THE WRITING PROCESS OF PUBLISHED AUTHORS AND GIFTED STUDENTS: A
MIXED METHOD STUDY REGARDING COMFORT WITH THE WRITING PROCESS

A Thesis by

Jordan Madison Courtney

Bachelor of Science, Southeastern Louisiana University, 2008

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The following faculty members have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content, and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Education, with a major in Learning and Instructional Design.

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Kim McDowell, Committee Chair

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Mara Alagic, Committee Member

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Janice Ewing, Committee Member

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Jody Fiorini, Committee Member

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Donna Sayman, Committee Member

Write with the wind at your back and the world spread ahead of you. SOAR

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to determine how the writing process of published authors would be accepted and utilized by gifted students. To increase the field of research regarding gifted students, research was completed in a gifted classroom. Data was gathered using multiple data points, including a belief survey, data from writing, final products, and classroom discussions. Results found that the majority of students produced more when utilizing the methods of published authors, although the work was not of finer quality. Students were also more positive about writing when using the published authors' methods.

Keywords: gifted education, writing process

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The writing process is a concept that has been universally accepted as "a series of actions taken by writers to produce a finished work (Dziak, 2016)." It is agreed upon by many experts that an original piece of work must be created, corrected, and finalized (Dziak, 2016). This process is considered to be logical and linear to most in the education field, however, to the published author, the expert in the field of writing, this process is neither. To best understand the process utilized by experts, one must call on the experts for their knowledge. Multiple authors have published books about their personal journey of writing and how they approach the process. Some authors, such as Mazer and Potter (2010), and Levine (2006), have specifically written books geared for children that explain the process as well as different aspects that can be utilized to create powerful writing. Other authors, namely King (2000) and LaMott (1994), have written for a more adult audience.

Gifted students are students who have been identified as having a higher than average intelligence quotient (IQ) than others. An IQ of 115 or above is considered higher than average, with an IQ of 130 indicating giftedness (Wechsler Test, 2017). Generally, students are initially identified by parents and teachers, because the child is comparatively different than their peers academically, and then referred for testing (Wright & Ford, 2017). Identified academically gifted students represent a small portion of the population in any school environment (National Association for Gifted Children, 2017).

The purpose of this study was to determine if gifted students are receptive to the writing process utilized by published authors Anne Mazer and Ellen Potter through their book *Spilling Ink*. Analysis will determine if this intervention changes student views on writing, as well as the quality and quantity of their writing.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Writing Process

In the classroom, writing is often taught as a path to follow logically, step by step, to come to a final product (Anderson, 2011). Authors find that the writing process is not logical, instead it is winding and oftentimes recursive. According to Mazer and Potter (2010) in their book *Spilling Ink*, a text for young authors, writers are more focused on telling the story rather than the process used to write. This sentiment is echoed by other authors such as King (2000) and Lamott (1994). Both state that although there are steps to writing, there is no order or definitiveness. Instead, authors write, edit, and revise continually. Some authors state that they read their previous writing daily, while others prefer to wait until the action is completed before revising (Sampson, Ortlieb, & Leung, 2016). Anderson (2011) aptly pointed out that there is a process, but it is not the only process. Each author follows their own path, finding along the way different strategies that work for them. Sampson, Ortlieb, and Leung (2016) completed a study of how the writing process is different based on what published authors do. They found that authors often stated that the writing process is specific to each individual. Writing is not a lock step process; each step can be moved or even removed if necessary (Anderson, 2011).

The main steps of the writing process as identified by authors are drafting, revising/editing, and publishing (Dziak, 2016). Drafting is when the story is first committed to the page, bringing life to the story. Revising/editing is when the author works with the audience in mind to correct the issues with their writing (Dziak, 2016). This is also when the author can reread what they have written objectively and critique their own work (Mazer & Potter, 2010). Other readers may be brought in to help with the revision and editing of the work. Publishing is a

multi-step process in which the author works with an outside entity to present the story to the public. For published authors, this often includes an agent, an editor, and a publishing contract (King, 2000). For students, this may include creating a final copy that is then released to a specified public audience (Graham & Sadmel, 2011). As Spanke and Paul (2015, p. 184) state, "Writing does not and should not exist in isolation," and should be read by a varied audience.

Writing begins with a first draft which is simply placing the story on the page. According to King (2000), the first draft should be written behind closed doors, in which only the author is interacting with the story. By putting the story on the page, the author can better understand the characters, how they speak, think, and act (Mazer & Potter, 2010). The author can also visualize the setting and plot without interference from outside critics.

According to Dziak (2016), revision is meant to correct ideas and content, while editing is intended to correct grammar. Editing and revision allow the author to take a step back and be objective, testing the setting, plot, and characters. This testing can reveal any inherent issues with the story. According to the authors, editing and revision are when the book truly begins to take shape. "Revising is like doing an elaborate interactive puzzle. You rearrange some pieces" (Mazer & Potter, 2010, p. 165). Many of the authors stated that large scale editing and revision should not be completed immediately after finishing the first draft (King, 2000; Lamott, 1994; Mazer & Potter, 2010). Time should be given to be objective and allow the author distance from the story. This constitutes the second draft of the story. Once the author has had time to edit and revise the work themselves, outside readers can be brought in to help. Authors warn against doing this before the story is complete to preserve the author's confidence in the story (Mazer & Potter, 2010). When outside readers are brought in, the author must be willing to take criticism. This criticism may or may not be useful, but should always be heard and understood (Sampson,

Ortlieb, & Leung, 2016). Then, any details that need to be corrected may be placed into the next draft of the story. This can be completed as many times as necessary.

