THE EFFECTS OF AN EXTENDED PROMPT VERSUS A TYPICAL PROMPT ON THE LENGTH AND QUALITY OF FIRST DRAFT ESSAYS WRITTEN BY URBAN SECONDARY STUDENTS WITH MILD DISABILITIES

DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

Outcomes for secondary students whose writing skills are less than proficient are discouraging. Students with mild disabilities especially face significant challenges in their writing education, yet few interventions have been implemented (Englert, Raphael, Anderson, Anthony, & Stevens, 1991). Typically, these students write far less than their non-disabled counterparts and are less able to produce coherent, quality writing (Vallecross & Garriss, 1990). Writing output is often so sparse that it is difficult for teachers to identify deficits for remediation. Consequences for adults with poor writing skills include underemployment (College Board, 2004), restricted access to higher education, and extra time and expense in postsecondary education (Livingston & Wirt, 2004).

Research indicates that with strategic support, students with disabilities can increase both the quantity and quality of their writing. Various supports have been explored in the research, including self-regulation (De La Paz, 1999), goal-setting (Page-Voth & Graham, 1999), and revision strategies (Wong, Butler, Ficzere, & Kuperis, 1996, 1997). Strategies are most likely to be used if they can be easily implemented by the teacher to more than one student at a time. This study proposed the use of an extended prompt containing supports for writing a 5-paragraph essay as a way to increase the length and quality of student writing.

ii
Eight African American high school students participated. Each week during the 12-week study, students completed a first draft essay. During the baseline condition, students wrote in response to a typical 1-page prompt that provided a topic, background, and brainstorming information. During the intervention condition, students wrote with an extended prompt, a 7-page packet containing the typical prompt, prewriting support, and guidance for writing an introduction, conclusion, and three body paragraphs. Students wrote a final essay using only the typical prompt.

The results demonstrate that 7 of the 8 participants (a) averaged more words using the extended prompt than the typical prompt, (b) demonstrated no important difference in percentage of correct word sequences between the two conditions, and (c) were more likely to have higher holistic scores on essays written with the extended prompt. The results are analyzed and discussed, along with limitations.
Dedicated to my father
I wish to thank my husband, Russ, for his support and encouragement through the entire doctoral program. This is more ours than mine. I’m eternally grateful in the truest sense of the words.

Dr. Ralph Gardner, III deserves immeasurable gratitude for his guidance. He is a model advisor. If he had a middle name, it would be Patience. Thanks also to my committee members, Dr. Bill Heward and Dr. Nancy Neef, for their guidance and encouragement to pursue this line of research.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ........................................................................................................... ii  
Dedication .................................................................................................... iv  
Acknowledgments ........................................................................................ v  
Vita ................................................................................................................ vii  
List of Tables ............................................................................................... xiv  
List of Figures .............................................................................................. xv  

## Chapters

1. Introduction ............................................................................................... 1  
   - Purpose of Study .................................................................................... 4  
   - Research Questions ............................................................................... 4  
   - Glossary of Terms ................................................................................ 5  

2. Literature Review .................................................................................... 9  
   - Writing Characteristics of Students with Mild Disabilities ................. 9  
   - Urban Students ..................................................................................... 14  
   - Approaches to Writing Instruction ...................................................... 14  
     - The traditional approach .................................................................. 16  
     - The process approach ..................................................................... 18  
   - Measuring/Evaluating Quality ............................................................. 20  
     - Holistic scoring ................................................................................. 21  
   - Qualitative Measurement .................................................................... 23  
     - Curriculum-based measurement .................................................. 23  
     - Number of words written ............................................................... 24  
     - Correct word sequences ................................................................. 26  

