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The Use Of Graphic Organizers When Writing With Dual Identified EL And LD Students

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THE USE OF GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS WHEN WRITING WITH DUAL IDENTIFIED EL
AND LD STUDENTS
By
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A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements of the degree of Master of Arts in ESL

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To my family, especially:
My two daughters, Vivienne and Avalene, who spent hours reading articles with me, sitting in my lap while I typed, and pressing their faces against the window to my office
My husband, Martin, who supported me, brought me tea, listened to my musings, and sometimes pressed his face up against the window to my office, too

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Census data from the 2000 Census Brief reports that the number of ELs (English Learners) in The United States has increased by over 50% in the last decade. The data also shows us that 50% of students 16-21 who receive Special Education are identified as LD (Learning Disabled). The data cannot, however, paint an accurate picture of the overlap between these two populations as there is not a consistent way to identify ELs for Special Education across the country (Nguyen, 2012). Despite the inaccurate data available to us, however, we know that this population of dual identified students is also on the rise.

A lot of research has been done with EL (English Learner) students in a variety of contexts. For example, Echevarria, Vogt, and Short published the widely used text *Making Content Comprehensible* (2012). Likewise, all the texts and trainings available at universities, districts, and state conferences around SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) focus on the needs of the EL in all domains, including writing. Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2012) present the eight components from lesson preparation to review and assessment that are research-based and proven to be effective in addressing the academic needs of ELs. When the SIOP model is fully implemented as laid out by Echevarria, Vogt, and Short, research has shown improvement in the academic performance of ELs.

Similarly, quite a bit of research has been done focusing on the writing and needs of Special Education (SpEd) students or students with Learning Disabilities (LD) who are sometimes categorized as receiving Exceptional Student Services (ESS). This includes the work of Monroe, Troia, and Graham (2006).

The existing research, however, does not have a lot to say about the writing needs of the unique population of dual identified EL and LD students. What little does exist focuses primarily

on elementary students, leaving those in the middle school without the support they require to be successful in writing in their higher stakes academic setting. The middle school age group is an especially critical time as, nationwide, students are entering 6th grade and their performance, as reported to the local, state, and national levels, appear to plummet or plateau (Rockoff and Lockwood, 2010). It is also documented that EL and ESS students both lag behind their peers in growth as measured by assessments. It is unsurprising, then, that the dual identified population of EL and ESS students at the middle school level is reported as having the slowest growth (Solari, Petscher, & Folsom, 2014). In meeting the needs of our students, how can middle school educators better prepare and instruct their dual identified students in the area of writing?

The purpose of this study is not to examine or combat whatever external factors may be leading to the dip or plateau of middle school students. While the decline in data may indicate to some that students are not only unable to retain their skills from the elementary level, but may actually regress, it is my opinion that the expectations of and tasks presented to these students are not consistent with what they have been introduced to, taught, and become accustomed to throughout their elementary careers. Nevertheless, despite my opinions on this matter, that is not the focus or purpose of this particular study.

The purpose of this study is to determine if the use of an intentionally designed and explicitly taught graphic organizer will help dual identified EL and LD Hispanic middle school students grow in organization and development on argumentative writing tasks. The study examines how a group of Hispanic, middle school aged, dual identified LD/ELD students use graphic organizers to plan their argumentative writing. With explicit instruction and practice using a particular graphic organizer, I expect to see an increase in the scores of this population in the areas of organization and development on argumentative writing tasks. This research is

important because there is currently a lack of literature available on improving writing with this unique population, and often times these are the students struggling the most in writing across the board, for all their content area classes. The research will make evident how graphic organizers, when explicitly taught and practiced, can help increase the competency of this population in argumentative writing, especially in the areas of organization and development as scored on the LDC (Literacy by Design Collaborative) argumentative writing tasks rubric, making it especially relevant to educators and administrators working with middle school aged students, especially those who are dual identified as EL and LD.

This chapter introduces the issues associated with planning and writing with the unique dual identified population, especially my interest in this topic on a personal level.

Background of the Researcher

In my seven years in the classroom, I have been fortunate enough to work in many different settings. I have worked in an extended day kindergarten program for Title I English Learners from a variety of backgrounds. I have also worked as an ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) teacher in a Title I Deaf and Hard of Hearing elementary school where I taught first through fifth graders who came from very diverse backgrounds and experiences. Some of my students were DHH (Deaf and Hard of Hearing) with limited formal education as they relocated to Minnesota after living in a refugee camp. Other students were on two year visas with their parents who worked in research laboratories at the Mayo Clinic and had private tutors at home. In the summers, I worked with the Migrant Interstate Program at an alternative learning center. There I usually worked with middle school students, though I also spent one summer

helping high school students recuperate their credits and pass their TAKS (Texas Assessment of Knowledge) tests so that they could graduate at their home schools in Eagle Pass, Texas.

I have been fortunate to have these diverse experiences. My students and their needs have helped me grow and learn as an educator. While every position I have held keeps a piece of my heart, I often throw myself into my current work. With that in mind, it is not surprising to me that my current passion ties to advocating for middle school English Learners who are dual identified as LD (Learning Disabled) and have writing identified specifically on their IEPs (Individual Education Program).

I am now a middle school ELD (English Language Development) teacher. At my current home school where I spend 75% of my time, 44%of the students on my caseload are dual identified as English learners and receiving Exceptional Student Services (Special Education) with writing as an identified area on their IEP (Individualized Education Program). Between my two sites, 52% of my caseload is dual identified. The majority of these students have received ESS and ELD services for several years (four or more) and still remain far below proficiency in the area of writing. They remain categorized by the state of Colorado as NEPs (Non-English Proficient) in writing, meaning that they have yet to score above a 3.0 on ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 or WIDA MODEL in the domain of writing. Despite several years of ELD and ESS services, these students remain at a 3.0 or below as measured by ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 and WIDA MODEL.

When it started out, WIDA stood for World-class Instructional Design and Assessment; however, as WIDA has spread throughout the country, the organization has determined that the acronym did not fully encompass their mission, vision, or values, and state, "Now WIDA just means WIDA." (www.wida.us). The mission of WIDA is to advance the language development,

specifically academic English language development of children and youth who come from linguistically diverse backgrounds. ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 is a large-scale English proficiency assessment for students kindergarten through 12th grade. The annual assessment helps determine EL students' proficiency and progress in reading, writing, speaking, and listening in the areas of Social and Instructional Language, Language of Language Arts, Language of Mathematics, Language of Science, and Language of Social Studies. ACCESS for ELLs is common core aligned and exceeds the federal requirements for the monitoring and reporting of ELs' progress towards English language proficiency (www.wida.us) .

WIDA MODEL (Measure of Developing English Language) is similar to ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 in that it assesses English language proficiency for students in kindergarten through 12th grade. MODEL operates in grade level bands, so middle school students take the Grades 6-8 MODEL form. MODEL is an adaptive test that allows for placement within different sections of the test based on student performance on the assessment up to that point (www.wida.us). While some areas use the WIDA MODEL to identify students who may be candidates for ESL/ELD/Bilingual resources, the district involved in this study uses this particular assessment to serve as an interim assessment during the school year. Given in the fall and the spring of each academic year, MODEL scores contribute to placement and other decisions in a student's education, such as the appropriate ELD course.

Likewise, these students are often scoring 1s and 2s on the 4 point LDC (Literacy by Design Collaborative) rubric in each of the areas assessed in the domain of writing. This makes my interest in this particular topic not only of interest for me, but particularly urgent for myself and for the students I serve. Similarly, it makes this area of study of particular importance for my site and district as we should be looking for the best way to serve this population and assist them

in making growth in all areas, but especially in writing where they are lagging behind their peers, in order to make them college and career ready and prepared to thrive and survive beyond the walls of our schools.

Role of the Researcher

As I mentioned, I am currently a middle school ELD teacher, and I will be conducting the study at my home school. The site of this study is a suburban IB (International Baccalaureate) middle school (grades six through eight) in Northern Colorado. The school has an enrollment of approximately 970 students, with the primary population being native English speakers of European descent. The largest second language learning group is native Spanish speaking students, all but one of whom are of Mexican heritage. These students, if they qualify for ELD as indicated by their WIDA MODEL, WIDA ACCESS, or, if they are new to the district, their W-APT (WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test) scores, receive their core Language and Literacy course as a replacement by their ELD instructor. This means that their language arts instruction is provided by an ELD professional in a pull-out model, and these students receive all their explicit language arts instruction in a small group setting.

Because of the rigor of the classes at this particular school, as well as the standards and expectations of a middle school student, there is a lot of writing in each of the content areas. This means that while my students receive their language arts instruction in my classroom, they are constantly reading and writing and should be receiving instruction in these domains throughout the rest of their day.

Whether a student is in social studies, science, art, or orchestra, they are expected to be able to clearly share their opinions in writing and present and justify an argument with evidence.

This task, which would be challenging for any student this age, is especially difficult for the unique ELD/LD population.

School-wide Writing Assessment

In this particular setting, literacy is a school-wide goal. With this in mind, the school and district have created a set of writing assessments for each of the three grades, 6th through 8th, in different content areas. The district requires a minimum of four such assessments throughout the year, which are consistent across each of the five middle schools in the district. The school where I work and where this study is conducted, however, goes above and beyond in this domain, having students work on their argumentative and expository writing in each content area, whether it be a core area such as Math, Science, Language and Literacy, or Individuals and Societies (social studies) or an elective area such as Orchestra, Band, Physical Education and Health, or Language Acquisition (which consists of Spanish and French at our site).

During the first quarter of the year, the students are given the district writing assessment in one of their core courses, Language and Literacy, Science, or Individuals and Society, and this is used as a baseline. All writing samples are scored on an LDC (Literacy by Design Collaborative) rubric which assesses Organization, Development, Conventions, Selection and Citation of Evidence, and Focus. This initial writing assessment is used as the baseline and is uploaded into the school-wide data base. Approximately four to seven weeks later, depending on the grade level, students are given a writing assessment in a different content area. Again, the assessment is scored using the LDC rubric and usually entered into the database. The data is collected and discussed at grade-level team meetings to help determine interventions or courses of action for individual students, groups of students, or the grade level as a whole.

I will use the baseline school-wide writing assessment as well as a writing assignment from the replacement Language and Literacy course I teach in this study. The idea is that with the use of an explicitly taught graphic organizer, dual identified EL and LD students will grow specifically in the areas of organization and development on their writing tasks.

I have decided to focus on organization and development for a few reasons. First of all, I do not feel that the category of conventions is the most urgent area at this point. If students can communicate their ideas effectively, spelling and punctuation errors are not as much of a concern. Secondly, since I am working with a dual identified population, research shows that LD students often spend the majority of their efforts and attention on conventions in writing tasks, usually at the expense of content and ideas (Monroe & Troia, 2002). Since these students are preoccupied with spelling, punctuation, and grammar, they often "write around" their ideas, favoring a "correct" sentence over one that communicates a more complex idea or piece of evidence.

Another reason to focus on organization and development instead of conventions and focus is that it requires more critical and higher order thinking skills to achieve grade-level scores or proficiency in organization and development. Argumentative writing was chosen due to the anecdotal evidence I have. In the past, students have complained about the difficulty of these tasks, other teachers have come to tell me these students are not succeeding on these tasks, and the school wide data indicates that this particular population of ELD and LD identified students are struggling overall in this area.

Guiding Questions

This study seeks to answer the following guiding questions:

1. Can a graphic organizer help improve organization and development in an argumentative or expository writing task?

2. How does the explicit instruction and use of an intentionally designed graphic organizer improve student perception of their own abilities and attitudes towards completing an argumentative or expository writing task?

Summary

At the beginning of the 2016-2017 school year, 100% of the dual identified EL and ESS students on my caseload at my home school were considered below proficiency or grade level in organization and development for writing tasks. Clearly, with numbers this high, we are not doing enough to help this population in the demanding task of writing, a skill they need in all content areas and which is important to develop for college and career readiness beyond the walls of our school. Argumentative and expository writing was chosen due to the anecdotal evidence I have. In the past, students have complained about the difficulty of these tasks, other teachers have come to tell me these students are not succeeding on these tasks, and the school wide data indicates that this particular population of ELD and LD students are struggling overall in this area.

This study will focus on the growth and student attitudes and their perceptions of their own ability regarding argumentative and expository writing tasks, specifically in the area of organization and development for dual identified EL and LD Hispanic, middle school students. Due to the urgency of the issue suggested by the evidence at my site as well as the lack of research regarding this specific population and writing, it is imperative that we as educators

examine our practices and adapt to help this population grow and achieve in this particularly challenging academic domain.