Practice is another aspect of writing that authors agree upon (King, 2000; Lamott, 1994; Levine, 2006; Mazer & Potter, 2010). In each book, the author states that they had to try many different options with writing to find what worked for them. This trial and error, as well as the continued practice, increased their skill level with extended writing projects. They dealt with frustration along the way, teaching them how to overcome doubt, fear, and confusion. Trial and error led to beautiful writing. Practice may not make perfect, but it does sharpen skills. "Writing is discipline specific, and writing talent is a function of the relationship between the individual and the domain" (Olthouse J. M., 2012, p. 67).

Writing in Today's Classroom

The writing process taught in today's classroom is very logical and methodical (Anderson, 2011). Students are asked to brainstorm a topic and then begin writing on that topic based on a specific set of expectations. During their writing, they will be asked to conference with other students and the teacher to revise and edit their work. Once the writing is complete, they are expected to go through the conferencing process again to complete a final draft. The final draft is then graded by the teacher who will be looking for specific style pieces in the work. Certain grammatical expectations may be placed on the work as well. According to the meta-analysis conducted by Graham and Sandmel (2011), process writing neither improves nor degrades student composition quality. With an effect size of .34, modest improvement was shown across multiple studies.

This process is somewhat akin to what published authors do with one glaring difference-authors often do not get criticism from outsiders during the writing of the book (King, 2000;

Mazer & Potter, 2010). Criticism allows doubt to creep in and destroy the story before the author has had time to listen to the characters. This also stymies creativity, as the author will be spending time focusing on the expectations rather than the story. "I don't always ask for critiques- and never before I'm finished with a manuscript" (Mazer & Potter, 2010, p. 185).

"Elementary teachers' roles include: modeling, explicit instruction, and providing students with opportunities to engage and practice writing across domains and across disciplines" (Bifuh-Ambe, 2013, p. 137). These roles are expected in all content fields in the classroom. Students are expected to master concepts presented in the classroom and to prove this mastery through production. Writing is unique in that it allows students to be highly creative while showing mastery. Instruction focuses on the different types of writing needed by students (Lenski & Johns, 2004). Different types of writing should be taught to students, as should the components of writing.

Questions that linger after reading published authors on how they write are: Should students be asked to learn different styles of writing, components of writing, and the writing process at the same time? And can they truly master them all together (Mazer & Potter, 2010, pp. 183-184)?

Gifted Definition

The original United States Office of Education definition of gifted and talented created in 1972 has been revised a few times, but the overall definition has stayed the same. The criteria to be considered for gifted education differs from state to state, but the federal definition is the basis for all state definitions.

The term "gifted and talented", when used with respect to students, children, or youth, means students, children, or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in

areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic

fields, and who need services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order

to fully develop those capabilities (United States, 1965).

Gifted is a title identifying precocious children with potential above that of their age

equivalent peers (United States, 1965). These children often score much higher than their peers

on intelligence quotient (IQ) tests. An IQ above 130 is in the range for giftedness, as it is above

the common bell curve (Wechsler Test, 2017). Being labeled gifted entitles the student to more

focused classes that are accelerated or enriched to meet their needs.

Gifted Curriculum: Acceleration and Enrichment

Gifted students require a curriculum that moves at a rapid pace and condenses the

repetition of prior mastered information (Callahan, Moon, Oh, Azano, & Hailey, 2015). By

teaching with a rapid pace, educators can cover more concepts with gifted students, holding their

interest and reducing boredom. Condensing repetition of prior mastered information ensures that

students are not wasting precious educational time (Davis & Rimm, 2004). Research has found

that gifted students are spending approximately 80% of their classroom time working on the

same concepts as their peers, at the same level (Callahan, et al., 2015). This amount of waste

leads students to not meet their potential.

To counteract this, teachers can accelerate or enrich their curriculum (Davis & Rimm,

2004). Acceleration and enrichment are often used interchangeably when in fact, their definitions

are quite different when discussing gifted curriculum. Acceleration is "any strategy that results in

advanced placement or credit" while enrichment is "strategies that supplement or go beyond

standard grade-level work but do not result in advanced placement or credit" (Davis & Rimm,

2004, p. 121). Acceleration is moving students past the prescribed grade level curriculum into other grade level curricula. Enrichment is delving deeper into grade level content.

Gifted students should encounter more complex concepts, content, and skills within their curriculum (Van Tassel-Baska, 2008). Acceleration means that they will encounter these through more difficult curriculum. Enrichment introduces these through depth of information. Through this complexity, students should be given the chance to problem-solve and utilize critical thinking skills (Van Tassel-Baska, 2015).

Gifted Characteristics

Students who have been identified as gifted often share many characteristics that can be utilized in the classroom (see Appendix A: Table 1). Gifted students are often self-led and self-motivated (Davis & Rimm, 2004). However, if the concept is a repetition, the student may fail the activity because they are bored or uninterested. "They need and enjoy learning tasks that are unstructured and flexible, rather than the highly structured tasks needed by less able students" (Davis & Rimm, 2004, p. 39). This flexibility allows the student to find a portion of interest and this gives them a personal connection.

Gifted students are also known for having deeply varied self-confidence, often with higher levels of confidence in the areas in which they are gifted or talented (Clinkenbeard, 2012). This level of self-confidence can be shaken if the student suffers from negative effects of perfectionism. Perfectionism is an issue for many gifted individuals and can create both positive and negative effects depending on how the individual utilizes the perfectionism (Silverman, 1999). Gifted students also become frustrated easily, not from comparing themselves to others, but rather from succumbing to perfectionism (Davis & Rimm, 2004). This can cause their tested ability to differ from their classroom achievement.

