

LISTENING CLOSELY: EXAMINING STUDENTS' LANGUAGE
AND VALUES RELATED TO ACADEMIC WRITING

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE
TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF LITERACY & LEARNING
COLLEGE OF PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

BY

AMANDA BREWER B.A., M.Ed.

DENTON, TEXAS

MAY 2021

Copyright © 2021 by Amanda Brewer

DEDICATION

To my past, present, and future students. I have not always been the teacher I wished to be, but you have been and will always be the best teachers I could imagine.

ABSTRACT

AMANDA BREWER

LISTENING CLOSELY: EXAMINING STUDENTS' LANGUAGE AND VALUES RELATED TO ACADEMIC WRITING

MAY 2021

Secondary students' argumentative academic writing abilities have not been meeting the standards set for them by the educational system (R. P. Ferretti & Graham, 2019; Preiss et al., 2013). To ensure the success of students in higher education and the workforce, it is important that the educational system support students' writing development in more effective ways than have been tried up until this point.

Guided by social constructivism, this qualitative case study highlights the importance of examining students' values for their writing and the language they use to explain those values. The study took place in a North Texas high school. Analysis included writing as an analytical stance (Augustine, 2014) and open, *a priori*, and axial coding (Merriam, 1998). Major findings across the cases included that students' values and language about argumentative academic writing aligned with their current and future understandings of their identities and that their metacognitive talk differed depending on those identities as well. This study contributes to the literature of writing and identity theories, and the findings have implications for the teaching of writing and metalinguistic talk in the classroom.

Keywords: secondary students, writing, identity, language use, social constructivism

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Background of the Problem	3
Statement of the Problem	8
Purpose of the Study	8
Research Questions	9
Significance of the Study	9
Summary	9
II. LITERATURE REVIEW	10
Theoretical Framework	10
Social Constructivism	10
Language	12
Thought and Language	14
Inner Speech	15
Teaching as Assisted Performance	16
Identity	18
Writing Process Theory	19
Review of Literature	20
Teaching Writing	21
Academic Writing	24
Criteria for Quality Writing	26
Adolescence	28
Metacognition	29
Writing	31
Summary	34

III. METHODOLOGY	36
Methodological Framework	36
Case Study	37
Setting and Participants	38
Positionality of the Researcher	41
Data Collection	44
Data Analysis	48
Interview Transcripts and Writing Samples	48
Sorts of Statements about Writing	52
Trustworthiness	56
Summary	57
IV. FINDINGS: JADE	59
Introduction to Jade	60
Interrelated Understanding of Academic and Other Genres of Writing	63
Academic Labels and Informal Descriptions	64
High Standards for Writing	65
Creativity	68
Coherent, Cohesive Text	70
Use of Personalized Writing Process	74
Audience's Perceptions	75
Connecting with Audience	76
Summary	77
V. FINDINGS: AARON	79
Introduction to Aaron	79
Internal Process and Internal Values	83
Informal, Metacognitive Language	86
Personalized Writing Process	87
Idea Generation	89
Metacognition	90

Meaning Through Content	91
Connecting Content and Audience.....	95
Summary.....	98
VI. FINDINGS: CLETUS	100
Introduction to Cletus	100
Developing Understanding of Academic Writing	103
Academic Labels	106
Author's Craft.....	107
Narrative Techniques	111
Complexity in Style	112
Perception of Academic Writing	115
Formality	116
Clarity and Coherence.....	118
Summary.....	119
VII. FINDINGS: LACEY.....	121
Introduction to Lacey	121
Static Understanding of Academic Writing	124
Evaluation of Writing	127
Coherence	132
Presenting Facts	134
Formal, Reserved Writer's Craft	137
Summary.....	139
VIII. FINDINGS: CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS	140
Language.....	142
Metacognitive Language Influenced by Future Selves	145
Internally focused Metacognition.....	146
Externally focused Metacognition.....	148
Values.....	152
Summary.....	157
IX. DISCUSSION.....	158

Contributions	162
Writing	162
Identity Theories	165
Implications for Practice	166
Implications for Research	169
Limitations	171
Conclusion	172
REFERENCES	173
 APPENDICES	
A. Semi-Structured Interview	190
B. Student Survey	192
C. Researcher Reflexive Journal	202
D. Student Think-Aloud Protocol	204
E. List of Sort Statements (from Nauman et al., 2011).....	206
F. Student Sorts	210

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
3.1 2018-2019 Enrollment Information	39
3.2 Final Participants and Data Collected	41
5.1 Aaron’s Ranking of Conventions Statements	94

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
2.1 Four Stages of Performance	17
2.2 Academic Writing “Box”	25
3.1 Data Collection Timeline	45
3.2 Initial Thoughts about Aaron	50
3.3 Initial Extended Response to Aaron	51
3.4 Students’ Sorts of Statements about Writing	53
3.5 Students’ Top Five Sorts of Statements about Writing	54
3.6 Analysis of Jade’s Language Use	55
3.7 Selection of Data from Analysis of Concrete, Informal, and Negative Language Use	56
4.1 Illustration of Jade’s Academic Writing Performance and Values	60
4.2 Jade’s Self-Assessment of American Dream Essay	68
5.1 Illustration of Aaron’s Understanding about Academic Writing	81
5.2 Selection of Aaron’s Essay	84
5.3 Selection of Aaron’s Language about his Writing Process	88
5.4 Paragraph from Research Paper Showing Evidence Supporting Ideas	93
5.5 Selection from Aaron’s Moral Dilemma Paper	93
5.6 Aaron’s Research Paper	98

6.1 Illustration of Cletus's Understanding of Academic Writing	102
6.2 Cletus's Top Five Sort	108
6.3 Cletus's American Dream Essay	110
6.4 Cletus's Writing Building from Simple Ideas to Complex	114
7.1 Illustration of Lacey's Understanding of Academic Writing	122
7.2 Lacey's Ranking of Statements about Conventions and Diction	125
7.3 Example of Lacey's Use of Formal, Academic Register in Writing	126
7.4 Lacey's Research Paper Self-evaluation and Reflection	129
7.5 Lacey's Top Five Rankings of Statements Concerning Coherence	132
7.6 A Body Paragraph from Lacey's Writing	133
7.7 Lacey's Conclusion	135
7.8 Lacey's Ranking of Statements about Style and Craft	137
7.9 Lacey's Research Paper Introduction and Body Paragraph	139
8.1 Illustration of Cross Case Findings	141
8.2 Themes from Individual Case Studies	142
8.3 Extent to Which Participants Valued Concepts	152
8.4 Identities and Writing Values from Individual Case Studies	153

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Secondary students' writing and writing instruction are the subject of multiple reports and studies (Applebee & Langer, 2009; National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). These reports tend to focus on a particular type of writing, argumentative academic texts, that has been determined to be one of the most difficult types of writing (R. P. Ferretti et al., 2007).

The majority of these reports explain that many students graduate from high school without being able to write clearly and coherently for multiple audiences, putting them at a disadvantage in the job market, workplace, and higher education (National Commission on Writing, 2004; Preiss et al., 2013). In addition, when examining what shifts teachers and schools are making to improve outcomes for students, similar recommendations are regularly being made: teach the writing process and writing strategies, use mentor texts and word processors, and allow for student choice in their writing (S. Graham et al., 2016; National Center for Education Statistics, 2012; Perin, 2007).

Argumentation has been defined as:

A verbal and social activity of reason aimed at increasing (or decreasing) the acceptability of a controversial standpoint for the listener or reader, by putting forward a constellation of propositions intended to justify (or refute) the standpoint before a rational judge. (van Eemeren et al., 1996, p. 5)

As a genre in school, argumentative writing is often formulaic and structured (R. Ferretti & Fan, 2017; Kihara et al., 2009). It is a mode of writing that students are “boxed” into. However, outside of secondary education, argumentative writing breaks free of many of these constraints (Brandt, 2014).

As Vygotsky (1986) explained, all knowledge is influenced by social interactions. One important way to improve writing ability is through opportunities to speak about writing, as speaking and listening are supportive of writing development (Hasani, 2016; Miller & McCardle, 2011). Secondary students who do not take advanced courses often do not engage in a great deal of verbal interaction in the classroom, and their teachers focus on smaller, skills-based assignments (Delpit, 1986; Ladson-Billings, 1992). The lack of engaged talk in these classrooms is problematic because students are not developing their first form of literacy, speech and language, in more complex and thoughtful ways (Sineath, 2014). This directly impacts their writing achievement, as writing is often considered the most complex form of literacy (Hasani, 2016), and it is supported by talking, listening, and reading. Because they are not speaking much about writing at all, students often do not have opportunities to explore their thinking about their standards and goals for their academic writing.

Additionally, secondary students in particular are heavily influenced by their peer groups and are working to form their future identities and goals, and both of these social influences have an impact on their learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Yet while much writing research has focused on instruction and assessment, students' identities as academic writers and their beliefs about writing have been investigated less often (Williamson 2019). Therefore, it is important to consider not only the instructional interactions in the classroom between the teacher and the student, but also to consider the culturally figured worlds that students are forming in the context of their social groups and their understandings of their future identities (Holland et al., 1998). Especially at the upper levels when students get close to graduating, if a student believes that in their future, they will have no need to write, that most likely has an impact on what they see as important in writing and what they might devalue. Similarly, students who imagine their future lives will require a great deal of writing may think that certain qualities of writing or efforts would be well rewarded by the future work they may do.

Background of the Problem

As a high school English teacher, I have worked with students who are disinterested in school after many years of being told to be quiet and to complete the assignment. I, too, am guilty of saying those words. At the same time, if we believe that "talk is the sea upon which all else floats" (Britton, 1970, p. 11), then it is critical to students' success that they engage in meaningful talk with their peers, their teachers, and themselves. Talk allows students to shape their ideas and to develop their inner thought processes by training and shaping their oral language.

When I go to a student for a writing conference, the first thing I ask is for them to tell me about their piece. At the beginning of the year, my students are often unable to say anything about their work. They want me to do the telling, evaluating, and thinking. As a way to give us a common language to talk about their writing, I frequently use rubrics and mentor texts to talk with students about the aspects of writing that indicate quality, things like intriguing content that is focused on a few main ideas; structures that allow readers to easily follow the logic; and sentences that flow into one another, deepening the reader's understanding of the topic. While I know we are using the same words, my students often do not talk enough for me to really understand what they think about those words and how they see themselves using those ideas (or not) in their writing. This left me wondering if I was spending too much of my limited classroom time pushing my own agenda in pursuit of some "ideal text" I have in my own mind (Gere & Stevens, 1985) or values that I have for writing that my students do not share.

Knowing that responsive teachers must shift their instruction to meet student needs (Wickstrom et al., 2011), I began to work toward using classroom time to listen and tune in to my students' understandings, acknowledging the social construction of knowledge that occurs in the classroom and individual writing conferences. This thinking led me to conduct a pilot study in the spring of 2019, focusing on participants' perceptions of what aspects of writing were particularly hard and easy for them, and their thinking about how I (their teacher) used classroom time to address those aspects of writing (Brewer & Burke, 2020). The 10 students involved in the pilot study were in my English II class (nine sophomores and one junior). Through interviews with students, a

collection of their writing, and surveys, I examined these ideas. Through data analysis, I found that students presented themselves in different ways as writers; some said that they considered themselves strong academic writers while others said they liked to write but that those skills did not connect with their school writing. Depending on how strong of an academic writing identity the students presented, they tended to talk about different aspects of writing as strengths and weaknesses. Those who identified as strong writers more frequently talked about revision as a strength and gave a more holistic analysis of their work. Those who identified as weaker academic writers tended to say pre-writing and drafting were strengths and to focus on editing and spelling when evaluating their own work.

Overall, the students spoke about their writing and what they wanted instructionally in ways that struck me as relatively simplistic. While the research questions were not intended to specifically examine students' language about these areas, I began to wonder if they would have responded differently if the questions had been framed around their understanding of criteria of quality writing rather than their assessment of their abilities. This study directly influenced my current interest in what students value and attend to in their writing and how those aspects are found in their writing and revisions.

It was at this point that I began to see the importance of my students' language as crucial to the success of both my teaching and their learning. Vygotsky stated,

Children who do not possess the appropriate generalization are often unable to communicate their experience. The problem is not the lack of the appropriate

words or sounds, but the absence of the appropriate concept or generalization....

The word is almost always ready when the concept is. (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 46)

With this understanding of language and concepts in my mind, I began to see our writing conferences differently. I recognized that there were unheard conversations that the students were having with themselves in their heads before they were speaking with me. That thinking they were doing was shaping what they were able to say. I began to wonder what exactly they were thinking that made them speak in that way. The conferences also allowed me to listen to what criteria they valued in their writing, not just what I determined as important for that task.

All of this led me to recognize that one of the significant problems in schools is that teachers do not listen carefully to both what their students are saying and how they are saying it. Instead, teachers tend to provide the traditional, academic language to their students, encourage them to use it, and correct them when they do not or use it incorrectly. Shifting the focus to culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris & Alim, 2014) would push teachers instead to carefully observe in what ways their students are already doing the work of academic writing in ways that may not traditionally be considered academic. Teachers could sustain, support, and encourage the work that their students are already doing and show them next steps to make what they are already doing better, instead of ignoring what students bring to the classroom and requiring that they learn something entirely new.

Of course, this only works if they are given the opportunity to develop “relevant experience and expertise” (Wood, 1998, p. 92). While there are no “typical” classrooms,

researchers have found that secondary language arts students are not frequently asked to write for more than a page analyzing and interpreting ideas (Kiuahara et al., 2009). With academic writing occurring this infrequently, it is understandable why only 24% of 12th graders in 2011 scored proficient on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). While high school language arts students are regularly asked to write extended pieces including personal journal entries, narratives, and poems, the extent of their academic (interpretive and analytical) writing is limited to short answers or a research paper once or twice a year. The lack of regular, extended analytical pieces is an issue for both schools and students because they simply do not have enough opportunities to gain the experience and expertise that writing requires.

By both encouraging and assisting students in developing their metalinguistic abilities, teachers could better engage with students in conversations that will extend their thinking about writing (Camps et al., 2000). Students' oral language skills are typically stronger than their written language because it is the first form of language they develop. However, because these forms of talk are not typically developed in classrooms, this specific kind of talk is still in a developmental stage for most students. By inviting students' language and writing values into the classroom space, teachers have an opportunity to understand what their students are valuing in their written work and the reasons behind those values.

Statement of the Problem

While students' argumentative academic writing has been considered problematic, it is possible that students value and attend to aspects of writing that are different from what the educational system values and attends to. Therefore, it is important to listen to what students value in their writing and how they speak about those values in order to support writing growth.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore how students spoke about their writing and what they valued in academic writing. Building on the ideas of sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), this study explored how students verbalized and thought about quality writing criteria. Because of the social nature of knowledge construction, students' identities and personal beliefs were important to the interpretation of their language and values.

A multiple case study approach (Khan & VanWynsberghe, 2008; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015) allowed me to examine individual cases and conduct a cross-case analysis to look at connections among the cases. As both the teacher and the researcher, I grounded myself in classroom inquiry (Hubbard & Power, 1993), observing, noting, and questioning throughout the study. This study provided an opportunity to understand what it is students attend to and value in their writing, including and beyond the traditional elements of academic writing. It also examined how they show that attention and value in their work, providing an opportunity to examine what the students' ideas and language use might mean for teachers' instructional decisions and explanations.

Research Questions

The study was focused on the following research questions.

1. How do the participants explain what they attend to when composing and revising assigned analytical writing?
2. From those explanations, what are the participants' personal values for their writing?
3. How do their standards manifest in their writing?

Significance of the Study

Classroom instruction is based on social interaction. However, teachers, including myself, often focus more on what we are sharing with students than with what they are sharing with us. By closely examining students' language use about argumentative writing and revising, teachers could be in a better position to leverage their instruction to the concepts students are developing. This study sought to provide examples of what students might say, giving teachers an idea of what to listen for.

Summary

By examining students' language use, their stated values about writing, and their writing samples, this research adds to the literature about student language and student values in academic argumentative writing. In the next chapter, I will identify and explain the theoretical framework of the study and survey current and seminal research in the field on which this study builds.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I will introduce and explain the main theories that will guide my thinking in this study: Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism and future identities as expanded on by Holland et al. (1998), and Vygotsky's (1978) theories about language. Then, I review the literature from surrounding areas that inform the direction of my study, focusing on research that connects with the research questions, restated below.

1. How do the participants explain what they attend to when composing and revising assigned analytical writing?
2. From those explanations, what are the participants' personal values for their writing?
3. How do their standards manifest in their writing?

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on three main areas of theoretical understandings: social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1986), identity and figured worlds (Holland et al., 1998), and writing process (Flower & Hayes, 1981). I will briefly expand on these theories and their importance to the present study. Then, I will review the literature of the areas that will situate this study.

Social Constructivism

Social constructivism is the understanding that knowledge is built through one's interactions with others in the present moment and that prior knowledge is built through

the previous interactions (Vygotsky, 1978). This means that an individual's understanding of a concept is based in both her prior experiences and the interactions she has with others about that concept. For the present study, this is important to consider because knowledge about writing is not just transmitted from teacher to student. Instead, students integrate new understandings with both their prior and current interactions with teachers, students, and writing itself.

Learning often happens through the interactions between students and teachers, and those interactions are based in specific cultural situations that both confine and define the interactions in multiple ways. Additionally, other interactions also influence the interaction between teachers and students, which are also culturally situated. For instance, a student who identifies with a particular group at school will bring that identity and those values into the English classroom and will integrate their understandings of the English content with the knowledge they have from their other group memberships and identities. Vygotsky believed social and cultural values, beliefs, and understandings are all developed and shown through interactions between individuals, directly influencing an individual's current and future understandings. The society and culture in which one is immersed influences how we think and what we see as worth thinking about. For this study, it was important to consider the culture of the participants' classrooms, school, homes, affinity groups, and the larger community when examining students' writing and thinking, as these influence the students in ways that they may not recognize themselves. As their teacher, I am directly involved in some of the same communities as the student

participants, while I am an outsider in other ways. Negotiating, questioning, and understanding these social contexts is important to this study.

Language

Vygotsky believed that language developed through the interaction of individuals with one another, constructing meaning together. He saw language as the “tool of tools,” believing that language mediates higher-order thinking. That is to say, without language, higher-order thinking is not able to exist. This is in stark contrast to Piaget (Wood, 1998), who believed that language was a result of developmental growth only, meaning that both language and higher-order thinking would develop when the child reached the next developmental stage, without the use of language as a tool. Bruner (1983) extended Vygotsky’s thinking by explaining language as a scaffold that, as the child becomes older, can then transform both thinking and learning processes.

Clay (2015) argued that language is so important to thinking that teachers must not accept silence from students when they are working on complex tasks, particularly reading comprehension. Clay wrote that we must push for output in these situations by asking questions like, “What are you thinking?” By asking the children to use their oral language to explain their thinking, they are strengthening their language tool both orally and internally for future use and tasks.

Another example of the relationship between language and metacognition comes from Johnston (2004). He explains ways teachers can use language to change student thinking in the moment and in the future. Johnston suggests asking questions that build on students’ metacognition and self-regulation. For example, “How did you do that?” and

“What are you planning on trying?” are questions that show the child it is assumed that they will have a plan for their work and that they can articulate how and why they did something a certain way. Again, by pushing students to respond orally about their thinking, teachers are continuing to assist them in the development of egocentric and inner speech that can help mediate their higher order thinking tasks now and in the future.

Cazden (2001) researched classroom discourse. She used discourse analysis to show how the talk found in a classroom showed what was valued in that classroom. She contrasted traditional and nontraditional classrooms. In traditional classrooms, she primarily found the initiate, respond, and evaluate cycle (IRE). In this cycle, the teacher initiates the verbal exchange, usually with a question. One student then responds, and the teacher provides an evaluation of that response; then the cycle repeats again. This process does not allow for students to develop their language because the amount of sustained talk is inadequate. By filtering all the classroom talk through the teacher, students do not have an opportunity to speak or use their language to develop their higher-order thinking.

Cazden et al.’s (1985) discourse analysis of young children’s sharing time offers another way of looking at the impacts of the social nature of language and oral compositions. They found that many students used bracketing when telling their stories; they defined bracketing as an interruption in the utterance with additional material inserted that included a noun or verb phrase and ends with repetition of the initial utterance to orient the reader. Bracketing is a “transparent indication of cognitive processes at work” (Cazden et al., 1985, p. 54) and “rules out any general explanation of cognitive egocentricity” (1985, p. 59). Cazden et al. (1985) suggested that bracketing

provides a lens for viewing first drafts and revisions, as teachers can look for the orienting information and how the additional information is included. This analysis of student talk shows the beginnings and the importance of attention to the audience, as these students demonstrated both their metalinguistic and metapragmatic awareness by inserting their additional information and providing context for the listener.

Thought and Language

This study draws on Vygotsky's theories (1986) of thought and language to examine students' language and self-talk about their writing. Vygotsky believed that language and thought cannot be separated from one another and that one's thinking, and the language used to express it influence each other, due to the influence that culture and society have on our thinking and understanding. Closely linked to this understanding is his idea that one's inner speech develops both from one's own thinking and social interaction with others (Vygotsky, 2002). Before inner speech is developed, children first engage in egocentric speech; this is used when young students are using their own oral language as a mediator for themselves, working through their own situations. Egocentric speech later becomes inner speech that is greatly condensed (as compared to verbalized speech) but still serves as a mediator for the student working through her thinking process. For example, when students are reading through a particularly difficult selection, they may be found to talk themselves through their comprehension issues, both with egocentric speech and inner speech. While inner speech is for oneself, external speech for others is used to communicate ideas and then it influences the inner thoughts and inner speech of the speaker. External speech for others may also include metacognitive speech,

as a student may verbalize her thinking for others, and, while this kind of language is much farther removed from inner speech, it can still provide some insight about the speaker's thought and language.

Inner Speech

Verbalized language is just part of the broad umbrella of language itself, and it can only show us part of what the speaker is thinking. Inner speech and self-talk also have a place in when attempting to understand an individual's thinking and language practices. Inner speech, or self-talk, is thinking that abides by more of the rules of oral speech. It is more organized and logical, reflecting the social requirements of speech, but inner speech is to help one's own thought process. Because of the nature of inner speech, it is difficult to investigate. Some research has been conducted, particularly on inner speech while silently reading (Ehrich, 2006), but there is a need for more studies on inner speech during the composing and revision process (Flower, 1979). It is also a form of metacognition. Vicente and Martinez (2011) explained that inner speech is an internalized tool that people use because it is the best way to communicate our thoughts to ourselves, and that this is conscious cognition.

Tharp and Gallimore (1991) also investigated the idea of one's speech as a mediator for performance. They described this as stage two in learning when the learner is still relying on a mediator and has not yet internalized the learning but also no longer needs a more competent other to assist in their performance of the task. In this stage, the learner is functioning as the more competent other, using inner talk, egocentric talk, or

physical mediators they have created to assist them in their performance. Smagorinsky explains that,

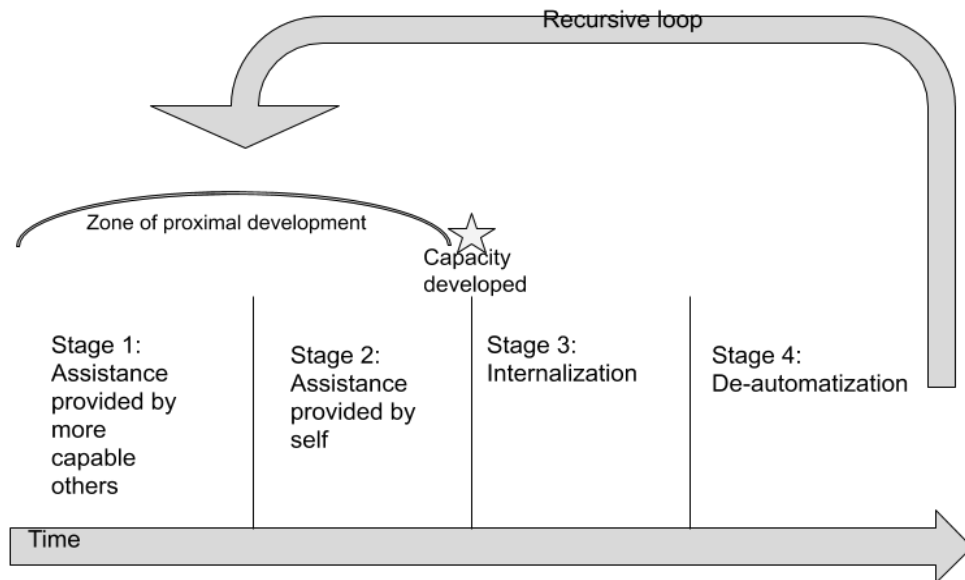
[t]he mediated nature of consciousness is an assumption from which a cultural psychologist's work proceeds. The goal, then, is to understand the ways in which the tool of speech mediates the thinking that is studied through the collection of a protocol, and the ways in which uses of speech are mediated by other cultural means. (2001, p. 239)

Teaching as Assisted Performance

Tharp and Gallimore's (1991) theory of teaching as assisted performance builds upon Vygotsky's understanding of learning as occurring with a more competent other. Tharp and Gallimore explain four stages of learning that the learner goes through as she develops performance capacity (see Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1

Four stages of performance by Tharp and Gallimore (1991)



In Stage 1, the learner is dependent upon the help of a more capable other, and the learner begins to take on responsibility for performing the task, moving from “other-regulation to self-regulation” (Tharp & Gallimore, 1991, p. 35). As in Vygotsky’s theory, learning is inherently social because the learner cannot learn without the interaction with the more capable other. In Stage 2, the learner is able to carry out the task without assistance from others but has yet to automatize that performance. The learner is still providing their own assistance and “the transfer from external to internal control is accomplished by the manipulation of the sign (e.g., language) from others to the self” (Tharp & Gallimore, 1991, p. 37). This builds upon Vygotsky’s understanding of language as the ultimate tool that people use to mediate their learning. When the learner has automatized and

“fossilized” their understandings and abilities, they are no longer functioning in the zone of proximal development and have developed capacity, no longer relying on themselves or a more capable other for assistance. Often, de-automatization (Stage 4) can occur, and the learner must return through the developmental process to regain that capacity. De-automatization can be launched by a change in setting, difficulty, or personal stress.

Identity

Just as interactions between individuals are important to the understanding of social constructivism, so too is the individual important to this study. Adolescents in particular are exploring and constructing their identities in multiple cultural contexts on a daily basis (Becht et al., 2016; Erikson, 1968). Gee (2000) explained that identity can be seen in four main ways: nature identity, position identity, discourse identity, and affinity identity. Nature identity is “developed from” the individual, position identities are “authorized by” institutions, discourse identities are “recognized in” specific groups, and affinity identities are “shared in” by groups. In this study, the participants shared some of their different identities with me; some of their identities I was able to readily understand, while others were hidden from me because of my own identities.

Additionally, adolescents are in a particular position in their lives where their imagined futures or “figured worlds” (Holland et al., 1998) are very important. Holland et al. defined figured worlds as “collectively realized ‘as if’ realms” (1998, p. 49). So, if a student wanted to become a police officer after high school, they might see writing poetry as something that will not be important to their future and may disengage from that

activity. On the other hand, they may see particular value in conducting interviews for the school newspaper, as questioning is a skill they believe will be important to their future.

Writing Process Theory

Writing process theory was integral to this study as well, as I believe that writing itself is a recursive process that moves inner thought into the written word. Flower and Hayes (1981) explained that cognitive writing process theory is based on the following four points:

1. “Writing is best understood as a set of distinctive thinking processes which writers orchestrate or organize during the act of composing” (p. 366).
2. “The processes of writing are hierarchically organized, with components processes embedded within other components” (p. 375).
3. “Writing is a goal-directed process. In the act of composing, writers create a hierarchical network of goals and these in turn guide the writing process” (p. 377).
4. “Writers create their goals in two key ways: by generating goals and supporting sub-goals which embody a purpose; and, at times, by changing or regenerating their own top-level goals in light of what they have learned by writing” (p. 381).

These understandings about the thinking and processes involved in writing were used to analyze student writing and revision and to understand student talk about their writing and revisions.

Writing process theory focuses on the individual’s thinking processes; while it is often presented as a decontextualized understanding, it is also culturally situated.

Vygotsky's theories emphasize the importance of society and the more knowledgeable other, but he also was interested in cognition and viewed it as a result of our social interactions. In this study, I attempt to see both influences, shifting between the frames as needed in order to understand the decisions and explanations of the participants. Individually, neither frame allows me to answer the research questions completely; together, they allow me to examine the influences of individual and societal cognition.

Review of Literature

In the following section, I review literature in the areas I see as connected to the current study. These areas include the teaching of writing, classroom talk, criteria for quality writing, academic writing, adolescence, and metacognition, writing, revision, and their component parts. The teaching of writing section includes landmark and recent research studies about writing instruction. The next section is about academic writing in particular, focusing on the thinking required for such writing, the frequency with which it is assigned, and the demonstrated need for additional instruction. The classroom talk section examines the study of language in the classroom in particular. Next, I examine what the research says about criteria for quality writing; as this study examined what students considered important in their writing, I need to compare their ideas with the literature. As the subjects in this study are adolescents, I have included a section specifically about adolescent learners. Finally, there are three sections about the components and interrelatedness of metacognition, writing, and revising.

Teaching Writing

Landmark studies in the field of writing include Emig's (1971) case studies of 12th graders and Graves' (1975) research with younger writers, ages 7–8. The methods of both of these studies have influenced the field since their publications, and their findings have been the basis on which further work has been centered. Emig's research focused on the processes involved in these writer's work through different genres and tasks. Some of her findings included the abstract and teacher-centered nature of writing instruction. Her findings caused her to urge for the process of writing to be taught more in schools, focusing on idea generation, drafting, revising, editing, and publication. She also argued for the processes to be more loosely defined, allowing students to wrestle with their own thinking and reasoning. While Emig's case studies were not directly cited in Flower and Hayes' 1981 theory article, her careful analysis of what her participants did while writing easily parallel the processes they outlined ten years later. At the same time, Voss (1983) stated that Emig's implications were "shrill and overstated," and that "perhaps the overstatement seemed necessary at the time to jar teachers out of being complacent in their general incompetence" (p. 279).

Graves (1975) researched young writers. He found that younger students wrote better quality and a greater quantity of writing when they were able to choose their own topics and genres. He also found that their use of the writing process was related to their cognitive developmental level. Older students were better able to use the processes to produce higher quality work. Both of these seminal studies show the importance of

teaching process writing while also highlighting areas where teachers can focus their efforts to help students' understanding and emerging skills.

Shaughnessy (1979) looked at writing samples from tests that older students took. He found that, while their overall scores showed that the students were skilled in language use, they were mostly beginners in writing. Because these students already scored high in other areas, their writing scores showed a discrepancy between their other abilities and their writing. His study shows the importance of teaching writing so that students develop their skills in all areas of language.