In Chapter One: Introduction, I have introduced my research by establishing the purpose, significance, and need for this specific study. The context of the study was briefly introduced, as was the role, assumptions, and possible biases of myself in the role of researcher. My background was also introduced to provide more insight into my personal interest in the topic and research questions, as well as provide the reader with more context.

Chapter Overviews

In Chapter Two: Literature Review, I will provide a review of the literature relevant to the research questions and population involved in the study. Topics will include writing with ELs, writing with Special Education students, background information on the dual identified EL and LD population, the relationships between ELs and special educators, and, of course, the importance of planning as a part of the writing process.

Chapter Three: Methods includes a thorough description of the research design and methodology for this study. The methods of data collection and reasoning behind the decisions are discussed, and the participants in the study are introduced.

In Chapter Four: Results, the results of the study will be presented. Both quantitative data regarding student growth in the areas of organization and development on argumentative writing tasks as well as qualitative data concerning student self-perception on their abilities and growth as well as their attitudes towards the writing tasks will be presented.

In the final chapter, Chapter Five: Conclusion, I will discuss the results of the study. I will reflect on the data collected as well as the possible limitations of the study. I will also reflect on the possible implication of the results and recommendations for action and further research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This chapter addresses existing research on the topics tied to this study. Areas of interest include writing with ELs, writing with students with disabilities, relationships between EL and special educators, the dual identified population, and the importance of planning. This literature review will help build background and address the gap in the existing literature and research which will emphasize the importance of answering the following questions:

1. Can a graphic organizer help improve organization and development in an argumentative writing task?

2. How does the explicit instruction and use of an intentionally designed graphic organizer improve student perception of their own abilities and attitudes towards completing an argumentative writing task?

Writing with Special Populations

Writing with ELs

Instruction of ELs focuses on the four domains: speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Calderon & Minaya-Rowe, 2010; Diaz-Rico, 2008). Of the four domains, EL students typically achieve proficiency in speaking and listening earlier than in reading or writing. Usually, writing is the last domain that a language learner masters. In fact, although reading and writing are so intertwined and often are taught together, a proficient reader does not necessarily create a proficient writer, especially when it comes to ELs (ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Interpretive Guide for Score Reports, 2017).

According to Calderon & Minaya-Rowe (2010), ELs must become flexible writers. This means their writing skills must be able to transfer outside of the EL classroom to home, the

workplace, the community, and beyond. In order to do this, ELs must obtain proficiency in all four domains, become proficient not just in literacy as its own entity but in content area knowledge, work first hand with details and facts of texts, and, perhaps most importantly, produce original works using language in a way to communicate with others (Calderon & Minaya-Rowe, 2010; Diaz-Rico, 2008).

ELs benefit from extended time and multiple opportunities to develop their writing fluency. Beyond that, they need a genuine audience, useful feedback, and a sense of community where they can collaborate, validate, and support each other (Diaz-Rico, 2008; Farbman, 2016).

Writing with students with disabilities

Troia & Graham (2002) claim that explicit instruction for LD students regarding planning increases qualitatively better writing. Their 2002 study examined the work of 20 fourth and fifth grade students with LD. Troia & Graham developed a three step planning method that consisted of goal setting, brainstorming, and organizing in the realm of narrative writing. Teachers were instructed to provide explicit instruction in three steps. First, teachers modeled how to use goal setting, brainstorming, and organizing for story writing. Second, teachers identified multiple tasks for students to practice. Third, students were given multiple homework assignments for independent practice where they were given advice ahead of time and feedback afterwards. The study found that the LD students produced longer and qualitatively better stories than their "process writing" peers, but it unfortunately did not transfer to the uninstructed genre of persuasive writing.

Unzueta and Barbetta (2002) claim that LD students tend to focus on transcription skills such as handwriting, spelling, and limiting vocabulary usage to words students know they can

spell correctly. It is also asserted that LD students have difficulty navigating the organizational process for complete composition.

Relationships between EL and Special Educators

First of all, there is undeniably an over-referral of EL students to special education. This claim is echoed by countless authors and researchers (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2013; Linn & Hemmer, 2011; Diaz-Rico, 2008; Klingner & Artiles, 2003; Baca, 2002). While qualifying assessments are pointed at as probably the greatest obstacle at this point, the authors claim that simple awareness of this data is the first step in providing EL students access to an education that actually meets their needs (Linn & Hemmer, 2011). In response to this issue, Klingner & Artiles (2003) point to the IDEA Exclusionary Clause which states that a student must have had ample time to learn in a language they understand. To uphold this, it is suggested that there be more professional development in the Exclusionary Clause. Also, EL teachers or professionals should be present at IEP meetings. Additionally, observations should be done in classroom setting by an EL professional and the IEP manager or Student Support Team to determine if a student actually is provided with the required opportunity to learn.

Another issue addressed by Klingner & Artiles (2003) is that of inappropriate placement. To this, the authors demand that the special education field stop viewing EL students as coming from a deficit. The authors also request that IQ tests no longer be used for placement, but rather that RTI (Response to Intervention) processes be carried out with fidelity.

But what of the EL students who are appropriately identified for ESS services? How can EL teachers and special education teachers work together to better serve this population?

Baca (2002) explores "restructuring the system", which would consist of greater collaboration between special education and EL teachers. Baca also argues that IEPs

(Individualized Education Programs) should be written with both English acquisition standards and special education goals. Collaboration between special education teachers and EL teachers is imperative (Orosco & O'Connor, 2014). Perhaps most relevant to this topic, however, is Baca's suggestion for "double sheltering" for these dual identified students.

The Dual Identified Population

According to the Census Brief of 2000, there was a 50% increase in LEP students in the United States between 1990 and 2000. Of special education students between the ages of 16 and 21, 50% are categorized as LD, however we don't know how many are also ELs because there is not a consistent way to identify this subgroup across the US (Nguyen, 2012; Zehler, Fleischman, Hopstock, Pendzick, & Stephenson, 2003).   During the 2000-2001 school year, one study found that 9% of the k-12 LEP students at the schools studied during the 2000-2001 school year were also identified as SpEd, accounting for about 357,325 students. It then goes on to list the incidences of identified disabilities, beginning with 55.9% identified with specific learning disabilities and 23.5% were identified as having a speech/language impairment (Zehler, Fleischman, Hopstock, Pendzick, & Stephenson, 2003).

Artiles (2002) discusses the unique challenges posed by ELs, especially in the context of special education. The challenges are evident across the board: referral, assessment, and instruction. Artiles claims that the current instruction for EL students also classified as SpEd (special education) is not effective in meeting these students' needs. Educators need to be aware of the linguistic, cultural, and special education needs of these students. Instruction should not focus only on their special education or disability needs, but should keep their cultural and linguistic needs in mind, too (Orosco & O'Connor, 2014).

In collaboration with Klingner, Artiles states that not enough is known about EL representation in special education and that more research needs to be funded and performed (2003). A particular area of passion for Artiles, he calls for more research on the overlap between language acquisition and language development in EL students who are also diagnosed with a specific Learning Disability. Klingner & Artiles (2006) outline the process for how they recruited senior researchers to participate in publishing a special edition of *Journal of Learning Disabilities*. While this certainly has raised awareness in some realms about the importance of further research regarding the dual identified EL and ESS population, it is a drop in the bucket, and we need to do more targeted and specific work in this area of education.

Unsurprisingly, the 2014 work of Solari, Petscher, & Folsom found that dual identified EL and ESS students in grades 3-10 grew slower in the area of literacy than their general education peers. While this is not new information, Solari, Petscher, & Folsom took the study one step further and compared the dual identified population to the two single identified populations of ELs and ESS students. While the fact that the dual identified EL and LD students were outperformed in the area of literacy by their EL peers and their LD peers is not shocking, it is important to make note of this information and reflect on it in instructional practices.

A 2015 US Department of Education study on the time to reclassification for ELs in Washington Road Map Districts further corroborates these claims (Greenberg Matamedi, 2015). The study found that the average EL student was being reclassified after 3.8 years, with Hispanic students taking slightly longer at an average time of 4.2 years in EL programming before reclassification. Dual identified EL and LD students, that is, EL students who were also eligible for special education services, took the longest of any population to reclassify, averaging 5.5 years. It should be noted that the way these districts were reclassifying students had nothing to

do with grade-level expectations, and many of the reclassified students were still not meeting grade-level expectations at the time of reclassification. It is still worth noting, however, that the dual identified population took almost 45% more time in the program in order to meet the standards for reclassification than the average EL. Even considering that Hispanic ELs were taking longer on average, the dual identified population even took almost 31% longer.

Monroe & Troia (2006) studied three middle school LD students who received eight hours of intense instruction on planning, self-regulation, and revising in line with opinion writing. Two of the three students were dual identified as ELs, with Khmer and Khmu as their L1s. Monroe and Troia found that LD students tend to produce writing that is categorized as shorter, had more mechanical errors, and was less developed, coherent, and refined than their "typically developing peers"

Students were taught a developed strategy called DARE: Develop a position statement, Add supporting arguments, Report and refute counterarguments, and End with a strong conclusion. Students collaborated on graphic organizers with peers before writing. Then, they self-scored their writing before sharing it, revised it, and turned it in. Post test scores with the three students were better by one point on a six point rubric for five quality standards than the control group of LD students. Unfortunately, the process did not transfer to narrative writing.

Two of the three participants in Monroe & Troia's 2006 study were dual identified students; however, Monroe and Troia viewed the process primarily through an LD lens, whereas there is little research regarding this work through an EL lens.

Unzueta & Barbetta (2012) studied persuasive writing of four Hispanic students with specific learning disabilities. Hispanic and Culturally Diverse students typically score below their monolingual counterparts of European descent on writing tasks, which Unzueta and

Barbetta attribute to the fact that they supposedly often do not receive more rigorous writing instruction because the students are "learning the language". The dual identified LD and Hispanic and Culturally Diverse students were scoring below either one of their single-identified peers consistent with the work of Monroe & Troia (2006).

The Role of Motivation and Student Perception

According to Conchas (2001), nearly one fifth of the United States population consisted of children of immigrants in 2001, and most of those immigrants came from Latin America and Asia. This makes the question of the persistent low academic performance and high dropout rates for students of Latin American descent in the United States public school system especially troubling. Conchas (2001) explored several potential factors for this low academic performance, attributing it in part to many factors including, but certainly not limited to, ill-equipped learning environments, inadequate instructional materials, defiant peer subcultures, such as gangs, and teachers' low expectations of their students.

Regarding teachers' low expectations of their students, the work of Harry and Klingner (2007) discusses the "historical devaluing of minorities" and the role of deficits in special education identification. According to Harry and Klingner (2007), eligibility for special education services relies on "proof of intrinsic deficit". Seeing deficits in students can in turn create deficits as the negative perception of the teacher is demotivational to students.

Similar to Concha's claim regarding teachers' low expectations of their students, Hashemian and Heidari (2013) make a related claim about teacher attitude, though their claim ties to teacher attitude towards writing, rather than their students as individuals. Hashemian and Heidari (2013) assert that positive teacher attitude towards writing leads to increased student motivation.

According to Hashemian and Heidari (2013), there are four ways motivation helps a student: it increases energy level, directs individuals towards specific goal(s), promotes initiation and persistence in an activity, and affects learning strategies and cognitive processes an individual applies to a task. Without motivation, even individuals with high skill levels are unlikely to achieve academically.

Hashemian and Heidari (2013) studied L2 learners' motivation and attitude as it correlated to their success in writing in their second language. Participants in the study were randomly selected from a group of MA students of TEFL, and while the study found no correlation between negative attitude and success in L2 writing, Hashemian and Heidari found a significant correlation between positive attitude and success. The higher the positive attitude regarding L2 writing tasks, the higher the level of success. Hashemian and Heidari (2013) also suggest that students are more likely to be motivated by writing if it is used as a tool for intellectual or social development, and that students who have a positive attitude towards writing are more likely to find value in expending time and energy on writing tasks.

Cheng (2002) asserts that writing is both an emotional and cognitive task. Cheng's study on L2 writing anxiety revealed that perceived L2 writing competence was a greater indicator of writing anxiety than the actual writing competence. These findings emphasize the importance of teachers in developing and nurturing students' positive and realistic perception of their own writing competence, and even suggests that doing so is as important as actually developing students' writing skills.

The Importance of Planning

Planning is an important part of the writing process. Effective planning can lead to the production of higher quality texts. Unfortunately, planning and pre-writing processes are often

skipped or overlooked with students. In fact, Monroe & Troia (2002) claimed that LD students typically try to reduce planning time as much as possible in order to minimize the overall time spent on the writing task. Lack of planning and organization prior to the actual composition work leads to lower quality texts.