Wright and Ford (2017) surmised that the characteristics are indicative of a need to further analyze the child and their performance. The characteristics are useful to aid in identification, but should not be utilized for diagnosis (Wellisch & Brown, 2013), because each child displays the characteristics in different ways and at different times (Song & Porath, 2005). Because the characteristics are broad and over-arching, many students may be identified, but concessions may need to be given if the child has other characteristics due to a previously existing condition, maladaptive behavior, or other disability (Wellisch & Brown, 2013).

Issues in Gifted

Gifted is not a federally mandated area of special education (Wright & Ford, 2017). As such, many decisions about gifted education are based at the school, district, or state level (National Association for Gifted Children, 2017). This leads to many interpretations of the definition of gifted.

Gifted children are often ignored in the classroom because "Those kids will make it on their own" (Davis & Rimm, 2004, p. 1). They are expected to do the work and excel even though they have previously mastered the content (National Association for Gifted Children, 2017). They are also often expected to help other students who struggle in the classroom. This places the gifted student in an awkward position because the other students may not accept the help, or may look at the gifted student as an intruder. Although many gifted students are willing to help, they understand that there is a limit to how much they should be helping. The gifted student is also wasting time when they could be learning beyond the curriculum of their peers.

Writing and the Gifted Student

Play to your strengths, not your weaknesses. You don't have to perfect every aspect of writing. Concentrate on what you're good at, and especially on what you love. Then make it even better (Mazer & Potter, 2010, p. 231).

Gifted goals on an Individualized Education Program (IEP) are written to increase the student's strengths. Areas of strength are identified and then become the focus of education. The previous quote mirrors this expectation. Possessing high verbal abilities at a young age, coupled with early, avid reading, opens a pathway for writing (Kohanyi, 2005). As both are known characteristics of gifted students, this is a logical progression. This precocious language shows strength and can be utilized in writing activities. Gifted students should be encouraged to write, not to finish, but to enjoy the process and the creativity.

However, this population deals with a great deal of uncertainty regarding writing (Jalaluddin, 2014). In his study, Jalaluddin (2014), found that high achievers in writing still viewed themselves with a negative perception. They did not see themselves as competent writers. Thevasigamoney and Yunus (2014) found that many students have anxiety regarding writing which can be damaging as it can be concealed by other strengths. Not addressing the anxiety can lead to future difficulties.

Conversely, Olthouse (2014) found that gifted students were generally positive toward the action of writing when they could be creative. Negativity was shown when students were limited. In a previous work, Olthouse (Olthouse J. M., 2012) found that many gifted and talented students view academic writing as limiting because students view this as writing for others rather than for self. As one progresses through the education system, the constraints of the curriculum grow more demanding, leading to a decrease in creative writing opportunities in the school environment (Garrett & Moltzen, 2011). Increasing student engagement in writing, both creative and academic, is attainable using authentic audiences (Spanke & Paul, 2015). Students become more motivated to increase their skills when someone other than the teacher will be viewing their work.

When students begin to view the act of writing as a reward, rather than the grade, their ability can shine through (Silverman, 1999). It is the job of the teacher to help students see writing as a creative outlet; this requires knowing how to motive each child specifically (Sengul, 2015). In this vein, it is important that students learn and incorporate self-regulation into their writing to internalize the process and the emotions connected with writing (Albertson & Billingsley, 2001). Once students have learned to view writing positively, students will be able to receive constructive criticism. Olthouse (2012) found that students want substantial feedback to grow as writers, not just corrections of errors. This requires the teacher to take an active role in building the student as a writer.

Writing Instructional Approaches

Discourse writing, traits writing, and process writing are three of the main focuses of writing instruction. Discourse writing is the study of the different styles of writing and how they differ (Lenski & Johns, 2004). Traits writing is focusing on the different elements of writing and teaching how to implement them (Culham, 2003). Process writing centers on how writing is put together from creation to publication (Dziak, 2016). There are many books available for teachers to use in the classroom regarding each of the types of instruction (Anderson, 2011; Culham, 2003; Healy & Walisayi, 1997; Lenski & Johns, 2004). The implementation of each style offers a variety of benefits and challenges.

Various instructional methods have been utilized in the regular education classroom with gifted students, but documentation is sparse. Embedding writing into the curriculum was studied by Clughen and Connell (2011), but a focus on how it affected students was not essential to the study; therefore, insights regarding how this study affected gifted students were not offered. Kellogg (2008) determined the cognitive growth stages of writing and showed need for

deliberate practice. Again, gifted students were not a focus group. McCarthy, Woodard, and Kang (2014) focused their research toward which method teachers used to teach writing. While important to the fields of writing and education, gifted instruction was not mentioned.

Much of the research found regarding writing with gifted students details the use of the Integrated Curriculum Model. The Integrated Curriculum Model is based on differentiation through either concept, content, or product (Center for gifted education, College of William and Mary, 2008). Using the Integrated Curriculum Model as a base, the Language Arts Effectiveness Studies was created to teach persuasive writing to students in elementary and middle schools around the United States (Van Tassel-Baska, 2008). Van Tassel-Baska's research focused on gifted learners and what works best for them. The results showed that the students increased their writing skills between the pre- and post-tests especially in literary analysis and interpretation of the writing. The curriculum also showed growth ability for students in the areas of elaboration and interpretation.

