am definitely sure

5. How sure are you that you can write a concluding sentence?



Not sure at all



I am a little sure



I am mostly sure



I am definitely sure

6. How sure are you that you can write a short story (with at least 5 sentences?)



Not sure at all



I am a little sure



I am mostly sure



I am definitely sure

7. How sure are you that you can write a short letter (with all the parts of a letter, at least 5 sentences long?)



Not sure at all



I am a little sure



I am mostly sure



I am definitely sure

8. How sure are you that you can revise and edit your writing on your own?



Not sure at all



I am a little sure



I am mostly sure



I am definitely sure

9. How sure are you that you can use correct capitalization?



Not sure at all



I am a little sure



I am mostly sure



I am definitely sure

10. How sure are you that you can use correct punctuation?



Not sure at all



I am a little sure



I am mostly sure



















I am definitely sure

## Appendix H Writing Attitude Scale

### Writing Attitude Survey

Name \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

GARFIELD © PAWS. All rights reserved.	1. How would you feel writing a letter to the author of a book you read?				
	2. How would you feel if you wrote about something you have heard or seen?				
	3. How would you feel writing a letter to a store asking about something you might buy there?				
	4. How would you feel telling in writing why something happened?				

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5. How would you feel writing to someone to change their opinion?



6. How would you feel keeping a diary?



7. How would you feel writing poetry for fun?



8. How would you feel writing a letter stating your opinion about a topic?



9. How would you feel if you were an author who writes books?



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10. How would you feel if you had a job as a writer for a newspaper or magazine?



11. How would you feel about becoming an even better writer than you already are?



12. How would you feel about writing a story instead of doing homework?



13. How would you feel about writing a story instead of watching TV?



14. How would you feel writing about something you did in science?





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15. How would you feel writing about something you did in social studies?



16. How would you feel if you could write more in school?



17. How would you feel about writing down the important things your teacher says about a new topic?



18. How would you feel writing a long story or report at school?



19. How would you feel writing answers to questions in science or social studies?



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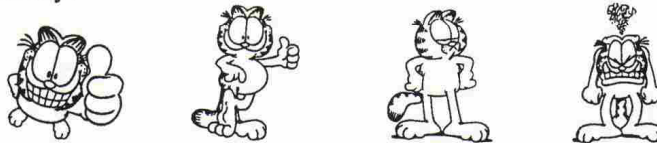
20. How would you feel if your teacher asked you to go back and change some of your writing?



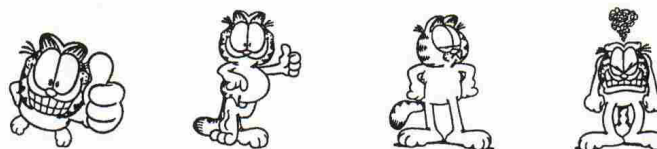
21. How would you feel if your classmates talked to you about making your writing better ?



22. How would you feel writing an advertisement for something people can buy?



23. How would you feel keeping a journal for class?



24. How would you feel writing about things that have happened in your life?



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25. How would you feel writing about something from another person's point of view?



26. How would you feel about checking your writing to make sure the words you have written are spelled correctly?



27. How would you feel if your classmates read something you wrote?



28. How would you feel if you didn't write as much in school?



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### Appendix I Writing Assessment

You will have 30 minutes to write about the best day you ever had. Write neatly on the lines below.

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## Appendix J Rubric for Scoring Writing Assessment—Ideas

2:1 • Writing

### WRITING AND LANGUAGE GRADE 2

#### Writing to Express Personal Ideas

- Writes stories with beginning, middle, and end

Criteria	Yes	No
<b>4</b> Uses the writing process to develop a story (express personal ideas) with a beginning, middle, and end. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-write</li> <li>• First draft</li> <li>• Revise</li> <li>• Edit</li> <li>• Final product</li> <li>• With some attention to the 6-traits</li> </ul>		
<b>3</b> Writes a story with a beginning, middle, and end with developing use of the writing process and some attention to 6-traits.		
<b>2</b> Writes multiple sentences in a story with no attention to the writing process. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sentences are in a logical sequence, but story lacks development of beginning, middle, and end.</li> </ul>		
<b>1</b> Writes a story using simple sentences in a logical sequence.		