According to Kellogg (1987), college students spend about one quarter of their writing time planning, while Gould (1980) claimed that skilled business executives spend as much as 2/3 of their composition time planning. In light of these claims, it should be alarming that most school age children often forgo planning. They begin writing as soon as a task is given or might spend approximately one minute planning (De La Paz & Graham, 2002).

De La Paz & Graham (2002) claim that the average American is not a proficient writer. To justify their stance, the pair of researchers studied the writing behavior of middle school students, focusing on the planning and pre-writing stages of the writing process. They had an explicitly taught group and a control group. The experimental group focused specifically on the planning, drafting, and revising necessary for extended writing. In the end, the experimental group provided longer writing samples with "more mature vocabulary", and their writing samples were assessed as qualitatively better. With explicit instruction in planning strategies, 90% of students in the experimental group had "highly developed plans" for writing as compared to between 35% and 65% of the control groups.

According to Calderon & Minaya-Rowe (2010), pre-writing and planning is an important step in the writing process. Pre-writing activities help students generate and organize their ideas prior to writing and will lead to a more developed and organized approach to text production. ELs need more guidance, time, examples, and prompts in order to effectively use graphic organizers to plan their writing (Calderon & Minaya-Rowe, 2010; Diaz-Rico, 2008).

Not only do ELs need instruction in planning and pre-writing, but LD students benefit from explicit instruction as well. According to Troia, Graham, & Harris (1999) focusing on planning and mindfulness with fifth grade LD students greatly improved the quality of the final writing product. They assert that students require time for planning and even need time for self-regulating. Students were taught using the genre of narrative writing. The process was transferred successfully to persuasive writing and maintained in a general sense over time. The researchers found that after this study, the participants spent as much time planning their writing as actually writing and asserted that the students valued their own writing and so put in more effort.

Graphic organizers are important due to their visual representation of ideas and how they help build schema and key concepts and connections. According to Unzueta & Barbetta (2012), the use of graphic organizers in reading comprehension is well documented, but there is reportedly little documentation for how graphic organizers can help students improve their writing. In fact, even in *Strategies for Teaching English Language Learners* (Diaz-Rico, 2008), graphic organizers are only discussed as tools for comprehension, not to help students organize their own ideas prior to producing a text.

Other success stories include a study by Lorber as referenced by Unzueta & Barbetta (2012) concerning computer graphic organizers with general education 8th graders and a 2002 study by Sturm & Rankin-Erickson where L2 Hispanic students planned with no graphic organizer, then a handwritten graphic organizer, and finally, the most successful computer graphic organizer. All graphic organizers resulted in an increase in the number of words written, the number of main clauses with subordinate clauses, and the quality of writing as measured by a holistic score.

The Gap

The current lack of literature available on improving writing with this unique dual identified population, especially at the middle school level, makes the research presented in this study particularly important. Often times these are the students struggling the most in writing across the board, for all their content area classes.

Of the research that does exist, the focus tends to be on using computer graphic organizers with this dual identified population (Unzueta & Barbetta, 2012). Unfortunately, resources such as technology, programs for computer graphic organizers, or money to provide these are not always available in schools. If they are available, they are not always reliable. For example, should a building lose internet connection or if a student needs to work at home, computer graphic organizers are not a reliable tool. In addition to this, students cannot use computer graphic organizers on many standardized tests such as WIDA ACCESS, PARCC, or CMAS. To exert teacher and student energy on a tool that would be so selectively useful seems wasteful.

A paper graphic organizer or hard copy can be utilized in any setting from the classroom to homework to a standardized test. In the classroom, students can be provided with a copy of the graphic organizer. It can be written into their plans to have a copy for school-wide or district level writing assessments. Paper graphic organizers can also be sent home with students to work on even if they do not have technology or internet access.

As if these reasons were not enough, a student who receives explicit instruction with a particular graphic organizer, is repeatedly exposed to it, and has several successful interactions and results from using it may be able to reproduce the graphic organizer in a standardized testing

situation. While I do not personally believe that standardized testing is the be all and end all in assessing a student's writing ability, it is one application. It could help the student not only receive higher scores through the production of more organized and developed texts, but it could help the student enter the testing situation with less anxiety and more confidence.

Conclusion

This chapter provided a literature review of existing research and studies. Furthermore, the gap in research was discussed, indicating the importance of further research in the area of dual identified EL and LD students, specifically at the middle school level and pertaining to the domain of writing. Chapter 3: Methods will discuss the participants, setting, and data collection methods.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Overview

This chapter includes a thorough description of the research design and methodology for this study. The methods of data collection are explained in detail. The reasoning behind the decisions for the type of data collected and the method for data collection are discussed, and the link between the research questions and the data collected are explicitly linked. The data collected is intended to answer the following questions:

1. Can a graphic organizer help improve organization and development in an argumentative or expository writing task?

2. How does the explicit instruction and use of an intentionally designed graphic organizer improve student perception of their own abilities and attitudes towards completing an argumentative or expository writing task?

Finally, the participants in the study are introduced. The participant information is reported in a chart; however, individual background information is reported and explored in the paragraphs following the table. This chapter was written prior to the research being completed.

Site of the Study

This study is conducted at the home school of the researcher. The school is an IB (International Baccalaureate) middle school in Northern Colorado. The school serves approximately 970 sixth through eighth graders. The majority of the student population at this site are native English speakers of European descent, and the largest second language learning group is native Spanish speakers, most of whom are of Mexican heritage. Students that qualify for and accept ELD services are placed in Language and Literacy course taught by the ELD instructor, effectively receiving their language arts instruction in a pull-out model and a small

group setting. Dual identified students, that is, students who are considered EL and LD make up about 44% of the population receiving direct EL services at this site.

Participants

There are five participants. These students were selected for meeting the criteria of being enrolled in the site of study. Additionally, they are all Hispanic with an L1 of Spanish and are dual identified as ELs and LD.

At the time of Fall Conferences in October of 2016, students identified for the study were introduced to the study. Families were given a Human Consent form that was in English (Appendix C) and Spanish (Appendix D). Six of the eight identified students returned the permission slip, with five students and their families giving formal permission through the provided Human Consent Form.

The chart below provides basic information on each of the eight participants. Names have been changed. The aliases will help provide anonymity and protect the students.

Name	Gender	Grade	Number of years in ELD Program	Number of years receiving ESS
Hector	Male	6th	6	2
Ashley	Female	7th	6	5
Theresa	Female	7th	7	5
Angel	Male	7th	6	6
Jose	Male	8th	3	3

The students' proficiencies are measured by ACCESS for ELs 2.0, WIDA MODEL, and PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers). PARCC is an annual test given in the areas of English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics between grades three and eight and in high school. PARCC claims to be a modern, high quality

assessment tied to the "new, more rigorous standards" that serves as an "educational GPS system" in that it measures students' performance in the two content areas of literacy and mathematics to communicate areas the student needs improvement in by graduation in order to be college/career ready (www.parconline.org). In this study, I am not concerned with the PARCC mathematics scores. Rather, I will only be looking at the PARCC scores in the area of English Language Arts/Literacy in the subcategory of writing as the study is most concerned with progress in the domain of writing.

Hector is a social 6th grade student. He loves to share in class and tries to participate in discussions as much as possible. He has little patience when asked to sit still for a task longer than ten minutes, however if given a stretch break, he is able to refocus. When he took the WIDA ACCESS in 5th grade in January 2016, Hector scored a 4.4 overall and a 4.4 in writing. On PARCC in spring of 2016, Hector did not meet expectations in writing.

Ashley is fun-loving 7th grader who loves to spend her weekends hanging out with her friends. She participates frequently in class and works well with any other student. Ashley sees value in her education and so puts a lot of effort into her school work. She does not rush, and she is good about asking questions or advocating for herself to clarify questions in her literacy class. On the WIDA ACCESS in January 2016, Ashley scored a 4.2 overall with a 4.2 in writing. On the writing portion of PARCC given in April 2016, Ashley did not meet expectations.

Theresa is Ashley's sister. She was held back a year in elementary school. Unlike her younger sister, Theresa sees little value in school, regarding it more as an obligation. That being said, when teachers take the time to build a meaningful relationship with her, Theresa puts effort into her school work and will participate in class discussions. Theresa has a sharp sense of humor and loves hanging with her "squad", shopping, and doing anything on her phone – snapchat,

vine, whatever! In January 2016, Theresa scored a 3.7 overall and a 3.9 in writing on WIDA

ACCESS. On PARCC, she did not meet expectations in the area of writing.

Angel loves to hang out with peers and appear as a typical middle school student. Easily

distractible, he tends to miss a lot in his classes and benefits from frequent check-ins and

individual repetition of directions or task information. He thrives on praise and positive

relationship building with teachers in the school has led to Angel having a more positive attitude

towards school in general. On WIDA ACCESS in 2016, Angel scored a 3.0 overall with a 2.9 in

writing. He did not meet expectations on the PARCC writing assessment.

Jose transferred to our school at the end of the 2015-2016 school year from a rural district

in Montana. He had been in the district previously, however, and scored a 4.6 overall and a 3.9 in

writing on the WIDA ACCESS in 2014. He has not yet taken the PARCC assessment. It has

recently been brought to our attention, too, that Jose was wearing hearing aids in Montana, but

we have not seen them at school here, nor had we received this information from his previous

school. We are in the process of having him re-evaluated by the audiologist. Since beginning 8th

grade, Jose has opened up and started smiling and school and joking around with the other

students. When appropriate accommodations are provided, Jose feels successful, and when he

feels successful, he participates frequently in his classes. He has also begun playing lacrosse,

which he enjoys teaching other students about.

Discussion of the Method

Data collected will help examine the growth of dual identified students in the area of

organization and development in argumentative and expository writing tasks. As this is study is

most interested in growth, it is important to establish a baseline. For this reason, data will be

collected twice. Data will first be collected from participants' initial school-wide writing task at

the beginning of the school year in September. They will be interviewed on their experience shortly after. The second set of data will then be collected four to eight weeks later, depending on the assessment calendar in Fall 2016 for each of the three grade levels. In between the data collection times, students will be explicitly taught to use the graphic organizer. They will receive lessons, teacher modeling, and opportunities to use the graphic organizer with support in the ELD Language and Literacy classroom.

Both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected. The quantitative data collected will be collected through the assessment of the writing tasks using the LDC argumentative writing rubric, especially as it pertains to the areas of organization and development. This quantitative data will help answer the question: *Can a graphic organizer help improve organization and development in an argumentative writing task?*

Quantitative Data provides a controlled measurement of data by providing a numerical analysis. The students' scores in the areas of organization and development are measured on a rubric created and defined by an outside agency (LDC). This data can be considered more objective as the researcher is removed from the data. The quantitative data is outcome-oriented, generalizable, and can be replicated (Mackey and Gass, 2005).

Qualitative data will be collected as well. Each student participant will be interviewed after each of their writing tasks. This data will help to answer the second research question: *How does the explicit instruction and use of an intentionally designed graphic organizer improve student perception of their own abilities and attitudes towards completing an argumentative or expository writing task?*

Qualitative Data provides a different lens and approach than quantitative data. While quantitative data can be categorized as statistical, qualitative data tends to be more interpretive.

Qualitative data tends to be more process and discovery oriented, and the researcher is close to the data and often involved with the subjects. Qualitative data is more difficult to generalize as it can be more subjective and may focus on single cases or very specific responses unique to the subjects (Mackey and Gass, 2005).

The benefit of collecting both qualitative and quantitative data is that it provides a more complete picture. While qualitative data was once considered "soft data", the importance of such data is becoming increasingly recognized as important in the field of second language acquisition (Mackey and Gass, 2005). When dealing with students, of course "hard" or quantitative data is important as it helps of justify and quantify student progress and achievement and the effectiveness of a teacher and their chosen methods. Students are humans, however, not just data points, and so it would be negligent to focus only on the statistical results of a study involving student writing achievement. It is not only important that the students improve in the area of organization and development in their writing, but that the students recognize their improvement or success and can attribute it to something. If the students do not recognize their own successes or struggles, they cannot repeat the successes or grow and develop.

The Graphic Organizer

The graphic organizer I designed that will be used in this study can be seen in Appendix B. This particular graphic organizer is the result of several revisions over a few years. The introduction and conclusion paragraphs are situated in order and set apart in boxes to visually indicate to the students that these paragraphs are different structures than the body paragraphs. The part of the graphic organizer for the three body paragraphs have space for the topic sentence and three supporting details, as well as a spot to note the source for each supporting detail. The

addition of these source spots is intended to remind students that their writing must use accurate information and also to ease the burden of citing information in their written drafts.