In a follow-up study conducted by Callahan, Moon, Oh, Azano, and Hailey (2015), three curriculum models, Differentiated Instruction Model, Depth and Complexity Model, and Schoolwide Enrichment Model, were integrated to create a model known as CLEAR. The CLEAR Model focuses on "**C**ontinual Formative Assessment, Clear **L**earning Goals, Data-Driven Learning **E**xperiences, **A**uthentic Products, and **R**ich Curriculum (Callahan, et al., 2015, p. 143)." This model emphasizes the importance of real world application of knowledge gained from the experts in the field. The model was found to be successful among gifted students participating in a gifted-only classroom. Although the model seemed to be successful, no other research has been found regarding the CLEAR model of teaching.

The field of writing instruction is varied in its topics and uses. Much research has been done on how different writing instruction addresses the needs of general education students and students with needs. As such, research focusing specifically on how gifted students alone embrace and utilize a writing intervention is needed. Research regarding gifted students and writing is diverse, ranging from implementation of specific curricula to students' feelings regarding writing.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

Purpose Statement

A review of the available literature regarding writing and gifted students revealed a deficiency of information regarding how students implement the writing process of published authors. The purpose of this research project was to determine the effectiveness of teaching the writing process utilized by Mazer and Potter, published authors, to gifted students. As there is not a plethora of research regarding the topic of student integration of methods of published authors, this research will inform the field. This study focused on two main data points, belief studies and pre-test/post-test writing samples.

Research was based on the following questions:

- What are the beliefs gifted children have about the writing process?

- Do these beliefs change following a writing intervention?

- What is the effect of a writing intervention on the writing of gifted children?

Participants

The students in the gifted classroom who have been identified through testing as gifted participated in the unit. There are nine students, ranging in age from eight to eleven. Six of the students are identified by parents as white and three are identified as Asian. Three of the students are female and six are male. As this follows the common trend of more males being identified as gifted, this class is considered normal (Bianco, Harris, Garrison-Wade, & Leech, 2011). Although the focus size is limited, it is appropriate as the unit is focusing only on students identified by IEP as gifted. In a school of 386 students, the identified gifted student population

makes up approximately two percent of the general population of the school. This sample size, although a convenient sample, was chosen for its guarantee of curriculum integration.

Qualitative Assessment

Throughout the unit, students were questioned regarding their feelings about writing, including their feelings on the intervention. These interview type questions allowed insight as to how the students were responding to the text. They also allowed the instructor to know when work was needed on a topic. The interview questions included questions such as: what are your thoughts and feelings about the writing process, how do you feel about writing, and what are some tips from the book that you are planning to use. Using these interview questions, qualitative assessment was completed.

Quantitative Assessment

Two assessments were given: a pre-test/post-test belief survey and a pre-test/post-test writing sample. The purpose of the belief survey was to determine student buy-in before beginning the unit (see Appendix B). These were scored using a Likert scale (see Figure 3.1: Likert Scale) and were compared after completion. The belief survey is organized into two areas. Numbers one through seven address attitudes toward writing. Numbers eight through twelve address comfort with writing. After the unit, the belief survey concluded if students' beliefs have been changed after learning a different process.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither/Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Figure 3.1: Likert Scale

The pre-test and post-test writing samples were scored using the 6+1 Trait Writing Rubric (see Appendix C). Students were given the following prompt for both the pre- and post-test: "Think outside of your comfort zone and write about that topic." The 6+1 Trait Writing is a

five-point rating scale with one being the lowest possible score, and five being the highest. The rubric is used throughout the school district in which the research is being completed. This was used to determine if the unit has been successful in increasing their writing ability.

Intervention

The unit focused on the book *Spilling Ink* by Anne Mazer and Ellen Potter. The book is a writing how-to based on the authors' methods. The students read the book prior to beginning writing. Instructional time for reading the book was based in the ninety-minute English Language Arts block of time. Writing took place during the thirty-minute process writing block of time. These times were assigned by the district and were adhered to. When reading the book, students documented what they would like to try. After reading, students had the opportunity to video chat with the authors and ask direct questions regarding their writing. The students were given a month to write. They followed the method set forth in the book: write what you know, personal editing only until the work is finished, do what works for you, etc. The students were able to have this type of freedom as they have all been through formal writing training. They were also expected to work more independently based on their IEPs. Students were given one month as their baseline to control for consistent data, as one month was given for the traditional method (see Figure 3.2: Schedule). Students were also able to work at a faster pace than their general education peers, and as such, one month was adequate time to determine the effectiveness of the intervention and its implementation.

Hypothesis

The author identified three areas in which growth were expected: better writing skills, increased comfort with writing, and improved attitude toward writing. These were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Writing skills were assessed using the 6+1 Trait Writing Rubric

and a count of the words written. Comfort was assessed using the Belief Survey. Attitude had a

dual assessment through the Belief Survey and the interview questions.

Pretest Survey	September 22, 2017
Read *Spilling Ink* / Week 1 Intervention Instruction	September 25 – 29, 2017
Uninterrupted Writing	September 28 – October 13, 2017
Time Away from Writing	October 14 – 15, 2017
Self-Edit	October 16, 2017
Peer Edit	October 17, 2017
Teacher Edit	October 18, 2017
Finalize and Turn In	October 19, 2017
Posttest Survey	October 24, 2017

Figure 3.2: Schedule

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Qualitative Data Analysis

Throughout the unit, one-on-one, interview questions were asked, and answers were recorded to gather additional data, specifically regarding students' thoughts and feelings.