In addition to writing process theory, I see writing as a skill that is developed across many years (Bazerman et al., 2017). Because this study was focused on secondary students and their views of writing, it was important to remember that students are not coming as blank slates to this stage of their writing development. Students collect their ideas of writing criteria throughout their careers as students; recognizing this is important to contextualize the study. At the same time, Prior (2017) responded critically to some of the other findings in Bazerman et. al.'s work. Of importance to this study is Prior's argument that writing cannot be analyzed simply as writing itself. Research needs to take into account the context, the participant, the task, and the psychological elements involved in composition. Prior also argued that writing researchers need to be specific and overt about the theories they are operating under, as these theories directly influence both the purpose and the findings of such research. This study attempted to recognize and make overt these theories so that the implications of the study can be clearly explained and contribute to the field.

How writing is best taught is frequently debated. Writing workshop, based on the ideas of choice, uninterrupted time, models, and publication (Atwell, 1998; Calkins, 1986; Graves & Murray, 1980; Murray, 1968), has been heralded as the most authentic and best way to apprentice students into writing. It is currently experiencing a resurgence in schools as they are able to purchase curriculum that has been created around those principles. However, other scholars have concerns about the apparent lack of focus on the specific writing skills that students need to learn in order to be accepted as quality writing. Delpit wrote of her concerns that African American children were not getting the skills they need in order to “harmonize with the rest of the world” (1986, p. 18) when teachers use workshop methods. She argues that White children will be assisted by their parents in learning the basic skills that are the foundation of writing, but African American children (and possibly other minority populations) will be left behind in the educational system because they do not pick up those basic skills. While current workshop models do tend to include some specific skill instruction, her criticism of current writing instruction is still important to consider.

Others are concerned that the writing process is taught and used so frequently and in so many different ways that it has become essentially meaningless. Baines et al. (1999) said that the “heart and soul of writing” have been lost through the focus on process writing. Instead of being a naturally emerging process that depends on the writer’s developing goals and thinking, it is often scheduled to fit the school week (brainstorming on Monday, pre-writing on Tuesday, drafting on Wednesday, etc.). In this way, the writing process has become a checklist, rather than the recursive processes it truly is. This

has particularly affected the idea that writers can and do change their goals and their thoughts frequently while writing, leading to students not engaging in deep revision of their work.

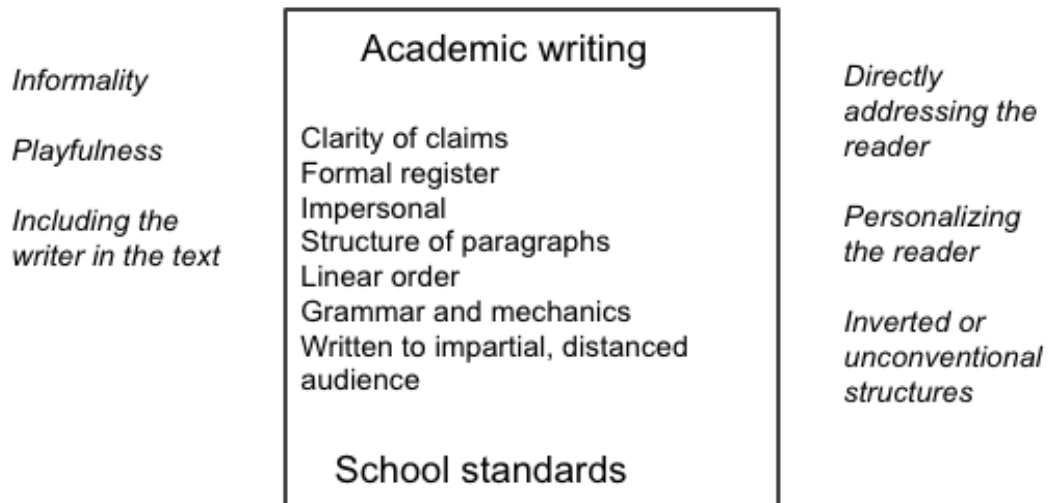
While the cognitive work is still critical to the teaching of writing, we also have to pay attention to the quality of the work itself. In attempts to show the importance of the final writing product and to provide a model, teachers use mentor texts (Kiuahara et al., 2009). Mentor texts are pieces of writing that the students can use to model their own writing after and to show how writers attempted to attain the criteria for quality writing. On one hand, mentors are intended to “show” rather than “tell” students what good writing does. However, Witte (1985) argued that, just like only teaching the process, only providing mentor texts to gauge student quality of writing does not help students either. Especially with professional texts used as mentors, the students might struggle to see the cognitive processes involved because the final products are of a much higher quality than what they are currently capable of producing.

Academic Writing

Academic writing asks students to examine texts, determine importance, make a claim, and defend that claim with support from texts while maintaining a formal register (Horowitz, 1986; Schmoker, 2018). In particular, the structure of paragraphs is important to the logical order of ideas (Netz, 2001). The deep traditions in academia have contributed to the creation of a “box” into which many teachers believe all academic writing must fit (Dafoe, 2013). Figure 2.2 shows the “box,” along with some of the common qualities that schools consider important for academic writing.

Figure 2.2

Academic Writing “Box”



Additionally, automated writing evaluation has become more and more common, and the traditional “box” becomes more reinforced, as students are being pushed to write in ways the system will mark as high scoring (Shermis et al., 2016). While that “box” is being challenged (Hyland & Jiang, 2017; Wargo, 2019), the traditional standards still persist in many institutions.

The progression of the standards-based movement has resulted in great emphasis on analytic argumentative writing, particularly in response to texts (Matsumura et al., 2015). While there is dissent about the privileging of this genre (DeStigter, 2015), the general assumptions are that argumentative writing in particular helps students think logically and prepares them to be active members of a democracy. Argumentative writing has been said to be “slow to develop, insensitive to alternative perspectives, and generally

of poor quality,” and it is important for schools to intentionally and with great regularity have students engage in this written mode (R. P. Ferretti & Graham, 2019, p. 1345).

Multiple studies have shown that secondary language arts students are not required to craft writing of a substantial length often across the course of a school year (Graham et al., 2014; Kiuahara et al., 2009; Matsumura et al., 2015). These same studies also show that students are doing even less writing of sustained length and analytical thought outside of their English language arts classrooms. Badia (2000) found students’ basic understandings about academic writing showed their conceptions of the task related to their actions and talking about writing after instruction. If students are not regularly given opportunities to practice and talk about the specific demands of these types of academic, analytical writing, it follows that they would not be able to be successful with this type of writing at the university level. Indeed, in the 2011–2012 school year, one-third of first-year undergraduates reported enrolling in at least one developmental course (Schak et al., 2017).

Criteria for Quality Writing

Researchers have proposed various ideas about what makes quality writing. In this section, I will summarize a few of these historical ideas of criteria for quality writing and explain what I used to determine quality writing in this study.

One such study had English teachers rank papers in order of quality (Carlton et al., 1961). Through factor analysis, Carlton et al. identified five main factors that impacted essay scores: ideas, wording, organization, mechanics, and flavor. As this study

was published by the Educational Testing Service, it was important to the field and impacted the teaching of writing for college entrance exams.

Nold and Freedman (1977) had Stanford freshmen composition students write four on-demand argumentative papers that were then scored by English teachers and assigned scores on a four-point scale. The papers that earned the higher scores had several things in common: length, sophistication in modification, avoidance of using ‘be’ verbs, and sophisticated vocabulary. These criteria are very different from the study by Diederich, French, and Carlton. However, the analysis used by Nold and Freedman was intentionally used to elicit more precise ideas about writing quality.

Beyond the educational world, numerous writers rely on *The Elements of Style* by Strunk and White (2007). This style guide has been used for many years by a wide variety of writers, from college students to professional writers. Two of the main focal points are to write concisely and to use active voice. These are qualities of writing that have been valued across fields for many years.

More particularly, the National Writing Project (NWP) has published an Analytical Writing Continuum (Smith & Swain, 2016) that was developed to assess the impact of NWP teachers in classrooms. The rubric was based on the Six +1 Trait Writing model (Culham, 2003), but it was reconceptualized by NWP (Bang, 2013; Singer & LeMahieu, 2011). The attributes include content, structure, stance, sentence fluency, diction, and conventions. There is also a holistic score point. Because of my involvement in the use of this continuum, these score points are in my mind when reading student writing.

Nauman et al. (2011) conducted a study that asked writing teachers of all grade levels to look at 31 items used to describe what writing can do and to sort those statements from what they most agreed with to what they most disagreed with. Participants were also asked to write about what they considered good writing. The results showed that the most commonly agreed upon qualities of good writing included strong thinking and communication, structure, clarity, purpose, voice and correctness. These findings are similar to those from the previous studies as well.

Sommers' conclusions from her study on the revision strategies of adults indicate a lack of awareness about the "incongruities between intention and execution" of their writing (1980, p. 53). She suggests that students need to be able to better evaluate their own writing and to "rely on their own internalized sense of good writing and to see their writing with their 'own' eyes" (Sommers, 1980, p. 53). It is this suggestion that students need to evaluate their own writing and sharpen those internal standards that directly impacts the intentions of the current study.

Adolescence

While the specific age ranges of adolescence have been reconfigured as the science of brain and body development have changed, the most accepted range is 10 to 19-years-old (Sawyer et al., 2018). Age ranges are also defined by the culture in which the child exists: in the United States, this age range is accepted and is also beginning to extend into the early 20s. The defining characteristics of adolescence involve the physical and mental developments humans undergo during this age range, the changing societal expectations, and the specific learning needs and desires of adolescents. Adolescents go

through major societal shifts in expectations during this time that are based on cultural and historical traditions. In years past, 15-year-olds might have been expected to be married; now they are still in school and have legal protections and restrictions that show that society does not yet consider them full adults.

Adolescence is also marked by typical interests and behaviors. Researchers have found that adolescents have particular interests in exploring their changing and growing identities (Compton-Lilly, 2016; Moje, 2000; Thomas, 2004). Additionally, adolescents in classrooms have different ways of working with teachers, sometimes accepting and requesting support, but sometimes refusing that support (A. L. Consalvo, 2011; A. Consalvo & Maloch, 2015). Successful teachers of adolescents work to establish relationships that value their diverse and developing identities while providing academic support (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Stewart, 2017; Wickstrom et al., 2011).

Metacognition

In order for a secondary student to improve their thinking and writing, they have to have an understanding of the importance of metacognition. Metacognition is the student's "ability to be aware of one's own activities while reading, solving problems, and so on, is a late-developing skill with important implications for the child's effectiveness as an active, planful learner," (Baker & Brown, 1984, p. 353).

Cognition was primarily studied through protocol analyses (Smagorinsky, 2001), but as the field has begun to see the inseparability of cognition and society, protocol analyses are not sufficient to help the researcher understand what is happening cognitively.

Metacognition itself requires additional skills, including self-regulation, self-efficacy, and metalinguistic skills. Self-regulation has emerged as an area of metacognition focused more on the social aspect of thinking. Zimmerman (2002) defined self-regulation as “not a mental ability or an academic performance skill; instead, it is the self-directive process by which learners transform their mental abilities into academic skill” (p. 65). Self-regulation and writing are particularly intertwined because both are complex processes with multiple interdependent processes involved (Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997). The relationship between self-regulation and self-efficacy have been investigated (Feltham & Sharen, 2015; MacArthur et al., 2015), and findings are still unclear. MacArthur et al. (2015) found that teaching self-regulatory strategies improve students’ writing and their self-efficacy. Other studies have begun to link revision with metacognition and self-regulation. Feltham and Sharen (2015) examined 17 participants in an undergraduate course who were given instruction that included critical thinking, writing process, and feedback. Findings included that the post-test showed improvement in students’ thinking about how well they write depends on their own effort, again providing another link to the importance of student self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986) in their revision decisions.

Additionally, self-regulation is closely linked with the writer’s self-efficacy in writing, as a sense of one’s own proficiency and ability is directly related to how carefully one can monitor her own output (Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997). Self-efficacy is a person’s belief in her ability to accomplish a task with reasonable success (Bandura, 1986). In order for a student to purposefully engage in the processes of

metacognition and metalinguistic talk, the student will need to understand these processes and the potential they have to aid in their writing. In addition, the student will need to have writing self-efficacy. Researchers have found that writing self-efficacy is a better prediction of writing success than pure writing ability (Meier et al., 1984). Therefore, it is important for teachers to foster self-efficacy through positive talk and support in the classroom (Schunk, 2003).

Writing

Thinking is necessary to have something to write about, and metacognition is an important tool in the writing process. A writer must think about her ideas, how to best present them, and what the reader might need from her writing. Negretti (2012) examined community college students' metacognition by keeping journals detailing their perception of the task and thinking. The author concluded that metacognition "mediates between task perception and self-regulation" (p. 170) and that students' metacognition is closely linked to how they judge the quality of their writing strategies. Furthermore, Hacker et al. (2009) have argued that, because "writing requires both thinking and thinking about that thinking," writing is best described as "applied metacognition" (p. 170). In order to investigate writing, the research must happen as close to the thinking itself as possible, requiring the use of think-aloud protocols and the author's reflections on the writing.

In order to use one's thinking and metacognition in the writing process, metalinguistic skill is also necessary. Metalinguistic skill, or the ability to think and/or talk about the specific language being used, has previously been examined primarily in relationship with students' engagement with texts and self-awareness (D'warte, 2012;

Englert et al., 1991; Morin, 1993). These studies focused on ways to get students to use language to express their understandings and on what teachers can do to make their own thinking visible for students. However, they did not examine the specific qualities of student self-talk and metacognition in the context of the writing process. Other studies have sought to examine self-regulation and student revision (Feltham & Sharen, 2015; MacArthur et al., 2015; Negretti, 2012; Panadero & Romero, 2014). These have primarily focused on student self-reflection on the process of revising their writing and self-evaluation after the writing or on ways teachers can provide instruction in these strategies (Camps et al., 2000; Hayes, 2004). These studies support the investigation into further description, categorization, and deeper understanding of students' self-talk and metacognition as related directly to their understanding of the qualities of writing and how that impacts their composing and revising processes.

In order for writers to think about their writing, some writers engage in private speech, "speech that is not directed to an interlocutor" (Daiute, 1985, p. 136). Private speech is another form of that internal, inner speech both Vygotsky (1978) and Tharp and Gallimore (1991) discussed. Daiute argued that "learning to write involves a complex mixture of talking to one's self and to others about the content, form, and creation of the text" (1985, p. 138). This can connect with both Stages 1 and 2 of Tharp and Gallimore's assisted performance model of learning. It is through this internal and external dialogue that revisions and additions to texts are reasoned and crafted.

Revision also requires those but also requires self-assessment or self-evaluation. The self-reflective nature of revision means that students have to be tuned in to the

quality of their own writing: reading like a writer, and attending to their original or revised intent, versus what is on the page (Hayes, 2004). Murray (1968) expanded on the differences in the ways amateurs and professionals see revision: “All effective writers know writing is rewriting. The inexperienced writer feels a revision is a failure. The amateur believes the writer is the person who can sit down and rip off an essay or a report. The professional writer knows better” (Murray, 1968, p. 11). While adult writers and teachers of writing tend to believe this, many secondary student writers do not. Acknowledging their reluctance and different conceptualization of the concept of revision is important to hold in mind while considering revision. Others have rebuffed Murray’s theory of revising, showing that the initial planning and drafting have more impact on the quality of the product than revisions do (Berkenkotter & Murray, 1983). The different types of writers that are studied have responded in different ways. “Advanced student writers” have been found to be the types of writers who revise the most (Faigley & Witte, 1981).

Many studies have focused on the number and types of revisions that students make in their writing. These studies have focused on quantifying the number of revisions made and comparing those among groups (Beach, 1976; Brakel, 1990; MacArthur et al., 1991). Most studies have found that inexperienced student writers do not revise in a deep way. Matsushashi and Gordon (1985) posited that students have the procedural knowledge in how to revise but are stuck by the egocentric nature of revising their own work. Matsushashi and Gordon asked students to turn their papers over, and “list and number five things you want to add to improve your essay” (1985, p. 3). They used the word

“add” instead of “revise” intentionally, thinking that students might respond differently to that word. Their findings showed that this cue generated more student revision beyond the surface level, showing that students might not be set up to show their abilities in the ways we ask them to do so in classrooms traditionally.

There is also the idea of “pretextual revising” (Witte, 1985, p. 264). This is the revision that happens in the writer’s head before she writes it down. Revision of this sort is difficult to identify for researchers, but it can also be difficult for the writer herself to identify if she does not have a strong command of her own cognitive, metacognitive, and metalinguistic abilities. If student writers are not capable of talking about these decisions, it is possible that they are not engaging in this thinking very deeply. Witte argues that research conducted on revision must include pretextual revision in order to get a full account of the revision process. Vygotsky argued that the thought concept usually develops before they have the word to name that concept (1986). By this logic, if students are not able to speak about their processes, it is possible that they do not yet understand those processes and concepts in depth.

Summary

In this chapter, I reviewed current literature related to writing instruction, writing conferences, criteria for quality writing, and metacognition. These studies are a launching place for the present study, which examined students’ writing, their values and standards for that writing, and their language use when discussing that writing. When taken together, there is a place for this study that focuses on students’ writing, talk about writing quality, and revision. By merging these areas, this study contributes to the

literature and provide insight into what students' attend to and consider in their writing and revising.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the use of language around the writing processes 10th grade English II students use when tasked with writing analytical papers. The research questions that guided this study were:

1. How do the participants explain what they attend to when composing and revising assigned analytical writing?
2. From those explanations, what are the participants' personal values for their writing?
3. How do their standards manifest in their writing?

In order to explore these questions, I used qualitative case study design. This chapter contains four main sections: the methodological framework, the setting and participants, data collection, and data analysis methods.

Methodological Framework

Qualitative research was appropriate for this study because of the types of questions asked and my interest in “understanding the meaning people have constructed” (Merriam, 1998, p. 6). Through these questions, I wanted to explore the world as it was perceived through the eyes of the participants because I believe that knowledge is constructed as people interact with the world and one another. Through this study, I sought to understand how students thought about writing and their writing process and how their values for their writing related to that thinking.

Case Study

Stake (1995) explained a case study as “the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (p. xi). Because my intention with this study was to closely examine what individual students think and do while composing and revising, the case study is the most appropriate method for investigation. In order to do this, I would need to both provide rich, thick description (Guba & Lincoln, 1985) and to analyze and understand in context (Freeman, 2014).

Merriam (1998) defined a case as “a thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries” (p. 27). Because my interest was in understanding what students understand about writing quality and how they handle revision based on those understandings, I selected an instrumental, typical case (Stake, 1995). A typical case does not mean that the case is not unique and set in a specific context; rather, it means that the participant was selected because she represents a typical student in the course. This purposive participant sampling allowed me to answer the research questions in a more thorough, specific way (Merriam, 1998).

In order to further solidify my understandings and to establish transferability and confirmability, I investigated several single cases. In this multiple case study, each case was a single student. After presenting each student as a single case, I then used cross-case analysis to look for “meaningful connections between cases” (Khan & VanWynsberghe, 2008, p. 5). By examining the cases individually, I was able to get closer to

understanding each individual participant's cognition and reasoning. Although the cases were not a collection bound together, there were enough similarities (see section below about participant selection) across the cases to make the cross-case analysis meaningful and productive.

Setting and Participants

This study was conducted at a local high school where I was an English II teacher. While the site was selected primarily for convenience, it was also composed of students from a mix of socioeconomic statuses and ethnicities. The school was located in north central Texas in a school district that is experiencing rapid growth, resulting in shifts to its historic demographic makeup. The school is located in a particularly fast-growing area of the school district and gained approximately 200 students a year in the 4 years since it was opened. Table 1 contains demographic percentages about the school as compared to the district and the state. There are many similarities in the percentages of subpopulations while the biggest differences are in the African American and Hispanic populations. The school had a higher percentage of African American students than the state and the district and a lower percentage of Hispanic students.

Table 3.1*2018-2019 Enrollment Information*

	State (%)	District (%)	School (%)
African American	12.6	16.5	29.5
American Indian	0.4	0.6	0.5
Asian	4.5	3.4	2.8
Hispanic	52.6	31.1	20.8
Pacific Islander	0.2	0.2	0.1
White	27.4	46.7	44.7
Two or more races	2.4	1.4	1.4
Economically disadvantaged	60.6	45.5	35.6
English language learners	19.5	14.8	2.9
Special education	<i>Data not available</i>	<i>Data not available</i>	10.2
Mobility rate	15.4	15.1	14.4

The student participants were selected through purposive, criterion-based selection (LeCompte & Goetz, 1984) from my English classes. Because I was most interested in the understanding of typical tenth grade students, the most important selection criteria were that the participants appeared to perform mostly in the average range. I selected 10 students who had previously performed satisfactorily on both the state English Language Arts assessment and in English classes. Students who were served through special education or who were enrolled in honors English classes were not involved in the study. With these participants, my goal was to capture the thinking of an

“average” 10th grader, one who has the basic abilities and understandings essential to be able to write (as determined by state criteria and previous English teachers) but who was not working outside of class to improve their writing abilities.

I presented the study to eligible students’ parents and guardians for their consent and then to the students themselves for their assent to participate in the research. Of the eligible students, 14 completed the consent and assent forms. Of those participants, I completed initial interviews and writing sorts (see Appendix B) with three before the school closed due to the Coronavirus pandemic. At that time, I had to propose a modification to the Institutional Review Board in order to continue data collection completely online. This required changing the survey to a Google Form and, in one case, changing the sort of writing statements into Google Slides and completing it during a Zoom meeting.

Three participants and guardians consented and assented to continue the study online; however, only one was able to be reached to complete the writing sort. The following table shows the participants for whom I was able to collect a comprehensive data set.

Table 3.2*Final Participants and Data Collected*

Participant	Initial interview	Writing sort	Survey	Post-writing think aloud	Number of writing samples collected
Jade	2/13/20	Began 2/13, completed 2/24	Via Google Forms, 3/19/20	Did not complete due to absences	6
Aaron	2/19/20	3/4/20, completed online on 5/7/20	Via Google Forms, 5/14/20	3/4/20	5
Cletus	2/25/20	Began 2/27/20, completed 3/4/20	Via Google Forms, 3/19/20	3/4/20	7
Lacey	2/11/20	2/20/20	Via Google Forms, 3/20/20	3/4/20	8

Positionality of the Researcher

At the time of this study, I had been an employee of the school district for the past eleven years and had worked at this high school for 3 years. During these 3 years, I taught regular and special education inclusion sections of English II. My understanding of the range of abilities was refined during these years as I worked with both special education and general education students.

As a child, I was a student in this same district, and now my son is a student here. As a result of this and my work experience here, I see myself as deeply immersed in and

committed to the success of education in this community. At the same time, the dynamics, subpopulations, and history of this school is very different from the schools my son and I attended. I was raised in a middle class, white family, and I am currently raising my own middle class, white family. While the schools I attended were poorer than the school in this study, I was enrolled in primarily honors classes, most of my peers looked like me, and came from more affluent backgrounds. My home Discourse was a close match to the school's Discourse, unlike the home Discourse of some of my students. As a student, I was pushed beyond my comfort zone academically with great regularity. As an on-level teacher, I found my students to be a more diverse group, economically, racially, and academically, than those with whom I was educated.

I knew that many of my students were planning on attending college and had goals that will require a college degree. One of my primary concerns as their teacher was that I was not preparing them well enough, especially as compared to their honors-level peers. I remember my own experience of being a first-year college student and how much I struggled with the depth and quantity of writing that was expected of me. I came from a privileged background that supported me and eased my way into those new expectations, and it was still very difficult for me to improve my skills enough to achieve the level my professors required of me. From that experience, and from my experience in classrooms, I could only imagine how much harder it would be for my students to make the same improvements. This motivated my decisions and actions in my research and in my teaching.

As a teacher, I am deeply immersed in the National Writing Project movement and my own local writing project. From these groups, I have learned about and been engrossed in the importance of deeply personal, choice-based writing. I value this type of writing and the importance of it in developing students' character, thinking, and writing abilities; at the same time, I recognize that students already have developed their characters, thinking, and writing abilities, and that, as their teacher, it is one of my responsibilities to help them begin to know how to "harmonize with the rest of the world" (Delpit, 1986, p. 18). I believe that I have the responsibility to teach the academic writing style, structures, and thinking while honoring their choices and individuality at the same time.

As both the classroom teacher and the researcher, I had a particular interest in helping my students meet their writing goals. I worked as a participant observer (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Although I was engaged in the teaching process during the study, I did not test a particular practice or idea, and so I did not change my teaching. I continued to work as I usually did with students, adapting my instruction to meet their particular goals and needs. Therefore, this study was not action research; instead, it was classroom-based inquiry conducted by a teacher wanting to understand what was happening in her classroom (Hubbard & Power, 1993). In the tradition of teacher-research, my findings and thinking have changed who I am as a teacher and have changed my practices (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Saqipi & Vogrinc, 2020).

Because I was the researcher and their teacher, it was important for me to consider the implications of my own position of power. The majority of what I asked the

participants to do (think-alouds, writing, drafting, conferencing, etc.) were all practices that I used regularly in my English classroom. While students were completing their regular classwork, there were no distinctions made between what the students who were participants in the research and those who were not. Therefore, students tended to feel comfortable both with me as the researcher and with the things they were being asked to do. Students were asked to complete surveys about their self-assessment of their writing (see Appendix A) for this study. Before completing the surveys, I reminded them that it was voluntary and did not impact their classwork or grade.

There was also the concern that students would tailor their responses to what they think I wanted to hear. Again, by using the strategies I regularly used in my classroom, I believe that students were honest and open with their responses. Most importantly, I did not want students or parents to feel coerced to participate in the study. I explained that their participation in the study would not affect their grade or their position in my classroom. I communicated to students and their guardians that they could withdraw from the study at any time and that there would be no consequences, grades, or other evaluation as a result of this study, as it was solely for the research study.

Data Collection

From the pilot study, the survey and interview questions were slightly redesigned in order to collect a richer and fuller spectrum of data. Additionally, I added a collection of statements about writing (Nauman et al., 2011) that could help students consider their values about writing and speak to them.

Data sources included:

- Pre-interviews with participants about their understandings about the writing process (see Appendix A) and a sort of statements about important qualities of writing (see Appendix B). These interviews were audio recorded.
- Student surveys about self-efficacy and writing tasks (see Appendix C).
- Researcher reflexive journal documenting and explaining the research process, and including analytical, theoretical, and methodological memos (see Appendix D).
- Artifacts including pre-writing, first drafts, revisions and edits, and final copies of student writing (see Appendix E).
- Participants' think-alouds about their compositions (see Appendix F).

The timeline for data collection is in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1

Data Collection Timeline

When	What	Data source
November 2019	Submitted research application to the school district	
Late December 2019	Submitted IRB for approval	
Late January 2020	Received IRB and district approval	
February 2020	Selected students for participation	

February 2020	Collected consent and assent forms from students and parents	
March-May 2020	Conducted pre-interviews, think-alouds, and writing sorts; distributed student surveys	Individual interviews, sorts, surveys, writing collection, and researcher notes
April 2020	IRB modification due to Coronavirus pandemic	

Writing artifacts that were collected came from three primary academic argumentative writing assignments. These papers were collectively designed by the English II team that I was working with at the time. One of the assignments was an argumentative research paper. The assignment asked the students to think of a problem in the world that they were willing to take a stand for or against and to provide information to the reader to convince her to stand with them. Students were required to use Gale databases through the school library to research and support their arguments with facts. Students were also asked to complete a self-assessment of their work for this piece of writing. The second writing assignment was for students to write about whether or not they thought the American dream was achievable and why. After reading the novel *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck (1993) as a class, students were required to use supporting illustrative evidence from the novel and newspaper articles and opinion pieces of their choosing. Students also completed a self-assessment of their work. The final writing assignment came from a unit focused on the first season of the podcast *Serial*, which focused on the criminal case of Adnan Syed and presented multiple perspectives

about his guilt or innocence in the killing of his former girlfriend, Hae Min Lee. This paper was a timed writing assignment that asked the students to argue their opinion about Blackstone's ratio: It is better that 10 guilty persons escape than that one innocent suffer. Students were asked to use evidence from Syed's case as evidence when forming their argument.

While in the process of data collection, all digital work was compiled on my personal computer. Handwritten notes were typed up as soon as possible after their collection, adding in important details from my memory about that event. I wrote in my reflexive journal after all data collection to further document what happened and to begin the analysis process. The data was kept in a locked drawer in my home office. Digital notes and comments were kept in a password-protected folder on my personal computer.

Brief notes about instruction and noticings about student participants were kept on paper during instruction, and I completed a more thorough write-up after students left the classroom (see Appendix C). Although lesson plans were not finalized when the study began, classroom plans included several timed analytical essays, separate revision sessions for those essays, one or more extended process papers, multiple quick writes, and several formal and informal writing conferences. Because of the dramatic reduction in student work completion during the school closure for the pandemic, the number of writing samples and think-alouds collected was significantly less than initially planned.

Once the participants were selected and had signed consent and assent forms, I scheduled a time for the initial interview. This was done after or before school at the students' convenience. The think-alouds were conducted after one timed writing piece;

while the initial plan was to collect multiple think-alouds, this was not possible due to the school closures. Because of my understanding of the sociocultural nature of talk and cognition, I recognized that, although the think-aloud process, my participants did most likely address some of their verbalized thought to me (Smagorinsky, 2001). While I did use a protocol analysis (Alhaisoni, 2012; Jingjing & Xuesong, 2017), I did not ignore the fact that this is an artificial practice, still very much impacted by the relationship between the participants and the researcher. In such cases, Smagorinsky explained that “collecting and analyzing protocols becomes highly problematic.... [because] the protocol is not simply representative of meaning. It is, rather, *an agent in the production of meaning*” (2001, p. 240).

Data Analysis

Data analysis began early in the data collection process in order to improve and refine the analysis. The changing interpretations and understandings were documented in my reflexive journal (see Appendix D) in order to track how these early understandings grew into the final themes that will be presented in the study. The simultaneous collection and analysis of data allowed me to better direct the emerging nature of the qualitative research project (Merriam, 1998).

Interview Transcripts and Writing Samples

My initial plan was to analyze the transcripts of the interviews using open coding to assign “some sort of short-hand designation to various aspects” of data so that those pieces could be quickly retrieved (Merriam, 1998, p. 164). However, when I was very reluctant to begin coding, I worried that labeling pieces so early in the analysis process

would cause me to prematurely lose or disregard data that could prove important. From the data analysis in the pilot study, I knew I needed to include more time simply stewing with the data before attempting to code or classifying it in any way. After discussing my reluctance with my advisor, I developed an alternative initial analysis, using writing as my “first analytic stance toward the data” (Augustine, 2014, p. 3). I selected one participant to begin with (Jade), and I compiled my transcripts, the student’s sorts of the statements about writing, and her writing artifacts. I then began writing my way through all of the data, reading chunks of data and writing my initial thoughts (see Figure 3.2) and then writing extended responses to each piece (see Figure 3.3), even when I felt like I did not know what I was writing or thinking.