Students were explicitly taught how to use the graphic organizer before the post-test. Each grade level had at least two opportunities to interact with the graphic organizer in their Language and Literature course before the post-test writing task was completed. Most of the students were also given a copy of the graphic organizer to use for a writing assignment in a different class, too, though they were not required to use it.

The first time students were introduced to the graphic organizer, the structure of an expository piece was discussed. Students reviewed that their final product was expected to have an introduction, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Students were asked to identify the areas on the graphic organizer for each of these parts.

Students were then told that the area for the body paragraphs should be completed before the introduction and conclusion boxes, at least for the first use of the graphic organizer. For each grade level, the first body paragraph was laid out together as a class. The class determined a suitable topic for the body paragraph that tied to the prompt, then found three supporting details and listed the source. The teacher projected the graphic organizer on the board and recorded the ideas for the class to see, asking questions, helping the students refine their ideas, and guiding students to review certain sources in order to find meaningful and relevant supporting details based in fact. Students were then given time to complete the other two body paragraphs independently, checking with peers and the teacher for clarification, ideas, or help. As students completed the body section of the graphic organizer, the teacher gave a quick mini-lesson review on the parts of an introduction and conclusion. Then, as students began these parts independently, they could conference one on one with the teacher.

During the second exposure to the graphic organizer in the students' Language and Literacy course, students were reintroduced to the graphic organizer and reminded of the last time they used it. The teacher then projected the graphic organizer on the board and completed the section for one body paragraph, modeling what one could write. The sample was removed from the board once students began their work. The teacher checked in with each student in the class individually to assess their understanding of the task and use of the graphic organizer.

When it came time for the students to use their graphic organizers to write their final product, the teacher modeled using her notes from the modeled graphic organizer to write one paragraph. Students were then given time to work on their writing independently, referencing their sources, peers, and teachers as necessary.

Some students were given copies of the graphic organizer to facilitate a particular writing task in another course. Once this was at the request of the teacher, but the other times were at the request of the student. This provided additional practice with the graphic organizer before the assessed post-test writing task.

For the post-test writing task, given in the students' Language and Literature course, students were given the writing prompt at the end of a particular unit of study. Students were given another copy of the graphic organizer and instructed to use it as practiced to plan their writing. Students completed the graphic organizer independently on their individual writing topics. After the teacher checked to see that the graphic organizer was completed, students could conference with the teacher or a peer before beginning to write their final composition independently.

Data Collection

<u>Pre-test</u>

      Students will engage in a constructed response to an argumentative or expository writing task, as decided by the teams at the site of the study, without any provided graphic organizer or explicit instruction in organizational or developmental pre-writing techniques prior to the pre-test. Of course, students probably have received some instruction in these areas in the past, but this will be a new school year. The pre-test is a writing task developed at the district level and given to all students in a particular grade at all schools. For example, all 6th graders will take the exact same assessment, all 7th graders will take the same assessment, and all 8th graders will take the same assessment. The task is scored on the LDC (Literacy by Design Collaborative) rubric.

<u>Post-test</u>

      After explicit instruction in the use and practice with a specific, provided graphic organizer (Appendix A), students will engage in a post-test of a constructed response to an argumentative writing task. The pre-test task is district or building created, and the students will not be singled out to take it. Each grade level has their own writing task that every student completes. All sixth grade students in the building will complete the same pre-test task, all seventh grade students will take the same pre-test task, and all eighth grade students in the building will complete the same pre-test task. For the pre-test, students will write their constructed response to an argumentative task in their sheltered Language and Literacy course. This will assure that the content on the assessment is appropriate for ELs and that they are indeed given the graphic organizer to plan before their writing.

Qualitative data will be collected in the form of interviews with the students. The students will be asked to share how they felt they did on the test, what they have improved on, how they have improved, what has helped them, and their general opinions and beliefs about argumentative writing. Interviews will be recorded using audio only and transcribed simply to ensure accuracy in the students' responses and the researcher's insights into the students' responses. These audio recordings will be deleted after transcription to ensure anonymity of participants.

Pre-Test Interview Questions:

- *Was it easy or difficult?*

- *Did you plan? Why or why not?*

- *Was the score you received fair? Why or why not?*

Post-Test Interview Questions:

- *How did you do on the most recent writing task?*

- *Was it easy or difficult?*

- *Did you plan? Why or why not?*

- *Have you improved in any way? How so?*

- *Was the score you received fair? Why or why not?*

The goal is to gather qualitative data concerning the student's own perception of their growth, achievement, and ability in argumentative writing. The data ties directly back to the second research question as presented in the overview of this chapter and in Chapter One. The questions are intended to be specific enough to keep the participants on task and on topic of their own argumentative writing and their process for planning and completing such a task, but are

also intended to be open-ended enough to get true answers from each participant without being leading or hinting to the interviewer what the desired answer or information might be.

LDC Rubric

The LDC (Literacy by Design Collaborative) argumentative and expository writing task rubrics are used district-wide and across the state of Colorado. Prior to the 2016-2017 school year, the rubric assessed four areas: Focus, Conventions, Development, and Organization. As of September 2016, the district has opted to use the new LDC rubric created in March 2016. Instead of four sections, the new rubric now separates out Selection and Citation of Evidence from Conventions to create five distinct areas to be assessed. See Appendix B.

As previously mentioned, one of the areas of focus in this study is Development. Development refers to whether or not the writer has provided sufficient details to support the claim and counterclaim. Essentially, Development is meant to determine whether or not the student presented enough to explain and develop the claims, reasoning, and evidence to sufficiently answer the prompt.

To score well on the Development area of the LDC rubric, students must compose an essay that "contains details that answer each aspect of the prompt, particularly how your answer specifically and uniquely given by each claim and how the counterclaim shows consideration of an alternative view" (LDC, 2016) For example, the writer would provide sufficient details to clearly explain their claims and counterclaim.

In addition, the essay must contain "reasoning that is relevant to, and clearly describes, how the claim supports the thesis" (LDC, 2016) For example, the writer provides details and evidence to support their claim. These details are relevant and tie logically to the thesis or claim.

The second area of focus in this study is Organization. Organization refers to how the writer maintains appropriate organizational structure to address the requirements of the prompt and how the structure of the response reveals the reasoning of the presented argument. In simple terms, does the writer order their paragraphs according to their thesis and place their counterclaim paragraph appropriately?

A well-organized essay has an introduction, body, and conclusion each marked by separate paragraphs. Each body paragraph presents a single claim with the connected reasoning or evidence. Also, the claims are ideally arranged in a progression building in complexity. In addition, the thesis is clear and appropriately placed in the introduction so as to help the reader map the progression of the essay in its entirety (LDC, 2016)

Conclusion

In conclusion, the methodology of this study will produce both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data will be collected in the form of scores on a pre and posttest writing task in the areas of organization and development as scored on the LDC rubric. Qualitative data will be collected in the form of participant interviews regarding their writing samples and writing behaviors in order to help determine student attitudes and perception about their own writing performance and abilities. Chapter 4: Results will reveal the results of the data collection methods.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Overview

This chapter presents the data collected for the study using the methods described in Chapter 3. The data is presented first by each participant and then as a whole. The data collected and then presented in this chapter is intended to answer the following questions:

1. Can a graphic organizer help improve organization and development in an argumentative or expository writing task?

2. How does the explicit instruction and use of an intentionally designed graphic organizer improve student perception of their own abilities and attitudes towards completing an argumentative or expository writing task?

Results of Individual Participants

The five participants in the study range from sixth to eighth grade. All students are dual identified as ELs and with an IEP. The individual profiles of the student participants can be found in Chapter 3: Methods. All names have been changed to protect anonymity.

In this section, the results of each student participant are presented. The student participants' scores are reported in Organization and Development as measured by the LDC rubric (Appendix B) for the pre-test where the students did not use the provided graphic organizer as well as for the post-test where students used the provided and pre-taught graphic organizer. Additionally, student responses regarding their attitudes and perception of their performance on each task is presented. Finally, an overview of the student data for both Organization and Development is presented.

Hector

Pre-test. The baseline data for 6th grade Hector in Organization and Development in expository or argumentative writing as defined by the rubric created by LDC showed that Hector was not proficient in either domain. The writing task had Hector read two short articles about space probes and write to explain the purpose of the space probes.

In the area of Organization, Hector scored a one. According to the LDC rubric, this means that Hector's writing on the baseline writing task "lacks an evident structure" and "makes unclear connection among ideas, concepts, and information".

In the area of Development, Hector also scored a one. According to the LDC rubric, this means that Hector's writing on this particular task presents an explanation of ideas and source material that is "irrelevant, incomplete, and inaccurate".

It should be noted that Hector has accommodations in his IEP that allowed for the articles that served as source materials to be read out loud to him. It should also be noted that this was an "on-demand" writing task meaning that it was not part of a particular lesson or unit of study. Hector did not receive prior instruction on space probes, the topic of the articles he was to use as his source materials.

When asked if he found the task easy or difficult, Hector shared that he thought the writing task was "not that hard", but that the articles were "a little confusing". When asked to explain what he was supposed to write about in his own words, however, Hector was unable to explain the task.

In response to the pre-test interview question *Did you plan? Why or why not?*, Hector responded that he did not plan because he "didn't have to". The interviewer pointed out that he

was given a piece of paper to plan his writing, to which Hector replied, "Yeah, but I didn't have to plan… The teacher said I didn't have to."

When asked if he thought the scores he received for this particular task were fair, Hector first replied, "I guess", but then continued that he thought he had done better.

Post-test. The writing sample used as a post-test for 6th grade student Hector asked him to write a four paragraph essay explaining and describing a real-life mystery from a text studied in class. Hector then read additional articles on the topic he chose. His essay was to present his research and discuss his own thoughts on the mystery using evidence from his research.

Hector scored a three in Organization as determined by the LDC rubric. This means that Hector's writing accurately explained "ideas and source material and how they support the controlling idea", according to the LDC rubric. Hector's score on the post-test showed a two-point increase from his pre-test score in Organization.

Similarly, Hector showed a two-point increase in his score in the area of Development, as scored on the LDC rubric. Scoring a three, Hector showed he could produce writing that "groups and sequences ideas to develop the controlling idea" and that Hector could use "transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas, concepts, and information".

When interviewed about his opinion on the difficulty of the task, Hector indicated that he thought it was difficult to plan his writing and "get all the ideas", but that once he had his graphic organizer filled out "the writing part wasn't really that bad…except sometimes it was hard to find the right words for parts. I had to read it a lot and check my work." Hector did plan his writing on the second task, using the provided graphic organizer because the teacher "made" him.

When asked if he thought his writing improved, Hector indicated that he thought it had because "We do a lot of writing here…I can write a lot more now. Like, now I can write a lot of paragraphs."

It should be noted that the post-test differs from the pre-test in a few ways. First of all, to conform to the purpose of this study, Hector was explicitly taught how to use an intentionally designed graphic organizer (Appendix A) and provided a copy of the graphic organizer for the required task. Additionally, the writing task used as the post-test was the culminating task in a unit taught in his Language and Literacy course, as opposed to the pre-test writing sample which was on demand. The implications of the differences between the conditions of the pre-test and post-test will be discussed in Chapter 5: Conclusions.

<u>Ashley</u>

Pre-test. On the writing task used to collect baseline data in Organization and Development, Ashley scored a one in both categories, indicating that she was not proficient in either domain. Much like the 6th grade task, the 7th grade writing task Ashley completed for the baseline was an on-demand expository writing task.

Ashley scored a one in Organization. The LDC rubrics used for scoring the writing are valid for 6th through 8th grade, meaning that Ashley, and all other participants in the study, were scored on the same rubric as Hector. According to the wording of the rubric, Ashley's writing on the pre-test writing task is categorized as lacking "an evident structure", and her writing "makes unclear connections among ideas, concepts, and information".

Ashley also scored a one in Development. According to the wording of the LDC rubric, this means that Ashley's initial writing sample explained ideas and source material in a way that was "irrelevant, incomplete, and inaccurate".

Ashley shared that she thought the writing task was "kind of hard", going on to share that writing in general is hard. Ashley did plan "because you have to know your ideas to write them into sentences". According to Ashley, her plan before writing was a list of ideas to include, "but not, like, complete sentences or stuff like that". Finally, when asked if the score she received was fair, Ashley responded, "Yeah. I worked hard, but I have to get better at writing…It is a lot of work…We have to practice a lot at school."

Post-test. On the post-test writing task, the 7th grade students were asked to write an argumentative piece on the subject of bilingualism. This task was the culminating assignment in a unit in the 7th grade Language and Literacy course that focused on reading expository texts about the benefits of and misconceptions surrounding bilingualism, especially in the United States and in our community. This was not an on-demand task, and Ashley had several days to compile her evidence, complete her provided graphic organizer, and compose her argumentative piece.