Before the intervention, students were asked about their thoughts and feelings regarding writing and the writing process. When asked about writing, one student stated that writing made him sad, one stated that he felt rushed, four stated that writing was fun, and three stated that it was boring. Student 2 stated that the traditional method "takes forever and wastes time. Stopping so much makes me forget my story." The comparison shows that four students enjoy writing, while five do not. Regarding the writing process, two students stated that they liked the school process of writing and editing at the same time, one stated that it was limiting, one stated that it was boring, while five stated that it took too long. Comparatively, two students liked the school writing process, while seven did not.

After the unit, the same questions were asked to determine change. The students were eager to answer. One student stated that writing is boring unless it is free write, one stated that writing was easy, three stated that writing was fun, and four stated that they liked writing using the method of published authors. In comparison, now only one student did not like writing, while eight liked writing. With the new writing process, all nine students stated that they liked the new process and found that it was easier to write with. They did state that they wanted more time to edit, to turn in their best writing.

After reading the book, students were questioned about the book and how they planned to implement it into their writing. The students were asked to determine their favorite part of the

book. The students chose varying areas of the book, specific to their needs. Two students chose the chapter titled "Convincing Your Characters That They are Alive." Two students chose "Spilling Secrets." The rest of the students each chose their own chapter including chapters about suspense, authorship, the author's life, and the writing process. One student stated that they could not choose one specific part, but rather that they enjoyed the entire book.

The students were also asked what tips they were planning to incorporate into their writing. One student stated that they liked how the authors stated that there are no set rules, so feel free to make your own. One student was using the clues on how to create narrative voice, while one student wanted to add more detail. Two were going to plan out their characters according to the instruction given by the authors. Four students planned to use the advice to walk away when you are at a block, then come back and write after the break. They also felt it was important to write every day.

Before beginning to write, students were asked to identify which genre they planned to write. One student chose fiction, one chose historical fiction, and two chose adventure fiction. Five students chose fantasy. After writing, the students were asked to identify which genre they had written. One wrote a research report, one a historical fiction, and two wrote a realistic fiction. The other five students wrote fantasy stories.

The last question asked was based on a section in the book where the authors state that some people like to plan before writing, while others like to begin writing immediately. Four students said that they would prefer to plan a bit first, but that it was not intense planning. Five students stated that they wanted to begin writing, and let the story work itself out.

After the intervention, students were asked to review and rate the intervention. Student 9 stated that using this method "felt much better because it was less cramped and less stress." In

addition, Student 5 claimed that this method made more sense. With students agreeing and

echoing those statements, this intervention received a positive rating from all nine students.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics for the scores on the 6+1 Writing Trait Rubric and the Beliefs

survey are provided in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Scores on the 6+1 Writing Trait Rubric

Test Administration	Mean	SD
Pre	82.44	9.14
Post	80.67	9.73

Note. N=9.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Scores on the Beliefs Survey

Test Administration	Mean	SD
Pre-Comfort	57.33	10.77
Pre-Attitudes	59.44	6.64
Post-Comfort	63.11	7.69
Post-Attitudes	57.44	5.90

Note. N=9.

To determine if there were statistically significant differences in students' score pre-

intervention and post-intervention, a series of nonparametric statistics were computed.

Nonparametric statistics are commonly used when sample sizes are small, and violations of the

normality are assumed. A one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used on all data sets.

Results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in scores on the

6+1 Writing Trait Rubric between pre- and post-testing ($p<.200$). There were no statistically

significant differences in scores on the Attitude component of the Beliefs survey ($p<.200$). There were, however, statistically significant differences in scores on the Comfort component of the Belief survey ($p<.05$).

While not a research question, it was interesting to examine word count as a factor of writing skills. Table 3 illustrates descriptive statistics for Word Count at pre- and post-intervention. These word counts were gathered from each student's writing samples.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Word Count

Test Administration	Mean	SD
Pre	497.78	375.84
Post	904.78	752.28

A one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to determine if word count growth was statistically significant from pre- to post-intervention. Results indicated that there were statistically significant differences in word count, with post-intervention being higher ($p<.02$).

Notes

To assess comfort with writing, five questions were placed on the belief survey. (See Appendix F: Table 2) The first question asked students to determine if writing should only be completed at school. At the beginning of the unit, all nine students disagreed. After the unit, one student decreased the view to a stronger level of disagreement, but all nine students held steady in their disagreement with the statement. The next statement was that writing takes time, to which, initially, one student was neutral, and eight students agreed. Following the intervention, all nine students agreed, with only the one neutral student changing their belief. Regarding the ease of writing, students had varied beliefs, with one student disagreeing that writing was easy,

while three students stated neutrality, and five students agreed. Beliefs changed greatly regarding this topic after the intervention, as two students then disagreed, five were neutral, and two agreed with the statement. Students were asked to rate the degree to which they agreed with the statement, "Writing is a career path for others, not me." Before the intervention, three students disagreed with this statement, three were neutral, and three agreed with the statement. Following, two students disagreed with the statement, three were neutral, and four agreed. The last statement for students to score was "I am comfortable with the writing process." Previously, one student disagreed, five were neutral, and three agreed. Afterward, three students were neutral with the statement and six students agreed. There were only two areas that showed distinct change of belief in the comfort section of the survey, how easy writing is and how comfortable the students are with the writing process. Both areas changed to reflect current comfort, showing that students found writing to be of differing degrees of ease and that two-thirds are comfortable with the writing process.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This intervention study was based on the works of King (2000), LaMott (1994), Levine (2006), and Mazer and Potter (2010). These published authors explained the difference between what students are required to do in school and what the experts implement. The differences are subtle, but powerful. With a group of gifted students, who value expert knowledge (Kanevsky, 2015), following in their footsteps seems a logical progression.