Figure 3.2

Initial Thoughts about Aaron

<p>I'll stop and I'll read through it Try to notice any errors Paper looks good</p> <p>In the process of the idea I wrote something completely</p>	<p>Brewer: So when you're writing what kinds of things make you pause and say, Oh I want to go change that sentence, or Oh I didn't like that.</p> <p>A: When I write, I'll stop and I'll read through it and while I'm reading through it I'll try to notice any errors because I want to make sure this paper looks good.</p> <p>Brewer: So when you say error, what are you thinking about as an error?</p> <p>A: Something that went on in the process 07:39 [points at head] of the idea and I think Oh wait that wasn't there. So I wrote something completely different down so I have to change it to match up with what's actually being written.</p> <p>Brewer: So one of the things I'm interested in is your internal standards for what makes good writing and what you want to live up to when you</p>	<p>So this is his process as he's explaining it. Metacognitively, I think that the kids have more going on in their brains than they are able to express here. And then he transitions into that self-evaluative work that shows that he's in that 3rd ZPD.</p> <p>"In the process of the idea"--what an incredible idea. This somewhat contradicts what I thought he was saying previously, that he had the pieces of the writing all together, and was just trying to put them in the right steps. So maybe the idea generation comes first, and then he just has to organize it all?</p>
--	--	---

Figure 3.3

Initial Extended Response to Aaron

Similarly, he had a group of words that I called self-evaluation. I separated these from the self-reflection group because these statements are specifically about the quality of the piece. He said he looks to see if the “paper looks good.” He also said things like “what needs to be written,” “see for myself if it seems like it’s good enough to be written,” and “that’s where the not good enough comes in.” He’s really talking about pre-textual revision. He’s holding all those thoughts in his head and revising and editing before he writes. He talks about it being “good enough to be written,” and this is clearly evidence of some internal standard that he’s measuring himself against. But to have that high of a standard for even writing something down, I think is counter-productive. I’m all for shitty first drafts. By lowering that standard for ourselves, we free our thinking to ramble and discover. I don’t know if this is something that you learn until you have really written so much. If you haven’t done the sheer quantity of writing that’s needed in order to understand that, I’m not sure that you can reach that conclusion.

When I finished with one participant, I moved on to another. While doing this initial writing and analysis, I color coded areas of my writing that seemed related to the theories I laid out in the theoretical framework: social constructivism, stages of the zone of proximal development, and Vygotsky’s understanding of language (see Figure 3.3).

After working through each transcribed interview and several chunks of extended thinking through writing, I began to see large, overarching similarities across the participants, including that their expressed future goals seemed to focus their writing. With that larger understanding, I was ready to move to a more focused form of analysis. I decided to use the NWP’s Analytical Writing Continuum attributes as a way to look at each part of the data in context of what makes up quality writing. I have worked with this continuum (in multiple variations) for the past 9 years as a scorer of writing for the NWP’s research on student writing. As a result, the continuum and the language used to describe specific aspects of student writing is deeply ingrained in my thinking. While it

seemed a natural lens to adopt, I wanted to make sure I also captured pieces of the data that did not clearly line up with those attributes. I used the attributes from the continuum as *a priori* codes; this was helpful in creating an index of my thinking (Elliott, 2018). I remained alert to that possibility and added the categories “writing process” and “other” to this initial analysis. I continued going through the data, writing in each specific area as I saw it come up in the participants’ interviews. As I was doing this, I pulled statements from the interview and put them on a mind map arranged by the attributes, writing process, and other.

After I had gone through all of the data in this manner, I went back to the students’ writing, re-reading each piece, and coding for the AWC attributes, evidence of the students’ writing process, and other things that did not fit in those categories.

Sorts of Statements about Writing

In addition to analyzing the interview transcripts and students’ writing, I needed to analyze the students’ sorts of statements about writing from the study by Nauman et al. (2011). I first put each students’ sort into a Google Sheet. On another sheet, I put their top five selections. Then I compared and color coded each of their sorts with distinguishing statements from the three perspectives from Nauman et al. (2011): 1) good thinking and communicating, 2) structure and clarity, and 3) purpose, voice, and correctness. This is illustrated in Figure 3.4 below.

Students' Sorts of Statements about Writing

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
		Most agree																													Most disagree		
Student	M. Hautzinger	9	19	22	4	24	21	15	31	20	30	7	1	3	10	26	17	29	2	23	13	28	5	8	14	16	27	18	25	6	12	11	Structure and clarity
	J. Cotton-Betteridge	27	18	28	11	13	24	21	20	12	22	5	31	29	15	16	9	4	10	3	2	26	8	19	25	17	7	30	6	23	1	14	Purpose, voice, and correctness
	B. Lonis	18	9	31	23	30	13	20	25	28	22	1	4	24	8	29	16	21	27	2	17	15	14	5	7	10	12	19	26	11	3	6	Structure and clarity and Purpose, voice, and correctness (even split)
	C. Rankin	7	22	1	20	30	9	28	5	27	18	15	26	31	10	24	19	13	16	6	2	4	8	21	29	25	12	3	14	23	11	17	Good thinking and communicating.
		Most agree							Agree							Neutral							Disagree							Most disagree			
	Perspective 1:	Most agree	23	2	5	18																											
	Good thinking and communicating	Agree	19	30	10	1																											
		Neutral	24	7	16	6																											
		Disagree	9																														
		Most disagree	4	17	21																												
	Perspective 2:	Most agree	1	9	3	30																											
	Structure and clarity	Agree	17	7	22	24																											
		Neutral	5	28	4	2																											
		Disagree	18																														
		Most disagree	27	6																													
	Perspective 3:	Most agree	20	24	17																												
	Purpose, voice, and correctness	Agree	4	18	2																												
		Neutral	15	1	30	5																											
		Disagree	7	19	6																												
		Most disagree	9																														

So, if a student put statement number 1 in the strongly disagree range and that aligned with the way participants who valued structure and clarity sorted that same statement, then I colored that number in the student's sort to match that perspective. This allowed me to visually see how each students' sort aligned with the different perspectives. I did the same with the students' top five sorts (see Figure 3.5).

Students' Top Five Sorts of Statements about Writing

[illegible]

After analyzing all of the data, I then wrote draft responses to my research questions from each case. These draft theme statements encompassed the major ideas and explained the “*underlying* ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations—and ideologies—that are theorized as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84). In preparation for the cross-case analysis, I read each draft statement across the cases and noted important similarities and differences. This analytical process allowed me to start with a holistic impression of the data set first, then the smaller pieces, and then, through the cross-case analysis, back to a holistic understanding of the data.

Cross Case Analysis

When considering the first research question (“How do the participants explain what they attend to when composing and revising assigned analytical writing?”), I knew I wanted to be able to answer that question in a concrete way. From the cross case writing I had done in response to the individual case research questions, I saw several pairs and ideas that threaded through each of my initial answers. I collapsed these ideas into categories of data that were “conceptually congruent” (Merriam, 1998, p. 184). They were concrete or abstract, academic or informal, negative response, process, and self-evaluation. I then returned to each of the statements I had coded with the AWC writing attributes, writing process, and other, and I labeled each statement using those codes.

This is shown for one participant in Figure 3.6 below.

Figure 3.6

Analysis of Jade’s Language Use

	Idea unit	Concrete/Specific/Objective	Abstract/vague/subjective	Academic	Informal	Negative	Process words	Self-evaluative
Content	evidence	1		1				
Content	evidential stuff		1		1			
Content	fast paced	1			1			
Process	filling it in		1		1		1	
Process	first draft	1		1			1	
Stance	first person kind of stuff	1		1				
Content	fit more ideas in		1		1			
Process	fix it later		1		1		1	
Conventions	fragments	1		1	1			
Stance	funny	1			1			
Content	general		1		1			
Content	gives more detail		1		1			
Structure	good ending		1	1				
Structure	gradual change	1			1			
Conventions	Grammatical errors	1			1			

While I did this coding, I was also continuing my process of writing about the data for my initial analysis.

Through that writing, I discovered that patterns in ways students used both abstract/academic and concrete/informal language with other types of language. In order to show this more clearly, I pulled independently meaningful phrases as idea units into another Google Sheet and added coding for the nearest significant idea unit. An example of this analysis is shown in Figure 3.7 below.

Figure 3.7

Selection of Data from Analysis of Concrete, Informal, Negative Language Use

Location	code for nearest idea unit	nearest idea unit	AWC	Idea unit	Concrete/Speci	Informal	Negative	Process words	Self-evaluative
Lacey2	abstract informal	just out of nowhere	Content	flip their opinion...and it gets confusing	1	1	1		
Cletus1	abstract informal	making sure everything is fool proof	Process	Making sure I haven't made any mistakes	1	1	1	1	1
Aaron1	abstract informal	It's the word order that really gets me	Sentence fluency	I can't find out where the word goes	1	1	1		1
Aaron2	abstract informal	they do help to make it seem good	Conventions	complete sentences aren't really needed a lot as most people think	1	1	1		
	abstract	so much thought process		Don't let what goes on in my head get fully					

At this point, I began writing a draft of the cross-case findings, returning regularly to the data to re-analyze as necessary. However, no major changes to the analysis occurred from this point forward, although some additional student statements or writing selections were added to the initial analysis. Occasionally, codes were changed based on further interpretation of the data set.

Trustworthiness

With qualitative research, the researcher is the “primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Data are mediated through this human instrument” (Merriam,

1998, p. 7). Because the analysis was filtered through my own biases and perspectives, it was important for me to intentionally and thoroughly document my thinking throughout the process. Throughout my data analysis processes, I shared my interpretations with my advisor. While I had planned to share the developed themes with the student participants, the change in my data collection timeline and the availability of the participants due to the Covid-19 pandemic made this impossible. I relied on peer debriefing to help me refine my analysis and thematic interpretations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). As analysis continued, I sent her emerging themes and developing understandings. She responded with clarifying questions and wonderings. I used those questions and wonderings to move my analysis forward, and I worked to remain open to her criticisms, suggestions, and observations so that I (the primary research instrument) could be finely tuned.

In order to conduct and produce ethical, rigorous research, I aligned my work with Tracy's (2010) "big tent" criteria. The criteria are: "(a) worthy topic, (b) rich rigor, (c) sincerity, (d) credibility, (e) resonance, (f) significant contribution, (g) ethics, and (h) meaningful coherence" (Tracy, 2010, p. 837). Dependability and credibility (Guba & Lincoln, 1985) were assured and maintained through the triangulation of multiple sources of data and through the data collection process and my reflexive journals.

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the methodological process I used to examine students' language and thinking about academic writing. Individual case studies and a collected case study allowed me to examine the students individually and commonalities across them. Several sources of data were analyzed, including interviews,

surveys, writing samples, and a sort of statements about writing. The analytical process allowed me to understand similarities and differences across the cases and important themes. In the following chapters, I present the individual case studies, followed by the collective case study.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS: JADE

In this chapter, I will present the findings from the analysis of data collected with Jade. In general, Jade seemed to have a firm understanding of what her school wanted from her for academic writing, but she had her own ideas about what she wanted academic writing to be. She saw academic writing as another opportunity to express herself creatively, to push herself to reach higher levels of performance, and to connect with the reader.

First, I will present a brief introduction to Jade herself. In the remainder of the chapter, I will present findings related to the following research questions:

1. How do the participants explain what they attend to when composing and revising assigned analytical writing?
2. From those explanations, what are the participants' personal values for their writing?
3. How do their values manifest in their writing?

Themes will be presented around research questions one and two, with supporting evidence from the participant's writing. The following themes will be discussed: an interrelated understanding of academic writing, high standards for her writing, and valuing the audience's perceptions.

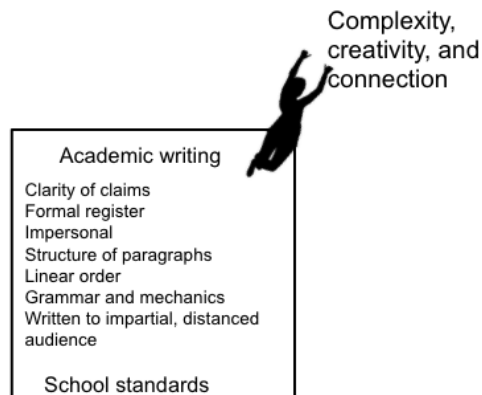
Introduction to Jade

Jade was a 15-year-old sophomore student at State High School. She identified as both Black and White. Her mother graduated high school, and her father obtained an associate's degree. She lived with her parents and her older sister, an 11th grader at the same school. Jade planned to go to college and to major in the performing arts. Jade was in my last class of the day. By the end of the day, most students were crabby, wiped out, or goofy, but Jade was usually even tempered and pleasant, even energetic. In her survey, she wrote that she mostly enjoyed English class.

Jade was aware of the traditional standards of academic writing (the “box”) and might be said to have mastered that form; instead of continuing to work within that box, she instead wanted to break out of it, reaching for different ways of writing to meet her goals. This is illustrated in Figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4.1

Illustration of Jade’s Academic Writing Performance and Values



She valued her education and wanted to do well. She earned mostly As and Bs in her classes. When it was time for the students to select their courses for the next year. I encouraged Jade to take an AP or dual credit English course. She said that she planned to, and that she previously had not taken one because there was no real incentive for her to, as the honors courses available to 9th and 10th graders did not earn them the extra point in their GPA like the AP and dual credit courses.

While she wrote on her survey that she felt that her abilities in English class were adequate, in an interview, she said that her PSAT scores showed that she was “a little above track” for her grade level and that “for me, it’s not hard to come up with something very fast.” She also said in English class, “I pick up the main skills that are necessary to pass that class. And then use it in the next level to keep what was taught and learn new.” Her confidence fluctuated, but mostly she reported feeling like she was capable of tackling any writing assignment that I threw at her. She said, “I always really liked writing. My first year in middle school which is 7th grade in Utah, and I had a really good writing teacher, and she helped me write little fan fiction type Warrior books.” On her survey she wrote that she was usually slightly confident when starting a new persuasive writing assignment: “Depending on how much I know about the topic or how strong the side I chose to work with is what makes me able to be totally confident about my work or on the edge.”

She also considered herself a reader. When asked what else she wanted to talk about at the end of one of our first interviews, she quickly identified reading as an issue in school: “We don’t do it. I know not all students want to read, but I’ll go to my

chemistry class and hear kids, ‘Oh, I haven’t read a book since elementary school.’ I’m just like, that’s sad. Reading books is great.” For Jade, the connection between reading and writing was very clear. Reading “widens your vocabulary and gives ideas. I didn’t start really wanting to write until I read that book series [*Warriors* series by Erin Hunter], and I was like, ‘Oh, why not hop on this trend?’”

While she did well in all her courses, her real passion was theater. She worked on all the school productions during the year, either on the technical side or as one of the more minor parts. Every time she made the cut, she would share that with me at the beginning of class, smiling broadly. I could feel the excitement coming from her. She asked that I attend each of her performances, telling me if it was going to be too scary for my son to watch or if it would be a good one to bring him to. While she said that writing would neither be important nor unimportant in her future, she did explain that if she were to become a playwright, “it would be very important” but as an actor “blocking and line memorizing only requires so much writing.” She loved reading *Antigone* and *Julius Caesar* in class and brought her acting talents to her passionate reading of her parts. Jade’s analysis of fictional characters in class was greatly influenced by her training in theater; she regularly asked about character’s motivations and back stories, and this led to deeper analysis and understanding of those characters.

Jade was aware of the implicit systems governing academic writing, but she purposefully pushed against them. She wanted to bring in elements of fiction and creative writing to her academic writing. But at the same time, she sometimes decided that some creative addition would be “too much” for that particular sentence or paper. So even

though she pushed boundaries of academic writing, she had her own boundaries that are just farther out than what many people would argue for. She had boundaries on the other extreme, too; she did not want her work to be too “basic.” She wanted her writing to go deeper than people would expect it to, and she wants to go beyond the basic standards of the rubrics we give.

Interrelated Understanding of Academic and Other Genres of Writing

Jade’s language about academic writing showed that she saw and understood the traditional aspects of academic writing as emphasized by schools. But she also did not see it as completely separate from other forms of writing, like personal narrative or fiction. Instead, she wanted to mix traditional, formal aspects of academic writing with the techniques she valued in fiction and theater, things like author’s voice, humor, and direct connection with the audience. Jade understood the box of academic writing and wanted to push the boundaries of the box to include these other things that she believed were important.

She often spoke about both fiction and academic writing in her responses, showing that she saw connections between her standards and her processes for both these types of writing. I asked her about some of her internal speech while writing, and she provided a list of questions she asked herself, spanning different genres: “Is that a big enough word or is it too big of a word? If it’s like you’re writing about a character or something: Is this character funny enough? What does this character want really? And if it’s opinionated: What do I want the reader to know?” She also said, “I like it when authors kind of interrupt their own stories with their own thoughts or add author’s voice

to it.” Her preferences and standards for writing across genres, rather than being limited by genre.

Her cross-genre thinking extended into structure as well. Statement 1 in the sort of statements about writing said, “A good paper has a strong, logical overall organization that is clear to the reader, so the reader knows what to expect.” She ranked this statement at position 30 of 31, showing a disagreement with that value. She said she did not want the structure of a piece not allow her to “guess exactly what’s next.” She followed this statement with an example from a novel we had read recently in class (*Of Mice and Men*), and I asked her how that translated to nonfiction or persuasive writing. She said, “If you know what to expect, even in a persuasive paper, wouldn’t it all kind of be the same then? You should have various subjects that are like reasons that you’ve probably never thought about.” Explicitness of structure is typically highly valued in academic writing, and Jade recognized that while continuing to push against that standard, arguing for a more creative and complex understanding of academic writing.

Academic Labels and Informal Descriptions

Jade acknowledged the traditional “box” of academic writing in her language, and she tended to use an academic label for her writing, while adding a description using mostly informal language (see next section). When speaking about the parts of a traditional academic paper, she labeled them as “intro paragraph,” “hook,” “claim,” “body,” “conclusion,” and “rebuttal.” When she was asked what she thought about when brainstorming for a paper, she said, “So I have always been taught to write the hook first, so I always come up with a hook first. And then everything else kind of follows after that.

You have your claim, and just the intro paragraph, so then you know what your body topics are going to be.” When asked what she talked to herself about while writing, she said, “Kind of how it's going to lead up to the next paragraph or how this body paragraph is going to end? What is the purpose of that body paragraph?” Her use of the academic language to describe her writing showed her understanding of the academic box of writing, but when she began to explain her writing, she frequently used informal language to describe it.

While she labeled parts of writing using academic language, she tended to extend her thinking on these parts by using informal language. For example, while she used academic language to describe the writing process, her explanations for and elaborations on the parts of a traditional paper were exclusively informal. She used informal language when describing how a piece of writing can stay focused and organized. In response to Statement 7 (“Good writing stays focused on the main idea and topic throughout”), she said, “Because if it doesn’t relate all back in the end, then it’s like if it starts going off topic and branching out to different ideas, it can kind of get confusing. It doesn’t tie together very well.” These informal phrases highlighted an imaginary visual perception of the writing, emphasizing the different ways complex writing can go wrong. The academic labels for these ideas may not have been sufficient for what she was trying to convey about the complexity of writing.

High Standards for Writing

One of Jade’s primary values for her writing was her desire to write well when compared with her standards for writing. In the survey, she was asked to explain how she

decides if an idea for a paper is good, she said, “If it makes sense, is clear, [and] has more than one way to tie into the paper. It can be backed up by facts and or personal experience. It is either pretty specific to match the paper or broad enough to expand and pick apart to match the paper.” On the other hand, when she decides that an idea isn’t going to work, she said, “If it can’t be backed up, [if I do] not [have] enough motivation, or only fits into a small portion of the paper and doesn’t relate to the rest.” The reverse is true for her as well, as she states that writing is not going to work if it does not fit together. In this area, her standards for herself align with the standards of traditional academic writing, and she stayed within the traditional box in this aspect.

As she further explored what mattered to her in quality writing, she began to move out of the traditional academic writing box. Other qualities of writing well that she identified included keeping the reader’s attention and surprising them with the ideas she wrote. She wanted her writing to “start really good and keep your attention in the middle. It’s got to be kinda fast paced for me, and be like, ‘Oh, I didn’t know that’ or like, proud of what I found. Like, ‘Oh, I remember coming up with that. That was pretty great.’ And then the conclusion; it’s gotta be like, ‘That makes sense.’ If I were to read that, and be like, ‘Wow, I actually learned something from that,’ or like, ‘Oh, I never thought of it that way.’” Traditional academic writing tends to be written to an imaginary, neutral audience, but Jade seemed to visualize an audience who she wanted to deliberately engage with.

Jade wanted to go above and beyond the bar of “average” good academic writing. She had personal standards for the types of sentences she wrote. In response to one of the

writing statements (“A variety of sentence types engages the reader [...]; you want to avoid too many short, choppy sentences”), she said “I like to have more detail in my writing, more opinionated, instead of just straight this fact, duh duh duh. This fact because—This fact. Instead, you could add a lot more.” She said, “Sometimes, yeah. I’ll write this really wordy kind of sentence and very factual, and it looks pristine, and someone looks at it, and they’re like, ‘Oh, that looks really good.’ And I’m reading it, and I’m just like, ‘That’s extra. It’s too much.’” This statement shows a regard both for clarity and for maintaining the interest of her audience in her writing. If a sentence is too factual or wordy, she believed it would not be interesting for her reader.

When speaking about this desire for quality writing, she regularly spoke about her own self-evaluation of her work. In order to self-evaluate her writing, she checked to see:

if it sounds right. Sometimes I’ll put it into Google Translate and listen to it read it aloud. So then, if it doesn’t sound right, I can go back and make sure it comprehends right when listening to it. And making sure it’s easy to read.

Sometimes the sentences don’t make sense, and there’s just random words in there that shouldn’t be used in there. And just making it overall easier to read while still keeping it professional, kind of. So, not simplistic, but at the same time, simplistic.

Her desire to write well translated into her having high standards for her writing that she sometimes struggled to meet. When self-assessing her work, she sometimes did not reach the highest level of performance that she wanted to. Below is a selection of Jade’s self-assessment of her American Dream essay (see Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2

Jade's Self-Assessment of American Dream Essay

	Accomplished writing performance (4)	Satisfactory writing performance (3)	Basic writing performance (2)	Very limited writing performance (1)	Student response: Why did you score yourself at this point? What did you do well? What could you have done better?
Organizing structure (20 points)	x				My structure was clean and went in order it was an easy to read essay
Position, ideas, and coherence (20 points)		x			Since I wasn't intrigued to the topic it was harder to come up with stuff and ended up being very factual
Progression of ideas and transitions (20 points)	x				The ideas all complemented each other nicely I used many transitions
Development of ideas, evidence, and reasoning (20 points)		x			The development of ideas were hard for me and again since the topic wasn't something I wasn't into therefore i feel like my reasons were not very backed up
Thoughtfulness (10 points)		x			I mainly used factual evidence that i've learned throughout the years so it wasn't passionate but very factual

Unlike many of my students, she ranked her performance as satisfactory for the majority of the attributes (rather than as accomplished). Her responses showed how she thought she had not met her own expectations in multiple areas. Here again, her standards for academic writing were slightly different than traditional academic expectations; she wanted to perform better than the “box.”

Creativity

For Jade, part of writing well involved writing creativity. This was a significant value for her, and it was one way she broke out of the academic writing box. She wanted her ideas to be creative. When asked what she thought about while drafting, she said, “Which is going to have the strongest opinion, kind of. Which one I’m most passionate about so that I can make it a better subject that I’m more interested in researching and following up on.” She needed to be interested in the ideas in order to bring her best work to her writing. She said, “When I read research papers, it’s kind of like—if it’s a good

research paper, and I'm actually into it—it plays out like a little court scene in my head. If the person is spitting facts, and then the rebuttal comes, and then, 'However, you know, I could be wrong, but, you know, this is why I'm not.' and I see a person saying it more." While she used the words "show not tell," she really seemed to be talking about showing the writer's train of thought.

One way she worked to present her ideas in creative ways was by adding informality into formal writing. She wanted the presentation of those ideas to be creative as well. In response to Statement 2 ("I personally like it when a writer adds something to their writing which shows some personality (humor, wit, ideals, values). I guess it depends on the piece, but I have read various types of writing that include some of the author's voice"), she said, "I always when I write personal narratives, I like to be funny, so little side comments that you get like, 'Oh, that's kind of funny.' Or if you're writing a narrative, so, 'Oh, I wasn't quite expecting this to happen, but you see...' It adds character. I agree with that." I then asked her if she thought this was different with persuasive writing, and she said, "No, because then you can kind of relate with it more."

She tended to primarily use that informality in her introductions and conclusions. In her American dream self-reflection, she commented that "I used factual evidence that I've learned throughout the years, so it wasn't passionate, but very factual." In this essay, Jade's use of purposeful informality comes through multiple times. Some examples are listed below:

- "Some might say that it's impossible or that dreams don't come true. Well, they're wrong because I know of a dream that is very real."

- “They gift us as Americans with the freedom to make our dreams possible. We could become doctors, engineers, artists and actress’ whatever we put our minds to!”
- “So now do you see that The American Dream is attainable. Others have achieved it, so what’s stopping you from doing the same?”

In her research paper, she had some similar statements:

- “Have you ever thought you might walk on the same streets as a serial killer? You may as well be if we were not to enforce this specific penalty.”
- “One off the wire person could take the lives of several, so why are we keeping the defect alive when we should be saving the innocent.”

Through this emphasis on creativity, she pushed the limits of the academic writing box, branching out to her own values, while holding on to some of the values of traditional academic writing at the same time.

Coherent, Cohesive Text

Another aspect of quality writing for Jade was that her writing be coherent and cohesive; this is a value that fits neatly in the academic writing box. While she wanted her work to be creative, she also wanted it to have a coherent thread connecting it from the beginning to the end. In response to Statement 10 (“The paper should have a flow. If the paper jumps from one idea to another, it makes it hard to breathe, just like a piece of music that doesn't transition well and then loses the melody”), she said,

I agree with that because there's a fine line between keeping the ideas creative and then jumping the gun of, like—Say you're talking about how endangered animals

should be kept in zoos and stuff, and you keep talking about poaching and stuff.

Like a jump. It should be a gradual change about how keeping the endangered animals in the zoo is safer for them, and then back it up by gradually introducing that they get poached in the wild.

Here, she addressed the more intangible parts of academic writing: the connections that help the reader understand. She did not specifically talk about the audience, but she did attend to what the audience needs by valuing those gradual changes that tie together.

Jade worked to make her writing coherent and clear to her audience. One way she tried to make her writing meet those standards was to make sure she included not just details, facts, and claims, but that she also explained those ideas. This can be found in her American dream paper. She wrote (sic):

Second, America gives hope and opportunity to those who don't have the chance to fulfill their dreams. They don't call America the country of hope for nothing.

From a third world country America is a place where you take for granted running water, insurance and even electricity. Where every day isn't a struggle to survive, a place where you can discover talents and create your own business. It's a haven where you have rights you can vote, these are things that some people couldn't even imagine. America really strives to project this image of safety especially to these third world countries. Let me tell you we are proud of our liberty we see this in things like Hollywood. In an article by Bob Mondello he states, "Hollywood had long been inspiring immigrants to come to the U. S with images that filled them with overstated optimism about what they'd find here" (12).

America has this self promotion to allow us to show and give life and show what truly living is.

In this nine-sentence selection, the majority of the sentences are her own thinking and explanations about the content (“They don’t call America the country of hope for nothing”; “It’s a haven where you have rights”). It is only in the last two sentences that she includes cited evidence to support her argument. This selection shows her commitment to crafting a coherent argument with the needed explanations to support the stated facts.

At the same time, she saw her elaboration in her writing as a fine balance. She said that writing can be “not elaborate enough [and then] you don’t have enough attention span to read it, and it’s boring. And then you also don’t want to go too elaborate because then it goes on details.” She wanted her writing to be thorough enough to make her meaning clear, but not so elaborate that it became mostly about details instead of her main ideas.

In both of her writing samples, the order is linear and logical. The beginnings and ends of some of her paragraphs help support that order. In her last paragraph in the American dream paper, her first sentence says, “Finally enough work and dedication to a dream can land you anywhere.” The last two sentences in that paragraph say “no one said that it was easy to make it but if you actually work for it, you will make it. This factor alone has the setup for your American dream come true.”

For the research paper, the structure was given to the students (introduction, two body paragraphs, counterargument, and conclusion). With the American Dream, paper

students were told to have an introduction and conclusion and several body paragraphs. Jade followed these structures and the organization of her papers, showing that she understood what each of those parts are and why they are important. Her American Dream paper doesn't have a "rebuttal," as she called it, but it is still effective and has enough body paragraphs to explain her points. The following paragraph from her research paper shows Jade's understanding of internal structure, evidence, and commentary:

First off death penalties save victims' families from more grief than they've already endured. As an empathetic person, I could never imagine the pain families have gone through knowing that their baby girl/boy was savagely killed in cold blood by another human being. A tragic example of a families trial through this process is explained clearly in this article by Stambaugh, "We continued with our lives and through time minimized our grief...Then in September of 1987 we were shocked to find out that Walunga was able to ask for a parole hearing. So here we went again. The entire senseless murderous incident was being rehashed in a hearing. As a family, as individuals, and as victims, we responded to Walunga's request, and he was denied," (Stambaugh 3). The agony they had endured, waiting for the murder to be captured. Then not only having to face them but have the fact that they could one day be freed only to do the same thing to someone else. Mr. Walungas's trials went on for generations in this poor family. By then this horrific event should have been healed and shut away from this family's history.

However, it is still in their lives and constantly making them relive the murder of their beloved child or could have been an aunt.

In this paragraph, Jade has a claim (“death penalties save victims’ families from more grief than they’ve already endured”), evidence in the form of a quotation, and some commentary where she explains why that evidence matters (“By then this horrific event should have been healed and shut away from this family’s history. However, it is still in their lives and constantly making them relive the murder of their beloved child or could have been an aunt”).

In her writing, she used transitions regularly at the beginning of each of her body paragraphs. In the American dream paper, she used words like “second,” and “finally.” In her research paper, she uses words like “firstly,” “secondly,” and “now.” She also did have some linking between paragraphs. The end of her introduction paragraph in her American dream paper says, “The American dream is attainable because we have the freedom and the environment to achieve it.” The next sentence is the beginning of her first body paragraph: “They gift us as Americans with the freedom to make our dreams possible.” The reuse of the words freedom and dreams provides a link between the two paragraphs.