ix
3. Method ........................................................................... 35
   Participants ........................................................................ 35
   Setting ............................................................................. 37
   Experimenter .................................................................... 40
   Data Collectors ................................................................... 40
   Dependent Variables ......................................................... 41
      Number of words written .............................................. 41
      Correct word sequences .............................................. 42
      Holistic scores .............................................................. 42
   Independent Variable ........................................................ 43
      Typical Prompt .............................................................. 43
      Extended Prompt .......................................................... 44
   Procedural Integrity .......................................................... 44
   Interobserver Agreement .................................................... 45
   Experimental Design ........................................................ 45
   Instructional Materials ...................................................... 45
   Procedures ....................................................................... 47
      Mini-lessons .................................................................... 47
      Baseline .......................................................................... 47
      First writing day .......................................................... 47
      Second writing day ....................................................... 51
      Third writing day ........................................................ 52
   Intervention ....................................................................... 53
      First writing day .......................................................... 53
      Second writing day ....................................................... 53
      Third writing day ........................................................ 54
Baseline II………………………………………………….…………... 55
Data Collection ……………………………………………………....... 55
  Number of words written ........................................... 57
  Correct word sequences ......................................... 58
  Holistic scores ......................................................... 59
Interobserver Agreement ............................................. 61
Procedural Integrity ...................................................... 63
Social Validity .............................................................. 65

4. Results ....................................................................... 66
  Interobserver Agreement ........................................... 66
  Number of Words Written ........................................... 66
  Percent Correct Word Sequences ................................. 68
  Holistic Scores .......................................................... 68
  Procedural Integrity .................................................... 69
Dependent Variables ...................................................... 69
  Number of Words Written ........................................... 69
    Student O ............................................................ 69
    Student J ............................................................ 69
    Student P ............................................................ 72
    Student R ............................................................ 72
    Student M ............................................................ 73
    Student L ............................................................ 73
    Student K ............................................................ 74
    Student N ............................................................ 75
  Group Results .......................................................... 75
Percent Correct Word Sequences ................................. 77
  Student O ............................................................ 77
  Student J ............................................................ 77
  Student P ............................................................ 80
Student R ................................................................. 80
Student M ............................................................... 81
Student L ............................................................... 81
Student K ............................................................... 82
Student N ............................................................... 83
Group Results ......................................................... 83
Holistic Scores ........................................................ 84
Student O ............................................................... 85
Student J ............................................................... 88
Student P ............................................................... 90
Student R ............................................................... 90
Student M ............................................................... 93
Student L ............................................................... 95
Student K ............................................................... 95
Student N ............................................................... 98
Group Results ......................................................... 100
Social Validity ........................................................ 101
Students’ Opinions .................................................... 101
Teacher’s Opinions .................................................... 102

5. Discussion .................................................................. 104

Research Questions ................................................... 104
Research Question 1 .................................................... 104
Research Question 2 .................................................... 108
Research Question 3 .................................................... 111
Research Question 4 .................................................... 113
Research Question 5 .................................................... 114
Limitations of the Study .............................................. 116
Implications for Practice ............................................. 126
Suggestions for Future Research ................................. 127
Summary .................................................................................................................. 130

List of References .................................................................................................... 139

Appendices:
A. Assent/Consent Forms ......................................................................................... 146
B. Sample Essay Scored for CWS ........................................................................... 149
C. Sample Typical Prompt ......................................................................................... 151
D. Sample Extended Prompt ...................................................................................... 159
E. Procedural Checklist ............................................................................................ 163
F. Sample Mini-Lesson ............................................................................................. 167
G. Student Q’s Data .................................................................................................. 169
H. IOA Data Collection Sheet for CWS ................................................................. 169
I. Student Satisfaction Survey .................................................................................... 174
J. Teacher Satisfaction Survey .................................................................................. 178
K. Sample Essays – Holistic Scores .......................................................................... 181
L. Student K’s Tenth Essay & Extended Prompt Packet Draft ............................ 204
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Student demographic information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Percentage IOA for each dependent variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Individual and group data for no. of words written</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Individual and group data for correct word sequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Holistic Rubric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Holistic score for Student O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Means and modes of holistic scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Holistic scores for Student J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>Holistic scores for Student P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>Holistic scores for Student R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>Holistic scores for Student M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>Holistic scores for Student L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>Holistic scores for Student K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>Holistic scores for Student N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>Students’ survey results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Ranks and holistic scores for the two longest and two shortest essays</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Classroom diagram</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Number of words written</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Percent correct word sequences</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Mean number of words across condition</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Mean percent correct word sequences across conditions</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Postschool outcome data for students with mild disabilities are discouraging. These students face low and/or underemployment; low rates of attendance at postsecondary institutions and even lower rates of completion; and generally more difficult adjustment to life as an independent young adult (Edgar, 1994). The outcomes for those who drop out of school are even worse. Traditional postschool options—education, employment, and military service—require a basic proficiency in the core curriculum that schools offer. Postsecondary education especially demands this proficiency. Edgar (1994) promotes the inclusion of transitional skills, including intensive writing instruction, in the secondary curriculum for students with disabilities to give them a better opportunity for access to and subsequently success in postsecondary education. One of the vocational/occupational models he suggests, the Apprenticeship/Citizenship Model, emphasizes high quality, socially valued skills. Basic academic skills are among those, including writing.