As with any small sample size, this study does not allow for generalizations of all gifted students. While this study does not speak for all gifted students, the implications of this study on this gifted population are interesting. The students in this gifted class showed promise with this method of the writing process, both in their comfort and attitude toward writing.

Comfort with writing was the area that showed the most significant change through this intervention. Students were more comfortable with the writing process of authors and writing was less cramped and stressed. There were two areas that showed distinct change of belief in the comfort section of the survey, how easy writing is and how comfortable the students are with the writing process. Both areas changed to reflect current comfort, showing that students find writing to be of differing degrees of ease and that two-thirds are comfortable with the writing process. Student attitudes, shown through interviews and the belief survey, were more positive about writing and the writing process. Creativity and expanse of writing were two areas in which students claimed this intervention helped them.

Through this unit, the students increased their writing by one hundred eighty percent. This is indicative of greater ability with writing.

Comparing pre- and post-test scores shows that students needed more time for revision and editing. This area would need to be more of a focus in any future research. The comparison of the pre- and post- belief surveys showed that student beliefs are slightly fluid, and can be influenced by authors. However, this could be related to the students age. While many of the beliefs were held by students or only partially changed, the five areas which changed were transformative for the students. They better understood that writing is not only for authors, nor should it always be published. They viewed writing as a more fun exercise, but were realistic in their view that writing is not always easy. Overall, the changing of comfort level belief showed the positive impact of this intervention.

This study found that while students' beliefs regarding writing changed, the effect of this intervention was neutral. Students were able to produce more, but were not able to significantly increase quality. This could be attributed to a lack of time for revision and editing. It could also be stated that this reduction was because students were more focused on completing the story, rather than its quality. This study did not delve into those specific areas, and as such, a reason cannot be postulated.

Other areas of interest were how this intervention affected the genders differently, and how it was received developmentally. Although the data is specific to this group of students, information showed that the females of the class had more significant growth regarding word count than that of the males. The females increased word count by an average of three hundred forty-nine percent. While the males increased by an average of eighty-six percent. These changes were noted as interesting, but were not part of the research questions. Developmentally, the older students in the study showed a larger change in beliefs. With regards to attitude, the older students, namely fifth graders, on average changed their views positively by six tenths

percent. The younger students, namely the third and fourth graders, had an average negative five percent change after the intervention. In the area of comfort, the older students increased their views positively by an average eight percent. The younger students also increased, but by an average of four percent. As such, it may be observed that this intervention may be more appropriately geared towards older elementary students.

Hypothesis Review

Three areas of growth were stated in the hypothesis section: better writing skills, increased comfort with writing, and improved attitude toward writing. Of the three, two showed both qualitative and quantitative growth- increased comfort with writing and improved attitude toward writing. Better writing skills only changed quantitatively regarding the number of words written.

Limitations

The limitations of this study are specific to this study alone. The small sample size was one of convenience. Bias was controlled for by having students utilize numbers instead of names. This does not guarantee a bias free survey. Future studies could utilize larger groups or multiple groups of gifted students. Another limitation was the time frame. In trying to keep the time limits equal between the two methods, proper time was not given to revision and editing. Future studies could challenge this by lengthening the time frame.

Conclusion

Due to the short span of time in which this unit took place, the results of this study do not yield conclusive evidence to the power of the intervention for all groups. Rather, the results only provide evidence for this specific group of students. However, with the information from this study, others may implement the study to determine effectiveness with other groups of students.

Future implementation of this research model would allow for more information regarding how

gifted students implement the methods of published authors. Based on the results of this study,

gifted students may be more open to different methods of the writing process.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Table 1

Common Characteristics of Gifted Students (National Association for Gifted Children, 2017)

Rapid learner; puts things together quickly
Excellent memory
Unusually large vocabulary and complex sentence structure for age
Longer attention span and intense concentration
Learn basic skills quickly and with little practice
Interest in experimenting and doing things differently
Highly developed curiosity
Wide range of interest (or extreme focus in one area)

Complete list available at www.nagc.org/resources-publications/resources/my-child-gifted/common-characteristics-gifted-individuals

Appendix B

Writing Beliefs Survey

Directions: Bubble in the answer that you most believe regarding each statement.