Use of Personalized Writing Process

While Jade did not speak a lot about her writing process, she did show that she valued her process and used it to push the limits of traditional academic writing. When asked how she drafted a paper, she said “I have my subject, and then I write down all—I’m trying to think how to describe it—just kind of like a word barf, a brain barf. You just

write down everything your kind of thinking.... And then you go through, and kind of—which ideas do you like best? And which ones have the most evidence to it, or that you can support and write about?” She said her “word barfs” tended to come “in fragments, just words that you can look back at and be like, ‘Oh, that meant this,’ and then I continue on that idea.” Her emphasis was on the speed of getting the ideas down so she can move to the revision process.

In contrast to my own understanding of the writing process, Jade was of the opinion that revision should be easy. She said things like “filling it in,” “easy to write,” “fix it later,” and “simple edit;” all of these statements show that she viewed the writing process as something that she can do easily. Similarly, she said she could tell her writing was going well when her conclusion is “easy to write.” She explained that if she’s having “a hard time figuring out what the message is to write down at the end in the conclusion then I know it’s not my best work.”

Audience’s Perceptions

Jade’s understanding of the importance of the audience came through almost every aspect of her writing. In contrast to some traditional, high school academic writers, she imagined the audience specifically, rather than an imaginary, neutral reader. This conception of her audience was another way she pushed the boundaries of the academic writing box. She said two comments in particular that showed her high esteem of the audience and its impact on how she wrote.

- “If you’re writing for a teacher, you gotta write what they want to hear”
- “You’ve gotta know your audience”

Two statements in her sorts also spoke to the issues that she raised in these statements. Statement 5 was ranked at 4 out of 5 in her top five (“Good writing shows a sense of audience. To effectively communicate your message, you need to know who you are writing for”). Jade did say that sometimes she wrote to please teachers, but there is also evidence that she wrote to engage and please a wider audience.

Connecting with Audience

Overall, Jade valued using her style as a writer to bring the reader and establish a close, engaging relationship with her reader, much like she stated preferring as a reader. She pushed the bounds of the academic writing box by her emphasis on connecting with her reader. Twice in her interviews she spoke about judging her writing by asking, “Is this something I would read?”

I asked her if a teacher had ever asked her to change something in her writing that she was happy with. She said that had happened “many times.” She remembered, “Most of it I usually got changes for having too much informal. Like, ‘And now we see...’ And when you use ‘we see’ instead of, like—I catch myself doing that all the time, so. ‘And now this shows,’ [or] more evidential stuff instead of first-person kind of talking.” The traditional formal tone was not enough for her, and she wanted a more direct connection with her audience.

In one of her conclusions, Jade wrote, “A dream is a fragment of hope that everyone has. Some might say it’s impossible or that dreams don’t come true. Well, they’re wrong because I know of a dream that is very real. The American dream is attainable because we have the freedom and the environment to achieve it.” The

informality of the ‘well’ allows her to bring her personality into it, but also allows for a different flow in the sentence. The pointedness of that sentence allows her to show the direct connection with the next sentence (thesis) focusing on what she knows about the American dream in particular.

In her final body paragraph, Jade wrote, “As the movie continues his situation progressively gets worse and nothing was making it better. Until he looked back on his life and remembered what his dream was and who he was fighting for. *And he prevailed it took lots of time* and he went through so many trials, but he survived them all because he lived in the land of opportunities.” The italicized portion is written exactly as she wrote it. If we allow that she intended to put a period after “prevailed,” this is an example of a short sentence used to make a point and deliberately contrasted with some longer sentences. Jade’s value of connecting with her audience required her to push the limits of traditional academic writing to allow for the informality and closeness that she so wanted in her work.

Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the data analysis that was completed to analyze the participant’s language and values for writing. First, I presented an introduction to Jade, a student who understood the traditional bounds of academic writing and chose to deliberately push those boundaries to better suit her particular desires for her work. Then I described the findings: language use that showed an interrelatedness between academic and other writing, valuing writing well, and valuing her audience’s perception. In the following chapter, I will present findings in the same manner for

another participant, Aaron.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS: AARON

In this chapter, I will present findings from the analysis of the data collected with Aaron. In general, Aaron seemed to be conscious of the traditional requirements and process approaches for academic writing; however, he had his own particular values, especially valuing his writing process and metacognition.

First, I will present a brief introduction to Aaron himself. The remainder of the chapter will present the findings of the following research questions.

1. How do the participants explain what they attend to when composing and revising assigned analytical writing?
2. From those explanations, what are the participants' personal values for their writing?
3. How do their values manifest in their writing?

Themes will be presented around research question one and two, with supporting evidence from the participant's writing. The following themes will be discussed: language use focused on internal process and internal values; valuation of the writing process; and his valuation of conveying meaning through his writing.

Introduction to Aaron

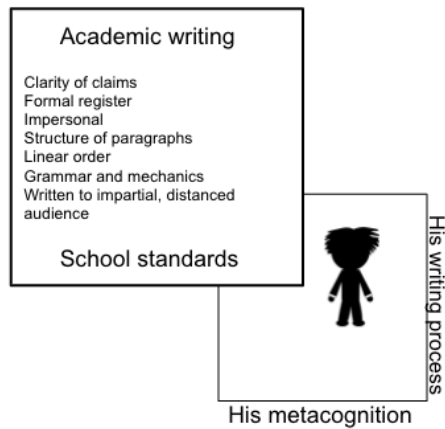
Aaron was 15-years-old and had dark brown, floppy hair that was constantly in his eyes. He wore wire-rimmed glasses that sat slightly crooked on his face, and he regularly took them off to rub off the smudges. He identified as American Indian, Asian,

and Hispanic. He stood like a kid who was used to being much smaller than he was now. His voice was quiet, almost hushed. In the fall semester, he had a friend in class, and the two were almost inseparable and never stopped talking. In January, the friend moved away, and Aaron became even quieter the rest of the year.

He was aware of the traditional understanding of academic writing and the “box” kind of writing that is traditionally valued in school. He also refused to be constrained by it; instead, he used it to meet his own goals for his writing, privileging his thought processes above the traditional standards, and worked outside of the box when that better suited his purposes. This made his writing appear highly variable, when really, he was working with the same standards throughout his writing; those standards just sometimes were not the same ones as the traditional academic writing box. Additionally, he saw writing as something he was still learning and improving on, and so his standards shifted as he saw himself grow more capable as well. Aaron’s relationship with the academic writing box is represented in Figure 5.1 below.

Figure 5.1

Illustration of Aaron's Understanding of Academic Writing



In his survey, he categorized his ethnicity as American Indian, Asian, and Hispanic. Both of his parents had completed high school. His dad worked in car retail, and his mother worked in a bank. He said his mother “tried to do college” but that he didn’t remember if she had graduated or not. He had one older sister, 19-years-old, who lived at home while working. After graduating high school, Aaron said he wanted to enroll at a community college and then transfer to a 4-year school to work on visual or graphic design or “messaging with audio.”

His understanding of his future self was more nebulous than some of the other students. He did not say much specifically about what he wanted to do. However, while some students who do not know what they want to do after high school and so they do not do anything in high school, Aaron was very focused on doing the things he needed to do now. He completed all his schoolwork, even if he ended up doing it very late. He also

was incredibly punctual to our meetings, riding his bike early in the morning to get to school on time to meet me before class.

In his survey, he said he made mostly As and Bs in his courses and that he had taken an honors English class before. He said he enjoyed our English class most of the time. He said he does not consider himself a writer, but “I feel like one because I’m able to write a lot. But like sometimes I struggle with actually writing ideas. I’ll just repeat things, which is a mistake I make.” As in his relationship to the academic writing box, he seemed to have a concept of what made someone a writer, but he did not fully agree with it because he had his own understanding of what made him a writer too, and he valued his own understanding more than that of the commonly agreed on ideas about a writer’s identity.

In his survey, he said that he considers his English abilities “very adequate” and prefers to think alone when beginning a new paper. He also said that “I can see that I have improved over the years with work than what I used to do back then.” He said he feels slightly confident when starting a new persuasive writing assignment: “I feel some confidence, but I always have to put some pressure on myself to work to appeal to the work.” He believed that writing will be important to his future because “It will still help me when I move on, because I will have to put ideas and plans onto paper.” Here again, he pushed against a more traditional understanding of the purpose of writing and highlighted instead his own understanding of the purpose and power of writing.

Internal Process and Internal Values

Aaron's language showed an awareness of standard academic writing, but he spoke much more often about his internal processes and internal values. Of the traditional steps in the writing process (brainstorming, pre-writing, drafting, editing, revising, and publishing), Aaron only said two of them (brainstorming and pre-write) throughout all of his interviews, and he said each only once. In place of these words, he used phrases like "sort through them [the ideas]," "look back," "create as I go," "change a bit," "change a bunch," "try to notice any errors," "rewind it," and "make it better." All of these phrases can be connected to the traditional steps in the writing process, but the way he spoke about them showed both the abundance of his thinking about the process and his personal comfort level with what he actually does during those steps. He preferred to speak in his own, informal way (creating his own "box" for writing), rather than use the academic language about the writing process.

One of his values was structure, but, again, rather than defaulting to standard academic structure, he preferred to use structures that made the most sense to him. When describing structure, he used some academic language, like "logical" and "format," but overall, he used nonacademic language. He explained that "you have to know what you're doing for it to sound good." In the sort, he said, "Some readers don't get that when the author tries something different and it doesn't seem really organized." In that statement, Aaron acknowledged that there is a standard way of structuring academic writing while showing that he sometimes goes against that standard ("tries something

different and it doesn't really seem organized"). He sometimes chose to use his own box of standards instead.

Aaron's internal structure of one of his essays made me slightly confused as a reader because it did not go in the order I expected. Figure 5.2 below shows a selection of his writing with a highlighted portion of transition that slightly confused me.

Figure 5.2

Selection of Aaron's Essay

tree so easy it ain't even funny." (Steinbeck 81) For most people they know that having obstacles is tricky towards getting the American dream as it causes problems and could just tear it all down.

That belief is found in the Bible as it states "Diligent hands will rule, but laziness ends in forced labor." This talks about procrastination and how you can control your dream. There are many examples of this in real life as people always complain about being poor and struggling, but it's really their own actions that affect that. This is believed to be true as everyone's actions affect them and they will have to deal with what happens. Especially when they complain about being broke and struggling, but really it's because they've procrastinated and aren't thinking right. This is proven as people dream about doing something, but end up not working at all.

Rather than setting up the new paragraph with the connection, he saved the connection between the quote and the previous idea for later in the paragraph. Aaron chose to introduce the quote first and then elaborate on the idea in the rest of the paragraph. He focused on his own "out of the box" interpretation of structure, rather than the commonly used structure in English essays.

Aaron also acknowledged the value of grammatical structures, while holding true to his own beliefs that those specific rules did not have much impact on his own writing. Aaron's comments about conventions focused on two main things: "general mistakes"

and his process for editing for conventions. He spoke of “general mistakes,” and said that they “look bad.” In response to Statement 21 (“I think writing needs to have complete sentences to be considered good,”), he said, “Complete sentences aren’t really needed a lot as most think, but they do make it seem good. But it’s also nice to have a variety of different structured sentences.” He acknowledged that many people think complete sentences are necessary and then said that they are not that important, so he recognized the box of academic writing and instead applied his own “out of the box” standard. He ended up ranking this statement at position 23 of 31.

Sometimes Aaron did not seem comfortable with the traditional box of academic writing, emphasizing again his own standards and values. He spoke about his revising process:

So, I’ll re-read the whole thing, and, while I’m re-reading through it, I’ll notice that something seems off because it won’t make sense when reading. The others. It’ll start to drift off and start to become, I guess, off topic. So, when I see that happening, I think, “Well, what was I thinking when writing?” and I have to figure out what happened to make me write something completely different. So, I have to go back and look through what I did.

His use of “I guess” before the traditional, academic phrase “off topic” emphasized his discomfort with the term. He then continued talking informally about the same idea without using that word for another two sentences, saying, “Because I have to find what caused me to get there. It’s something I do a lot. I overthink a lot of things.” He showed

more of an interest in his own process than the traditional evaluative standards of “boxed” academic writing.

Informal, Metacognitive Language

Additionally, his language showed an awareness of the metacognition he was doing while writing. He said, “I think about what I’m going to write, usually the writing prompts. I take some time to think. Usually, I come up with an idea before I start writing. Sometimes I create as I go.” The detail in his explanation shows clearly how he attended to his own thinking while writing, rather than just going through the motions of a learned “boxed” writing process. At another point in the interview, he said:

There’s so much that happens in my head when I think about these things. So, I have to come up with a clear idea, so it doesn’t end up a huge mess when I write it down, so it makes sense. [...] I have to sort through them [the ideas] because they are all based on the same subject. So, when I think about it, I have to think about which one--because it’s many of the same idea, which all sound good to me, but there’s only one that actually stands out and makes sense. So, I have to think about each one differently. I have to actually go into detail about it.

His abundance of language around sorting through his ideas shows his deep level of thinking about his own thinking and little to no attention to a checklist style “writing process” as taught in school.

Self-evaluation is a form of metacognition, as it requires the individual to think about their own thinking and compare it to a specific standard. Aaron’s language showed self-evaluative metacognition also. He talked about sentences belonging in different

places, words in wrong orders, and how sometimes “the sentences don’t seem to...,” but he did not complete the thought. He also said things like, “They don’t feel right,” and, “I’ll write it in one spot and realize, wait, no, it goes here.” This language all relies on an internal judgement of what is “right,” as if he spoke about a gut feeling rather than a specific understanding that helped him determine the appropriateness of the sentence. While the academic “box” might have helped form his opinions, he has branched out to his own interpretation of those standards.

Personalized Writing Process

Schools tend to teach the writing process in a particularly linear fashion, but Aaron’s explanations of his writing process were recursive and extensive. This is another example of him operating outside of the traditional academic writing “box.” He spoke about his writing process more than any other aspect of writing and significantly more than the other participants. A selection of his language about his process is shown in Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.3

Selection of Aaron's Language About His Writing Process

	Idea unit	Concrete/ Specific	Abstract/ vague	Academic	Informal	Negative	Process words	Self-evaluative
Process	try to notice any errors	1			1		1	1
Process	What actually should go there		1		1			1
Process	mistake		1		1	1	1	
Process	struggle with actually writing ideas	1			1	1	1	
Process	Don't let what goes on in my head get fully written down	1			1	1	1	
Process	rewind it	1	1		1		1	
Process	sort through them		1		1		1	
Process	try to keep it at a minimum		1		1		1	
Process	what I was thinking		1		1		1	
Process	So much thought process		1		1		1	
Process	so much that happens in my head		1		1		1	
Process	figure out		1		1		1	
Process	makes the most sense		1		1		1	
Process	in the process of the idea		1		1		1	
Process	I wrote something completely different down		1		1		1	
Process	I did change it a bit		1		1		1	
Process	change a bunch		1		1		1	
Process	Certain Ideas that would fit		1		1		1	
Process	Some change to make it fit even though it doesn't really make sense		1		1		1	
Process	make it better		1		1		1	
Process	write better		1		1		1	
Process	keep doing them		1		1		1	
Process	it's many of the same idea which all sounds good to me	1			1		1	
Process	there's only one that actually stands out and makes sense	1			1		1	
Process	think about each on differently	1			1		1	
Process	slowly realize an error maybe with them (ideas)	1			1		1	
Process	I just cancel those out	1			1		1	
Process	I chose one that actually stands out the most	1			1		1	
Process	repeat things	1			1		1	
Process	Sometimes I create as I go	1			1		1	
Process	I have to process it and write it down	1			1		1	
Process	I take some time to think	1			1		1	
Process	look back	1			1		1	
Process	So I can stay consistent	1			1		1	
Process	try to find the mistake I've made	1			1		1	
Process	stop and read through it	1			1		1	
Process	I added a lot to the two original ideas	1			1		1	
Process	keep it at the minimum because it's revising		1		1			
Process	push yourself to do it		1		1			

When I watched him tackle a writing assignment in class, his process frequently appeared unproductive to me. He would stare at the paper but not write anything down, even in a timed situation, for a considerable chunk of time. Just watching him, I had no idea that

his writing process was so involved or the depth of thought he put into it. On his survey, he noted that he felt slightly confident when starting a new persuasive writing assignment.

He particularly focused on idea generation and metacognition as parts of his writing process. Each one of these areas of focus will be discussed below.

Idea Generation

Idea generation came up as an important idea for him in his survey, his think-aloud, and his interviews. He said, “There’s so much that happens in my head when I think about these things. So, I have to come up with a clear idea, so it doesn’t end up being a huge mess when I write it down, so it makes sense [...]. So, it’s not just a bunch of ideas poured into one paper. I have to format it so that it makes sense which would actually help with actually writing.” His emphasis on the holistic evaluation of how the ideas fit together is slightly outside of the academic “box” as well, as he speaks about it in relationship to idea generation, rather than in an evaluative way.

While he did not do traditional prewriting, he instead stepped outside of the “box” and spoke about the revisioning he did while thinking through his ideas. He said:

I have to sort through them [the ideas] because they are all based on the same subject. So, when I think about it, I have to think about which one I have to—because it’s many of the same idea, which all sound good to me, but there’s only one that actually stands out and makes sense. So, I have to think about each one differently. I have to actually go into detail about it. Where I’m already brainstorming different writings in my head. So, I’m already writing for each one

to find an outcome. I find whichever one makes the most sense, and I choose that one, and I write it down.

The nature of this language showed his own value for idea generation and evaluation of those ideas. I have not explicitly taught them to think in this way or modeled it regularly. Aaron's thinking here showed another way he worked outside the "box" of traditional school thinking

His think-aloud was more about the ideas that he was writing about and not the writing process itself, but when he finished talking about those ideas, he said, "In the final paragraph, again an explanation as to why I chose what I chose. I liked putting together the explanation for my choice. It was fun putting together Adnan's case as it is a very strange case to put together when you're trying to figure out if he was guilty or not. I didn't like having to structure my essay, as it's kind of really long, and it goes over to the back. That's it."

Metacognition

Throughout his interviews, Aaron spoke about himself as the reader of his work, rather than speaking about a generic reader or audience. In this way, he showed his metacognition and self-reflection and again stepped outside the traditional "box" thinking of the reader as the teacher who will be grading the work. In his survey, Aaron wrote "I criticize myself and look for any parts that don't make sense to me." He said he looks to see if the "paper looks good." He also said things like "what needs to be written," "see for myself if it seems like it's good enough to be written," and "that's where the not good enough comes in." He held all those thoughts in his head and revised and edited before he

wrote. While sorting through those ideas, he considered many of them before he found ones that were “good enough to be written,” and this may be evidence of some internal standard with which he evaluated his writing.

In addition to self-evaluation as metacognition, he also spoke about learning from writing in a metacognitive way. For example, when responding to Statement 16 (“Writing that is too structured (like a five-paragraph essay) tends to be boring”), Aaron said:

It does seem too boring, but you have to put more thought into it. That's why it seems to be boring but because you put more thought into it, you're learning a little bit more as you go. So, to have something to structure, it kind of helps you grow with writing such as five paragraph essays, which include text and references from other things, but it does seem to be boring from what I've seen.

I responded, saying, “So it sort of sounded like you were saying that, yes, that structure is boring and at the same time it makes you work within that structure to be better.” He said, “Yeah.” Then I asked, “How do you think that that makes it better?” He said, “Even though it's something you don't like to do, you have to like push yourself to do it and as you keep doing them, you find it really boring. It helps you write better because you're having to focus more with the subject to get it to... I don't know how to word it.” Here his language abilities appeared to be exhausted, and he was not able to explain more about his thinking.

Meaning Through Content

Just as he spoke a great deal about his writing process, he spoke a considerable amount about content. In this analysis, content is defined as “how effectively the writing

establishes and maintains a focus, selects and integrates ideas related to content (i.e., information, events, emotions, opinions, and perspectives), and includes evidence, details, reasons, anecdotes, examples, descriptions, and characteristics to support, develop, and/or illustrate ideas” (Smith & Swain, 2016, p. 29). While Aaron’s speech focused primarily on maintaining focus and integrating ideas, his writing showed efforts to include evidence to support his ideas as well, and these are ways that his thinking tended to fit within the academic “box.”

Aaron ranked Statement 7 (“Good writing stays focused on the main idea/topic throughout”) at spot 1 of the 31 total rankings. In response, he said, “I agree with that as—When they’re focusing on the topic, they have to keep it going throughout. It has to flow with the writing to where it makes sense with the main idea of what our topic [...]. You can't just change it up to try [to] make something different when it's not what's really needed. So, you'll need a flow to keep the idea going or else it just won't make sense.” He attended to the audience’s perception of the content of the writing also. When sorting into his top five, he said, “So I think 7 applies to me a bit whenever I write about topics that I need because I have to focus on what I was given, and not over what I think about it otherwise. So, I have to find a way to keep it on topic rather than trying to change it a bit.” His focus on content and explanations are a part of his thinking that do tend to fit well within a traditional academic “box.”

As mentioned previously, while the majority of his responses focused on clarity and staying on topic, he also addressed the idea of providing evidence to support claims. Aaron ranked Statement 22 (“Writing is good when you can see critical thinking on the

part of the writer”) at spot 3 of 31, but this did not stay in his top five sort. In response, he said, “It is good when you can see what they were thinking as they're going because it helps you get into the mind of them so it kind of helps you understand what they're writing and sort of their perspective.... That you could see what they were originally getting at. So, it helps you see what they were trying to do.” In Figure 5.4 below, there is a paragraph from his research paper that shows an example of this.

Figure 5.4

Paragraph from Research Paper Showing Evidence Supporting Ideas

Now some people disagree with the fact that global warming/climate change is an actual thing and they just laugh at people for believing it. They call it 'fake science' whatever that's supposed to mean. In their article they claim, “Imaginary science relies upon selective use of observations to develop theories and ignores physical evidence that contradicts these theories, even though they are unreliable. The hemisphere was as warm as or warmer than today 1,000 years ago and considerably warmer 5,000 to 8,000 years ago. If they existed, polar bears and musk oxen survived these warm periods.” They claim that this 'fake science' is just there to lie to people to start something, when they have nothing to back up their statement considering their only claim is about the past and how much it's changed. In reality this is scientific proof coming from those higher than us with research to back it up rather than generate 'fake science' from a computer.

Here, he walked the reader through the thinking associated with this piece of evidence. While in his interviews, he did not talk explicitly about supporting ideas with evidence like this, he did talk about making sure that “the reader has to know what it's talking about, and it can't just be a mess, so they have to understand it clearly.”

Aaron ranked Statement 9 (“Good writing has a strong introduction that states the topic and a strong conclusion that sums up or reiterates the important points.”) at 6 of 31. Aaron said, “I agree with that as it does add information to help go with the topic and a conclusion helps sum it up, which relates back to important points. So, in order to get that writing going, you have to like work to write efficiently to get the points in for the writing.” Here again, his language refers back to the meaning as influenced by structure.

Overall, his writing shows the effort he made to make his ideas to link to one another so that they can better convey the meaning he wants to get across. While his sorts of the statements about writing did not show a strong valuation of conventions (see Table 5.1), he did speak to the importance of how conventions convey meaning.

Table 5.1

Aaron’s Ranking of Conventions Statements

#	Statement	Aaron’s initial ranking	Aaron’s top five ranking
4	A lot of students write exactly how they talk, and it doesn't make any sense; writers need to be able to use appropriate verb tenses and other proper grammar.	21 of 31	No change
17	Writing needs to be free of errors in conventions or mechanics; punctuation, grammar, and spelling affect the piece overall.	31 of 31	No change
21	I think writing needs to have complete sentences to be considered good.	23 of 31	No change

In response to Statement 4, he said, “I agree with that. [...] Because it is how some people write because they have to—How they talk is how they write, too. It doesn’t really make any sense when you put it on paper, but, to them, that’s how they’ve learned to speak, so when they write like that, it’s how it ends up being. And it kind of doesn’t make

any sense if you read it to yourself.” He did not respond at all to the second half of the statement about appropriate verb tense and grammar. Instead, his response focused solely on the impact that writing how one speaks has on the meaning that the reader or audience can take away.

Connecting Content and Audience

While he cared deeply about making sure his writing was clear and understandable, he also understood that he cannot control the perception of the reader. Aaron ranked Statement 3 (“Good writing is clear and easy to understand. Readers don’t have to struggle to get what the author is saying.”) at 27 of 31. In response, he said, “That’s sort of in the middle for me as those people don’t actually get what it’s trying to say. The good writing can actually help. It just depends on what it actually is.” I asked him what ‘actually is’ meant, and he said, “Like clear—[The reader] needs to understand and it has to be organized like the first one said. So, it has to be logical to make sense. Some readers don’t get that when the author tries something different and it doesn’t seem really organized.” Here, he alluded to the idea that sometimes readers just do not catch what the author is trying to do, and so he saw his job as a writer to attempt to convey that meaning as best he can. As previously mentioned, this is an area where his thinking moved outside of the traditional academic “box” to incorporate his own thinking about structures and ideas.

Aaron ranked Statement 2 (“I personally like it when a writer adds something to their writing which shows some personality (humor, wit, ideals, values). I guess it depends on the piece, but I have read various types of writing that include some of the

author's voice,") at spot 20 of 31. He said, "Okay, I agree with it because it is good to have the author show some personality because it does add some humor, or like values to it because it shows what they're thinking as they're going while they're writing. But it does have to depend on a certain piece or else it just seems out of place." Here he showed that he cared more about the thinking and communication than the way it is presented, again stepping outside of the traditional academic "box." Although the presentation or stance did matter to him as well, it does not appear to matter as much as the content. This focus on communication comes through in his moral dilemma paper in Figure 5.5 below.

Figure 5.5

Selection from Aaron's Moral Dilemma Paper

If I had to choose between
putting an innocent person in jail
or letting a guilty person go free,
I would choose letting a guilty
person go. Even, as that idea is
what I'm most comfortable with. I
understand that putting someone at
risk, but if so, it gives us more
evidence to put the best with many
life sentences.

Transcription. If I....

If I was to choose between
putting an innocent person in jail
or letting a guilty person go free,
I would choose letting a guilty
person go free, as that idea is
what I'm more comfortable with. I
understand doing that gets anyone (anyone) at
risk, but if so, it gives us more
Evidence to put them back with *****
a life sentence.

Aaron ranked Statement 5 (“Good writing shows a sense of audience. To effectively communicate your message, you need to know who you're writing for.”) at spot 8 of 31. He said, “I agree with that one because in order to have an appeal to readers, you have to know who you're writing to, so you can't just write as if you're writing to yourself. You have to write to who you think is going to read it. So, you want it to stand out and appeal to them so they can understand what you're trying to say.” When I asked him how it was different than writing to yourself, he said, “When you're writing to yourself, you're just having to write for what you think makes most sense to you but really wouldn't make sense to other people. So, when that comes down on paper, when other people read it, they don't really understand what you're trying to do, what you do as

you are communicating with yourself and not really anyone else.” He pushed against the traditional academic “box” view that all writing must be completely clear and explicit to the reader. Aaron showed this value about in the final two paragraphs of his research paper (see Figure 5.6).

Figure 5.6

Aaron’s Research Paper

That belief is found in the Bible as it states "Diligent hands will rule, but laziness ends in forced labor." This talks about procrastination and how you can control your dream. There are many examples of this in real life as people always complain about being poor and struggling, but it's really their own actions that affect that. This is believed to be true as everyone's actions affect them and they will have to deal with what happens. Especially when they complain about being broke and struggling, but really it's because they've procrastinated and aren't thinking right. This is proven as people dream about doing something, but end up not working at all.

The American dream is possible to attain and it's a bit tricky when it comes to obstacles and actions that you make that come along the way. It just takes some time and a bit more work/thinking to help you achieve your dream. Don't let those things stop you from progressing towards it, just keep your head up and keep moving, it'll all get easier.

In his conclusion, he shifted to directly speaking to his audience. It was effective because in the previous paragraphs, he had clearly explained his own thinking, although he had removed himself from the writing. He primarily wrote in this authoritative stance (connect to the knowledgeable statement), but he did reach out for some connection to his audience too.

Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the data analysis of Aaron’s language and values for writing. First, I presented an introduction to Aaron, a student who had an

understanding of academic writing and his own understanding of good writing that sometimes merged or diverged. Then I described themes from the findings: language that focused on his internal processes and values; his valuation of his writing process; and his valuation of conveying meaning through his writing. In the following chapter, I will present findings in the same manner for another participant, Cletus.

CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS: CLETUS

In this chapter, I will present findings from the analysis of the data collected with Cletus. In general, Cletus seemed to have some awareness of the “box” of academic writing; he particularly latched on to the academic language that accompanies such writing, yet he was still in the process of developing his understandings about academic writing.

First, I will present a brief introduction to Cletus. The remainder of the chapter will present the findings of the following research questions.

1. How do the participants explain what they attend to when composing and revising assigned analytical writing?
2. From those explanations, what are the participants’ personal values for their writing?
3. How do their standards manifest in their writing?

Themes will be presented around research questions one and two, with supporting evidence from the participant’s writing. The following themes will be discussed: how his language use showed a developing understanding of academic writing and his high regard for author’s craft, and standards for academic writing.

Introduction to Cletus

Cletus was 15-years-old and had dark brown hair, almost black, and wore black, wire rimmed glasses that were often crooked. He identified as White and Hispanic. His

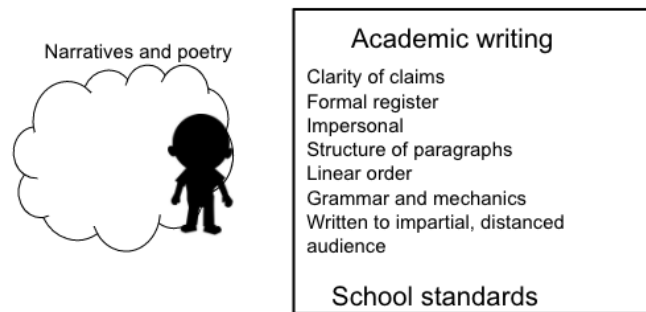
mother graduated high school, and his father had a master's degree and frequently worked out of the country contracting with the military. Cletus talked about wanting to join the military out of high school (he was an active member of ROTC) and going to college at the same time. He said he would stay in a few years and then get out and become a game designer. He earned As and Bs. In his survey, he wrote that he thought that writing will be important to his future because (sic), "When it comes to my Future jobs i believe that knowing how to write will become very well needed so i can further on know what im doing."

During his freshman year in high school, he took honors English I and failed both semesters. As a result, he had to re-take English I with the teacher next door to me, and, depending on the day, had to go right from that English class to mine. He took this in stride and regularly talked about how much he was learning in both of his classes.