The continued importance of writing in the curriculum at the postsecondary levels is demonstrated by the inclusion of writing assessments on the two standard college aptitude tests, the ACT and SAT, and in statewide educational tests (Ohio Department of Education, 2003a). Unfortunately, there are indicators that some students are not learning
what they need to succeed at college and university. In Ohio, 18% of the state’s tenth
graders scored below the proficient level in writing on the Ohio Graduation Test (OGT),
a new statewide proficiency assessment. Prior to IDEA ’97—and more recently No Child
Left Behind (NCLB) legislation—many students with disabilities could be and were
exempted from statewide assessments. With the passage of NCLB, however, 95% of
students in a district must participate in state assessments at each grade level (p.2, Ohio
Department of Education, 2003b). In addition, only 1% of students who take state
assessments may do so in an alternate format (p. 14, ODEa, 2003b), which means only
students with the most significant disabilities will be exempt from the standards-based
state assessment.

If and/or when students with academic difficulties attend postsecondary school,
they face more time and greater expense than their proficient peers. Twenty eight percent
of U.S. college freshman in 2000 took at least one remedial course; 14% of those were
enrolled in remedial writing. Public 2-year institutions are bearing the brunt of remedial
education: 42% of all their first year students took a remedial course in 2000. Of those,
23% enrolled in a remedial writing course (Livingston & Wirt, 2004).

Adequate writing skills are highly valued in the public and private employment
sectors. Two illustrations of its importance are that 75% of state human resources
directors surveyed said they take writing into account when hiring and promoting, and the
states spend millions of dollars a year on remedial writing instruction (College Board,
2005). In the private sector, billions of dollars are spent annually on improving employee
writing (College Board, 2004). It is clear that poor writing skills limit opportunities in the
corporate world (College Board, 2004).
Written language demands in school increase proportional to grade level, with effective written language skills being more essential in high school and beyond (Christenson, Thurlow, Ysseldyke, & McVicar, 1989; Polloway, Patton, & Cohen, 1981). This increase in written language rigors is especially difficult for students with cognitive and specific learning disabilities (SLD). Many students with SLD have literacy deficits, i.e., reading, writing, and spelling (Heward, 2006). Students with learning disabilities who have difficulties with written expression will likely exhibit poor writing skills in core content areas in addition to English. In addition to compositions and literary analyses in English classes, some science teachers require lab reports; social studies teachers often require students to write biographies, reports on countries, and essays comparing and contrasting government systems or world leaders; and math teachers may require explanatory reports of answer derivations. But beyond the academic purposes of writing are its benefits to an individual’s well-being. For many, it is a means of self-expression (Mercer, 1997). Pennebaker (1997) determined that writing about emotional experiences can have a beneficial impact on physical and mental health, including a reduction in the number of physician visits and reduced self-reports of distress and/or depression.