In the area of Organization, Ashley scored a three. On the task with the provided and explicitly taught graphic organizer, Ashley produced writing that, according to the wording of the LDC rubric, "groups and sequences ideas to develop the controlling idea" and "uses transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas, concepts, and information.

For Development, Ashley's writing scored a 2.5, a possible score on the revised and annotated LDC rubric. Ashley's writing on the post-test writing task accurately explained her

ideas and how they supported her controlling idea, however her explanation of source materials was "minimal" and contained minor errors.

When asked how she felt about her performance on the post-test writing task, Ashley responded positively, saying, "I worked really hard and I wrote a lot. Like a lot. I knew a lot of stuff about it…It's really good. I wrote good paragraphs and I used my sources."

Ashley did plan with the provided graphic organizer. "We had to plan to make it good and make sure it makes sense. Otherwise you might not know what to write," she explained. When asked if her writing has improved and whether or not the score her writing received was fair, Ashley shared, "I did a good job. I think people should read it."

Theresa

Pre-test. Theresa, the second 7th grade student participant in this study, scored a one in Organization. She scored slightly higher on Development, however, scoring a two. Despite the one point difference, Theresa was still considered not proficient in either domain as a proficient score is a three.

Theresa's score of a one on the LDC Rubric in the area of Organization indicates that her writing was lacked "an evident structure" and made "unclear connections among ideas, concepts, and information".

In the area of Development, Theresa's writing scored a two on the LDC rubric. This means her writing provided an explanation of her ideas and source materials that was "minimal or contains minor errors".

When asked about the pre-test writing task, Theresa stated that it was "easy". When pushed for more information, she responded, "You just have to write, you know? It's not that

hard." Theresa shared that she did not plan before writing because she "already knew what [she] was going to write" and "it doesn't really matter, you know?" Theresa attempted to avoid discussing whether or not she thought the scores for her writing were fair. "I don't really care," she replied. "It wasn't really for a grade or whatever."

Post-test. Theresa participated in the same post-test writing task as Ashley as they are both seventh grade students. Theresa showed improvement in the area of Organization and Development.

In the area of Organization, Theresa's writing sample scored a three when using the LDC rubric. Her writing on the post-test writing task showed that Theresa grouped and sequenced ideas "to develop the controlling idea" and that she used transitions "to clarify the relationships among ideas, concepts, and information.

Using the LDC rubric, Theresa's writing sample scored a 2.5 in Development. Theresa's writing explained how her ideas and the source material supported her controlling idea, however there were minor errors in her explanation of the source materials.

Theresa shared that she thought she did well on the post-test writing task. "It looks really good," she stated. While she had said that the pre-test writing task was "easy", Theresa said that the post-test writing sample was "kind of hard, you know? Because, like, you have to put in the information from the stuff you read and it has to be right."

Theresa did plan on the post-test writing task with the provided graphic organizer. "That paper just made it all more organized, you know? Then I can just look at it and write all the sentences. It makes the paragraphs go faster." Theresa indicated that she believed her writing has improved because now she "can write with a good introduction" and she doesn't "forget any of the parts" when writing. She also explained that because she had read multiple articles and taken

notes on several different sources before even beginning the provided graphic organizer, she was more knowledgeable about the subject of the writing task.

Initially, Theresa agreed that the scores were "fair" without even looking at the rubric. After having the descriptions for her scores read aloud from the rubric, Theresa still agreed that they were fair.

Angel

Pre-test. Angel, another 7th grade student, scored a one on both Organization and Development on the writing task used to collect baseline data. Like the other students in the study, these scores indicate that he was not proficient in either domain when responding to the expository, on-demand writing task.

Angel's score of a one in Organization categorized his writing as lacking "an evident structure". Also, according to the description on the LDC rubric, Angel's writing on the pre-test writing task made "unclear connections among ideas, concepts, and information".

Angel also scored a one in Development. According to the wording of the LDC rubric, this means that Angel's initial writing sample explained ideas and source material in a way that was "irrelevant, incomplete, and inaccurate".

Angel stated that he thought the pre-test writing task was easy, although he was unable to elaborate. Angel also stated that he did not plan or pre-write for the task in any way because he did not want to. When asked if the scores his writing received were fair, Angel replied, "I don't know. Sure." After having the descriptions for his scores read aloud to him from the rubric, Angel shrugged and declined to elaborate or share more on the topic.

Post-test. As the third seventh grade student participant in the study, Angel completed the same argumentative writing task as his peers, Theresa and Ashley, at the end of a unit of study in his Language and Literacy course. The implications of the pre-test writing task being on-demand and the post-test writing task being embedded in a unit of study will be discussed in Chapter 5: Conclusions.

Using the LDC rubric to score his post-test writing sample, Angel showed improvement in the area of Organization. His post task writing met expectations in the area of Organization, meaning that he grouped and sequenced ideas in order to develop his controlling idea and used appropriate transitions "to clarify the relationships among ideas, concepts, and information." The writing scored a three in Organization according to the LDC rubric.

Angel's writing on the post-test also showed improvement in the area of Development, scoring a two. According to the LDC rubric, a score of a two in Development is approaching expectations as the writer provides an explanation of ideas and source material that is "minimal and contains minor errors".

Angel believed the post-test writing task was easy. When asked if he planned and why, Angel responded to the interviewer that he had because "you made me". Angel believes his writing has improved because "it makes more sense". When asked if the score he received was fair, Angel replied, "Yes. It's good. I did a good job."

Jose

Pre-test. Jose, the only 8th grade student participant in this study, scored a one on both Organization and Development on the writing task used to collect baseline data. Like the other students in the study, these scores indicate that he was not proficient in either domain when

responding to the expository task. Unlike the other students, however, Jose's writing task was not on-demand.

As a culmination of the study of Jamestown in his Individuals and Society course, Jose was asked to use the multiple primary sources read and discussed in class to present and explain the reasons for the decline of colonial Jamestown. Nevertheless, like the other tasks, Jose was not provided a graphic organizer, nor did he use one because, as he put it, "I didn't know I had to plan. [The teacher] never said I had to hand in a plan, so I didn't do it."

Like all the students in this study, Jose's score of one in Organization on the LDC rubric categorizes his writing as making "unclear connections among ideas, concepts, and information".

Jose also scored a one in Development on the LDC rubric used to evaluate his writing sample. This shows that Jose had difficulty explaining his ideas clearly and incorporating source material. His writing was categorized as explaining ideas and source material in a way that was "irrelevant, incomplete, and inaccurate".

Jose stated that he found the pre-test writing task to be "pretty easy", but had not yet seen the rubric with his scores. Once shown the rubric, Jose admitted that writing "gets a little confusing sometimes" and shared that he just wants "to be done" when given a writing task. These were the same explanations provided for why he chose not to plan his writing.

Jose stated that the scores he received on this particular writing sample were "probably" fair because the teacher who scored this particular writing assignment "is a good teacher".

Post-test. Much like all the other participants in the study, the post-test writing task for Jose differed from the pre-test task in that it was not on-demand. Jose was asked to write an argumentative piece discussing the definition and attainability of the American Dream after a

unit taught in his Language and Literacy course. The implications of the difference between the two writing tasks will be discussed in Chapter 5: Conclusions.

Jose used the provided and explicitly taught graphic organizer to plan his writing. This increased his score in Organization from a one on the pre-test to a 2.5 on the post-test writing task. While Jose's writing grouped and sequenced ideas to develop the controlling idea while using transitions, there was a lapse in organization that detracted from the overall organization of the piece.

In the area of Development, Jose's writing scored a two on the LDC rubric. His explanation of ideas and source material were present, but they were minimal.

Jose shared that he was very proud of his product on the post-test writing task. He stated that he worked very hard and that he knew that he did a "good job". In fact, he shared that his family had received a positive call home from school to share how focused he had been and hard he had worked on this particular assignment. Jose conceded that it was not an easy task, describing it as "kind of hard, but not really too hard because I knew what to do. It just took a long time."

Jose planned his writing using the provided graphic organizer, sharing that he did so because it was expected as part of the assignment. He did state that it helped him with his writing because he was able to record his ideas in the "right order" before writing. Jose believed the scores he received to be fair because he "worked really hard" and he his writing has improved a lot due to practice and help from teachers.

Overview of Results

The quantitative and qualitative data has been presented as it pertains for each individual student participant in regards to the pre and post test writing samples. Now, the data will be

presented as a whole, first presenting the quantitative data pertaining to student scores in Organization, then the quantitative data pertaining to student scores in Development, and finally the qualitative data regarding student participants' perception of their own writing.

Organization

All five student participants showed improvement in their writing in the area of Organization as defined by the LDC rubric. Table 1 shows each student participant's score in Organization on the pre-test and post-test.
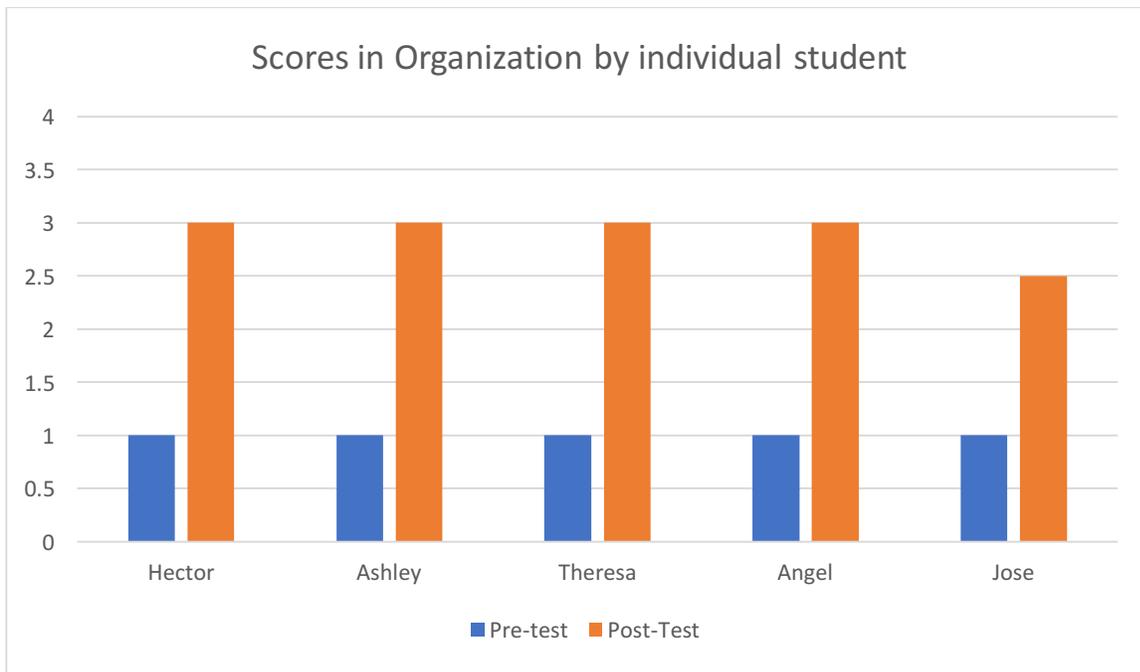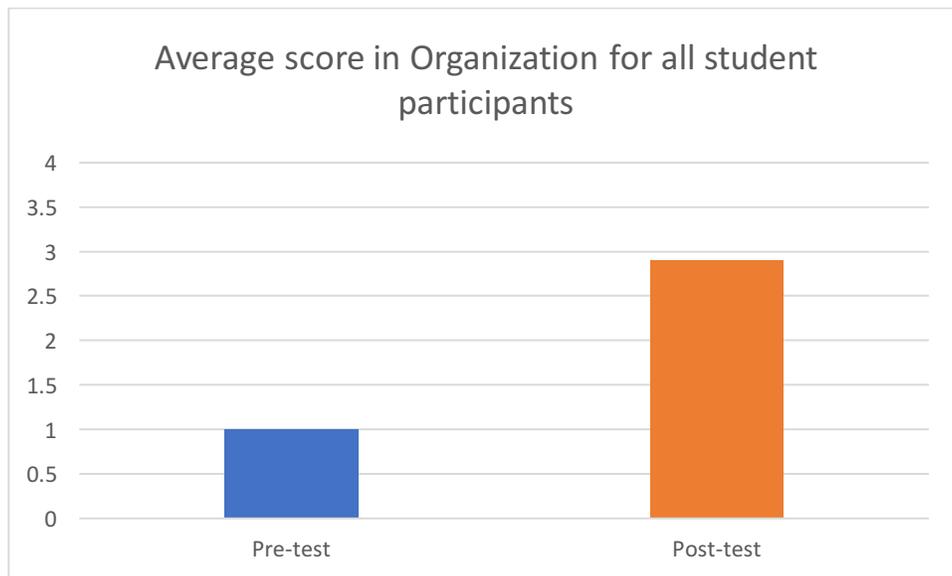

Table 1

Hector grew by two full points, as did Ashley, Theresa, and Angel. Jose still showed significant growth scoring 1.5 points higher in Organization on his post-test writing task than on his pre-test writing task. Hector, Ashley, Theresa and Angel all moved from "emerging" and

scoring a one in Organization on the pre-test writing task to "meets expectations" and scoring a

three on the post-test writing task. Jose still showed growth from the pre-test to the post test,

growing from a one in Organization to a 2.5, placing his writing performance on the post-test

writing task between "approaches" and "meets expectations".