He spoke of his identity as a narrative and poetry writer, and several times throughout the year, he shared his poetry with me. He considered himself to be a narrative writer and a poet, but that identity did not carry over to the academic box. He said he considered himself a writer: "Slightly, yes, but at the same time, not really. I hardly ever write stuff, so I'm just mostly doing my own thing instead of typing something up." However, he had a strong understanding of narrative writing and poetry, and he integrated his understanding of those genres with his developing understanding of academic writing. This is illustrated in Figure 6.1 below.

Figure 6.1

Illustration of Cletus's Understanding of Academic Writing



He reported spending a lot of time online, playing video games, chatting with peers, and reading about things that interested him. He did not regularly read books, but he did enjoy the reading and stories that he encountered in both my class and his other English class.

In his survey, he wrote that he felt his English skills were adequate and that “I feel like my skills are improving, but i still need to learn more that there is to extend my further knowledge on the subject instead of learning the minimal that there is.” Cletus seemed to recognize that his own efforts often were not as strong as he wanted them to be. While he knew what he needed to do to push himself as a writer and a student, he often did not do it. His self-awareness was impressive for a 10th grader, even if he did not often act on that self-knowledge.

Analyzing Cletus’s data was particularly difficult because there were so many things that he spoke about that contradicted one another. He could say one thing and then say something completely opposite and mean both. He seemed to believe in relativity and

how things might matter in one case, but not as much in another. He appreciated the complexity of things, and that complexity made it hard for him to communicate his values clearly.

Developing Understanding of Academic Writing

Cletus's language showed that he was developing his understanding of academic writing. Cletus frequently used academic language to talk about his writing; thirty-four of the 71 idea units coded for the study were coded as academic language. However, when he spoke about other types of writing, like narratives or poetry, he spoke more informally and provided personalized examples. He said,

In my perspective as a writer of a narrative, I would always put how I feel what the idea of what I'm writing is into my writing. I wouldn't go for nonfiction, fiction, or any other genre. I just write what I want to write. That's the writer's freedom of what they want to do. If they want to write, they want to write.

When talking about academic writing, he often repeated language from the statements about writing, and showed some confusion or misunderstandings about that academic language. This tended to be especially true when the statement mentioned parts of speech. In response to Statement 6 ("A lot of juicy verbs make writing good"), he used the word "verb" seven times while explaining his thinking. He said,

I highly disagree with that. Yes, verbs are very helpful in good writing, but, when it comes to it, you don't need that many verbs to have a good writing. Let's say you would only need like three verbs in one whole entire paragraph. The teacher is going to specify those verbs and make use of them. You don't need 15 verbs.

That's just going to overruin [sic] the good writing. So, some juicy verbs, I would have to say, depends on the number of verbs that and used and how they're used in the sentence to make it into a good writing.

Similarly, in response to Statements 14 and 25 he used the words "adjectives" and "adverbs" three and four times, respectively.

When self-scoring his American dream paper for the category of "position, ideas, and coherence," he scored himself at a basic writing performance. He wrote, "I scored myself this because I made sure the ideas are right but the position of them is quite off." This statement shows a misinterpretation of the word position. He interpreted it to mean structure and placement of the ideas rather than the position he took in his paper.

In addition to repeating the academic language from a prompt, he also used academic language when explaining his writing process. He also talked about a way he had been taught for pre-writing and structuring his work:

It's basically you draw 8 legs and make a thesis of what you want to write, and then you have little ideas around it, 8 little ideas and you select one of those ideas you want to write about as a first body, second body, or a conclusion. You would always have those 8 legs to figure out what you want to write as a body, a second, and a conclusion.... It's much more organized about that to have around.

When asked if he used this practice, he said sometimes, but I never saw him use it in class.

When he did use informal language, it was frequently abstract. Cletus spoke about his brainstorming process, saying, "I would just look like probably on the wall, thinking

to myself. ‘Ok, what do you want to do? What's the whole entire plan here?’ We had to go from point A to point B and make sure it succeeds. Not any obstacles or any faults.” Another example of his abstract, informal language came from his reflection on his research paper. Cletus said that he was not “happy with how it turned out [...] Just the way I typed it out. In a way, the idea was still there; it was just not the way I wanted it to come out in a way. Like it was sort of freestyle, but at the same time, it’s just compacted to one place, when I wanted it to be more spread out and understandable.”

Another example of his abstract informal language came from his post-writing think-aloud. Cletus said,

So basically, how it started is, when I read the prompt, I got an idea of what I wanted to write, but it took some time to actually figure out what I wanted to do.

What I did is that I went back to the case of Adnan Syed as my evidence and what I saw in myself of what proof would be needed to actually show what I did for this prompt.

While it seemed like Cletus was about to explain his thinking about his evidence and his proof, instead, he continued by saying, “I went on, fixing a few minor details to what I was trying to write in the prompt, giving some more information of what I—why I chose this and what I did.” It is possible that he spoke like this because the think-aloud was a new form for him, but his informal, abstract language was like this throughout his interviews.

Academic Labels

Often, Cletus listed or labeled academic terms without expanding on those words with additional descriptions, examples, or reasoning. He said,

[A] good writing is descriptive, and it gives the reader what's happening in the story. It does give them a good mental image of what's happening in a story when you're reading it. So, you do have to use figurative language, mostly, like allusion, personification, and some other figurative language to actually give the reader what's going on in the story.

While Cletus used a lot of words after the word “descriptive,” those words primarily repeated the idea of description without adding additional information about why or how an author might be descriptive. He then included some academic language that did connect to the idea of description, but those words are used to identify those terms and are not paired with examples or additional reasoning.

The same pattern emerged when he spoke about sentence types in response to Statement 13 (“A variety of sentence types engages the reader (simple, complex, dependent clauses); you want to avoid too many short, choppy sentences”). Cletus said:

Yeah, you do want to avoid that many choppy sentences because you wanted to make proper sense to the reader instead of being confused. Like if you mixed a complex before a simple, that would just make it a whole entire, what are you trying to get through, if you put a complex before a simple. It should be a simple first, and then have it into a dependent clause to where it's more alone and have that simple term explain it, instead of having a whole entire complex, and going

into a dependent because that would just scramble it to where it's like, less understanding in a way. So, I do have to agree that you want to avoid many choppy short sentences that there is. I'm going to put that in the second row. This response does have one additional idea (focused on clarify for the reader) that is repeated twice. However, the rest is primarily repetition of the language provided in the statement about writing, and it does not show an understanding of the reasons behind or even the main idea of the statement.

Author's Craft

Cletus identified strongly with Edgar Allen Poe and described his personal writing style as “a bit of free-style and a bit more like the poet Edgar Allen Poe, his type of writing.” He continued, saying, “Edgar Allen Poe’s writing is more deep and detailed of how his life was and how his writing compared to his personality and my personality is in my writing as well.” He believed that this personality and style were in his academic writing as well. He referenced Shakespeare, saying,

For example, Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, the poem or story was made for his son because he passed away, so he made it because he was sad and wanted to remember his son.... So, he wanted to see his son like that what he meant to him.

Same way with Edgar Allen Poe and his wife and the raven.

Cletus valued these authors, their style, and how they incorporated their life experiences into their writing. He wanted to do the same with his nonacademic writing; he did not seem to attempt to cross this value into his academic writing. This kept the lines of the

two forms of academic writing separated from one another both in his thinking and in his writing.

It is interesting to note how many of Cletus's top five rankings changed positions from much lower in the original sorts. As mentioned previously, his changing thinking occurred regularly and made it difficult to see a pattern in his thinking. His change in the sort rankings may mean that he agreed with many of the statements overall or he may have become overwhelmed with the number of statements originally and been more selective in the second sort.

Several of the statements in his top five sort had to do particularly with craft (see Figure 6.2). Statements 18, 28, and 2 are about specific tools and ways authors craft their work, while Statements 20 and 23 are about more general things authors may do in their writing.

Figure 6.2

Cletus's Top Five Sort

Top Five Ranking	Statement	Original Sort Ranking
1	18. A good writer surprises the reader with unexpected moves. This can be accomplished by using metaphors, similes, unusual vocabulary, mixing different modes of discourse (from the vernacular to the academic), varying sentence structures, employing humor.	1
2	20. Good writing contains details, elaboration, support, whether narrative or expository; enough elaboration to help the reader paint a picture in their mind or (for expository) provide sufficient support to explain ideas.	7

3	23. Good writing is like good thinking--fresh, clear, and honest. It artfully invites the reader into an idea or image with a quiet authority cannot be resisted.	30
4	28. Good writing is descriptive, with figurative language, and compels the reader to make vivid mental images.	9
5	2. I personally like it when a writer adds something to their writing which shows some personality (humor, wit, ideals, values). I guess it depends on the piece, but I have read various types of writing that include some of the author's voice.	19

In response to Statement 18, he said, “When it comes to what I write, narrative and poetry, I always use metaphors, similes, unusual vocabulary, and, of course, discourse just to get the reader’s more attention to it to understand it.” In response to Statement 2, he said,

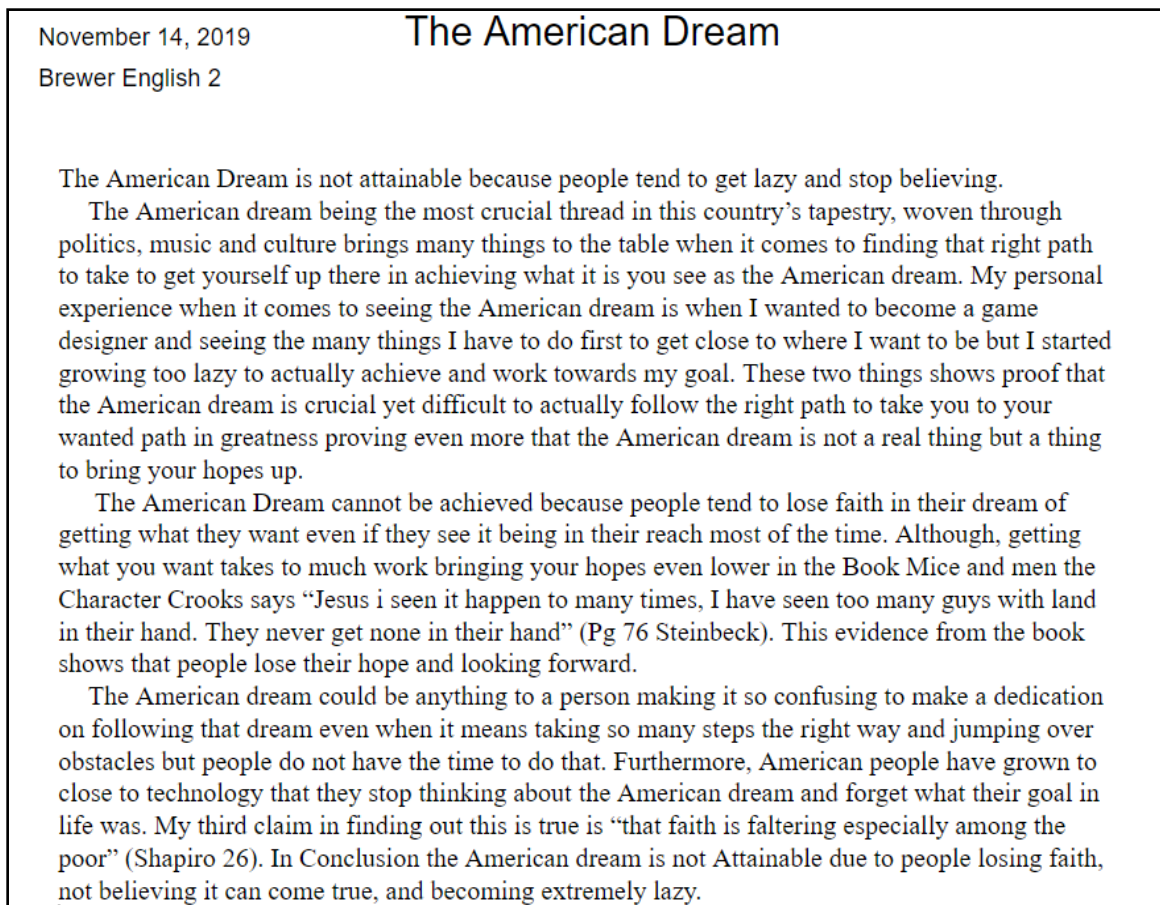
At the same time, I want to agree and disagree with that, [...] because sometimes when the writer actually writes their persuasive, they have to add a little bit of some humor to it to have like a little hook to it to get them there. Boom! I'm attached to what you're trying to get me to convince. But at the same time, when you're putting it into that different values of writing, it would mostly go into persuasive, into narrative or poetry.... When you have persuasive, that's like having to get you, boom, right in your face type of deal. So, I have to agree with that for persuasive type of writing.

However, he did not tend to use these techniques in his persuasive writing. Figure 6.3 below shows Cletus’s persuasive essay. While the second sentence contains a metaphor about the American dream being a thread, it was copied directly from a source

that students were given before writing the paper. While he did not write that sentence, it is possible that he did value what the original author had done with it, and so he put it in his paper.

Figure 6.3

Cletus's American Dream Essay.



There are two examples of imagery in this essay that Cletus did write. One ("the right path") is used in the second paragraph but originally came from the copied source. This may show that Cletus found value in that sentence, and so he copied it. The second is a metaphor in the last paragraph ("taking so many steps the right way and jumping over

obstacles”). Cletus spoke about his value for particular techniques in writing but tended not to use them in the writing samples that were collected. In addition to these general craft techniques, Cletus particularly valued traditionally narrative techniques and complexity in style. These values will be discussed in the following two sections.

Narrative Techniques

In addition to general author’s craft strategies, Cletus showed a preference for narrative techniques. In his survey, Cletus wrote, “I don’t enjoy it [argumentative writing] as much as I do with a narrative essay, which is more of a strong suit I have.” Cletus regularly incorporated traditionally narrative techniques into his responses about argumentative writing. He said, “I’d consider myself a character that’s being talked about in the prompt to have an idea, like, BOOM. There you go! That’s what I want to write about.” Later in his writing process he said that he checks to make sure that “the idea of me being the character and how I’d see it is still going through on paper. Like I make sure, ‘Ok, this is how I feel and how the character would feel if I was writing about the prompt in the first-person kind of way.’” Then he said, “Third person, I would think of something else. I would just write in the whole entire third person way of writing a prompt and all of that. And when it comes to drawing in the middle, I have a mixture of how I feel at first and how someone else would feel in their own way.”

In response to Statement 28 (“Good writing is descriptive with figurative language and compels the reader to make vivid mental images”), Cletus responded,

I would have to say that a good writing is descriptive, and it gives the reader what's happening in the story. It does give them a good mental image of what's

happening in a story when you're reading it. So, you do have to use figurative language, mostly like allusion, personification, and some other figurative language to actually give the reader of what's going on in the story. Give them that picture in their mind as they're reading and going along, feeling like they're in it, seeing what the writer is talking about.

By speaking about these aspects of writing that are traditionally connected with narrative text, he showed that he valued them and saw them as important to his writing style.

Complexity in Style

Cletus's writing tended toward complexity in sentence structure and in content. At one point in his first interview, he spoke about how he evaluated his writing, and he said,

I just get off track, and I just go into a whole entire new section. There's something way off topic, so I'd be like, 'Ok, this is sounding extremely complex and complicated to where I wanted it to be more understanding in a way.'

Here, he used complex in a negative way, showing that he did not want his ideas to be too complex for the reader to understand. However, when it came to style, Cletus's tendency toward complexity was found throughout his writing.

One way that he valued complexity in his style of writing was through his complex sentence structure. He did not have a clear and accurate understanding of the grammatical terms for sentence structures (as shown previously in the language section). However, knowledge of the terms is not necessarily important to being able to write well, and he did show that he cared how sentences are structured. In response to Statement 13

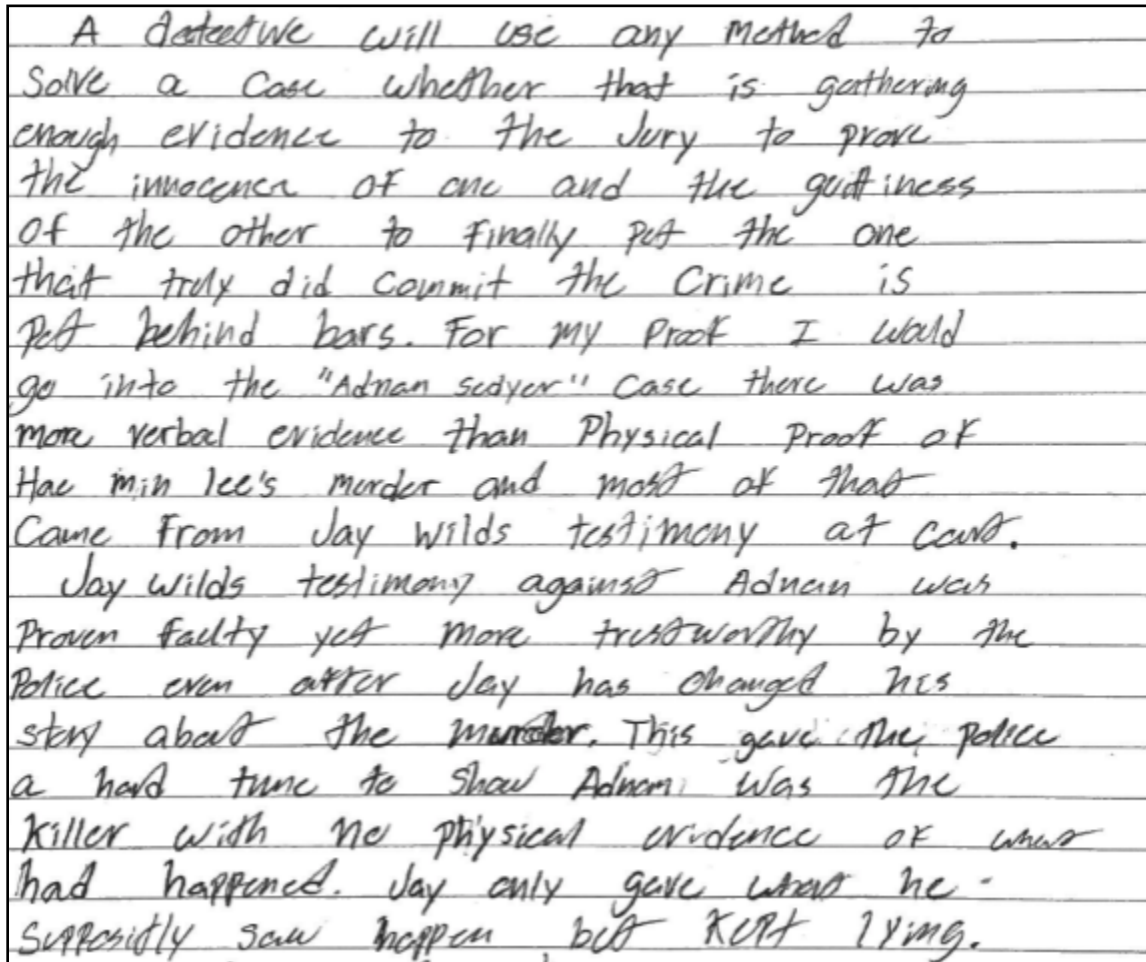
(“Variety of sentence types engages the reader {simple, complex, dependent clauses}; you want to avoid too many short, choppy sentences”), he said

Yeah, you do want to avoid that many choppy sentences because you wanted to make proper sense to the reader instead of being confused. Like if you mixed a complex before a simple, that would just make it a whole entire—It should be simple first, and then have it into a dependent clause to where it’s more alone and have that simple term explain it.

Again, he does not show an understanding of the particular terms, but he does emphasize that he cared about how sentences are structured in order to share the meaning with the audience, building from simple to complex ideas. An example of this building on complex ideas is shown in Figure 6.4 below.

Figure 6.4

Cletus's Writing Building from Simple Ideas to Complex



A detective will use any method to solve a case whether that is gathering enough evidence to the jury to prove the innocence of one and the guiltiness of the other to finally put the one that truly did commit the crime is put behind bars. For my proof I would go into the "Adnan sadyar" case there was more verbal evidence than physical proof of Hae min lee's murder and most of that came from Jay Wilds testimony at court.

Jay Wilds testimony against Adnan was proven faulty yet more trustworthy by the police even after Jay has changed his story about the murder. This gave the police a hard time to show Adnan was the killer with no physical evidence of what had happened. Jay only gave what he supposedly saw happen, but kept lying.

He worked to ensure clarity by going from the simple idea about detectives trying to solve crimes to the complexity of Jay's lies in his testimony. While his sentence structure was not always correct, he used complex sentences to express his ideas.

Cletus valued author's craft, particularly narrative techniques and complexity in style, and he also wanted his writing to be perceived as academic. In the following section, I will discuss this value and how it manifested in his writing

Perception of Academic Writing

Just as much of Cletus's language was academic, one of his values was that his writing be perceived as academic, by both himself and his audience. He may not have taken on the identity of an academic writer yet, but he wanted to be perceived in that way by the audience. When responding to Statement 9 ("Good writing has a strong introduction that states the topic and a strong conclusion that sums up or reiterates the important points"), he strongly agreed with it, saying "It needs to have that audience's approval. It needs everything to do with persuasive and narrative writing." This response focused on the perception of his audience and his very broad reference to "everything to do with" writing. He placed this statement at position #2 in his full sort, but he did not put it in his top five sort at all.

Cletus was particularly concerned with how the audience or teacher would eventually perceive his writing. He said that, while drafting, he regularly asked questions like,

Is this up to the teacher's standards? Is this what she wants me to write? Is this what's supposed to be written in the first place? In a way, I just focus on myself and what the other person's wanting [from] me, but at the same time, I'm like, 'Ok, I'm just hoping this person is just understanding of what I want to write.

His statements here showed some uncertainty that his perception of academic writing is the same as the teacher's or his audience.

Formality

One way he worked for his writing to be perceived as academic was to write with a high level of formality. Cletus tended to write formally and expressed some preference for that in his talk. For example, he preferred not to use slang in writing. He said,

[U]s being generation X [sic], we're just making new slang words. Like, let's say, 'What up?' You put that into writing for some odd reason, and the teacher wouldn't understand. What's 'What up?' What does that mean exactly? And it's just going to confuse the person who's trying to read it and who doesn't know the slang words people use nowadays.

Statement 15 ("Some kids writing is too chatty for formal reports and research papers; voice and writing have to be appropriate for the purpose of writing") prompted him to speak more about voice and register. Cletus said:

This actually is very agreeable that some kids do tend to be more chatty and more off topic when it comes to like a formal report. Because, if you want to take to an example, an eyewitness of some sort of crime, they're going to be more specific of what they saw.... To where some people that you see are so chatty, not giving you that specific information that you need to actually give a report on.... And that's one thing you don't want in a formal report.

His explanation of his preference for formality was about speaking rather than writing, but his meaning is clear; he preferred for writing to stay on topic and formal.

Cletus's preference for formality can also be seen in his sentence structure. While his sentences often did not turn out grammatically correct, there is a level of complexity

in them that often rose above that of many other 10th grade students. Below are some examples of his attempts at complex sentences.

- Although, getting what you want takes to much [sic] work bringing your hopes even lower in the Book Mice and men the Character Crooks says “Jesus i seen it happen to many times, I have seen too many guys with land in their hand. They never get none in their hand.”
- The American dream could be anything to a person making it so confusing to make a dedication on following that dream even when it means taking so many steps the right way and jumping over obstacles but people do not have the time to do that.
- The American Dream cannot be achieved because people tend to lose faith in their dream of getting what they want even if they see it being in their reach most of the time.

These sentences show complex structures that generally are not executed in a grammatically coherent way. In the first example, Cletus uses a subordinate clause that does not connect to the second half of the sentence. In the second example, his usage of gerund phrases does not connect appropriately with the rest of the sentence. These blips cause breaks in rhythm and flow for the reader. While in the middle of the sentence he has some good connections and phrasing, it usually unravels by the end of the sentence. However, his attempts at these kinds of sentences showed some of his understanding of formal, complex structures and the high value that he placed on writing in a formal way.

Clarity and Coherence

Cletus valued clarity and coherence in his writing as a way of making sure his writing was perceived as academic. He spoke about wanting to make sure his writing was clear and connected. Cletus said,

When I write, it's sort of a way I can disclose of my message to different types of people to get some people to understand, and some people to be like, 'Huh, I wonder what this person is trying to write about? What is this person trying to get through?' That's how I see it, anyway.

He also said he knew his writing was good, "if it convinces myself. I have to say that if it convinces myself— 'Ok, this is good,' and all that. And I have to make sure it keeps going that way. If it's convincing to me, it's convincing to another person."

While he wanted his writing to be clear to his audience, he also believed that, sometimes, no matter what the author is attempting to do, the reader may not follow where the author is leading. Statement 3 said, "Good writing is clear and easy to understand. Readers don't have to struggle to get what the author is saying." In response to this, Cletus said,

I disagree with that. I disagree really with that.... Good writing has to be clear, but it's hard to understand what the author's point is. There can be different points the author is trying to get to you.... There's different purposes that the author is trying to say, but it's a very high struggle understanding that. It's not easy at all.

I asked him if understanding was supposed to be easy or not. He said, "In a way, it's not supposed to be. At the same time, it's supposed to be easy. 'Oh, this is what the

author is trying to tell me and now I understand,' but, as soon as you turn the next page, it's like a whole entire completely different thing that goes on." He expanded on this, saying:

It has to do with organization as well because it has to be organized to where you understand what you're saying and not have it go to a completely different type of purpose that the author's trying to tell you.... When it comes to academic purposes of narrative writing, you have to have that main purpose instead of switching it to side purposes to confuse the reader. It needs to be organized to the main purpose.

I prodded him here, asking how he reconciled what he was saying then with his original disagreement with the statement. He said he primarily disagreed with the second part of the statement ("Reader's don't have to struggle to get what the author is saying"): "The second part is a well-known red flag of good writing because it is a struggle. At the same time, if you're at a high level of understanding, it's not going to be a struggle at all." So, as a writer, he believed he needed to write in a focused and clear manner, but he believed that he could not control how his readers might interpret that writing because of their different levels of reading abilities.

Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the data analysis that was completed to analyze the participant's language and values for writing. First, I presented an introduction to Cletus. Then I described the findings: language use showed a developing understanding of academic writing and his values of author's craft and being perceived as

academic. In the following chapter, I will present the findings in the same manner for the final case study, Lacey.

CHAPTER VII

FINDINGS: LACEY

In this chapter, I present findings from the analysis of the data collected with Lacey. In general, Lacey seemed to have determined specific criteria that made up academic writing, and she made all of her work fit within that box of criteria.

First, I will present a brief introduction to Lacey. The remainder of the chapter will present the findings of the following research questions.

1. How do the participants explain what they attend to when composing and revising assigned analytical writing?
2. From those explanations, what are the participants' personal values for their writing?
3. How do their standards manifest in their writing?

Themes will be presented around Research Questions 1 and 2, with supporting evidence from the participant's writing. The following themes will be discussed: a static understanding of academic writing and the importance she placed on coherence.

Introduction to Lacey

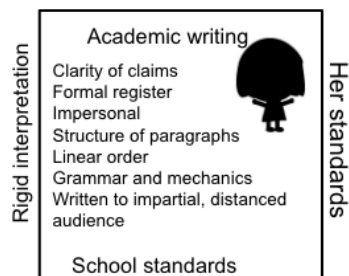
Lacey was a 16-year-old White female. She wore wire-framed glasses and had longer wavy blonde hair that she often wore back in a ponytail. She was on the swim team and was often late class due to her bus driver not arriving to pick the team up on time. While she was often late, she never got behind in class. Once, I noted that she had

been on time for a few classes in a row. She laughed and said that her coach had yelled at the bus driver, but that she was sure that she would be late again soon.

Lacey saw academic writing as a particular kind of writing with its own constructs that did not necessarily cross over into her fiction writing. She was aware of the academic writing box, understood the general demands of it, and chose to work within it when she needed to. She tended to treat it as a checklist: something to get through and not spend more time than necessary on. She was usually successful working within the academic writing box. She seemed to be satisfied with the criteria she had developed for it and gave few indications that she wanted to stretch beyond the lines of her box. This is illustrated in Figure 7.1 below.

Figure 7.1

Illustration of Lacey's Understanding of Academic Writing



Lacey never shared much about herself personally. She was a dedicated student who always turned in her work and typically had the highest grade in the class. In her survey, she said she enjoyed English class "some of the time." She was most engaged in the unit we did about Adnan Syed. She was focused on the pieces of evidence that could

have proved or disproved his guilt. Perhaps she was so engaged in that unit because of its relevance to her future plans for herself, as she expressed wanting to be a lawyer, journalist, or a homicide detective in the future.

She viewed herself as a reader and a writer both in and out of school. She always had a book, and we sometimes talked about what she was reading and made recommendations to one another. She also said that she wrote outside of school, usually fiction based around whatever it was she was reading. She saw her writing outside of school as useful to her at school, she showed both confidence and ambition with her classroom literacy practices.

Lacey was attentive in class, even when the atmosphere of the class made it hard to focus. The class she was in fluctuated in numbers between 22 and 26 students throughout the year. It was an inclusion class with nine special education students in the class. There were also a lot of behavior issues in the class. My co-teacher and I struggled with how to best work with the students, trying lots of different strategies (lenient, controlling, etc.) but nothing ever really seemed to work consistently for the group, and it was one of our hardest classes that year. Even with the regular behavioral disruptions and issues, Lacey usually remained focused and good natured. She tried to ignore the behaviors in the room.

Both of her parents had completed a bachelor's degree. She had a good relationship with her parents, and she talked often about talking with them about her writing, listening to their advice, and making changes based on their opinions. She made As and Bs in her courses, and, while she would have been successful in an honors

English course, she had not taken one up to that point. She said that her English abilities were adequate and explained that her “grammar can be incorrect sometimes.” She had some confidence about her writing abilities and said that she felt very confident when beginning a new piece of persuasive writing and that she “can get her point across easily.”

Static Understanding of Academic Writing

Lacey spoke about writing as if she believed that there was one correct way to write and many incorrect ways. She showed that she was aware of the constructs and demands of academic writing, and she deliberately chose to work within that box in order for her writing to be considered successful. Her understanding of the particular needs of academic writing came out in her language about conventions and diction (see Figure 7.2).

Figure 7.2

Lacey's Ranking of Statements about Conventions and Diction

Original sort placement	Statement	Top five sort
4	4. A lot of students write exactly how they talk, and it doesn't make any sense; writers need to be able to use appropriate verb tenses and other proper grammar.	
16	17. Writing needs to be free of errors in conventions or mechanics; punctuation, grammar, and spelling affect the piece overall.	5
6	21. I think writing needs to have complete sentences to be considered good.	
23	8. Good writing is concise, using an economy of words. It avoids repetition and redundancy.	
8	31. Accurate word choice is key; the words have to be chosen precisely to convey the author's meaning.	