In his review of 60 experimental writing studies conducted between 1963 and 1982, Hillocks (1986) reports that a number of studies demonstrated that the longer a piece of writing, the higher the grade or score. Hillocks concluded, “the evidence appears overwhelming that length makes a difference in quality” (p. 83). Many of the studies that followed the publication of Research on Written Composition included length as a measure (e.g., Graham, MacArthur, & Schwartz, 1995; Isaacson & Mattoon, 1990), and
for some of those, researchers did conclude that longer essays were associated with higher rankings/scores (e.g., Deno, Marston, & Mirkin, 1982; MacArthur & Graham, 1987).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of two different types of writing prompts on the length and quality of first draft essays written by urban secondary students with mild disabilities. At the onset of the study, all participants wrote in response to a typical prompt. Participants generally wrote one first draft per week. Each week, a scorer counted number of words and number of correct, incorrect, and total word sequences. As number of words written in the individual’s essays remained stable or decreased, participants were moved into the intervention condition, during which they wrote in response to an extended prompt. Percent correct word sequences was tabulated weekly and monitored, but as a secondary primary dependent variable, it did not contribute to the decision to move participants into intervention. During the last week of the study, all students again wrote in response to a typical prompt. At the end of the study, all the essays were evaluated by two certified/licensed teachers and assigned a holistic score based on a rubric they developed.

Research Questions

1. What are the effects of using an extended prompt versus a typical prompt on the number of words written in initial drafts by urban secondary students with mild disabilities?
2. What are the effects of using an extended prompt versus a typical prompt on the percent correct word sequences in initial drafts written by urban secondary students with mild disabilities?

3. What are the effects of using an extended prompt versus a typical prompt on the holistic/rubric scores of initial drafts written by urban secondary students with mild disabilities?

4. What are the students’ opinions of the extended prompt?

5. What are the teacher’s opinions of the extended prompt?

Glossary of Terms

Definitions for terms and concepts used in this study are provided in this section.

Anchoring. A process used prior to holistic scoring of writing by more than one scorer to familiarize the scorers with the rubric being used and to assure to the highest degree possible that the scorers are using criteria from the rubric as their primary source and not unspecified criteria. The anchoring process attempts to make the subjective process of holistic scoring as objective as possible.

Brainstorming. Part of the first step in the writing process known as prewriting (the other steps are drafting, revising/editing, and publishing). It can take many forms, but the intent is that the writer generates as many ideas as possible so that he or she is likely to hit upon a high-interest idea. In addition, when he or she begins drafting, there should be a wide selection of ideas from which to choose.

Case. Whether the first letter of a word is capitalized or not. Upper case is a capital letter, lower case is not.
**Context.** The words and idea surrounding a particular word (e.g., in the sentence *She was wearing a full-length parka with a hood, but I could tell she was hot*, the meaning of hot can be connoted from the context to be good-looking, not feeling warm).

**Correct Word Sequences.** A pair of words is a sequence. If the two words in the sequence are correct in grammar, context, spelling, punctuation, case, and agreement (number or pronoun), the sequence is considered correct (CWS), otherwise it is considered incorrect (ICWS). Correct Word Sequences, in this study, is a method for measuring sentence level errors.

**Draft.** The second step in the writing process, it is the first output of writing in the writing process that is organized/structured in a manner to be recognizable as the complete first response to the topic or prompt.

**Holistic Scoring.** The process of scoring a piece of writing by examining and rating the presence of elements deemed important (e.g., given a 4-point rubric of pertinent criteria, a scorer reads a piece of writing and assigns it a number from one to four depending on the presence of the rubric criteria in the essay and in the context of the overall impression of the essay).

**Mechanics.** Refers to spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

**Prompt, Extended.** A seven-page packet containing the topic, background to the topic, the prompt, hints for writing a well-constructed essay, instructions for brainstorming, a brainstorming structure, a blank outline, and instructions and questions for completing the rest of the essay, including an introduction and conclusion and three body paragraphs.

**Prompt, Typical.** A one-page handout containing the topic background to the topic, the prompt, hints for writing a well-constructed essay, and instructions for brainstorming.
Resource Room. A classroom that students with mild disabilities are assigned to in order to receive special education services at a level of intensity one step more supportive than tutoring services. Students are assigned to the classroom for services pertaining to an academic course (i.e., math and English) but do not receive course grades for those classes from the resource room teacher (although she may consult with the academic teacher regarding grade and assignment modifications). A student could be assigned to resource room for one or more classes and to a self-contained classroom for one or more classes.