Table 2 shows the average score in Organization of all five student participants on the

pre-test writing task compared to the average score of Organization of all five student

participants on the post-test writing task.

Table 2

The average pre-test score in Organization for all five student participants was one. Upon

examination of the LDC rubric (Appendix B), it is evident that this is the lowest possible score

on the rubric. The average post-test score in Organization for the five student participants is 2.9,

a mere 0.1 point away from "meets expectations" in the area of Organization. This shows an

average growth in Organization of 1.9 points in the area of Organization.

Table 3 shows the average growth in Organization from the pre-test writing task to the post-test writing task by grade. It should be noted, however, that there is only one student participant in sixth grade and one student participant in eighth grade. There are three seventh grade student participants.
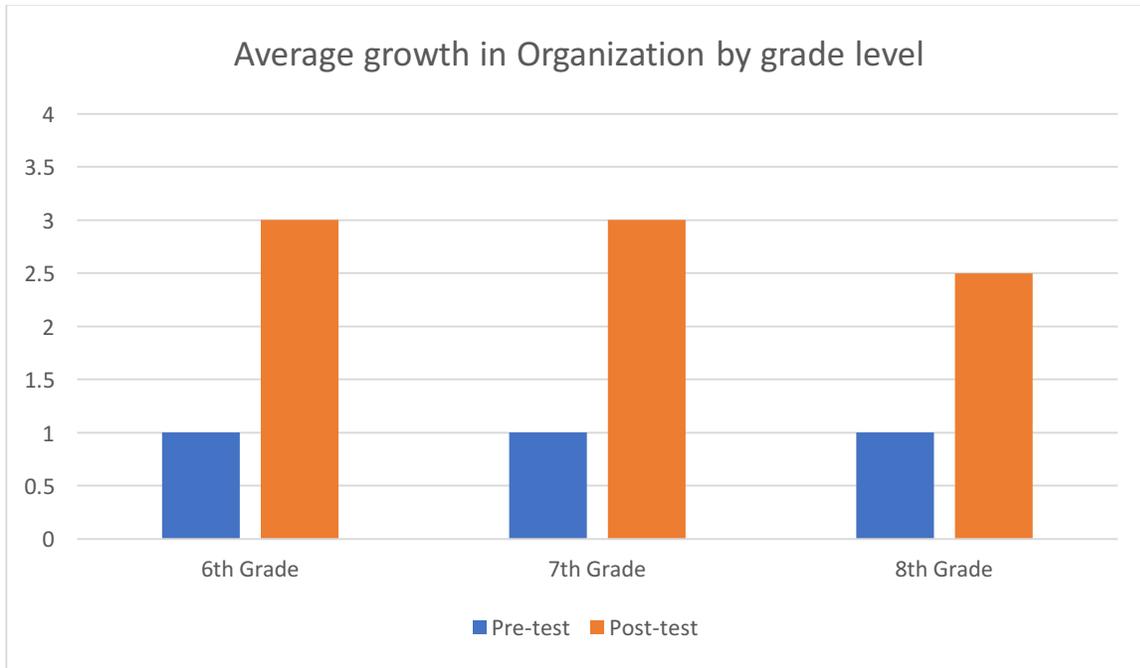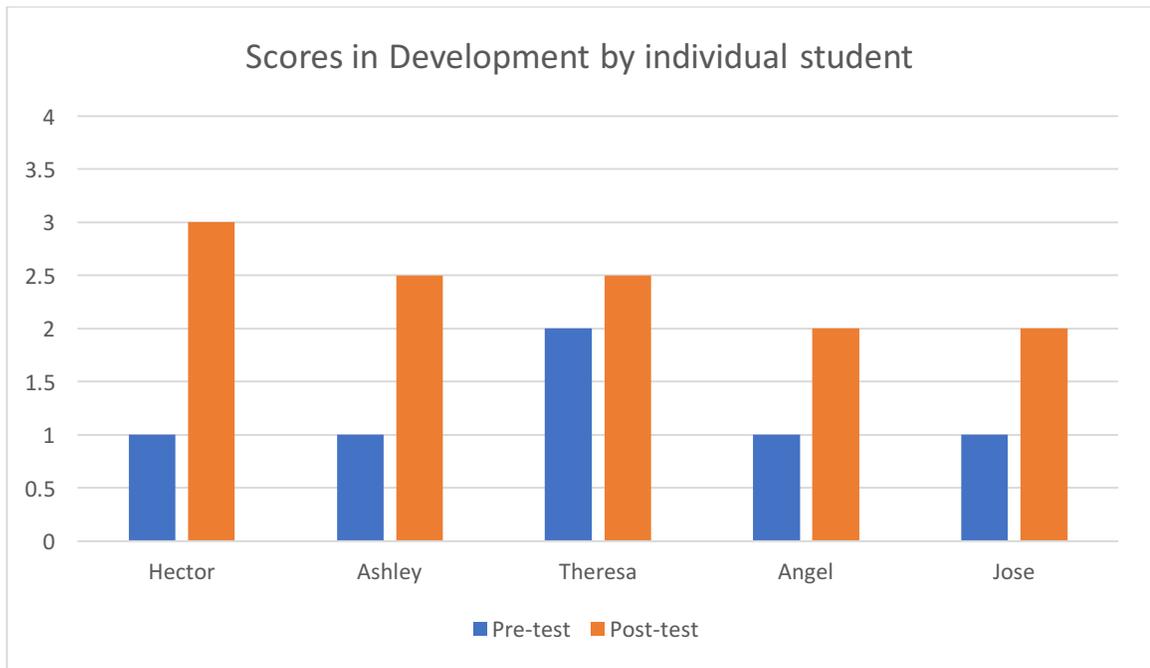

Table 3

Both sixth and seventh graders grew from an average of one in Organization to an average of three, showing an average growth of two points. This categorizes their performance in Organization on the post-test writing task as "meets expectations". The eighth grade student participant grew from a one to a 2.5, showing growth of 1.5 points. This places the eighth grade student participant between "approaches expectations" and "meets expectations".

All five student participants showed improvement in their writing in the area of Organization as defined by the LDC rubric, though with more variation than their growth in Organization. Table 4 shows each student participants score in Development on the pre-test and post-test.

Scores in Development by individual student

Table 4

Hector grew by two full points in the area of Development as defined by the LDC rubric, categorizing his growth in Development as "meets expectation" on the post-test writing task.. Ashley grew by one and a half points, scoring a 2.5 on the post-test which places her between "approaches" and "meets expectations" in the area of Development. Theresa scored higher on the pre-test in Development at a two, and her post-test writing score in Development scored a 2.5,

showing growth of half a point. Angel and Jose grew by one full point, showing improvement in

Development and categorizing their post-test writing task as "approaches" in Development.

Table 5 below shows the average growth in Development for all five student participants

from the pre-test to the post-test.
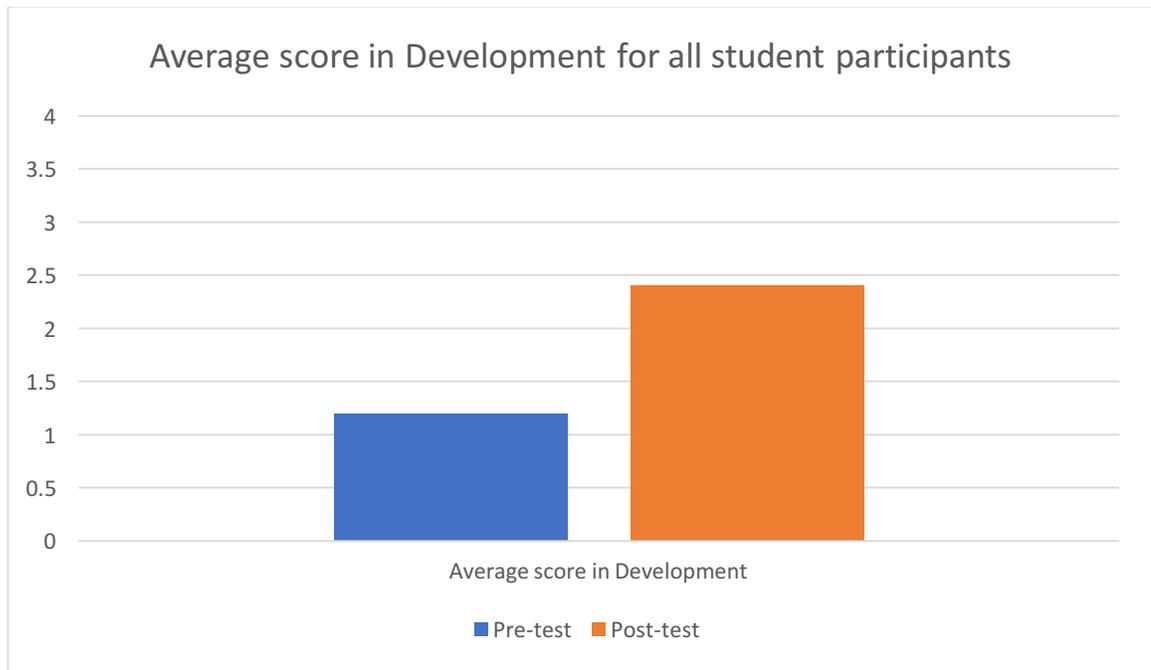
Table 5

The average score for all five student participants on the pre-test in Development as

defined by the LDC rubric was 1.2, slightly above the average score in Organization. The post-

test writing task showed an overall average growth of 1.2 points making 2.4 the average score in

Development on the post-test writing task.

Finally, Table 6 shows the average growth in Development from the pre-test writing task

to the post-test by grade level rounded to the nearest tenth of a point. As stated in presenting

Table 3, it is important to remember that there is only one sixth grade and one seventh grade student participant respectively. There are three seventh grade student participants.
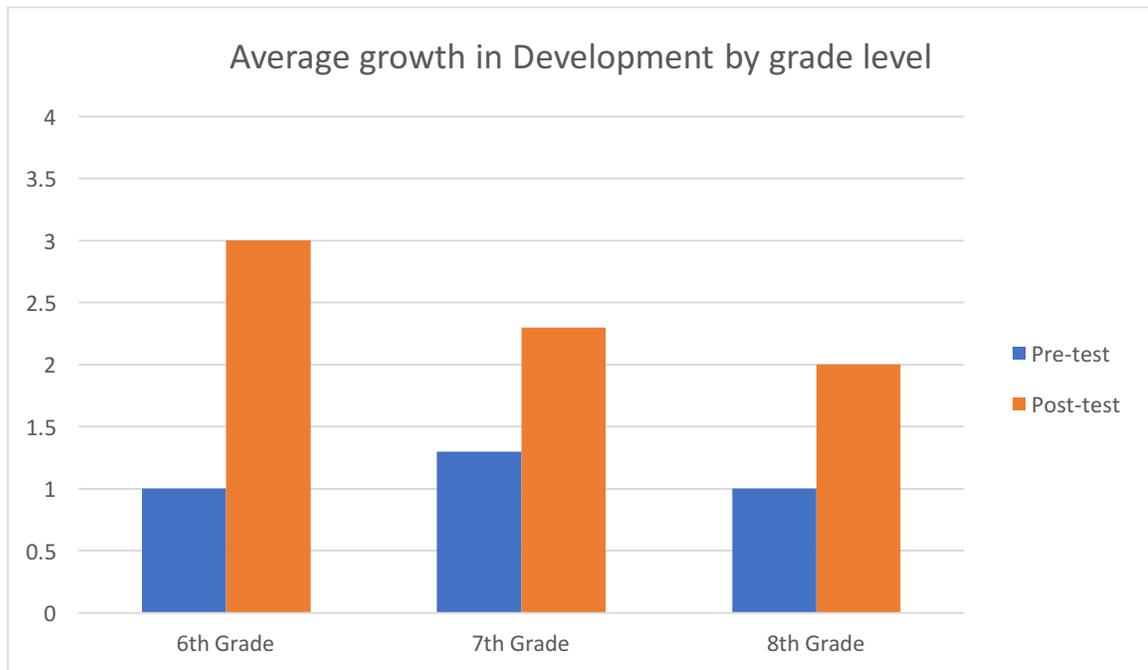
Table 6

The sixth grade student showed an average growth of two points in Development, moving from a one on the pre-test to scoring a three – "meets expectations" – on the post-test writing task. The three seventh grade student participants started with an average score of 1.2 in Development on the pre-test writing task and showed an average growth of one point and an average post-test score in development of 2.3. The eighth grade student participant scored a one in Development on the pre-test writing task and a two on the post-test writing task, showing growth of one full point.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the data collected during this study. The quantitative data collected shows student growth and improvement between a pre-test writing task and a post-test

writing task using a provided, intentionally designed and explicitly taught graphic organizer. The qualitative data collected seeks to provide insight on the student participants' perception of their own growth and development between the pre and post-test writing tasks.