In response to Statement 17 she said, “[I]f you have poor grammar and no punctuation—there’s a reason they’re there. Because you can’t read it without correct grammar.” She did not waver on her thinking here; writing needs to be correct so that others can read it. This was something she was also concerned with in her writing. In her survey, she ranked her abilities in English classes as “adequate,” and added, “I feel my grammar can be incorrect sometimes.”

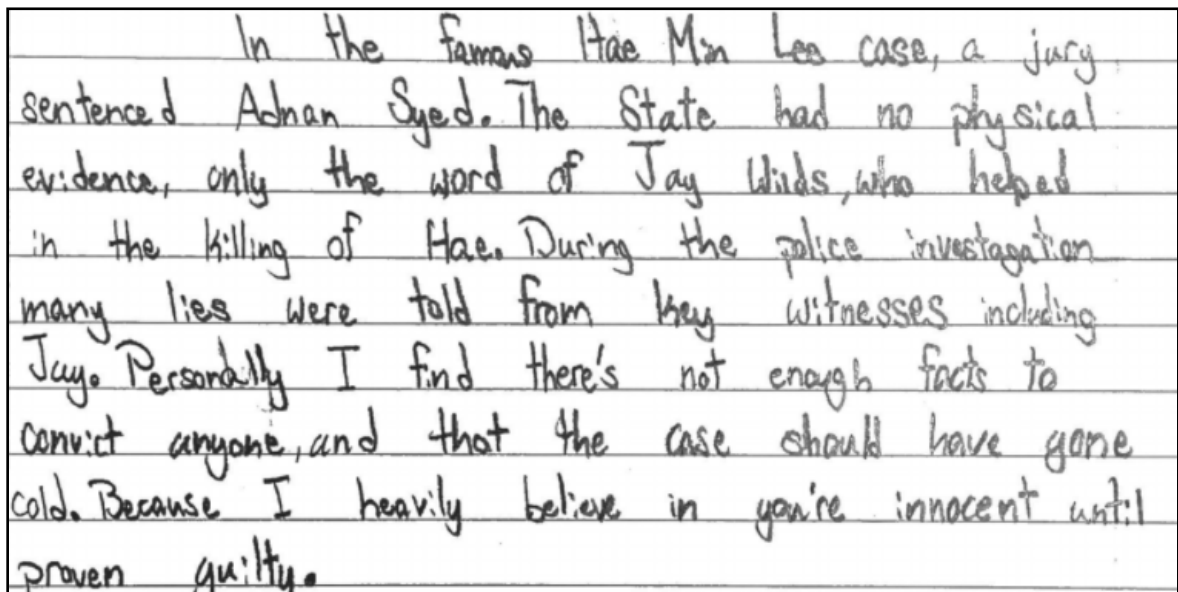
When speaking about accurate word choice (Statement 8 above), she said, “It goes back to the grammatical wrongs because if you write something and you just use negative words instead of meaning to use the positive ones, it just gets more confusing.” Her response seemed like an oversimplification of what the statement was attempting to convey. Rather than noticing that there are differences in the meanings of words that,

overall, mean the same thing, she spoke about using a totally incorrect word that says the opposite of what the author meant.

Lacey cared about the register of language in her writing as well and saw register as a way of staying within the confines of academic writing. In response to Statement 4 (“A lot of students write exactly how they talk, and it doesn’t make any sense; writers need to use appropriate verb tenses and other proper grammar,”), Lacey said, “I read a lot of my friends’ essays because they prefer me editing over it sometimes, and I read a lot of ‘y’all,’ and I don’t like it when I hear ‘y’all’ in sentences.” In her writing, she wrote in an academic register as well. Figure 7.3 below shows a paragraph from an essay that highlights her use of a formal tone as well.

Figure 7.3

Example of Lacey’s Use of Formal, Academic Register in Writing



In the famous Hae Min Lee case, a jury sentenced Adnan Syed. The State had no physical evidence, only the word of Jay Wilds, who helped in the killing of Hae. During the police investigation many lies were told from key witnesses including Jay. Personally I find there's not enough facts to convict anyone, and that the case should have gone cold. Because I heavily believe in you're innocent until proven guilty.

In this sample, she uses the passive voice (“many lies were told”) which is commonly found in academic text. She does use “I” in her writing, and many consider that to be an

informal practice. However, her formal register and her emphasis on facts work to counterbalance that informality.

Continuing to her commitment to keeping her writing contained in the academic box, Lacey also showed concern about the correctness of content and structure. Again, she showed an awareness of what makes up academic writing, and she worked to stay within what she saw as those guidelines. She said, “I try to write more fact stuff. I try not to get too opinionated, even though most writing stuff has to be opinionated.” When responding to Statement 12 (“Writers shouldn’t try to write about too big of a topic. They need to choose little moments or describe specific topics”), she said, “I feel like it depends on the writer because some writers can write about a broad [topic] correctly, I guess, in a way that makes sense.” By saying, “correctly,” Lacey suggested that there is also an incorrect way to write about a broad topic. She then added that correctly meant to “make sense.” Her language again suggested that she considers academic writing to be a particular form of writing that requires specific things from the writer, and she attempted to fit her writing within the constraints of that form.

Evaluation of Writing

Lacey valued both her own evaluation and others evaluations of her work. She checked her work against the rigid box she had constructed about academic writing and worked to keep her writing up to standard and within the box.

In order to determine what she thought was good writing or not, she focused on being able to support her ideas. In her survey, she said an idea for a paper was good “If I can defend it,” and it was not going to work “[i]f I can’t defend it.” She compared her

evaluative standards with teachers and said that she thought her standards were “pretty similar because most English teachers ask for staying on topic and a lot of details. I hear that a lot. I feel like I’m very detail oriented, so I don’t think it’s too far off.” When speaking about her standards, she rarely included teachers’ standards, but in this instance she did. She acknowledged that her standards for academic writing were created in conjunction with the standards she was taught. It is possible that her standards were influenced by the ones she was taught, or her personal standards may have just aligned with teachers in general.

Often this self-evaluation was about being critical of her work. I asked her how she talked to herself while writing. She said, “It’s a lot of—this sounds bad. It’s a lot of negativity because I critique it a lot. I’ll have moments where, ‘I’m gonna use that. That sentence was good.’” She also said that sometimes she disagreed with a grade a teacher gave her, saying, “I’ll see the grade they give me, and I’m like, ‘Oh, that’s way too high in my opinion.’ But I’m also very hard on myself, so.” She was hard on herself, but she also usually worked to meet her high standards. After submitting their research papers, students had to complete a self-evaluation and reflection piece. Lacey’s is below in Figure 7.4.

Figure 7.4

Lacey's Research Paper Self-evaluation and Reflection

	Accomplished writing performance (4)	Satisfactory writing performance (3)	Basic writing performance (2)	Very limited writing performance (1)	Student response: Why did you score yourself at this point? What did you do well? What could you have done better?
Organizing structure (20 points)	x				Each paragraph was organized to support the main idea.
Position, ideas, and coherence (20 points)	x				My view never shifted to something completely different.
Progression of ideas and transitions (20 points)		x			I could have added a few more transition words.
Development of ideas, evidence, and reasoning (20 points)	x				I used my quotes, and explained each one.
Thoughtfulness (10 points)	x				I spent lots of time writing my ideas into three claims.
Word choice (5 points)	x				I felt my word choice was acceptable for a persuasive essay.
Sentence fluency (5 points)		x			At times my sentences were a little off.
Punctuation and grammar (5 points)		x			My grammar at times throughout the essay was questionable.

She ranked herself high in the areas of the rubric and also noted places where she felt she could have done better. For most of her “Accomplished” rankings, her reasoning was focused on some specific thing that she had done successfully, and her “Satisfactory” rankings explained something she had not done as well or suggested something she could have done better.

While she said she was critical of her writing, she also reported being relatively pleased with her process overall as she grew older. She said:

I’ve found that I’ve been getting really good at just writing a lot. Because in middle school, even in 9th grade, it was a long process to write anything. And now recently I’ve gotten better at least writing down the whole thing. Writing more than I had to and going back and editing.

She explained this more when talking about how she came up with her ideas. She said, “I try to just do a lot of ideas, and then I’ll edit through them. I change my mind a lot about what I want to write, so I’ll try to just jot down like ten ideas and then pick three or four.” In both of these statements, she expressed an awareness of her process and a sense that her process worked well for her. She did not mention having been taught a particular process, but the idea of brainstorming is something that teachers often encourage students to do. Her writing process fits within the box of academic writing that her schooling has taught her.

Sometimes, Lacey said she would have a “family member read something, and they’ll be like ‘Hm. Are you sure you want to do that?’ And I’ll be like, ‘no.’ And then I’ll change it.” She also said she thought her writing was going well, “if I feel like I could openly talk about it to a family member. If I feel like it’s going wrong, then I couldn’t explain it to a normal person, I guess.” She continued, saying, “I guess for me personally, I’m very close to my family. So, their opinions are valued highly in my eyes, so when I talk about something, and I have a parent who goes, ‘Oh, yeah, that makes sense,’ then I go, ‘Oh, it does make sense.’”

One of the interview questions asked if a teacher has ever asked the student to change something about their writing that they were already happy with. Lacey said:

Yeah, in middle school I had a lot of teachers try to edit a lot of my stuff.

Especially in 7th and 8th grade. When they changed the idea of what I was trying to write, I didn't really appreciate it because I thought I agreed with it myself. So, when they tried to change it, I still changed it because, you know, I wanted a good

grade in the class. But I didn't like it. I'd go home and talk to my mom and be like, "I did not like that." And she'd be like, "Hm. You know. You need your As so you're going to change it."

Here Lacey spoke about a moment when her evaluative criteria for academic writing was shaped by a disagreement. Because she strongly valued the grade (not necessarily the teacher's input), she did change what she wrote, but she registered her disagreement about the standard. I asked her why she had such a difference of opinion with the teacher, and she said:

Probably because they saw it as because I was younger, which makes sense because I was younger. Probably in that sense they were like, "You haven't done that much reading or researching the topic." So, I think it goes back to that.

It is possible that, even in middle school, Lacey had developed such a strong understanding of academic writing and the content that fit within that box. Her teachers may have disagreed with her because she had chosen topics that were more complex than her peers', or because they did not think she had a good understanding of the topic that she was writing about. Either way, her understanding of appropriate content for academic writing was developed, and she did not want to stray from her understanding of what was appropriate, even if that did mean disagreeing with the teacher. She did defer, not because she agreed, but because she valued the grade over her beliefs about academic writing. It is interesting to consider how incidents like these may have caused her to adjust her understanding of academic writing.

Coherence

Lacey strongly valued coherence in her writing, and this value showed through her sorts of the statements about writing and her writing. She may have seen it as another way she could fit her writing into that academic writing box. Three of her top five statements had to do with coherence (see Figure 7.5).

Figure 7.5

Lacey's Top Five Rankings of Statements Concerning Coherence

Statement number	Statement	Original ranking	Top five ranking
9	Good writing has a strong introduction that states the topic and a strong conclusion that sums up or reiterates the important points.	1	1
22	Writing is good when you can see critical thinking on the part of the writer.	3	3
3	Good writing is clear and easy to understand. Readers don't have to struggle to get what the author is saying.	13	4

In response to Statement 9, she said,

Very important because I personally have a short attention span, and if I read something that, within the first paragraph, doesn't grab me or I don't understand it, I'm just going to stop reading it. So, I think the first paragraph is personally the most important.

In response to Statement 3, she said, "It's just organized and easy to understand." She cared about the writing being easy for the reader to understand, and she saw value in using structure to support that understanding. For example, she ended up ranking

statement 16 (“Writing that is too structured tends to be boring”) at rank 25 of 31. This statement devalued structure, and she rejected it, focusing instead on the clarity that a simplistic structure can provide.

In her interview, she spoke about what she thought about while revising: “I try to make sure I stayed on topic for the most part because I ramble sometimes, so I try to keep it all—I delete a lot of sentences because I write a lot.” She also said that she knows her writing is going well “if we’re given a point we have to try to stick around, I try to make sure if what I’m writing about isn’t anything unrelated to that, or I’m rambling.” Both of these statements show Lacey deliberately limiting her writing to points that she considers on topic.

In her writing, she appears to limit herself to what is directly related to the topic. For example, Figure 7.6 below shows a body paragraph from one of her essays.

Figure 7.6

A Body Paragraph from Lacey’s Writing

Next, the rate of Americans buying homes is through the roof, literally. So many people are moving to the suburbs to start their American dream life. According to The US has become a nation of suburbs, “In 2010, suburbanites outnumbered city and rural dwellers combined for the first time.” (Boone 1). This statement is supporting the idea that more Americans are achieving this middle class dream.

While she could have gone more in depth about the quoted evidence and expanded on other possible reasons for that movement or why the suburbs are the middle-class dream,

Lacey instead stated how her idea was related to the topic of that paragraph and stopped. The simplicity of this structure allows for cohesion but not nuance. She is able to keep her writing within that “academic writing box,” and she does not see a need to push beyond that standard level.

Presenting Facts

Lacey saw her value for factual clarity reinforced by what she was asked to do at school. She said her classes involved her doing a lot of

writing a lot more of the facts and reading other people’s ideas and critiquing them.... A lot of reading other things, and other papers or books we have to edit and documents and then we have to summarize and bring in other ideas from that plus our own. So, a lot of ‘Here’s the main idea. Now write about it in your own words’ kind of thing at school.

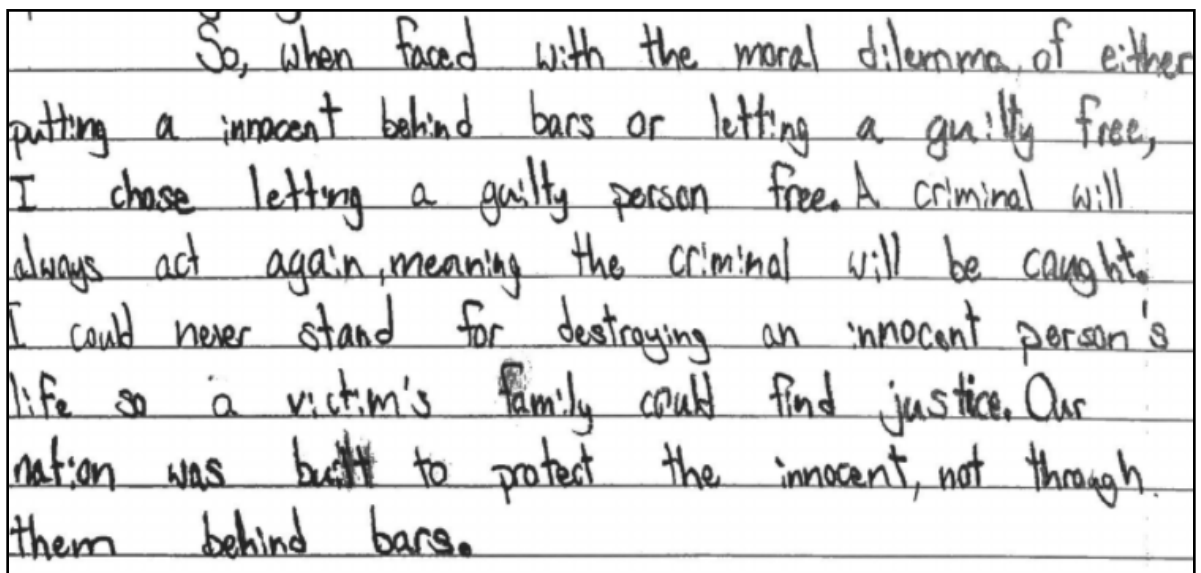
She acknowledged that this kind of writing felt different from the writing she does outside of school “because, in my free time, I do fiction writing, so I go off trail a lot on those. But at school, it’s like, ‘Here are the facts. Find your own facts or argue these.’”

It seems probable that her focus on facts could be because of her stated future goals of being a journalist, a lawyer, or a homicide detective. Although she did not speak about those goals as a reason for her focus, she did agree that those professions are heavy writing professions. Additionally, in the classroom, she was very engaged during the unit about the Adnan Syed case. She soaked up the facts and enjoyed participating in discussions about what those facts meant.

While she valued facts, she also valued the thinking that would go along with those facts, even though it did not appear much in her writing. In her sort of statements about writing, she ranked Statement 22 (“Writing is good when you can see critical thinking on the part of the writer”) at position 3 of 31. In response to this statement, she agreed, and then said, “because, if the writer isn’t showing critical thinking then the reader won’t show any kind of critical thinking about things.” This statement does not provide much reasoning for her thinking, and she did not expand on it. Her writing was primarily based on facts, with little reasoning provided by her to explain the meaning behind those facts. However, in her think-aloud after writing an essay about Adnan Syed, she did show some of that critical thinking. Below in Figure 7.7 is her conclusion from her paper.

Figure 7.7

Lacey’s Conclusion



So, when faced with the moral dilemma of either putting a innocent behind bars or letting a guilty free, I chose letting a guilty person free. A criminal will always act again, meaning the criminal will be caught. I could never stand for destroying an innocent person's life so a victim's family could find justice. Our nation was built to protect the innocent, not through them behind bars.

In her think-aloud, she said:

It wasn't fair for Adnan to be thrown in jail if he was still technically innocent. And there are multiple cases that are very similar where an innocent person was sent to jail just because outsiders viewed that there had to be someone serving time. And as sad as it is to say, I believed that a case should go cold, aka unsolved. I feel like that's better than putting an innocent person, and ruining their life. Some people say, oh they'll just go to jail for years, and then come back. Well, no though. He was arrested before he finished high school, so he doesn't have a high school diploma, and he'll have to suspend getting into college and by then he might be too old to work and you're pretty much robbing this person of their whole life and you're robbing another family.

It is this level of critical thinking and reasoning that could have been in her writing. The logic and clarity in her reasoning in the think-aloud would have fit well in the paper, but she did not include it. Perhaps, because of her strong preference for facts, this reasoning felt too personal or too opinionated, or perhaps this is an area she is working to develop and is not yet able to incorporate in her writing. If she was still developing that ability, perhaps she did not feel confident that this kind of writing would rise to the standards that she had set, and so she chose not to include it. While her writing fit inside her constructed box of academic writing attributes, it seemed to constrain what she included as regards to this statement. Again, her box allowed for coherence and facts but not for the nuance that she was able to provide verbally.

Overall, her focus on coherence and clarity for the reader of her work remained strong throughout her writing and her interviews. This was another way Lacey showed her understanding of the “box” of academic writing and how she kept her work within that box.

Formal, Reserved Writer’s Craft

As she valued facts and cohesion, Lacey tended to value a formal and reserved writing style. Figure 7.8 includes statements about writing that attend to the idea of style and craft and Lacey’s ranking of the statements. In her resort for the top five statements, she did not change the ranking of any of these statements.

Figure 7.8

Lacey’s Ranking of Statements about Style and Craft

Original Ranking	Statement	Lacey’s response
18	2. I personally like it when a writer adds something to their writing which shows some personality (humor, wit, ideals, values). I guess it depends on the piece, but I have read various types of writing that include some of the author’s voice.	I'd say agree, probably not as strongly agreed as the first statement, but I still agree with it. It does say “sometimes” at the bottom, so yeah. I'd say agree.
22	5. Good writing shows a sense of audience. To effectively communicate your message, you need to know who you're writing for.	That's like in the middle for me. Because you have to be able to effectively communicate your message, but you could write for anyone, I guess. So maybe slightly towards agree so like in the middle.
31	11. Good writers avoid cliches.	I want to put that toward disagree because I feel like there's some cliches that there's a reason they're cliches

		because a lot of people use them, like a lot of talented writers use them.
27	18. A good writer surprises the reader with unexpected moves. This can be accomplished by using metaphors, similes, unusual vocabulary, mixing different modes of discourse (from the vernacular to the academic), varying sentence structures, employing humor.	I'm going to put that toward the middle of disagree because, when I'm reading--I mean, there's like-- you read fiction and there's like a plot twist, but during most -- of the time when you're reading something, you don't want to go one way, and just out of nowhere they just flip their opinion, or they flip what they are talking about because it just gets confusing. So, I'll put that toward the middle of disagree.

From these rankings, Lacey's preference for facts and clarity rises above the ideas of style and craft. In her response to each of these statements, Lacey disagreed and explained that each one did not fit into her understanding of academic writing. Lacey preferred academic writing to not have too much personality showing through (Statement 2). She believed academic writing could be so general that it would not need to change to support the understanding of a specific audience (Statement 5). She saw cliches as useful (Statement 11) and saw variation in writing as a potential source of confusion for a reader (Statement 18). Each of these statements do not fit into her understanding of the academic writing "box;" from this, it can be inferred that Lacey saw academic writing as generic, factual, and free of superfluous extras like metaphors or humor.

This resulted in her creating text that had a formal, academic tone. Figure 7.9 below shows a sample of this in her introduction and first body paragraph of her research paper.

Figure 7.9

Lacey's Research Paper Introduction and Body Paragraph

The Truth about Police Officers

Police officers being accused of brutality is sickening, because they are only doing their job to protect American citizens. During dangerous settings, such as riots, police officers have to use more force to protect citizens. Without this force, citizens protesting in extreme ways, would endanger innocent people. Because of this, police officers are faced with hate, but they still put their lives on the line. Their jobs are rough, with little to no credit, if anything police officers should be given more respect.

Some citizens have been making statements that police officers are too reckless during missions, and only make the problems worse. To the outside eye, the force that officers use may seem extreme or reckless, but it's very necessary. Some problems can be solved just by an officer being there. A few of those young cowboys fired theirs to get the attention of looters, the streets quickly became quiet and deserted (Davis 2). Just by showing up, the officers were able to control a dangerous setting. This is just one of many dangerous settings that officers have to use force to control the situation.

In this selection, Lacey's formal tone and academic style and language support her values of coherence and facts. The lack of figurative language or dynamic author's voice suggest that she does not emphasize those as important aspects of academic writing. Instead, she fits her writing into the box of academic writing that emphasizes facts and formality.

Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the data analysis that was completed to analyze the participant's language and values for writing. First, I presented an introduction to Lacey, a student who had an understanding of academic writing and worked to keep her writing within that understanding. Then I described the findings: use of dichotomous language to describe her writing, valuing her self-evaluative process, and valuing factual clarity. In the following chapter, I will present findings from across the cases.

CHAPTER VIII

FINDINGS: CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

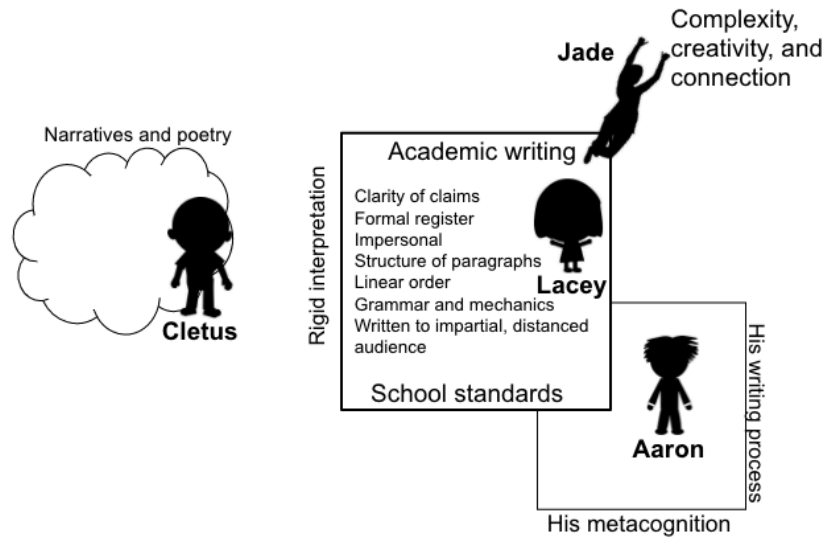
The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the language and values of student writers. The research questions guiding this inquiry were:

1. How do the participants explain what they attend to when composing and revising assigned analytical writing?
2. From those explanations, what are the participants' personal values for their writing?
3. How do their standards manifest in their writing?

In this chapter, I present the findings across the four cases examined previously. The overarching theme discussed here will be how students' language and values were related to their imagined future identities. For this chapter, I have brought the drawing of the students and their "boxes" of academic writing together (see Figure 8.1).

Figure 8.1

Illustration of Cross Case Findings



Students' Language and Values Related to Their Future Identities

The first research question was: How do the participants explain what they attend to when composing and revising assigned analytical writing? The findings from the cross-case analysis suggested that participants used language that emphasized their understanding of how they would use writing in their imagined future identities. Additionally, the way the participants spoke about their metacognition suggested that their internal or external foci was also related to their understanding of writing and their future goals.

Language

Initially, my analysis led me to look particularly at the kinds of words students were using to talk about their writing. However, as analysis continued, I began to see how students positioned themselves in relationship to academic writing in particular and that led me to shift my analysis to focus more on the content of the language instead. In this presentation of the findings, both analyses will be used to illustrate the theme.

First, I will briefly explain the students' future goals and ways of speaking about them. As presented in the individual cases, the themes that factored into this cross-case finding are listed in Figure 8.2 below.

Figure 8.2

Themes from Individual Case Studies

Participant	Theme
Jade	Language showed interrelated understanding of academic and other types of writing
Aaron	Language showed focus on internal process and internal values
Cletus	Language used showed developing understanding of academic writing
Lacey	Language showed static understanding of academic writing

In the initial interview, the participants each discussed their future goals for themselves. Jade said, "I want to be an actress," and to major in the performing arts; she added, "That, or I want to be a veterinarian." (The idea of being a veterinarian never

came up again in her interviews). Aaron said, “I don't really know what I want to do. I want to do college. I've been working on trying to do visual and graphic designing or messing with audio, so like, I want to try and do graphic designing or visual designing. But I'm not really sure.” Cletus said he wanted to “join the military, go through college, [and] while in the military just to get my degree and all that so I can become a game designer.” While this is what he stated as his future goal, in the majority of his talk in the interviews, he highlighted his passion for writing fiction, narratives, and poetry. In her interview, Lacey said she wanted to go to college and had considered majoring in “journalism for a while and then I changed to law.” In her survey, she said she wanted to be a lawyer or a homicide detective.

Jade's language use showed she was incorporating her theatrical training into her writing. She said that her teachers had asked her to change her writing style from “informal” and “first person kind of stuff” to more “evidential stuff.” Sometimes her teachers praised her writing when she thought it was a “really wordy kind of sentence and very factual” and just “too much.” Jade wanted her writing to “get passion out.” Jade valued the informality, passion, and first-person nature of her writing perhaps because it was more similar to her theater training.

She spoke in a way that showed she understood differences between traditional academic writing and writing for other purposes. When asked if writing needs complete sentences to be considered good, she said, “I mean, if it's being a graded paper, yet.... Even if you just have random words, it doesn't make sense, but sometimes thoughts even can be kind of—it can be good. But it's not the best.” While she did not specifically refer

to theater, her explanation could apply to plays and other performances where incomplete sentences occur frequently.

Aaron's somewhat intangible goals for his future manifested in his writing as an intense internal focus. While it was not as specific as the other participants' imagined future identities, I can see how knowing himself as a writer could prepare him for whatever he might decide to do in the future. As previously shown in his findings chapter, Aaron's language use focused on his thinking process. He believed that he needed to have his thinking clear in order for a reader to understand and said, "in order to have a good writing, you have to have a sense of order to have the reader know what you're talking about." He was cognizant of how much he valued his thinking, too, saying, "I overthink a lot of things.... I try to trace myself back to what I was thinking of in order to get that same feeling when I was writing to make it all match....so I can stay consistent." Perhaps his intense focus on his writing process was a way for him to hone his thinking so that he could carry that over to whatever he decided to do in the future. His critical thinking about his own decision-making process would be valuable in a future career as a graphic designer.

Cletus's language focused instead on his abilities as a fiction writer. While his future plans were to become a game designer, he seemed to have an unspoken goal of continuing to develop his fiction writing. In his survey, he wrote that he thought that writing would be important to his future and wrote (sic) "When it comes to my Future jobs i believe that knowing how to write will become very well needed so i can further on know what im doing." In this statement, he did not specify a particular kind of writing

that he will need to be able to write well. He later said, “I’d rather tell a person what’s going on in the story, what I’m feeling, and who the characters are instead of persuading someone,” and “If you’re using narrative, repetition is highly avoided, and redundancy as well. But when it comes to poetry, it’s literary terms, repetition, alliteration, onomatopoeia, and you have to focus on those.” Throughout his interviews, when he was asked about argumentative writing, he often addressed fiction and poetry as well.

Lacey’s language focused on claims, facts, and supporting her claims with what she considered indisputable reasoning. These would all be important to her future as a detective, journalist, or lawyer. Her determining factor for if an idea for a paper was good was if she could “defend it well” or not. She emphasized the importance of correctness for grammar, saying that “you can’t read it without correct grammar.” When reviewing her work, she said, “I try to look at it on both sides when I’m reading it. Make sure the facts are still there, and I didn’t get too off topic.” She attempted to stay objective and wanted to let the facts speak for themselves, rather than providing much of her own thinking, which she tended to consider “off topic.” All of these tendencies related to her future goals for herself as a writer in arenas that would require straight presentation of facts.

Metacognitive Language Influenced by Future Selves

Connected to the first finding about how students used language to show their understanding of writing as related to their future goals, there were also differences in the depth and complexity of their language use, particularly in their use of metacognitive

language. Students tended to speak with either internally focused metacognition or externally focused metacognition.

Jade and Aaron's metacognitive speech was focused on their writing and their thinking about how to achieve their purposes. I have called this *internally focused metacognition* because of their focus on their own thinking, without reference to an external audience or standard. Aaron worked to develop his writing for his own purposes, perhaps because he was not sure what his future might look like. Jade focused her thinking internally because she knew that her standards and the traditional academic "box" standards did not align, and so she relied more on herself than on external standards. Cletus and Lacey's metacognitive language was more aligned with the external processes that teachers tend to teach (*externally focused metacognition*). Their metacognitive language helped them achieve the external goals of the generic idea of "academic writing." Cletus relied on external guides because he was still developing his understanding of academic writing, while Lacey was comfortable with the external processes because they aligned directly with her goals for her writing. The difference between the two types of metacognition can be thought of as examining one's own thoughts while considering the values of a generic reader or external standards (externally focused) as compared to examining one's own thoughts while considering one's own values (internally focused).

Internally focused Metacognition. Jade's language showed that her focus was on herself and her ideas rather than on externally imposed thinking protocols, perhaps because she recognized that, in order for her writing to do what she wanted, she had to

break out of the standard academic writing “box.” In order to do that, she had to develop her own standards. When asked how she started to work on a new writing assignment, she said,

So, I have always been taught to write the hook first, so I always come up with a hook first, and then everything else kind of follows after that. You have your claim, and just the intro paragraph so then you know what your body topics are going to be. For body topics, I usually like to...I have my subject and then I write down like...I’m trying to think how to describe it—just kind of like a word barf, a brain barf. You just write down everything you’re kind of thinking.