Rubric. A set of criteria on which to base holistic scoring of writing.

Self-contained Classroom. A classroom for students with disabilities severe enough to preclude their inclusion in academic classes. Students in a self-contained classroom receive services at a level of intensity/support above resource room and tutoring. Students could be assigned to a self-contained classroom for one or more classes and receive resource room services and/or tutoring for one or more classes. The teacher in the self-contained classroom is responsible for assignments, grades, and credit for the course(s).

Sentence Level Errors. Errors in writing that may or may not affect the overall integrity/impression of the essay. Includes errors in capitalization, punctuation, spelling, grammar, context, diction, case, number agreement, pronoun agreement, and sentence structure (i.e., fragments, run-ons, split infinitives). In this study, measured by Correct Word Sequences.

Tutoring Room. A classroom for high functioning students with disabilities (usually learning disabilities), in which special education services are delivered at a level of intensity/support one step below resource room services. Special education services are
provided by a tutor and include reading texts/tests and otherwise providing academic support for completion of assignments. Tutored students are not assigned a class period for tutoring services; instead, they seek services in the tutoring room from their tutor on an as-needed basis, usually during study hall. A student who needs a test read would seek that service during the academic class in which the test is scheduled.

*Writing Session.* The time it took for students to complete that week’s prompt. Usually coincided with a calendar week, though on occasion a student needed some time in the next calendar week to complete a prompt.

*Writing Day.* The 45-min period established as the boundary for one writing episode. In this study, there are first, second, and third writing days. First and second writing days never occurred on the same calendar day, but occasionally second and third writing days did occur on the same calendar day.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The intent of this chapter is to review the research and professional literature related to this study. The chapter begins with an overview of the writing characteristics of students with mild disabilities, especially those with learning disabilities, followed by a brief review of information pertaining to urban and secondary students. Next, approaches to writing instruction are reviewed with emphasis on the writing process. At this point in the chapter, the rationale and support for qualitative and quantitative measures are presented. Finally, the chapter ends with research that focuses directly on interventions for the writing of secondary students with mild disabilities.

Writing Characteristics of Students with Mild Disabilities

Approximately 11% of the school-age population have disabilities and receive special education (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Of those, approximately 85-90% have mild disabilities and about half have specific learning disabilities. According to Mercer (1997) many students with specific learning disabilities have writing deficits. Fortunately, researchers are attempting to address the writing deficits of students at the middle or high school level (Graham, Schwartz, & MacArthur, 1993; Wong, Wong, & Blenkinsop, 1989). According to Deshler, Schumaker, Lenz, Bulgren, Hock, Knight, and Ehren (2001), the majority of students with learning disabilities at the secondary level have language skills at the 4th and 5th grade levels. These writing deficits include
planning, drafting, organizing, and revising text, making it difficult for them to produce coherent text. Many students are also too heavily dependent on teachers to prompt and monitor their writing performance (Englert, Raphael, Anderson, Anthony, & Stevens, 1991). Unfortunately for these students, writing is not often emphasized in instructional programs for students with learning disabilities (Mercer, 1997).

Students with learning disabilities often produce written products significantly shorter than their non-disabled peers’ writing (Graham, Harris, MacArthur, & Schwartz, 1991; Morris & Crump, 1982). Thomas, Englert, and Gregg (1987) found that students with learning disabilities were five times more likely “to terminate their text prematurely” than their typically-developing peers. Graham and colleagues suggest that students with learning disabilities prematurely terminate their writing because they find it difficult to persist in language production in the absence of signals of the kind they would receive in conversation. Scardamalia, Bereiter, and Goelman (1982) suggest that children learn the appropriate performance components of writing as a result of their experiences with conversation. They purport that the lack of reciprocity in the writing situation results in a “general discoordination of language production resulting from the lack of external signals” (p. 177). Their speculations are in regard to young children considered novices at writing, but the comparison to older emergent writers is neither difficult nor unreasonable.