The data was first presented as it pertained to each of the five individual student participants between the pre and post-test writing tasks. Then, the data was presented as a whole to provide a clearer picture of the data collected from the group of student participants as a whole.

In Chapter 5: Conclusions, I will discuss the results of the study, examining the implications of both the qualitative and quantitative data. I will reflect on the data collected as well as the possible limitations of the study. Finally, I will reflect on the possible implications of the results and recommendations for action and further research.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

The research and data presented in this study was intended to answer the following questions:

1. Can a graphic organizer help improve organization and development in an argumentative or expository writing task?

2. How does the explicit instruction and use of an intentionally designed graphic organizer improve student perception of their own abilities and attitudes towards completing an argumentative or expository writing task?

The previous chapter presented the quantitative data in regards to Organization and Development as defined on the LDC rubric (Appendix B) for the five student participants grades six through eight. This data sought to specifically address the first question above. Chapter 4: Results also presented qualitative data in an attempt to answer the second question above.

This chapter will present a reflection on the data, as well as limitations and implications of the study. Finally, recommendations for further action and research will be discussed.

Reflection on the Data

Quantitative data

All five student participants showed growth in both areas of Organization and Development on the LDC rubric from the pre-test to post-test writing tasks. Students showed average growth of 1.9 points in Organization, growing from scores of one and "emerging" in Organization to threes and "meets expectations".

Considering all five students are dual identified as ELs and having an IEP (Individualized Education Program) with specific writing goals due to their disabilities, this is significant

growth. All five students had their writing samples for the pre and post-test writing tasks scored on the LDC rubric (Appendix B) the same as all mainstream, non-EL students. The fact that this population which was clearly performing so far below the mainstream population in writing produced writing that met expectations in Organization is significant.

All five students also grew in the area of Development. According to the LDC rubric, in order to meet expectations for development and explanation of sources in writing, a students must be able to "accurately explain ideas and source material and how they support the controlling idea". While only one student, sixth grade Hector, scored a three in Development on the post-test writing task, Ashley and Theresa, two of the seventh grade student participants, scored a 2.5, nearly meeting expectations. Jose and Angel scored only a two in Development on the post-test writing task; however, they both showed growth in that area of a full point.

While all students showed growth from the pre-test to the post-test writing task, the students showed more growth in Organization than in Development. All five student participants grew by at least 1.5 points in Organization, but in the area of Development, two students grew by one point and one student grew by only half a point.

I believe the difference in growth between Organization and Development makes sense. The students were explicitly taught to use an intentionally designed graphic organizer which was then provided for them to use on the post-test writing task. Of the five students, only one, Ashley, even attempted to plan their writing on the pre-test writing task. It makes sense that any planning at all would improve the organization of a written piece.

The graphic organizer provided a skeleton of sorts for the students. It has space for each part of an introductory and concluding paragraph. For each of the body paragraphs, it prompted students to provide a topic sentence with three, relevant supporting details. If students were able

to complete the graphic organizer, then their written product should, as the definition of meeting expectations in the LDC rubric states, group and sequence "ideas to develop the controlling idea" and use "transitions to clarify the relationship among ideas, concepts and information".

The graphic organizer was also designed with Development in mind. Students were prompted on the graphic organizer to list the sources from where they gathered their supporting details. This was intended to encourage students to think about the sources they were using for the writing task, as well as encourage use of information from the sources rather than vague or irrelevant information. Listing the sources and grouping the information under topic sentences provided a scaffold to students to help them explain how their details supported their controlling idea.

Despite the fact that the graphic organizer is considered a scaffold, it lent itself to deeper cognitive processes for the student participants. The scaffold allowed the students to free up cognitive space and engage in more complex thinking rather than waste time and energy on organizational tasks associated with writing. This asks us to reflect back on the work Monroe and Troia (2002) who claimed that LD students typically attempt to reduce planning time in order to minimize the overall time spent on the writing task, but, due to the lack of planning, students often produce lower quality texts. The intentionally designed graphic organizer used in this study encouraged the dual identified student participants to spend time on planning and organizing, therefore leading to higher quality texts.

Calderon and Minaya-Rowe (2010) stated that pre-writing or planning is an important step in the writing process. Pre-writing activities, such as completing a graphic organizer, as in the case of this study, help students not only generate their ideas, but organize them. The graphic

organizer in this study facilitated this process prior to writing and did lead to more developed and organized final products, consistent with the claims of Calderon and Minaya-Rowe (2010).

Qualitative data

As is the nature of qualitative data, it is not so cut and dry. When asked about the difficulty of the pre-test writing task, Hector, Theresa, and Angel all indicated that they thought the task was easy or "not that hard", despite the evidence that the writing did not meet expectations. In fact, Hector and Angel both received the lowest possible scores on the pre-test writing sample, and yet asserted that the task had not been difficult.

Their answers to the other two interview questions regarding the pre-test, however, indicates that Hector, Theresa, and Angel's attitude regarding the pre-test writing task was not positive. None of the three attempted any sort of planning, primarily because they did not want to or the teacher supervising the task did not "make" them. These three students were also non-committal when discussing whether or not the scores their writing received on the pre-test were fair. Hector stated he believed he thought he had done better but accepted the scores without attempting to justify the assertion. Both Angel and Theresa asserted that they essentially did not find the task or the scores important. Theresa stated that the task and scores did not matter since it was not for a grade, and Angel claimed he did not care.

Based on their answers to these questions regarding their pre-test writing scores in Organization and Development, I believe that Hector, Theresa, and Angel actually felt defeated in writing. They did not want to show any personal investment in their writing because they were convinced to do so and to not meet expectations would be considered a failure. If they conveyed that they did not care about the writing task, then it may seem that they could have done better if

they had tried, they simply did not find it important enough. I believe this to be a coping mechanism to protect themselves in an attempt to not seem less than their peers and to hide their lack of confidence in the area of writing.

After the post-test writing task and using the graphic organizer to plan their writing, Hector, Theresa, and Angel all shared that they thought they had done well on the post-test writing task. As with the pre-test, Hector and Angel asserted that the post-test writing task was not difficult, whereas Theresa shared that she thought the post-test writing task was "kind of hard" because she was prompted to include plenty of supporting details and to ensure that these details were accurate and attributed to sources.

Theresa's change in perception of the task being easy to difficult, I believe, is a positive one. The fact that she found the post-test writing task difficult shows that she took it seriously and spent time building her controlling idea and supporting evidence. Theresa put effort into the post-test writing task, and that, naturally, made it seem more difficult.

Hector claimed to have found the post-test writing task "wasn't really that bad". He said he used the graphic organizer because the teacher made him, but implied that it helped him write more and that his post-test writing sample was organized into paragraphs. While Hector's response is not that the task was difficult, he did not out-right call it easy. Hector put more thought and effort into the post-test writing task, producing a more organized and developed product, yet with the help of the graphic organizer that he was taught and told to use, Hector felt positively about his final product and was pleased with his scores on the post-test writing task.

Angel's attitude about his writing seems to have changed little between the pre-test and post-test writing task. Claiming both tasks were easy and only having planned on the post-test writing task because it was expected of him, he did begrudgingly admit that his product for the

post-test writing task made more sense and was better organized than the pre-test writing task. This is a step in the right direction to help Angel build confidence and take pride and ownership in his own writing.

Ashley and Jose had slightly different attitudes and beliefs about the pre-test writing task and their performance than Hector, Theresa, and Angel. Ashley admitted to finding the pre-test writing test somewhat difficult, and while Jose initially claimed the pre-test writing task was easy for him, that was before he knew his scores. Upon being shown the rubric with his writing assessed, Jose admitted that the task had been difficult and a little confusing. In my opinion, this is indicative that Ashley and Jose had more ownership of their writing and were more aware of and cared more about the expectations for the final product.

Of all the student participants, only Ashley attempted to plan on the pre-test writing task. This again shows how Ashley's attitude towards writing differed in the beginning from Hector, Theresa, and Angel. By taking the time to plan, however ineffective it may have been since she scored only a one in both Organization and Development on the pre-test using the LDC rubric, Ashley showed that she cared about her final product, was generally aware of the expectations, and put effort into her work. On the post-test writing task, Ashley maintained this attitude, but seems to have increased in confidence. Again, Ashley planned, though this time she used the provided and explicitly taught graphic organizer. Ashley shared that she felt she did a good job on her final product on the post-test, even saying that she thought other people should read it. This clearly shows that Ashley was proud of her final product and felt that she had shown growth and improvement in her own writing.

More in line with Hector, Theresa, and Angel, Jose also did not plan on the pre-test writing task because he did not want to. In fact, Jose shared that planning would have taken time

that he did not want to spend on the task, telling me that he simply wanted "to be done". The lack of willingness to spend time on the task gives insight into Jose's attitudes about his own writing and writing skills on the pre-test. Knowing Jose, I believe that he did not feel the task to be worth his time, although it is possible he did not believe he would be successful no matter how much time and effort he spent on the task.

Like Ashley, Jose thought his score on the pre-test was "probably" fair, however for a different reason than Ashley. Whereas Ashley admitted that writing tends to be difficult for her, Jose indicated that his score was most likely fair and accurate because the teacher that had assessed his writing was a "good teacher", showing that at least Jose had a positive connection with the teacher and thus it would be easier to use that relationship to build confidence and buy-in with his writing in the future.

In fact, Jose shared that using the graphic organizer had helped him get his ideas in the "right order" and that he believed his scores on the post-test writing task were indeed fair. He asserted that he had worked hard on the post-test writing task and that his writing had certainly improved due to his hard work, lots of practice, and lots of help from his teachers.

Considering the quantitative and qualitative data together

Overall, it seems that the use of the graphic organizer as well as the explicit teaching and practice leading up to the post-test writing task led to an increase not only in student scores in Organization and Development as shown on the LDC rubric, but also to an increase in confidence and a more positive attitude in students' perceptions of their own writing and writing abilities. This is consistent with the findings of Cheng (2002) who stated, "for foreign language teachers, fostering students' positive and realistic perception of their writing competence is as important as developing students' writing skills".

The tie between student perception of their own writing and writing abilities and their increased scores in Organization and Development is also consistent with the findings of Hashemian and Heidari (2013) who claim that teacher attitude towards writing influences student motivation. With the emphasis the teacher of the five student participants put on writing and planning their writing, the students were influenced and changed their attitude to reflect more positively on the post-test writing task.

As discussed in Chapter 3: Methods, the quantitative data is important in a public school setting as it helps to justify and quantify student progress and therefore the effectiveness of the teacher and their methods. The qualitative data, however, is just as important in my opinion. The students are more than numbers and data points. It is just as important that the students recognize their own growth, successes, and improvement in Organization and Development as it is that they make this quantifiable growth. Without the recognition of their growth and success and reflection as to how they achieved their improvements, it is unlikely that the students will know how or be motivated to take the steps to be successful again and continue to grow and develop.

Limitations

As with any study, there were many limitations regarding the research presented and discussed here. First of all, the sample size of student participants was small (only five students), which does not provide for data that would be considered statistically significant, though the data clearly points in a positive trend.

Additionally, the second question guiding this research was: *How does the explicit instruction and use of an intentionally designed graphic organizer improve student perception of their own abilities and attitudes towards completing an argumentative or expository writing task?* This question collected qualitative data from each individual student. Qualitative data, by

nature, is more difficult to generalize and is more subjective and open to interpretation than quantitative data.

Other limitations to the study include the span of three grade levels, each with different pre and post-test writing tasks, the fact that the pre-test writing task for each student was expository while the post-test writing task was argumentative, and the concept that the pre-test writing task was on-demand while the post-test writing task was tied to a particular unit in each student's Language and Literacy course. Despite these limitations, the implications of the study are important.