The way she started this response was focused on academic words she most likely has learned from her teachers (hook, claim, body topics, etc.), but as she began to talk about what she actually did while writing, her language changed, becoming more informal and internally focused. She continued her explanation, saying, “And then you go through, and kind of—which ideas do you like best? And which ones have the most evidence to it, or that you can support and write about.” Again, in this portion of her explanation, she focused on her own values to evaluate her ideas about her writing. The specificity of her process here, as compared to the first part of her first explanation, suggests a level of comfort and practice with this writing process, as compared to the listing of parts of a paper.

Aaron regularly spoke about evaluating his ideas. He said he needed to “sort through them” and that “there’s only one that actually stands out and makes sense,” and so he needed to “think about each one differently.” Aaron’s language shows that he sees

himself as in control of his ideas and that he deeply values the idea generation and selection process. Sometimes, he “slowly realize[s] an error maybe with them [the ideas],” and then “I just cancel those out.... I chose the one that actually stands out the most.” This is the language of someone who is deeply involved in his metacognition, and he used his thinking to support his goals for his writing. Additionally, his language is often self-evaluative and self-reflective. He spoke about re-reading his work and deciding that it did not do what he had intended to do; when he recognized that, he said, “I have to find out what caused me to get there,” and “I have to figure out what happened to make me write something completely different.” While this shows that he is re-reading and evaluating his work, his process-focused self-reflection is another indicator of the internally focused nature of his metacognition.

Jade and Aaron’s language about their metacognition differed in their foci; Aaron spoke more about the idea generation portion of his process, while Jade spoke about the drafting process. These seem to be the portions of their writing processes that they are most heavily invested in. While they focused on different aspects, their language was internally focused metacognition; they were examining their thinking about what they wanted for their writing.

Externally focused Metacognition. Lacey and Cletus, in contrast, used metacognitive language in ways that showed that their focus was not on their self-evaluation and understanding of their writing. Instead, their metacognitive language was focused on examining how they were meeting the standards of some externalized vision of academic writing. Although they both spoke using externally focused metacognition,

Lacey focused on her estimations of her audience's perception, and Cletus appeared to go through the motions of the thinking that he thought was expected of him, rather than deeply engaging in his personal thought process.

When asked what he thought about while drafting, Cletus said,

I mostly brainstorm what the prompt is about. Let's say if the prompt was like, 'what has this student done during high school?' you'd have to figure out in your—The way I'd figure out is how do I feel about high school? What's my view about how this person would feel? I'd consider myself a character that's being talked about in the prompt to have an idea. Like, boom. There you go.

That's what I want to write about.

He started by saying that he brainstorms, and he said that he brainstorms about what the prompt is about, not about his own thinking in response to the prompt, in contrast to Aaron. Then, he gave a concrete example of a prompt and asked questions of himself. This seems to be the closest he came to explaining his personal process. So, while he showed an understanding of the brainstorming process, his explanation of his process focused mainly on the external criteria that make up brainstorming (thinking about the prompt and deciding on an idea). His metacognition, when explained in the interview to the researcher (his teacher), seemed to be a display of his understanding of the process, rather than an explanation of his internal thoughts and process.

Similarly, in his think-aloud, Cletus said, "So basically how it started is, when I read the prompt, I got an idea of what I wanted to write. But it took some time to actually figure out what I wanted to do." He explained what brainstorming is but not his thought

process, again showing an external, task fulfillment approach to his metacognition. He also said, “What I did is that I went back to the case of Adnan Syed as my evidence, and what I saw in myself of what proof would be needed to actually show what I did for this prompt.” Here too, Cletus explained the external steps of evidence selection, without explaining the internal process or his own thinking. Of course, he may have been thinking very differently than he chose to explain in those moments to me, but the language he used in these interactions showed the externally focused nature of his metacognition.

When asked how he decides if a writing piece is going well, he said, “If it convinces myself. I have to say that if it convinces myself, ah, ok this is good and all that. And I have to make sure it keeps going that way. If it’s convincing to me, it’s convincing to another person.” His self-evaluation here was about if his idea was convincing to him because he was seeing himself as if he were the audience. He explained this in a comment that came two exchanges later in the interview; he added, “I have to make sure it connected to another person, to how they relate to how I felt in that poem.” When asked about the conversation he has in his head while writing he said, “Is this up to the teacher’s standard? Is this what she wants me to write? Is this what’s supposed to be written in the first place? I’m just hoping this person is just, like, understanding of what I want to write.” Here again his thinking was focused on the understanding of his writing by others (his teacher or a generic reader).

Lacey focused her metacognitive talk on how she imagined her audience would perceive her writing. Lacey said, “I do really short quick thoughts, so like one word kind of stuff. So, I try to pick one word that I want for every paragraph. Either that could be

what emotion I want to convey or my solid one point that I want to stay around. So usually one or two points.” Lacey attended to her purpose and the perception of her intended audience, while simultaneously giving a great deal of attention to the structure of her writing. This attention to the orderliness of the paragraphs seems to show an eye toward the audience’s understanding already, rather than the intense internal focus seen from Aaron and Jade. Lacey did not talk about determining which of her ideas she wanted to focus on. This could be an indication that her idea generation process was more “crystallized” (Tharp & Gallimore, 1991) than that of Aaron or Jade. She did not closely examine that process perhaps because she already believed she was capable of doing it. Instead, she focused her energy on the beginnings of structure.

When asked how she determined if her writing was going well, she said,
If we’re given a point that we have to try to stick around, I try to make sure if
what I’m writing isn’t anything related to that, and I’m rambling. That’s one way.
Or if I re-read it, and I just have a lot of clustered thoughts in one paragraph, I
know it’s going well.

Here too, her focus was on the audience. She did not check with herself to make sure that she said what she intended to say, like Aaron or Jade did. Instead, she checked to see that her writing exhibited characteristics of an easily understandable text. When asked about how she talked to herself while revising, she said, “I try to not look at it too much as if I was reading it. I try to put my mind in like an outsider reading it or someone.”

So, while Lacey’s external focus was directed toward her future audience, Cletus’s external focus was directed toward me specifically as the interviewer/teacher. As

Lacey visualized her future work as a detective, journalist, or lawyer, her focus on how a reader would understand her writing is understandable. Cletus, on the other hand, perhaps focused on me as the teacher and interviewer because he did not feel confident with his process yet or because he wanted to please me. Academic writing was not his primary type of writing, and so he may not have been ready to focus on his own understanding and evaluation of his work.

Values

In this section, I will present the findings for research question two: From those explanations, what are the participants' personal values for their writing? From the analysis of how the students talked about their writing, I drew conclusions about their personal standards and values for their writing. Several commonalities emerged among those values, including cohesion and coherence, complexity, audience, and self-evaluation. While the participants shared these commonalities, there was variation to what extent they valued that particular idea. This is displayed in Figure 8.3 below.

Figure 8.3

Extent to Which Participants Valued Concepts

Participant	Cohesion and Coherence	Complexity	Audience
Jade	High	High	High
Aaron	High	High	Moderate
Cletus	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Lacey	High	Low	Moderate

As these values were addressed in their individual cases, they will not be re-addressed here. Through triangulating their interview data, their writings, and the sorting of statements about writing, I determined that the students primarily valued purposes and goals in their writing connected to their future goals for themselves, whether or not they were valuing the traditional aspects of academic writing. The reverse was also true; participants devalued aspects of the writing process or particularly writing attributes that they saw as disconnected to their future goals for themselves. The participants' future identities and writing values from the case studies are presented in Figure 8.4 below.

Figure 8.4

Identities and Writing Values from Individual Case Studies

Participant	Future identity	Writing values
Jade	Actor	Creativity, coherence
Aaron	Visual/graphic designer	Personalized writing process, meaning
Cletus	Game designer (implied: narrative/fiction writer)	Author's craft
Lacey	Detective, journalist, lawyer	Coherence

At a surface level, it appeared that the similarities in identities and purposes would separate the girls from the boys. However, with further examination, the students were either driven by externally focused desires for their futures or by internally focused goals of learning and improving.

The two girls, Jade and Lacey, both had specific plans for college and careers. Jade said, "I want to be an actress, so I want to go into—I wanted to go to Julliard, but

that's more classical stuff.... Majoring in the performing arts." She continually referenced being an actress in her interview responses, and her attention to the importance of the audience in her writing mirrored the importance of the audience in the theater. In her survey, she said that writing will be neither important nor unimportant for her future because, "For acting a play, if I were to go down that road, it would be very important; however, blocking and line memorizing only requires so much writing." While she did not see writing as something that she would regularly use in her future, she did translate the idea of performing to how a writer's final product becomes a type of performance for the reader. Her values were in line with her future goals, and they worked to support both purposes.

Similarly, Lacey said, "I don't know. I wanted to either go—journalism for a while, and then I changed to law. So, it's probably something around like a lawyer." In her survey, she said that writing will be very important to her future because "I want to become a lawyer or a homicide detective." All three of these jobs focus on facts and pulling together ideas to create a position. In this way, Lacey significantly differed from Jade, as her purposes for her writing were not to entertain and stand out but to present ideas and objective facts that support her thinking. Additionally, these different purposes show how the girls' different world views were informed by their ideas about their identities and futures. Jade's future plans will require personality and individual distinctiveness, while Lacey's plans will require attempts to see people and situations as objectively as possible. So, while their identities and purposes appeared to be similar,

instead, the distinctions meant the girls approached their writing tasks in very different ways.

Overall, the boys' plans were more flexible and allowed for the possibility of substantial changes, unlike the plans the girls reported. At first glance, the boys appeared to have similar purposes for their writing and futures goals. As previously stated, Cletus stated that he planned to join the military and then college to work as a game designer, but he also spoke about fiction and poetry writing in a way that suggested that he might pursue writing in his future as well. Indeed, his writing values were primarily focused on nonacademic writing. He referred to Edgar Allen Poe's style of writing as a goal for his own writing, saying Poe's "writing is more deep and detailed of like how his life was and how his writing compared to his personality and my personality is in my writing as well." Cletus's future goals did not seem to translate into particular values for his academic writing, perhaps because his future goals were focused on nonacademic writing. He seemed to see academic writing as a tool that he will have to use in order to achieve his goals, but he had yet to develop individualized values for his academic writing, like he had for his fiction and poetry writing.

Aaron said that he wanted "to do college" so that he could work in "visual and graphic designing or messing with audio. That's what I want to do when I graduate. But I'm not really sure." In his survey, he said that writing would be important to his life after high school because "[i]t will still help me when I move on, because I will have to put ideas and plans on to paper." It is here that an important difference emerged among the participants. While all of the students had goals for their futures and plans about how to

reach those goals, Cletus, Jade, and Lacey spoke more about their end goal rather than their process. Much like the internally and externally focused metacognition, Cletus, Jade, and Lacey were more focused on their outcomes, while Aaron focused more on his internal goals for himself as a learner and a writer. Aaron, instead, focused on the importance of the process to his future. As seen in earlier sections, his attention to his writing and learning process was significant.

Unlike the other participants, Aaron regularly talked about himself as a learner while writing. In his sort of the writing statements, he ranked Statement 17 (“Writing needs to be free of errors in conventions or mechanics; punctuation, grammar, and spelling affect the piece overall”) at the lowest spot. He said, “Most wouldn’t agree with that because errors and just general mistakes, and they do tend to look bad, but they’re good to help you look back at it and kind of think about what you did. It helps you to grow to know what you need to do next time. It’s like having those little mistakes is good to help you grow.” I responded, saying, “So you don’t want it to be free of errors because that means that you’re kind of done learning.” He said, “Yeah. You think you’re ready for it, but you aren’t.” While this conversation was in response to a statement about conventions, Aaron had this attitude across almost all of the study; it came through implicitly through his self-reflective statements while re-reading, revising, and attending to his thought process.

The differences in the participants identities and purposes resulted in subtle differences in their values for their writing. Jade and Lacey’s writing values were clearly linked with their future identities and the values those future identities will place on

writing. Cletus, due to his future imagined identity as a fiction and poetry writer, did not seem to have developed specific values for his academic writing. Aaron's future identity was less fixed in his mind, and so his present identity was focused primarily on being a learner and a writer. His purpose, then, was on the learning process that occurred while writing and in his own thinking process. The finished product was important to him also, but it was the learning and the thinking work of writing that made up his purpose

Summary

In this cross-case findings chapter, I have presented major themes for each of the research questions as found from the participants collectively. One of the main findings was that the participants' language use and values for their writing showed their understanding of academic writing as related to their future goals for themselves. Also, in their language use, the participants' metacognitive speech differed depending on those goals. In the following chapter I will discuss implications from these findings.

CHAPTER IX

DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to explore students' language use and values for their argumentative academic writing. This final chapter restates the research problem and reviews the major methods used in the study. The major sections of this chapter summarize the results and discuss the contributions to current literature and research implications.

This study provided an opportunity to understand what it is students attend to and value in their writing, how they show that attention and value in their work, and what those findings might mean for teachers' instructional decisions and explanations. The study involved four case studies of 10th grade English students; a cross-case analysis was also conducted. The case studies attempted to elicit students' values and understandings of academic writing and also analyzed their language use about academic writing. This study sought to do this by answering the following questions:

1. How do the participants explain what they attend to when composing and revising assigned analytical writing?
2. From those explanations, what are the participants' personal values for their writing?
3. How do their standards manifest in their writing?

The case studies relied upon interviews, surveys, writing samples, and a sort of 31 statements about writing (Nauman et al., 2011). Students were interviewed once and the

sorts of statements were conducted in an additional session or two, depending on student needs. After completing the full sort, students were asked to review their sort and select their top five values from the statements about writing. The surveys were conducted online, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Writing samples were collected across the spring semester.

Findings were presented for the individual participants' cases and across the cases. The major cross case findings were that participants spoke about their writing in ways that related to their understanding of their future identities, and they valued parts of academic writing that related to their future identities as well.

Students' language showed their understanding of argumentative academic writing was related to their future goals for themselves. Jade and Lacey spoke in ways that fit with their future goals for themselves as a theater student and a detective or journalist, respectively. Jade valued personality, humor, and connection with the audience; Lacey focused on facts and formality. Cletus spoke in ways that showed his goals were primarily associated narrative and poetry writing, rather than argumentative writing. He spoke about bringing himself in as a character to his academic writing. Aaron had formulated less of his future plans than the other participants had and instead focused on his personal writing process, refining his thinking, and communicating his message to his audience. Their understanding of their task merged with their understanding of themselves and their future selves (Holland et al., 1998). Teachers know that students always bring their whole selves into the classroom, but they also bring their whole selves

into their understanding of the tasks they are given; the classroom is not disconnected from students' identities (Albareello et al., 2018).

Similarly, the participants primarily valued aspects of argumentative academic writing that they saw as important to their future goals for themselves. Jade's focus on a future career in the theater influenced her values of showing rather than telling and writing in ways that surprise the reader. Aaron had not yet determined a specific future career goal, but he believed that clarity in writing would be important in his future career. He valued communicating his message to a reader in a way that clearly and precisely conveyed his thinking. Cletus's preference for narrative and poetry seemed to take precedence over his understanding of argumentative writing, and his values for argumentative academic writing were unclear. Lacey valued facts and objectivity, which would support her future work as a detective or a journalist.

They also spoke and wrote in ways that showed their understanding of the traditional "box" of academic writing. Lacey, Jade, and Aaron showed their understanding of the genre and how it fit or did not fit with their own values for their writing. They used what they had learned about the genre to shape their writing to fit their particular values. Cletus's language showed his developing understanding of the genre along with aspects of the genre that he did not yet understand. In this way, their language gave insight into what they had already learned and mastered in regards to argumentative writing and what areas they are yet to develop.

The participants used metacognitive language differently, particularly varying in the complexity and depth of their language. Jade and Aaron used internally focused

metacognitive language to reflect on their own standards for their writing; their writing efforts focused on meeting those personal standards that they had internalized and customized to their own values. Cletus and Lacey used externally focused metacognitive language that regularly referred to their readers' expectations for their work rather than to their own particular values. Their metacognitive language use shed light on their thinking, language development, and their interactions with society, particularly in the form of writing instruction from teachers (Vygotsky, 1986, 2002). The participants used language and thinking associated with the writing process (Flower & Hayes, 1981). Aaron's language use showed that he had both internalized and personalized the frequently taught writing process, adapting it to his identity as a writer and the areas that he was particularly concerned about, especially idea development and clarity. In contrast, Cletus primarily used the academic labels associated with the writing process, but he showed little personalized language or process associated with it.

I was impressed with how clearly the participants' current and future understandings of themselves as so clearly impacted their writing values. However, I am not sure that this is often clear to the students themselves. This is a way my own practice has been changed as a result of my findings. I have spent more time this year asking students to think about their future lives and how writing will come into play for them. I do have specific writing values I have to emphasize for the specific kinds of writing that we engage with based on our curriculum, and I have also asked students to think about their particular values for their writing.

Some, like Jade, want their work to be funny and engaging, either because it suits their future purposes or current identities; others, like Aaron, are so focused on their own thinking that they have to work very hard to make their thinking clear to their audience. Like Cletus, many may need more experience to begin developing expertise in this area (Wood, 1998). Many students are like Lacey; they accept that this is just the way writing is. I see it as my duty to both show them that this is how this particular form of writing is often done, but to also show them that there are many, many other values that can be emphasized through their writing, and that their values matter. By showing them ways to find their values for their writing, I hope to make writing more personalized and meaningful for them as individuals, not just cogs in an academic system.

Contributions

This study contributes to the understanding and current research on secondary students' writing and identity.

Writing

While teachers of other content areas tend to use their students' prior knowledge to launch their instruction, secondary English teachers regularly re-teach the writing process every year. This "blank slate" approach may mean that students do not gain the levels of metacognitive and self-regulatory abilities that they need to in order to develop the writing skills required by the job force and higher education (Kiuahara et al., 2009). Students are also not asked to write at length very often across the course of a school year (Kiuahara et al., 2009). It is possible that high stakes testing practices contribute to these instructional decisions (Avalos et al., 2020); teachers are so hyper-focused on the basic

level skills required to pass the tests, and so they do not focus on the higher-level skills that are also needed beyond the test. So, while students have been found to be least successful with argumentative writing (Hasani, 2016), perhaps it is not the most difficult, but just that they have had the least experience working with the higher-level cognitive requirements.

The participants in this study brought a wealth of knowledge about both academic writing and other kinds of writing; they integrated their previous understandings with what they had learned that year. When teachers do not acknowledge what students already know and build on it, they lose valuable leverage to dramatically improve student writing each year. Listening to students speak about their writing would provide an easy way to see what students understand and value and give teachers insight on how to move students forward. Students' language use combined with their writing could be an important way to think about their learning and the stages of the zone of proximal development (Tharp & Gallimore, 1991; Vygotsky, 1978). If students speak more like Jade (using both academic and nonacademic language to explain their thinking and self-evaluating in a holistic way), teachers could support their growth with language about cohesiveness and examples of more sophisticated structures. Similarly, if students speak more like Cletus (using academic labels without strong understanding and focusing on external standards), teachers could provide additional examples of the academic terms, talk about them in informal language, and help students determine what they care about in their writing.

Additionally, secondary English teachers tend to teach and reinforce the academic writing “box” in a structured, inflexible way that denies students values for their writing. This may be attributed partially to high-stakes testing (Hillocks, 2002) and to teachers’ discomfort with teaching writing (Malloy, 2016). Schools typically require so few extended writing pieces that students do not develop the expertise or experience needed to feel comfortable with the genre and learn how to begin to break those rigid constraints of academic writing (Gillespie et al., 2014). The participants in this study were able to express their values and their writing showed how they brought their values into their writing. The purpose of writing instruction is not to change the identity of the writer, but to “broaden their repertoire” and to “refine their judgement in making choices with their repertoire” (National Council of Teachers of English, 2018, Principle 3.2 section). If teachers are not doing that and report not being prepared to do that, teacher preparation programs and professional development needs to focus on this as an important area for growth.

This study also shows the value in having students verbalize their metacognitive processes (Gadd & Parr, 2017). Teachers benefit from hearing how students are thinking about their work and what their thought processes are. Teachers can then prompt students in ways that are more responsive and productive. More importantly, by speaking about their thinking, students clarify their thinking. Aaron’s awareness of his thinking processes was a support to his writing because he used his metacognition to refine his thinking and to self-evaluate his work to see if he was meeting his standards. Cletus’s lack of

metacognition speech could provide an entry point for a teacher to model her thinking or to ask questions that might prompt deeper thinking on his part.

Identity Theories

Teachers want to value and get to know the students who come into their rooms. They are instructed to make their content relevant and engaging and to bring students in as participants in that particular field (Moje, 2008). However, this study shows that students' future identities might impact the way they interpret and use the information that teachers provide. Teachers are not working with blank slates who are going to become a participant in that field without bringing their previous understandings and future goals. Students take in the information that their teachers give them and connect it with their own purposes, understandings, and goals. So, it is not just important that teachers value their students' identities and make them welcome in the classroom; it is also important for teachers to understand the current and future identities that their students have currently and are developing. Those identities influence the students' interpretations of what they are learning.

Adolescence in particular is a period of both personal and social identity formation (Albareello et al., 2018). Teachers walk a fine balance between honoring both the identities their students bring into the room and the ones they are considering for their future with the other, as yet unconsidered and undiscovered possibilities for their futures. Teachers must both respect and support the identities that students already have and are developing, while teaching their content that can open new identity possibilities for their students. Jade and Lacey had already formulated their future identities as an actor and

lawyer or detective; as their teacher, I can respect their thinking about their futures, show them ways they can refine the skills those identities would require, and continue to expose them to a broader view of literacy that incorporates both the ideas and skills that they value and those that they may have already disregarded.

Additionally, this study raises questions about what it means to see oneself as a writer and why that identity seems to be such an exclusive one. Both Cletus and Aaron spoke about not identifying as writers, even though they both thought deeply about their writing and had some out of school literacy practices. Lacey said she was not sure if she was a writer. Jade was on the only one of the participants who used phrases like, “as the writer,” in her responses. Disciplinary literacy (of which academic writing is a part) asks teachers to position students as do-ers of the discipline (Billman & Pearson, 2013). If that identity is one that students believe to be exclusive or limited to people different than them, more needs to be done to show students how they already are writers and that one does not become a writer by being good at writing, but by doing it and by continuing to refine their practice. Instead, teachers could position their practice as an “ontological act; when we write, we enact a sense of ourselves as beings in the world” (Yagelski, 2009, pp. 7–8). The participants in this study spoke in ways that showed they understood themselves as “the writer being” (Yagelski, 2009, p. 8).

Implications for Practice

This study offers several implications for practicing teachers. One is to consider students’ current thinking about themselves as writers and the value writing brings to their lives and their future lives. Students may have already done that thinking but not

verbalized it. Teachers can allow time for students to consider their identities and what they think will be most important to their futures. Also, rather than trying to persuade students that writing is important to their futures, teachers can listen to what students say and use that as a jumping off point to a conversation about what writing might be important in their future. Even the thinking processes that students may need to develop for their futures could be an important way to talk about writing, as writing can develop the thinking that they may need in their future.

This study also provides insight to teachers about the reasons behind students' writing habits and why certain students may be more prone to write in particular ways. The better the teacher understands the student's values and goals, the better the teacher can provide quality instruction. The goal of that instruction is not to change the students' personal values and goals; instead, the goal may be to show the student alternate ways of thinking, especially from people who may have different values and goals.

The participants' valued coherence and complexity in their writing; however, they did not use those words or mention being taught those things in their classes. English classes at the secondary level instead tend to focus on the writing process rather than these large, complex ideas (Jago, 2002). Students seem to value these large-scale ideas but are not being taught how to develop them or how to harness their metacognitive abilities to work on these concepts in their writing. The participants wanted to work on coherence, cohesion, clarity, and incorporating narrative techniques. Their writing showed satisfactory understandings of these aspects of writing, and their language showed that they were both reading for more challenge and in need of instruction and

support in these areas. This disconnect between student values, self-identified needs, and teaching could be causing students to underperform because they do not feel like their ideas are being valued in writing. Teachers could instead choose to focus on metalinguistic talk that allows students to develop their thinking and understanding of a more complex understanding of writing. By leveraging students' values for more complex and sophisticated standards for writing, teachers and students together can improve the quality of instruction and the quality of the writing produced in the classroom.

Perhaps most importantly, this study shows the need to give students time and space to talk about their standards and goals for their writing. If writing is the most complex form of literacy, then it must be developed using the other modes, particularly speaking and listening, because they are our first forms of literacy. Writing is complex, and speaking through those complexities is one of the most simple and powerful ways to support its development.

Having students speak about their writing is an invaluable and irreplicable way for students to build their own metacognitive processes and for teachers to assess and instruct. If a student like Cletus speaks about academic writing with primarily narrative language, teachers could honor his current understanding and provide additional support to help him translate those skills into his academic writing. Students come to us with funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992; Professor & Professor, 1992), both cultural and academic, that teachers and students can tap into to support their current work. By listening to their students talk about their writing, teachers can also assess their

understanding of academic vocabulary and the degree to which the student has internalized that language and its meanings.

Another implication for practice is that teachers may be able to listen to how their students talk about their writing in order to pinpoint where they are in their understanding and conceptualization of writing tasks. If students are solely using the academic language that teachers have provided, teachers can note that they may need additional opportunities to talk about writing. Teachers tend to be the ones who talk about the writing process and writing strategies and organization. Instead, we should have the classroom filled with language from the students about their writing. While they may not speak the way we might, their language will help them develop and further draft their understanding of writing and solidify it in their minds.

Implications for Research

These case studies and cross-case analysis provide additional avenues for further research on identity, metalinguistic skill, writing development, and criteria for quality writing.

This study examined four participants and determined that their current and future identities influenced both their language about their writing and their values for their writing. Adolescence has been found to be a time of major cognitive growth and improving ability to self-regulate (Hermann, 2019). Further research could be done to investigate this on a larger scale, focusing on different populations of students including culturally and linguistically diverse student populations.

This study provided a launching point for a future study about student language use in concert with the stages of the zone of proximal development (Tharp & Gallimore, 1991). Current thinking in the field has asked for ways to track the development of writing across the years (Bazerman et al., 2017). In this study, students spoke in different ways that seemed connected to their understanding of that particular aspect or attribute of writing. Examining their language in conjunction with their writing and teacher's instruction could provide additional insight into how teachers can help students use their oral language to develop their writing abilities.

Additional research could be done with Nauman et al.'s (2011) study about criteria for quality writing. Comparing students' sorts of the statements about writing across their secondary career could be an interesting way to examine students' values and developing identities. Additionally, comparing teachers' sorts and their grading practices could provide insight into what is being privileged in the classroom. Conducting the sorts with students from different extracurricular activities could provide insight about how to integrate students' identities and values into writing instruction.

I was also interested in how students spoke more or less often about each of the National Writing Project Analytical Writing Continuum attributes and the possible implications that it has both for classroom instruction and their metalinguistic skill. Further research could be conducted to determine if using the language of the continuum supports students metalinguistic and metacognitive growth.

While it did not become a major finding, I was particularly interested in how students used different types of words to explain themselves. Their use of negative

examples, narrative-like explanations, abstract and concrete language, and formal and informal language was unique to each participant. I believe further examination of students' specific language use could help teachers determine where students are in the stages of the zone of proximal development (Tharp & Gallimore, 1991). Further investigations into students' and teachers' metalinguistic skill would also provide insight into language practices in the classroom and their impact on writing ability (Miller & McCardle, 2011; Myhill et al., 2016). I would be interested to know how a teacher's metalinguistic skill impacts that of students and if the amount of talk among student groups versus teacher to student talk influenced metalinguistic skill. What practices increase metalinguistic talk and skill? What practices limit them?

Limitations

This study was limited to four participants, which limits the generalizability of the study. Additionally, one limitation of the study is that I chose to focus solely on academic writing, rather than multiple types of student writing. This study could later be replicated to investigate how students talk and think about more personal types of writing.

Another limitation is that students participating in the case study were enrolled in my English class. They were not enrolled in honors English courses. Their identification as students who did not take honors English courses likely impacted their perception of themselves as students and as writers.

Additionally, the writing samples collected were limited to those written in my classroom and across a short period of time due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I was also both the teacher and the researcher. It is probable that this impacted the students'

responses in both positive and negative ways. I already had established relationships with each of the participants that added to their comfort level, but they also may have been thinking that they were being evaluated and judged in their responses.

Conclusion

Academic writing is an important aspect of students' education, and it has been found that students tend not to achieve a high level of performance in this kind of writing by the time they graduate high school. Argumentative writing in particular is an area of concern because it is so commonly required in college level courses and is a very common form of reading that students will need to be able to comprehend as adults. If students are not achieving the level of performance that schools, colleges, and functioning society want them to be able to do by the time they graduate, then it follows that something is not happening in the classrooms. One of the easiest and first ways to investigate this is to listen to what students do know and think about argumentative academic writing.