Wong, Wong, and Blenkinsop (1989) conclude that adolescents with disabilities show developmental delays in writing, i.e., their writing exhibited characteristics of the writing of younger students. For example, eighth and eleventh grade students with learning disabilities achieved lower mean holistic scores rating “interestingness” and
clarity than normally achieving sixth and eighth graders. The eighth and eleventh graders with learning disabilities wrote fewer mean words than normally achieving eighth graders but more than normally achieving sixth graders on 2 out of 3 essays. Whole-class writing instruction presented at the level of the majority of the class, i.e., at grade level, may not be beneficial for such students who have writing deficits that place them below grade level. Though teaching writing in a one-on-one situation or in small groups is often more effective, as it is with other academic subjects, it may not be feasible in contemporary general education classrooms or even resource rooms. Individualized interventions for text production and quality enhancements are needed that do not require one-on-one instruction.

Students with learning disabilities exhibit a host of writing deficits that contribute to poor quality writing, including a high frequency of spelling and punctuation errors (Anderson, 2001; Moran, 1981), problems with cohesion and coherence (Nodine, Barenbaum, & Newcomer, 1985), repetition of words (Moran, 1981), irrelevant statements, lack of detail (Englert & Thomas, 1987), and poor revising skills (Espin & Sindelar, 1988; Graham, Scwartz, & MacArthur, 1993). Students with disabilities may make similar errors as students without disabilities but those errors tend to occur with more frequency (Anderson, 2001). For example, students with disabilities overused the conjunction “and,” omitted subjects, and started a story in third person then switched to first person more frequently than their non-disabled counterparts (Anderson). They were also more likely to make errors in punctuation, particularly omission of appropriate punctuation (Anderson). Students with disabilities also tend to write papers that are more confusing and incoherent than their non-disabled counterparts, making successive
statements that seem to have no relation to each other (Nodine, Barenbaum, & Newcomer, 1985).

Morris and Crump (1982) discovered that students with learning disabilities were more likely to use fewer different word types than students without disabilities. They surmised that their lack of spelling ability could account for this, i.e., students with disabilities were more likely to use words they knew how to spell than “new” words, resulting in a repetition of words. Moran (1981) found that spelling performance was the only measure that distinguished low achieving students and students with learning disabilities; students with learning disabilities averaged more misspellings.

Englert and Thomas (1987) found that the students with disabilities, in comparison to those without, tended to write more irrelevant statements. The authors surmised that the irrelevancies occurred because students did not look to the original stimulus (i.e., prompt/topic) for confirmation of the supporting statements. In addition, Englert and Thomas found that students with disabilities tended to write fewer elaborations (e.g., details and explanations). Likely related is the finding that students with learning disabilities are more likely to terminate their text prematurely (Thomas, Englert, & Gregg, 1987). They also tend to repeat information from a preceding sentence, and produce spelling, handwriting, and syntactical errors (Thomas, Englert, & Gregg).

Students with disabilities also display poor revising skills in that they tend to view the revising process as a time to correct the mechanics of their paper instead of as an opportunity to elaborate, sequence ideas more effectively, or improve the beginnings and/or endings (Graham, Schwartz, & MacArthur, 1993). Espin and Sindelar (1988) noted that students with learning disabilities tend to falsely correct at a higher rate than
their non-disabled peers, meaning they “corrected” aspects of their writing that were not, in fact, wrong. These deficits all contribute, along with sparse output, to a lack of overall quality in a finished product. Because writing is an essential skill for success in education at the secondary level and beyond, remedial instruction needs to address both the quantity and quality of student writing.

Hallahan and Kauffman (1997) suggest that students with learning disabilities may not know how to approach the process of writing an essay; this may make it difficult for them to complete work at various stages. Especially difficult may be the first stages, the initial output of an early draft. While increasing the output of older reluctant writers is essential, any intervention for increased production in the writing of older students is occurring at a time when their peers are learning to be concise in their writing, (i.e., parsimonious as opposed to verbose). For this reason, instruction at this level should focus on increasing quantity but not ignore the need for students to produce a quality writing product.