Checklist Criteria	Rubric Score
Criterion #4	4 – Complete Understanding
Criterion #3	3 – General Understanding
Criterion #2	2 – Developing Understanding
Criterion #1	1 – Minimal Understanding

## Appendix K Rubric for Scoring Writing Assessment—Grammar

Writing • 2:1

### WRITING AND LANGUAGE GRADE 2

#### Grammatical Use, Capitalization, and Punctuation

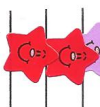

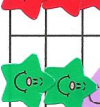
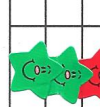
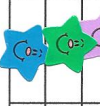
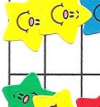


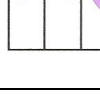

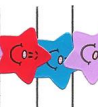
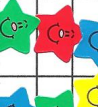

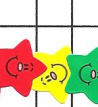
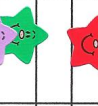



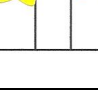

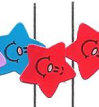



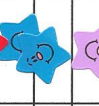





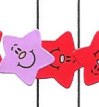


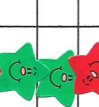
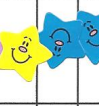



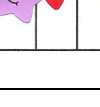




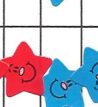




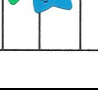

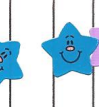

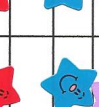
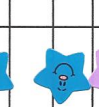




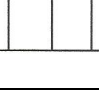

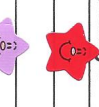
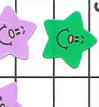
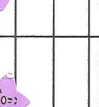





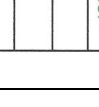

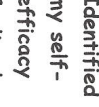
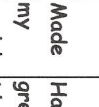
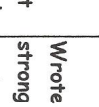
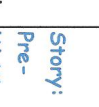
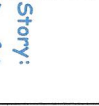
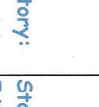
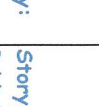








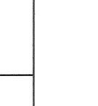
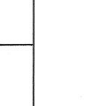
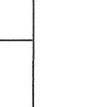
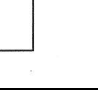

- Writes simple sentences with correct grammatical usage, capitalization, and punctuation

Criteria	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses capital letters:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ At the beginning of the sentence</li> <li>~ When writing <i>I</i> in isolation</li> <li>~ For proper nouns</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses periods correctly:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ At the end of sentences</li> <li>~ For numbered lists</li> <li>~ For abbreviated words</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses quotation marks when writing simple dialogue.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses commas correctly:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ In dates</li> <li>~ In salutations and closings</li> <li>~ For items in a series</li> <li>~ For addresses</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies and uses various parts of speech:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Adjectives</li> <li>~ Verb forms (helping)</li> <li>~ Verb tenses</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writes a simple sentence with subject verb agreement.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognizes when personal nouns and pronouns agree.</li> </ul>		

Checklist Criteria	Rubric Score
6–7 of the criteria	4 – Complete Understanding
4–6 of the criteria	3 – General Understanding
2–3 of the criteria	2 – Developing Understanding
1 of the criteria	1 – Minimal Understanding



## Appendix L Success Chart for Writing Intervention

Our Successes!									
Identified my self- efficacy feelings!	Made my goal!	Had great ideas!	Wrote a strong sentence!	Story: Pre- Writing	Story: Drafting	Story: Revising	Story: Editing	Story: Publishing	Celebrated my successes!
									
									
									
									
									
									
									
									
									

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