REFERENCES

- Albareello, F., Crocetti, E., & Rubini, M. (2018). I and us: A longitudinal study on the interplay of personal and social identity in adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 47(4), 689–702. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-017-0791-4>
- Alhaisoni, E. (2012). A think-aloud protocols investigation of Saudi English major students' writing revision strategies in L1 (Arabic) and L2 (English). *English Language Teaching*, 5(9), 144–154. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v5n9p144>
- Applebee, A. N., & Langer, J. A. (2009). EJ extra: What is happening in the teaching of writing? *The English Journal*, 98(5), 18–28. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2923.2002.01372.x>
- Atwell, N. (1998). *In the middle: New understandings about writing, reading and learning*. Heinemann.
- Augustine, S. M. (2014). Living in a post-coding world: Analysis as assemblage. *Qualitative Inquiry: QI*, 20(6), 747–753. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800414530258>
- Avalos, M. A., Perez, X., & Thorington, V. (2020). Comparing secondary English teachers' ideal and actual writing practices for diverse learners: Constrained professionalism in figured worlds of high-stakes testing. *Reading & Writing Quarterly: Overcoming Learning Difficulties*, 36(3), 225–242. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10573569.2019.1635056>

- Badia, M. (2000). Students' conceptions on academic writing. In A. Camps & M. Milian (Eds.), *Metalinguistic activity in learning to write* (Vol. 6, pp. 49–78). Amsterdam University Press.
- Baines, L., Baines, C., Stanley, G. K., & Kunkel, A. (1999). Losing the product in the process. *English Journal*, 88(5), 67–72. <https://doi.org/10.2307/821780>
- Baker, L., & Brown, A. L. (1984). Metacognitive skills and reading. In P. D. Pearson (Ed.), *Handbook of reading research* (Vol. 1, pp. 353–395). Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action*. Prentice Hall.
- Bang, H. J. (2013). Reliability of National Writing Project's Analytic Writing Continuum assessment system. *Journal of Writing Assessment*, 6(1), 13–24.
<http://journalofwritingassessment.org/article.php?article=67>
- Bazerman, C., Applebee, A. N., Berninger, V., Brandt, D., Graham, S., Matsuda, P. K., Murphy, S., Rowe, D. W., & Schleppegrell, M. (2017). Taking the long view on writing development. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 51(3), 351–360.
- Beach, R. (1976). Self-evaluation strategies of extensive revisers and nonrevisers. *College Composition and Communication*, 27(2), 160–164.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/356982>
- Becht, A. I., Nelemans, S. A., Branje, S. J. T., Vollebergh, W. A. M., Koot, H. M., Denissen, J. J. A., & Meeus, W. H. J. (2016). The quest for identity in adolescence: Heterogeneity in daily identity formation and psychosocial adjustment across 5 years. *Developmental Psychology*, 52(12), 2010–2021.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/dev0000245>

- Berkenkotter, C., & Murray, D. M. (1983). Decisions and revisions: The planning strategies of a publishing writer, and response of a laboratory rat. *College Composition and Communication*, 34(2), 156–172. <https://doi.org/10.2307/357403>
- Billman, A., & Pearson, P. D. (2013). Literacy in the disciplines. *Literacy Learning: The Middle Years*, 21, 25–33.
- Brakel, V. L. (1990). The revising processes of sixth-grade writers with and without peer feedback. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 84(1), 22–29.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.1990.10885987>
- Brandt, D. (2014). *The rise of writing: Redefining mass literacy*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316106372.001>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Brewer, A., & Burke, A. (December 2, 2020). *Examining relationships among revising, metacognition, and self-efficacy*. LRA 70th Annual Conference, Virtual.
- Britton, J. (1970). *Language and learning*. Penguin.
- Bruner, J. S. (1983). *In search of mind: Essays in autobiography*. Harper and Roe.
- Calkins, L. M. (1986). *The art of teaching writing*. Heinemann.
- Camps, A., Guasch, O., Milian, M., & Ribas, T. (2000). Metalinguistic activity: The link between writing and learning to write. *Metalinguistic Activity in Learning to Write*, 103–124.
- Carlton, S. T., Diederich, P. B., & French, J. W. (1961). *Factors in judgments of writing ability*. Educational Testing Service.

- Cazden, C. B. (2001). *Classroom discourse: The language of teaching and learning*. Heinemann.
- Cazden, C. B., Michaels, S., & Tabors, P. (1985). Spontaneous repairs in sharing time narratives. In S. Warshauer Freedman (Ed.), *The acquisition of written language: Response and revision* (pp. 51–64). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315465371-11>
- Clay, M. M. (2015). *Record of oral language: Observing changes in the acquisition of language structures: A guide for teaching*. Heinemann Education.
- Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. L. (1999). The teacher research movement: A decade later. *Educational Researcher* , 28(7), 15–25.
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X028007015>
- Compton-Lilly, C. (2016). *Reading students' lives: Literacy learning across time*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315641201>
- Consalvo, A. L. (2011). *Writing conferences and relationships: Talking, teaching, and learning in high school English classrooms* (R. Bomer (ed.)) [PhD]. The University of Texas at Austin.
- Consalvo, A., & Maloch, B. (2015). Keeping the teacher at arm's length: Student resistance in writing conferences in two high school classrooms. *The Journal of Classroom Interaction*, 50(2), 120–132.
- Culham, R. (2003). *6 + 1 Traits of Writing: The Complete Guide Grades 3 and Up*. Scholastic.
- DaFoe, N. (2013). *Breaking open the box: A guide for creative techniques to improve academic writing and generate critical thinking*. R&L Education.

- Daiute, C. (1985). Do writers talk to themselves? In S. Warshauer Freedman (Ed.), *The acquisition of written language: Response and revision* (pp. 133–159). Ablex Publishing.
- Delpit, L. (1986). Skills and other dilemmas of a progressive black educator. *Harvard Educational Review*, 56(4), 379–386.
<https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.56.4.674v5h1m125h3014>
- DeStigter, T. (2015). On the ascendance of argument: A critique of the assumptions of academe's dominant form. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 50(1), 11–34.
- D'warte, J. (2012). Talking about texts: Middle school students' engagement in metalinguistic talk. *Linguistics and Education*, 23(1), 123–134.
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0898589811000568>
- Ehrich, J. F. (2006). Vygotskian inner speech and the reading process. *Australian Journal of Educational and Developmental Psychology*, 6, 12–25.
- Elliott, V. (2018). Thinking about the coding process in qualitative data analysis. *The Qualitative Report; Fort Lauderdale*, 23(11), 2850–2861.
<https://search.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/thinking-about-coding-process-qualitative-data/docview/2155621346/se-2>
- Emig, J. (1971). *The composing processes of twelfth graders* (No. 13). NCTE.
<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED058205>

- Englert, C. S., Raphael, T. E., Anderson Helene, L. M., & Stevens, D. D. (1991). Making strategies and self-talk visible: Writing instruction in regular and special education classrooms. *American Educational Research Journal*, 28(2), 337–372.
<https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312028002337>
- Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. Norton.
- Faigley, L., & Witte, S. (1981). Analyzing revision. *College Composition and Communication*, 32(4), 400–414. <https://doi.org/10.2307/356602>
- Feltham, M., & Sharen, C. (2015). “What do you mean I wrote a C paper?” Writing, revision, and self-regulation. *Collected Essays on Learning and Teaching*, 8, 111–138. <https://doi.org/10.22329/celt.v8i0.4259>
- Ferretti, R., & Fan, Y. (2017). Argumentative writing. In C. A. MacArthur, S. Graham, & J. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *Handbook of writing research* (second, pp. 301–315). The Guilford Press.
- Ferretti, R. P., Andrews-Weckerly, S., & Lewis, W. E. (2007). Improving the argumentative writing of students with learning disabilities: Descriptive and normative considerations. *Reading & Writing Quarterly: Overcoming Learning Difficulties*, 23(3), 267–285. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10573560701277740>
- Ferretti, R. P., & Graham, S. (2019). Argumentative writing: theory, assessment, and instruction. *Reading and Writing*, 32(6), 1345–1357. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-019-09950-x>
- Flower, L. (1979). Writer-based prose: A cognitive basis for problems in writing. *College English*, 41(1), 19–37. <https://doi.org/10.2307/376357>

- Flower, L., & Hayes, J. R. (1981). A cognitive process theory of writing. *College Composition and Communication*, 32(4), 365–387. <https://doi.org/10.2307/356600>
- Freeman, M. (2014). The hermeneutical aesthetics of thick description. *Qualitative Inquiry: QI*, 20(6), 827–833. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800414530267>
- Gadd, M., & Parr, J. M. (2017). Practices of effective writing teachers. *Reading and Writing*, 30(7), 1551–1574. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-017-9737-1>
- Gee, J. P. (2000). Identity as an analytic lens for research in education. *Review of Research in Education*, 25(1), 99–125. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X025001099>
- Gere, A. R., & Stevens, R. S. (1985). The language of writing groups: How oral response shapes revision. In S. Warshauer Freedman (Ed.), *The acquisition of written language: Response and revision* (pp. 85–105).
- Gillespie, A., Graham, S., Kiuahara, S., & Hebert, M. (2014). High school teachers use of writing to support students' learning: a national survey. *Reading and Writing*, 27(6), 1043–1072. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-013-9494-8>
- Graham, S., Capizzi, A., Harris, K. R., Hebert, M., & Morphy, P. (2014). Teaching writing to middle school students: A national survey. *Reading and Writing*, 27(6), 1015–1042. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-013-9495-7>
- Graham, S., Harris, K. R., & Chambers, A. B. (2016). Evidence-based practice and writing instruction. In C. A. MacArthur, S. Graham, & J. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *Handbook of writing research* (pp. 211–226). The Guilford Press.
- Graves, D. H. (1975). An examination of the writing processes of seven year old children. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 9(3), 227–241.

- Graves, D. H., & Murray, D. M. (1980). Revision: In the writer's workshop and in the classroom. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 162(2), 38–56.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/002205748016200205>
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.
- Hacker, D. J., Keener, M. C., & Kircher, J. C. (2009). Writing is applied metacognition. *Handbook of Metacognition in Education*, 154–172.
- Hasani, A. (2016). Enhancing argumentative writing skill through contextual teaching and learning. *Educational Research*, 11(16), 1573–1578.
<https://doi.org/https://10.5897/ERR2016.2806>
- Hayes, J. R. (2004). What triggers revision? In L. Allal, L. Chanquoy, & P. Largy (Eds.), *Revision cognitive and instructional processes* (pp. 9–20). Springer.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-1048-1_2
- Hermann, H. (2019). Science of adolescent learning: How identity and empowerment influence student learning. *Alliance for Excellent Education*.
https://mk0all4edorgjxiy8xf9.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/04-Identity-and-Empowerment_FINAL.pdf
- Hillocks, G. (2002). *The testing trap: How state writing assessments control learning*. Teachers College Press.
- Holland, D., Lachiotte, W., Skinner, D., & Cain, C. (1998). *Identity and agency in cultural worlds*. Harvard University Press.
- Horowitz, D. M. (1986). What professors actually require: Academic tasks for the ESL classroom. *TESOL Quarterly*, 20(3), 445. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3586294>

- Hubbard, R. S., & Power, B. M. (1993). *The art of classroom inquiry*. Heinemann.
- Hyland, K., & Jiang, F. (Kevin). (2017). Is academic writing becoming more informal? *English for Specific Purposes*, 45, 40–51. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2016.09.001>
- Jago, C. (2002). *Cohesive writing: Why concept is not enough*. Heinemann.
<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED462691>
- Jingjing, H., & Xuesong, G. (2017). Using think-aloud protocol in self-regulated reading research. *Educational Research Review*, 22, 181–193.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2017.09.004>
- Johnston, P. H. (2004). *Choice words: How our language affects children's learning*. Stenhouse Publishers.
- Khan, S., & VanWynsberghe, R. (2008). Cultivating the under-mined: Cross-case analysis as knowledge mobilization. *Forum, Qualitative Social Research / Forum, Qualitative Sozialforschung*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-9.1.334>
- Kiuhara, S. A., Graham, S., & Hawken, L. S. (2009). Teaching writing to high school students: A national survey. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 101(1), 136.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0013097>
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1992). Reading between the lines and beyond the pages: A culturally relevant approach to literacy teaching. *Theory into Practice*, 31(4), 312–320. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405849209543558>
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32(3), 465–491.
<https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312032003465>

- LeCompte, M. D., & Goetz, J. P. (1984). *Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research*. Academic Press.
- MacArthur, C. A., Graham, S., & Schwartz, S. (1991). Knowledge of revision and revising behavior among students with learning disabilities. *Learning Disability Quarterly: Journal of the Division for Children with Learning Disabilities*, 14(1), 61–73. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1510373>
- MacArthur, C. A., Philippakos, Z. A., & Ianetta, M. (2015). Self-regulated strategy instruction in college developmental writing. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 107(3), 855. <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000011>
- Malloy, D. G. (2016). *How preservice teachers' attitudes and beliefs about writing inform their view of writing instruction* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Montana State University.
- Matsushashi, A., & Gordon, E. (1985). Revision, addition, and the power of the unseen text. *The Acquisition of Written Language: Response and Revision*, 226–249.
- Matsumura, L. C., Correnti, R., & Wang, E. (2015). Classroom writing tasks and students' analytic text-based writing. *Reading Research*, 50(4), 417–438. <https://doi.org/10.1002/rrq.110>
- Meier, S., McCarthy, P. R., & Schmeck, R. R. (1984). Validity of self-efficacy as a predictor of writing performance. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, 8(2), 107–120. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01173038>
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. Jossey-Bass.

- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Miller, B., & McCardle, P. (2011). Reflections on the need for continued research on writing. *Reading and Writing*, 24(2), 121–132. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-010-9267-6>
- Moje, E. B. (2000). “To be part of the story”: The literacy practices of gangsta adolescents. *Teachers College Record*, 102(3), 651–690. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/0161-4681.00071>
- Moje, E. B. (2008). Foregrounding the disciplines in secondary literacy teaching and learning: A call for change. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 52(2), 96–107. <https://doi.org/10.1598/JAAL.52.2.1>
- Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice*, 31(2), 132–141. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405849209543534>
- Morin, A. (1993). Self-talk and self-awareness: On the nature of the relation. *The Journal of Mind and Behavior*, 14(3), 223–234. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43853763>
- Murray, D. M. (1968). *A writer teaches writing: A practical method of teaching composition*. Houghton Mifflin.
- Myhill, D., Jones, S., & Wilson, A. (2016). Writing conversations: fostering metalinguistic discussion about writing. *Research Papers in Education*, 31(1), 23–44. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2016.1106694>

- National Center for Education Statistics. (2012). *The nation's report card: Writing 2011*. IES. <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED535204.pdf>
- National Commission on Writing. (2004). *Writing: A ticket to work... or a ticket out: A survey of business leaders*. College Board.
https://archive.nwp.org/cs/public/download/nwp_file/21479/writing-a-ticket-to-work-or-a-ticket-out.pdf?x-r=pcfile_d
- National Council of Teachers of English. (2018). *Understanding and teaching writing: Guiding principles*. <https://ncte.org/statement/teachingcomposition/>
- Nauman, A. D., Stirling, T., & Borthwick, A. (2011). What makes writing good? An essential question for teachers. *The Reading Teacher*, 64(5), 318–328.
<https://doi.org/10.1598/RT.64.5.2>
- Negretti, R. (2012). Metacognition in student academic writing: A longitudinal study of metacognitive awareness and its relation to task perception, self-regulation, and evaluation of performance. *Written Communication*, 29(2), 142–179.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0741088312438529>
- Netz, R. (2001). On the Aristotelian paragraph. *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*, 47, 211–232.
- Nold, E. W., & Freedman, S. W. (1977). An analysis of readers' responses to essays. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 11(2), 164–174.

- Panadero, E., & Romero, M. (2014). To rubric or not to rubric? The effects of self-assessment on self-regulation, performance and self-efficacy. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 21(2), 133–148.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0969594X.2013.877872>
- Paris, D., & Alim, H. S. (2014). What are we seeking to sustain through culturally sustaining pedagogy? A loving critique forward. *Harvard Educational Review*, 84(1), 85–100. <https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.84.1.982l873k2ht16m77>
- Perin, D. (2007). *Writing next: Effective strategies to improve writing of adolescents in middle and high schools*. Carnegie Corporation of New York.
https://media.carnegie.org/filer_public/3c/f5/3cf58727-34f4-4140-a014-723a00ac56f7/ccny_report_2007_writing.pdf
- Preiss, D. D., Castillo, J. C., Grigorenko, E. L., & Manzi, J. (2013). Argumentative writing and academic achievement: A longitudinal study. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 28, 204–211. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2012.12.013>
- Prior, P. (2017). Setting a research agenda for lifespan writing development: The long view from where? *Research in the Teaching of English*, 52(2), 211–219.
- Professor, C. G. V.-I., & Professor, J. B. G. A. R. (1992). Formation and transformation of funds of knowledge among US-Mexican households. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 23(4), 313–335.
- Saqipi, B., & Vogrinc, J. (2020). The development of teacher research as a form of developing teacher pedagogical practice. *Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal*, 10(3), 5–9. <https://doi.org/10.26529/cepsj.1003>

- Sawyer, S. M., Azzopardi, P. S., Wickremarathne, D., & Patton, G. C. (2018). The age of adolescence. *The Lancet. Child & Adolescent Health*, 2(3), 223–228.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642\(18\)30022-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642(18)30022-1)
- Schak, O., Metzger, I., Bass, J., McCann, C., & English, J. (2017). *Developmental education challenges and strategies for reform*. U.S. Department of Education .
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oepd/education-strategies.pdf>
- Schmoker, M. (2018). Demystifying writing, transforming education. *Learning*, 75(7).
<https://www.studentachievement.org/wp-content/uploads/Writing-Demystifying-Writing-Transforming-Education-Educational-Leadership.pdf>
- Schunk, D. H. (2003). Self-efficacy for reading and writing: Influence of modeling, goal-setting, and self-evaluation. *Reading & Writing Quarterly: Overcoming Learning Difficulties*, 19(2), 159–172. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10573560308219>
- Shaughnessy, M. P. (1979). *Errors and expectations: A guide for the teacher of basic writing*. Oxford University Press.
- Shermis, M. D., Burstein, J., Elliot, N. Miel, S., & Foltz, P. W. (2016). Automated writing evaluation: An expanding body of knowledge. In C. MacArthur, S. Graham, & J. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *Handbook of Writing Research* (pp. 395–409). The Guilford Press.
- Sineath, K. D. (2014). *The effect of classroom discourse on high school students' argumentative writing skills* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Northeastern University.

- Singer, N. R., & LeMahieu, P. (2011). The effect of scoring order on the independence of holistic and analytic scores. *Journal of Writing Assessment*, 4(1).
- Smagorinsky, P. (2001). Rethinking protocol analysis from a cultural perspective. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 21, 233–245.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190501000149>
- Smith, M. A., & Swain, S. (2016). *Assessing writing, teaching writers: Putting the analytic writing continuum to work in your classroom*. Teachers College Press.
- Sommers, N. (1980). Revision strategies of student writers and experienced adult writers. *College Composition and Communication*, 31(4), 378–388.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/356588>
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Sage.
- Steinbeck, J. (1993). *Of mice and men*. Penguin.
- Stewart, M. A. (2017). *Keep it R.E.A.L.!: Relevant, engaging, and affirming literacy for adolescent English learners*. Teachers College Press.
- Strunk, W., & White, E. B. (2007). *Elements of Style* (Vol. 4). Penguin.
- Tharp, R. G., & Gallimore, R. (1991). *Rousing minds to life: Teaching, learning, and schooling in social context*. Cambridge University Press.
- Thomas, A. (2004). Digital literacies of the cybergirl. *E-Learning and Digital Media*, 1(3), 358–382. <https://doi.org/10.2304/elea.2004.1.3.3>
- Tracy, S. J. (2010). Qualitative quality: Eight “big-tent” criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(10), 837–851.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800410383121>

- van Eemeren, F. H., Grootendorst, R., Henkemans, F. S., Blair, J. A., Johnson, R. H., Krabbe, E. C. W., Plantin, C., Walton, D. N., & Willard, C. A.. (1996). *Fundamentals of argumentation theory: A handbook of historical backgrounds and contemporary developments*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/358423>
- Vicente, A., & Martinez Manrique, F. (2011). Inner speech: Nature and functions. *Philosophy Compass*, 6(3), 209–219. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-9991.2010.00369.x>
- Voss, R. F. (1983). Janet Emig's the composing processes of twelfth graders: A reassessment. *College Composition and Communication*, 34(3), 278–283.
- Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society*. Harvard University Press.
- Vygotsky, L. (1986). *Thought and language* (A. Kozulin, Ed.). MIT Press.
- Vygotsky, L. (2002). On inner speech. In B. M. Power & R. S. Hubbard (Eds.), *Language development: A reader for teachers* (pp. 28–32). Merrill.
https://doi.org/10.1007/0-387-24578-2_1
- Wargo, K. (2019). A conceptual framework for authentic writing assignments: Academic and everyday meet. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.1022>
- Wickstrom, C., Araujo, J., Patterson, L., Hoki, C., & Roberts, J. (2011). Teachers prepare students for careers and college: "I see you," therefore I can teach you. *60th Literacy Research Association Yearbook*, 113–126.

- Williamson, T. (2019). Authoring selves in school: Adolescent writing identity. *Literacy Research: Theory, Method, and Practice*, 68(1), 250–270.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2381336919870291>
- Witte, S. P. (1985). Revising, composing theory, and research design. In S. Warshauer Freedman (Ed.), *The acquisition of written language: Response and revision* (pp. 250–284). Ablex.
- Wood, D. (1998). *How children think and learn: The social context of cognitive development*. Blackwell.
- Yagelski, R. P. (2009). A thousand writers writing: Seeking change through the radical practice of writing as a way of being. *English Education*, 42(1), 6–28.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40607915>
- Zimmerman, B. J. (2002). Becoming a self-regulated learner: An overview. *Theory into Practice*, 41(2), 64–70. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4102_2
- Zimmerman, B. J., & Risemberg, R. (1997). Becoming a self-regulated writer: A social cognitive perspective. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 22(1), 73–101.
<https://doi.org/10.1006/ceps.1997.0919>

APPENDIX A

Semi-Structured Interview

1. Tell me about yourself as a writer.
2. What are some things you think about while drafting? While revising?
3. How do you decide if a writing piece is going well? Not well?
4. Has a teacher ever asked you to change something in your writing that you were satisfied with already? What do you remember about that?
 - a. What about the other way around? Has a teacher ever complimented you on something in your writing that you weren't satisfied with? What do you remember about that?
5. Do you talk to yourself while writing? While revising? What kinds of things do you say?

APPENDIX B

Student Survey

Student name: _____

Directions: Please answer the following questions. Select just one answer for each question listed below.

Section 1

1. What is your gender?

☐ Female

☐ Male

☐ Other

2. What is your age?

☐ _____

3. What is your grade-level classification?

☐ Freshman

☐ Sophomore

☐ Junior

☐ Senior

4. What is your identified race/ethnicity? Please check all that apply.

☐ American Indian

☐ Asian

☐ Black

☐ Hispanic

☐ White

☐ Other (please explain): _____

5. What is the highest level or degree of school your mother completed? If she is currently enrolled, mark the previous grade or highest degree completed. If you don't know, make your best guess.

☐ Did not graduate high school

☐ High school diploma or GED

☐ Associate's degree

☐ Bachelor's degree

☐ Master's degree

☐ Professional degree (for example: doctor, dentist, therapist, etc.)

☐ Doctoral degree

6. What is the highest level or degree of school your father completed? If he is currently enrolled, mark the previous grade or highest degree completed. If you don't know, make your best guess.

- ☐ Did not graduate high school
- ☐ High school diploma or GED
- ☐ Associate's degree
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Master's degree
- ☐ Professional degree (for example: doctor, dentist, therapist, etc.)
- ☐ Doctoral degree

7. What grades do you usually make in your academic classes?

- ☐ Mostly As
- ☐ As and Bs
- ☐ Mostly Bs
- ☐ Bs and Cs
- ☐ Mostly Cs
- ☐ Cs and lower

8. Have you previously taken an advanced English class?

☐ Yes

☐ No

9. How many English courses have you taken more than once?

☐ 0

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3+

10. How do you feel about your current English class?

☐ I enjoy it most of the time

☐ I enjoy it sometimes

☐ I do not enjoy or dislike the class

☐ I dislike the class sometimes

☐ I dislike the class all of the time

11. When beginning a new paper, I prefer to get ideas by (select one)

☐ Thinking alone

☐ Thinking with other students

- ☐ Thinking with a teacher

Section 2

Directions: The following questions ask about writing specifically. Each question has space for you to write your answer. If you need more space, you may write on the back or attach additional paper.

12. When you consider your abilities in English classes over the past year, please circle the number on the Likert scale below that best fits the level of your abilities.

5	4	3	2	1
Very adequate	Adequate	Neutral	Less than adequate	Inadequate

Please explain your answer:

13. Please circle the number on the Likert scale below that best fits your level of confidence when beginning a new paper.

5	4	3	2	1
Very confident	Confident	Neither confident/ Unconfident	Slightly unconfident	Not confident

Please explain your answer:

14. When you consider your plans and dreams for your life after high school, how important do you think writing will be to your future life? Please circle the number on the Likert scale below that best fits your estimate.

5	4	3	2	1
Very important	Important	Neither important/ Not important	Slightly important	Not important

Please explain your answer:

15. How do you come up with ideas before writing a paper?

16. How do you decide if an idea for a paper is good?

17. How do you decide if an idea for a paper is not going to work?

Section 3

Directions: Listed below are 31 statements about writing. You will also have these same statements on note cards. Please arrange these cards on the provided continuum (separate from this paper) to show how much you agree or disagree with each statement. When you are finished, please let me know so that I can take a picture of your arrangement of the statements. (These statements were taken from Nauman, Stirling, and Borthwick's 2011 article "What makes writing good? An essential question for teachers.")

1. A good paper has a strong, logical overall organization that is clear to the reader, so the reader knows what to expect.

2. I personally like it when a writer adds something to their writing which shows some personality (humor, wit, ideals, values). I guess it depends on the piece, but I have read various types of writing that include some of the author's voice.
3. Good writing is clear and easy to understand. Readers don't have to struggle to get what the author is saying.
4. A lot of students write exactly how they talk, and it doesn't make any sense; writers need to be able to use appropriate verb tenses and other proper grammar.
5. Good writing shows a sense of audience. To effectively communicate your message, you need to know who you're writing for.
6. A lot of juicy verbs help make writing good.
7. Good writing stays focused on the main idea/topic throughout.
8. Good writing is concise, using an economy of words. It avoids repetition and redundancy.
9. Good writing has a strong introduction that states the topic and a strong conclusion that sums up or reiterates the important points.
10. The paper should have a flow. If the paper jumps from one idea to another, it makes it hard to breathe, just like a piece of music that doesn't transition well and then loses the melody.
11. Good writers avoid cliches.
12. Writers shouldn't try to write about too big of a topic--they need to choose little moments to describe or specific topics to write about.

13. Variety of sentence types engages the reader (simple, complex, dependent clauses) --you want to avoid too many short choppy sentences.
14. Adjectives tend to clutter up a text; good writers use few adjectives.
15. Some kids writing is too chatty for formal reports and research papers; voice and writing have to be appropriate for the purpose of writing.
16. Writing that is too structured (like a five-paragraph essay) tends to be boring.
17. Writing needs to be free of errors in conventions or mechanics punctuation, grammar, and spelling affect the piece overall.
18. A good writer surprises the reader with unexpected moves. This can be accomplished by using metaphors, similes, unusual vocabulary, mixing different modes of discourse (from the vernacular to the academic), varying sentence structures, employing humor.
19. Really, it all depends on the type of writing; every type of writing requires different things to be good.
20. Good writing contains details, elaboration, support, whether narrative or expository, enough elaboration to help the reader paint a picture in their mind or (for expository) provide sufficient support to explain ideas.
21. I think writing needs to have complete sentences to be considered good.
22. Writing is good when you can see critical thinking on the part of the writer.
23. Good writing is like good thinking--fresh, clear, and honest. It artfully invites the reader into an idea or image with a quiet authority cannot be resisted.
24. You need to have a point! Don't write just to fill up a page.

25. You don't see a lot of adverbs in good writing; adverbs are a sign the verbs are weak.
26. Good writing must conform to a genre, be that fiction or nonfiction; be it a memoir, historical fiction, an e-mail, an essay, a poem, an article, and so on.
27. Good writing shows instead of tells.
28. Good writing is descriptive, with figurative language, and compels the reader to make vivid mental images.
29. Good writing gives you the impression that time was spent crafting the piece.
30. It's good when the writer is obviously knowledgeable about the subject.
31. Accurate word choice is key; the words have to be chosen precisely to convey the author's meaning.

APPENDIX C

Researcher Reflexive Journal

Date	Student	Classroom teaching/conferenc es	Research process	Developing understandings of data

APPENDIX D

Student Think-Aloud Protocol

Directions: You will receive a writing prompt and time to complete the writing task. As you write, you will be recording your thinking out loud. While working, return to these directions frequently.

1. When beginning to write, talk about what you are thinking about the task and the prompt.
2. As you begin to come up with ideas to write about, talk about what considerations you made, including ideas that you decide not to write about and why.
3. Continue to pre-write, draft, and write as you normally do, talking aloud through your thinking as you make decisions while writing.
4. If, while working, you change your mind or discard ideas, talk about what prompted those changes.
5. When you catch yourself erasing something, explain that choice.
6. As you complete your final draft and revisions, consider how you satisfied you are with your work. Are you pleased or displeased with it as a whole? What about specific pieces? Why do you feel that way?

APPENDIX E

List of Sort Statements (from Nauman et al., 2011)

1. A good paper has a strong, logical overall organization that is clear to the reader, so the reader knows what to expect.
2. I personally like it when a writer adds something to their writing which shows some personality (humor, wit, ideals, values). I guess it depends on the piece, but I have read various types of writing that include some of the author's voice.
3. Good writing is clear and easy to understand. Readers don't have to struggle to get what the author is saying.
4. A lot of students write exactly how they talk, and it doesn't make any sense; writers need to be able to use appropriate verb tenses and other proper grammar.
5. Good writing shows a sense of audience. To effectively communicate your message, you need to know who you're writing for.
6. A lot of juicy verbs help make writing good.
7. Good writing stays focused on the main idea/topic throughout.
8. Good writing is concise, using an economy of words. It avoids repetition and redundancy.
9. Good writing has a strong introduction that states the topic and a strong conclusion that sums up or reiterates the important points.
10. The paper should have a flow. If the paper jumps from one idea to another, it makes it hard to breathe, just like a piece of music that doesn't transition well and then loses the melody.
11. Good writers avoid cliches.

12. Writers shouldn't try to write about too big of a topic--they need to choose little moments to describe or specific topics to write about.
13. Variety of sentence types engages the reader (simple, complex, dependent clauses) --you want to avoid too many short choppy sentences.
14. Adjectives tend to clutter up a text; good writers use few adjectives.
15. Some kids writing is too chatty for formal reports and research papers; voice and writing have to be appropriate for the purpose of writing.
16. Writing that is too structured (like a five-paragraph essay) tends to be boring.
17. Writing needs to be free of errors in conventions or mechanics; punctuation, grammar, and spelling affect the piece overall.
18. A good writer surprises the reader with unexpected moves. This can be accomplished by using metaphors, similes, unusual vocabulary, mixing different modes of discourse (from the vernacular to the academic), varying sentence structures, employing humor.
19. Really, it all depends on the type of writing; every type of writing requires different things to be good.
20. Good writing contains details, elaboration, support, whether narrative or expository; enough elaboration to help the reader paint a picture in their mind or (for expository) provide sufficient support to explain ideas.
21. I think writing needs to have complete sentences to be considered good.
22. Writing is good when you can see critical thinking on the part of the writer.

23. Good writing is like good thinking--fresh, clear, and honest. It artfully invites the reader into an idea or image with a quiet authority cannot be resisted.
24. You need to have a point! Don't write just to fill up a page.
25. You don't see a lot of adverbs in good writing; adverbs are a sign the verbs are weak.
26. Good writing must conform to a genre, be that fiction or nonfiction; be it a memoir, historical fiction, an e-mail, an essay, a poem, an article, and so on.
27. Good writing shows instead of tells.
28. Good writing is descriptive, with figurative language, and compels the reader to make vivid mental images.
29. Good writing gives you the impression that time was spent crafting the piece.
30. It's good when the writer is obviously knowledgeable about the subject.
31. Accurate word choice is key; the words have to be chosen precisely to convey the author's meaning.

APPENDIX F

Student Sorts