Much of what has been written about writing deals primarily with students in the elementary grades (Christenson, Thurlow, Ysseldyke, & McVicar, 1989; Goddard, 1998; Graham, 1990; Sexton, Harris, & Graham, 1998; Thomas, Englert, & Gregg, 1987). Given that children who are academically behind in the early grades are likely to fall increasingly behind as the years progress without intensive remedial instruction, it is indeed critical that due attention be paid to these important early years. Unfortunately, state proficiency scores, graduation tests, college remedial classes, and private and public employment sectors all indicate that students are still graduating from high school without the writing skills necessary to succeed.
Urban Students

Proficiency testing appears to be a long-term if not permanent fixture in education. Urban students tend to perform less well on these statewide tests than their suburban counterparts (ODE, 2005). In one central Ohio county, the largest urban district had nearly half (42.7%) of its high school sophomores score below the Proficient level on the writing portion of the new Ohio Graduation Test (OGT). The two other urban districts had 22% and 32% of their sophomores score below Proficient. In comparison, the eight suburban districts with the highest median incomes and lowest poverty in the same county averaged 7.4% of sophomores scoring below Proficient. Only two of those suburban districts had below Proficient percentages in double digits, neither above 15%.

When the data is disaggregated, it can be seen that it is the students from culturally diverse backgrounds that are failing the OGT in the greatest numbers. Only 63% of African American students were proficient in writing compared with 86% of their white peers. Hispanic students fared only marginally better with 67% achieving proficient status.

Approaches to Writing Instruction

There are two fundamental approaches to writing instruction. The traditional approach that was common prior to the eighties was characterized by formal grammar instruction and indirect measures of writing, such as objective tests assessing knowledge of grammar, spelling, usage, and vocabulary (Brown, 1980). Formal grammar instruction was a mainstay, if not the cornerstone, in our country’s English classes (Holbrook, 1983). That is, until Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer published the first Research in Written Composition (1963), an NCTE-sponsored review of writing research. Following the
Braddock Report, emphasis shifted away from the traditional approach to teaching the process of writing. One of the report’s conclusions was that grammar instruction has, at best, a negligible effect on writing outcomes and often has a harmful effect because it occurs in place of more effective instruction involving actual writing. This proclamation resounded through the classrooms and hearts of English teachers who had long known that writing is more than a student’s ability to carve up a sentence and place its parts on the appropriate horizontal and slanted lines (Hillocks, 1986). As a result, some researchers and educators renewed the search for effective writing instruction strategies. Though many composition teachers agreed that indirect measures have little to do with writing ability (Mann, 1988), others felt that grammar instruction had its place in an effective writing program (Holt, 1982). The debate raged on, as a perusal of article titles in *English Journal*, the flagship publication of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), from 1971 to present reveals. A sample of those titles follows:

- A No-Grammar Approach to Sentence Power, February, 1971
- Grammar and Goodness, May, 1973
- Grammar and Composition: Myths and Realities, December, 1975
- Examining a Grammar Course: The Rationale and the Result, October, 1980
- Bait/Rebait: Grammar Should Be Taught and Learned in Our Schools, March, 1982
- Writing and Grammar: An Image Problem, April, 1982
- Parsing the Question, “Why Teach Grammar?” December, 1984
- Grammar Curriculum: Back to Square One, January, 1986