1. Writing is important.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
O	O	O	O	O

2. All writing should be published.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
O	O	O	O	O

3. Writing is fun.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
O	O	O	O	O

4. Authors are just "good" at writing.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
O	O	O	O	O

5. The first draft is usually perfect.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
O	O	O	O	O

6. You don't have to practice writing.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
O	O	O	O	O

7. Reading and writing build on each other.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
O	O	O	O	O

8. Writing should be done only at school.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
O	O	O	O	O

9. Writing takes time.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
O	O	O	O	O

10. Writing is easy.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
O	O	O	O	O

11. Writing is a career path for others, not me.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
O	O	O	O	O

12. I am comfortable with the writing process.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
O	O	O	O	O

1. Favorite genre to read:

   _____

2. Favorite genre to write:

   _____

Adapted from Writing Survey created by The Middle School Classroom on TeacherPayTeachers.
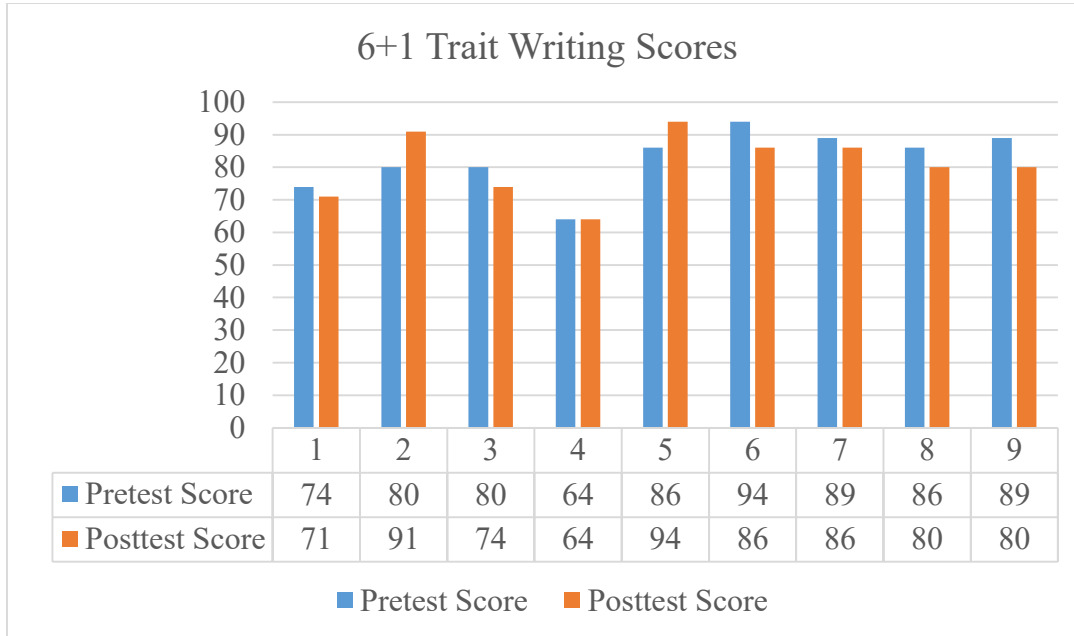
Appendix C

6+1 Trait Writing Rubric				Score: _____ /35	
	1	2	3	4	5
Ideas	You didn't sound like you knew what you wanted to say. You need to think more about your topic.	You need to focus your topic. There are no details. Your reader is left with many questions.	Your topic is somewhat focused. You have some details. Your paper is mostly clear.	Your topic is clear. You have many nice details. You have lots of specifics rather than generalizations.	You have written about things that others might not notice. You have a very focused topic. You have many wonderful details.
Organization	You have no organization. Your ideas are scattered!	You have very little organization.	You have some organization, but your reader still gets a little lost. Your sentences might sound out of order.	You have structure in your writing (beginning, middle, end/green, yellow, and red/etc.) You have transitions words.	You have in incredible structure! You have thoughtful transitions that link your points or ideas.
Voice	Yikes! Your paper is very boring!	Your story in not very interesting.	There are some exciting parts in your story, but it needs more feeling.	It sounds like YOU wrote this. You bring life to your writing. The reader feels something after reading it.	You made your reader laugh or cry! Your reader can picture exactly what you had in your head when you were writing this.
Sentence Fluency	Your sentences don't make any sense! They are either all very long or very short or incomplete.	Your reader is having trouble reading this aloud. Your sentences are not varied.	You can mostly read this aloud. You tried to write some short and long sentences, but you need to mix it up a bit more.	Your sentences are varied in length. It is easy for any reader to read aloud. Your sentences flow together. Your sentence beginnings are varied.	Your words roll off your tongue –it's like music.
Word Choice	You did not use any interesting words or you used the same words over and over.	You have few interesting words. You are using simple language.	You have some strong verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.	Your story is vivid. You use strong and interesting words. You do not repeat the same verbs, adjectives, or adverbs over and over.	Your paper has many memorable words that make your reader picture exactly what you mean. They are handpicked for this writing. You use similes, metaphors, or other interesting elements in your writing.
Conventions	You have made so many errors; it is impossible to read your work!	You made so many errors that it affects the reading of your story	You have a few errors in spelling or grammar.	You spelled all grade level words right. You indented paragraphs. You used correct punctuation and capitalization.	Your paper is perfect! There are no mistakes!
Presentation	You have turned in an extremely messy paper. Perhaps you used your worst handwriting and spilled tomato sauce on it!	You used messy handwriting and/or turned in a messy looking paper that has rips or smudges!	Your handwriting looks ok. You put little effort into your picture. Your paper could look neater.	You used your best handwriting. All of your papers are neat.	Your paper is extremely neat. You have added extra pictures or other elements to enhance your writing.

Adapted from Writing Rubric 2nd-5th grade – 6 traits of writing created by LGSF on TeacherPayTeachers.

Appendix D

Writing Data

6+1 Trait Writing Scores

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Pretest Score	74	80	80	64	86	94	89	86	89
Posttest Score	71	91	74	64	94	86	86	80	80

■ Pretest Score   ■ Posttest Score

Belief Survey Data

Table 1:

Belief Survey Attitude Score Comparison

Table 2:

Belief Survey Comfort Score Comparison

WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY
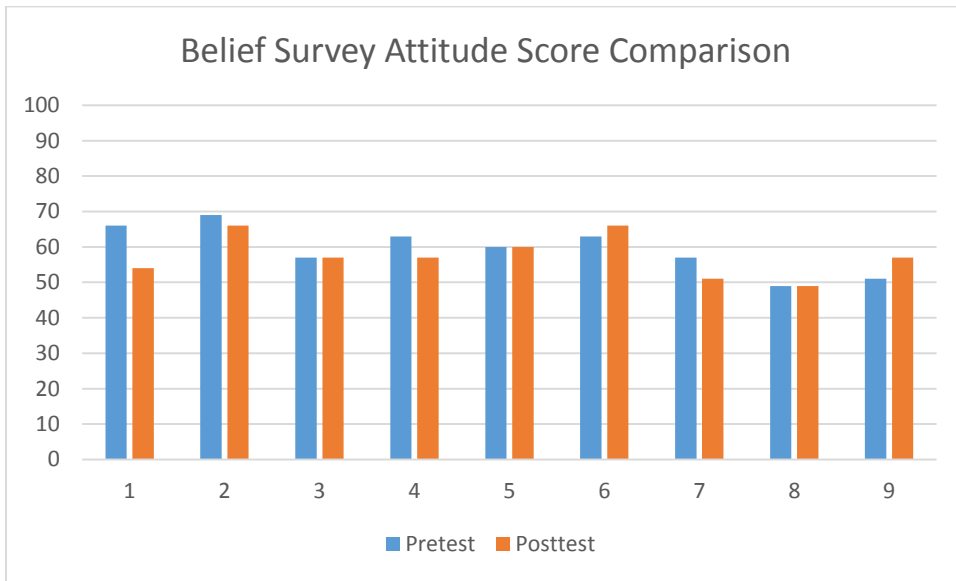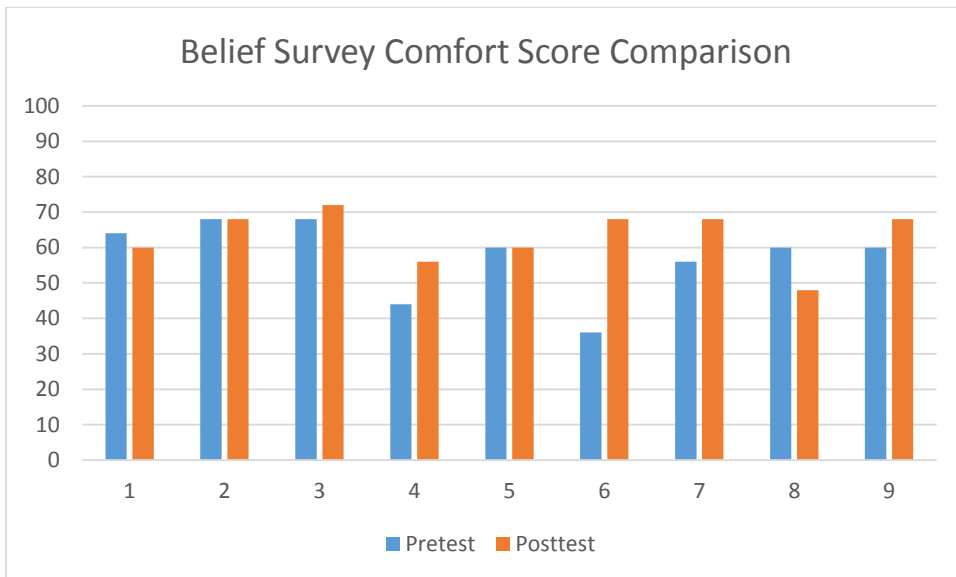**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**
Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Parental Consent Form

Purpose: A research study is being conducted by Jordan Courtney from Wichita State University. The purpose of this study is to determine how gifted students respond to the writing process utilized by published authors. This study will contribute to the researcher's completion of her master's thesis.

Participant Selection: Your child was selected as a possible participant in this study because of their participation in the gifted education classroom. Approximately 9 participants will be invited to join the study.

Explanation of Procedures: Should you decide to allow your child to participate in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form once all your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. This study consists of a review of work completed in the classroom as part of a unit regarding writing and non-fiction books. The items being reviewed are a writing belief survey and the final writing sample. Participation in this study will not take any of your child's educational time as the unit has already been taught.

Discomfort/ Risks: The investigator does not perceive more than minimal risks from your child's involvement in this study (that is, no risks beyond the risks associated with everyday life).

Benefits: Potential benefits from participation in this study include an increased understanding of the writing process and how it affects gifted students, once results are found.

Confidentiality: Every effort will be made to keep your study-related information confidential. However, in order to make sure the study is done properly and safely there may be circumstances where this information must be released. By signing this form, you are giving the research team permission to share information about you with the following groups:

- Office for Human Research Protections or other federal, state, or international regulatory agencies;
- The Wichita State University Institutional Review Board;

The researchers may publish the results of the study. If they do, they will only discuss group results. Your child's name will not be used in any publication or presentation about the study.

To ensure confidentiality, student names have been removed from all work and have been replaced with numbers. These numbers are random.

Refusal/Withdrawal: Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will <u>not</u> affect your future relations with Wichita State University. If you agree to participate in this study, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Contact: If you have any questions about this research, you can contact me at: jcourtney@usd259.net or (316)285-6797, or Dr. Kim McDowell at: kim.mcdowell@wichita.edu or (316)978-5497. If you have questions pertaining to your rights as a research subject, or about research-related injury, you can contact the Office of Research and Technology Transfer at Wichita State University, 1845 Fairmount Street, Wichita, KS 67260-0007, and telephone (316) 978-3285.

You are under no obligation to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that:

- You have read (or someone has read to you) the information provided above,
- You are aware that this is a research study,
- You have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to your satisfaction, and
- You have voluntarily decided to participate.

You are not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

_____
Printed Name of Child

_____
Printed Name of Parent/Guardian

_____   _____
Signature of Parent/Guardian   Date

_____
Printed Name of Witness

_____   _____
Witness Signature   Date

Appendix G

Wichita State University

Child Assent Form

I have been told that my parents (mom or dad) have said it is okay for me to participate, if I want to, in a project about writing and the writing process. I know that I can stop at any time I want to and it will be okay if I want to stop.

_____

Name   Date