Implications

While the research was done on a small scale and there were several limitations, as discussed above, the implications of the study are clear. Teaching dual identified students – students that are considered both ELs and have an IEP – benefit from being explicitly taught how to plan and organize their writing.

As shown by the quantitative data, the provided graphic organizer led to more organized writing as measured by the LDC rubric for all student participants. In regards to the qualitative data and the students' own perceptions of their writing, it is clear that when using the graphic organizer, students felt that their writing had improved and was more organized, even stating that their information was in the "right order" and that it helped them remember to include all necessary parts such as introductory paragraphs, etc.

The quantitative data also indicates that use of the provided graphic organizer also leads to better developed writing, though the growth in this area was not as great as in Organization. The student participants, when using the provided graphic organizer, did show a more developed use of sources, each showing growth as measured on the LDC rubric. Perhaps the growth made

in Development was not as great as in Organization because Development still depends greatly on the students' independent understanding of the source material. While the graphic organizer helped facilitate the use of the source material and reminded students to use the source material to explain their controlling idea, if the students were in anyway confused about the source material or misunderstood it, the final product would be considered less developed as the source material could not be categorized as accurately explained.

The implications of the qualitative data gathered from speaking with the students after the pre and post-test writing task show that practice, explicit teaching, and graphic organizers lead to more confident writers. The students all seemed more sure of themselves on the post-test writing task and generally perceived the writing task as less daunting, having a clear starting point and understanding the expectations for the final product. For some students, the writing was less of a chore with the graphic organizer, providing more personal buy-in and increasing the quantity and quality produced by the student.

The use of the intentionally designed and explicitly taught graphic organizer was a success in improving the Organization and Development of writing in the dual identified population. Providing a framework and scaffold for the EL students with IEPs that address writing increased scores in both areas, increased student confidence, and provided more positive attitudes towards writing.

Recommendations for Further Action and Research

Considering the implications as well as the limitations of the study, I have several recommendations for future action and further research in this area.

<u>Further action</u>

First of all, since it is clear that the graphic organizer helped the dual identified EL (English Learner) /LD (Learning Disabled) population produce more organized and developed writing and helped students have a more positive association with and attitude towards writing, it is my recommendation that this graphic organizer be provided as an accommodation for these five student participants on each of the major writing tasks no matter what subject area or in which course the writing takes place. This will help ensure more high quality products and more buy-in or effort from these students as they will clearly understand the expectations and can better organize their thoughts and ideas. Eventually, these students should work towards being able to reproduce this organization and planning method independently.

Furthermore, it is my recommendation that all dual identified students at this site be provided the graphic organizer as an accommodation. Obviously if the graphic organizer is simply provided, but not discussed, it will not lead to much improvement in Organization and Development, nor will it help students feel more confident and clear in their writing as it will seem just another hoop to jump through. For this reason, not only should the graphic organizer be provided, but time should be taken to explicitly teach the dual identified population how to use the graphic organizer and students should be given multiple opportunities to interact and practice with the graphic organizer. To help advocate for this, the results of this study, including the quantitative and qualitative data can be presented to teams and administration. This information can be shared one-on-one or in grade-level or subject matter team meetings.

It is also my recommendation that the ELs at this site of study, as well as the other middle school EL teachers in the district continue to use this graphic organizer and advocate for its use. Anecdotally, an EL teacher at a different site within the district used this graphic organizer with

her students, too, and noticed some reproducing it for other writing tasks. I recommend these EL teachers work together to introduce and provide opportunities to use multiple different graphic organizers to determine which works best for the population or even a specific student.

While the suggestions for further action presented here apply mostly to a local level, I recommend other EL teachers with similar dual identified populations implement a similar course of action using a graphic organizer when teaching formal writing.

Future research

With the success of the study on such a small population – only five dual identified EL/LD students – it would be interesting to see the results on a larger scale. For this reason, I recommend that the graphic organizer be used with a larger dual identified population to see if the quantitative data collected still shows growth and improvement in Organization and Development and if the growth could be considered statistically significant.

In addition, it is my recommendation that further research reflects and collects data regarding the methods and techniques used here on singly identified EL and ESS (Exceptional Student Services, which includes LD) populations. If the method and graphic organizer are effective for the dual identified population, it stands to reason that it would be effective and beneficial to the singly identified EL and ESS populations. It would be interesting to determine if the growth in the singly identified populations is comparable to the growth seen in the dual identified population.

Regarding one of the obvious limitations of the study, I recommend that the study be repeated with more consistency in writing tasks. In this study, the pre-test writing task was considered on-demand and was not connected to any particular unit of study in any of the

student's content area courses whereas the post-test writing task was done at the end of a unit of study in their Language and Literacy course. The study could be repeated with two on-demand writing tasks independent from units of study as well as with two writing tasks that came as a final assessment of a unit of study within the same course.

Additionally, as the area of Development as defined by the LDC rubric is so closely tied to the area of Selection and Citation of Evidence, I recommend that further study in this area examine the growth in the area of Selection and Citation of Evidence as well.

Finally, while outside the scope of this particular study, it would be interesting to see the effectiveness of different types of graphic organizers or offering students choices of different graphic organizers and how that effects their writing process and final product.

Appendix A
Graphic Organizer

Argumentative Writing

Introduction:

Attention Getter:_____

Teaser:_____

_____

_____

_____

Thesis: _____

_____

Body Paragraph #1:
Topic Sentence (Claim):_____

_____

_____

_____

- Supporting Detail #1:_____

  _____

  _____

  o Source:_____

- SD #2:_____

  _____

  o Source:_____

- SD#3: _____

  _____

  o Source:_____

Body Paragraph #2:

Topic Sentence (Claim):_____

_____

_____

_____

- Supporting Detail #1:_____

  _____

  - Source:_____

- SD #2:_____

  _____

  - Source:_____

- SD#3: _____

  _____

  - Source:_____

Body Paragraph #3:
Topic Sentence (Counterclaim):_____

_____

_____

_____

- Supporting Detail #1:_____

  _____

  - Source:_____

- SD #2:_____

  _____

  - Source:_____

- SD#3: _____

  _____

  - Source: _____

Conclusion:

Re-state Thesis: _____

_____

Summary/Synthesis: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Closing Statement: _____

_____

_____

Appendix B
LDC Rubric

Student Work Rubric - Argumentation Task - Grades 6-8

Scoring Elements	Emerging		Approaches Expectations		Meets Expectations		Advanced
	1	**1.5**	**2**	**2.5**	**3**	**3.5**	**4**
Controlling Idea	Makes an unclear or unfocused claim.		Makes a **general** claim that **addresses the prompt**, with an **uneven focus**.		**Establishes and maintains a clear** claim that addresses **all aspects** of the prompt.		Establishes and maintains a clear, **specific, and credible** claim that addresses all aspects of the prompt.
Selection & Citation of Evidence	Includes minimal details from sources. Sources are used without citation.		Includes **details, examples, and/or quotations** from sources that are **relevant to the claim**. **Inconsistently** cites sources.		Includes details, examples, and/or quotations from sources that are relevant to the claim **and supporting ideas.** **Consistently** cites sources with **minor formatting errors**.		Includes **well-chosen** details, examples, and/or quotations from sources that **support** the claim and supporting ideas. Consistently cites sources **using appropriate format.**
Development / Explanation of Sources	Explanation of ideas and source material is irrelevant, incomplete, or inaccurate.		Explanation of ideas and source material is **minimal** or **contains minor errors**.		**Accurately** explains ideas and source material and **how they support the argument.**		**Thoroughly** and accurately explains ideas and source material, **using reasoning** to support **and develop** the argument.
Organization	Lacks an evident structure. Makes unclear connections among claim, reasons, and evidence.		**Groups ideas and uses some transitions** to connect ideas, with **some lapses in coherence or organization.**		**Groups and sequences** ideas to **develop the controlling idea.** Uses transitions **to clarify the relationships among claim(s), reasons, and evidence.**		Groups **and sequences ideas logically** to develop the controlling idea **and create cohesion.** Uses **varied** transitions to clarify the relationships among claim(s), reasons, and evidence.
Conventions	Major errors in standard English conventions interfere with the clarity of the writing. Language or tone is inappropriate.		**Errors** in standard English conventions **sometimes interfere with the clarity** of the writing. Uses language and tone that are **sometimes inappropriate** for the audience and purpose.		**Consistently applies** standard English conventions; **minor errors**, while noticeable, **do not interfere** with the clarity of the writing. Uses language and tone **appropriate to the audience and purpose.**		Consistently applies standard English conventions, **with few errors.** Demonstrates **varied syntax** and **precise word choice.** **Consistently** uses language and tone appropriate to the audience and purpose.
Additional Task Demands (When applicable)	Does not address additional task demands.		Addresses additional task demands **superficially**.		Addresses additional task demands **adequately to support the argument.**		Addresses additional task demands **effectively to strengthen the clarity and development of the argument.**
Disciplinary Content Understanding	*Add criteria here*		*Add criteria here*		*Add criteria here*		*Add criteria here*

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Appendix C
Human Consent Form (English)

October 2016

Dear ELD Student and their Family,

My name is Katie Corrigan, and I am the English Language Development teacher at LEMS and WCMS. I am currently working on my master's degree at Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota. In order to complete my degree, I need to complete a capstone and conduct research. I have decided to focus on writing strategies with middle school ELD students who are dual identified and have an IEP. I would like to work with the participants in the study on specific techniques to organize and pre-write for their writing tasks in school.

The study will take place over several weeks. There is no risk to your student as the data I will assess will be the same data collected from all students for their argumentative writing tasks. Students will not be asked to complete additional writing tasks The benefits of participating in the study are that participants will learn and practice new pre-writing and organizational techniques that will, hopefully, increase their competency and scores in writing for all subject areas.

The data collected from this study will be printed in my capstone project which will be available online and in print. All participants are assured anonymity as their names will be removed.

If you have any questions about my research, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Katie Corrigan
ELD Teacher
LEMS & WCMS
651-341-0718
Katie.Corrigan@thompsonschools.org

_____

I, _____, give permission for my

child, _____, to participate in this research study.

_____   _____
Signature of parent   date

Parents: Your child's participation in this study is completely voluntary. Participating or not participating will not affect your child's grades at school. Your child may decline to participate or may stop participating at any time with no penalty even if you have given permission.

Students: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Participating or not participating will not affect your grades at school. You may stop participating at any time without penalty. Even if your parents have approved your participation, you may decide not to participate if you don't want to.

Appendix D
Human Consent Form (Spanish)

Octubre 2016

Querido estudiante de ELD y padres,

Soy Katie Corrigan, la maestra de Desarrollo del idioma Inglés (ELD) en las escuelas LEMS y WCMS. Actualmente estoy trabajando en mi maestría en la Universidad de Hamline en St. Paul, Minnesota. Con el fin de completar mis estudios, necesito completar un proyecto final que incluye investigaciones. Para esto, decidì de centrarme en estrategias de escritura con los estudiantes de la escuela secundaria en ELD - niños que tienen también un IEP. Me gustaría trabajar con ellos sobre técnicas específicas de organización y de pre-escritura que los ayudará en sus actividades de escritura en todas sus clases.

El estudio se llevará a cabo durante varias semanas. No existe ningún riesgo para su niño/a; los datos que lo/la evaluarán serán los mismos datos recogidos de todos los estudiantes en sus actividades de escritura argumentativa. No se les pedirá ninguna tarea adicional. Los beneficios su participación en este estudio son que los niños aprenderán y practicarán nuevas técnicas de pre-escritura y de organización que, con suerte, aumentarán su competencia y notas en escritura en todas las materias.

Los datos obtenidos de este estudio serán incluidos en mi proyecto final que estará disponible en línea y estará impreso como libro. Todos los participantes estarán anónimos.

Si ustedes tienen alguna pregunta acerca de mi investigación, por favor, contáctenme.

Katie Corrigan
Maestra de ELD
LEMS & WCMS
651-341-0718
Katie.Corrigan@thompsonschools.org

_ _

Yo, _____, autorizo a mi

niño/a, _____, a participar en este estudio de investigación.

Padres: La participación de sus hijo/a en este estudio es completamente voluntaria. Si participa o no, esto no afectará sus notas. Sus niño/a puede renunciar de participar o puede dejar el estudio cuando quiere, sin penalización, incluso si ustedes le han dado permiso de participar.

Estudiantes: Su participación en este estudio es completamente voluntaria. Si participas o no, esto no afectará tus notas. Puedes renunciar de participar o puedes dejar el estudio cuando quieres, sin penalización, incluso si tus padres han aprobado tu participación.

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