15
The Traditional Approach

The traditional approach to writing instruction can be traced back to the late eighteenth century when Noah Webster and other language reformists were advocating the adoption of a standard American English, attempting to assert this country’s linguistic independence as well as its political independence (Baron, 1982). The schools became the repositories of learning the American language, with emphasis on its correct spelling and pronunciation. As lessons in English grammar gradually made the transition from private to public schools, educators also recognized its importance in correct written expression as well as correct oratorical form (Baron). Grammar instructors even then, however, were apparently not adept at making the connection between grammar and writing clear. W. B. Fowles reports that after years of grammar instruction, he was “never required to write a sentence of English…” (cited in Baron, 1982, p. 128). Indeed, instruction in the use of the language included textbook dependency and the memorization of the rules and definitions of grammar. Baron suggests that the rigidity governing the instruction of grammar merely reflected the religious conservatism of post-Revolution America.
Reform appears to be a tradition in American education. Patriotic linguists who sought the adoption of a uniquely American language were considered language reformers in their day. The adoption of grammar instruction in public schools was one fruit of their labors. The proliferation of grammar textbooks in the 1800’s was unprecedented. During the nineteenth century, grammar became an established presence in American schools, but that did not stop innovators from trying to change the traditional system. Educator Joseph Neef advocated reform, beginning with terminology simplication and a reduction in the parts of speech to four (Baron). Influenced by Neef, Roswell Smith advocated recognizing the educational agency of children, i.e., a child’s capacity for “collecting, and originating, and producing most of the ideas which are necessary for its [sic] education…” (cited in Baron, 1982, p. 155). But traditional grammarians persisted and the twentieth century saw the continuation of grammar instruction in schools across the country, more entrenched in the educational system than ever (Brown, 1982).

With the onset of the process approach to writing instruction, the traditional approach was referred to by some as the product approach because of its emphasis on the product of writing with no regard for how the writing was produced (Carroll, 1984). The product approach is characterized, perhaps to a lesser degree, by the same disconnect from writing and language usage noted in the early years of grammar instruction, with an emphasis on learning rules and definitions, for example being able to name the parts of speech and their functions. The idea was that knowing the rules of grammar would make it more likely that the written product would be correct, i.e., that it would follow all the rules of grammar. Another characteristic of the product approach is the analysis and
deconstruction of published texts, the intent being to teach students to compose compositions similar in form (or tone, style, etc.) to the studied text (Newcomer, Bodine, & Barenbaum, 1988). The role of teacher in the traditional product approach is not that of authentic reader or audience of the writing, but evaluator (Carroll, 1984). Little feedback is provided until after the written product is finished (Newcomer, Bodine, & Barenbaum, 1988).

The traditional product approach to writing prevailed in American classrooms well into the mid-twentieth century (Newcomer, Bodine, & Barenbaum, 1988). But as grammar instruction was widely being acknowledged, both in research and practice, as failing to be effective as a tool for writing instruction (Hillocks, 1986), advocates of more writer-centered approaches were gaining a foothold. One of the suggestions for future research found in The Braddock Report was to find out what the act of writing involved. That question may not have instigated the surge in interest in the writing process that followed, but it certainly may have encouraged it (Hillocks, 1986).

The Process Approach

Though it is difficult to establish who first identified and touted writing as a process, the writing process approach became a popular and established instructional approach in English and language arts classrooms beginning in the 1970’s. Sounding the clarion call to focus on how writing occurs, writing process advocates encouraged teaching the steps to the writing process. Graves (1976) called the steps precomposing, composing, and postcomposing. The steps are currently more popularly known as prewriting, writing, revising, editing, and publishing, or some variation of these five stages. The process approach is characterized by an emphasis on the process by which a
student composes text, not necessarily on a perfect, finished product. Adherents to the process approach advocate the authenticity of this approach, the idea that students learn how the process of writing works and then go through the process, not just learn how to spell something correctly, memorize correct verb tenses, or be able to name the eight parts of speech.

Process approach enthusiasts advocate students choosing their own topics, writing for real audiences and purposes, and supporting student ownership of writing as the motivation for their seeking and developing the skills they need in order to effectively communicate (Graves, 1994). The process approach is manifest in the work Donald H. Graves and exemplified by the writing workshop model pioneered by Nancie Atwell (1987). According to Delpit (1995), those who advocate the process approach “often give the impression that they view the direct teaching of skills to be restrictive to the writing process” (p. 18) and those who ignore process are accused of neglecting the student’s need for expression in an authentic context.

The writing process approach emphasizes writing fluency, including techniques that improve a student’s ability to get words down on paper (Graves, 1994). It promotes frequent writing in contexts that are meaningful and authentic to the students, which usually translates to students choosing their own topics and genres for their written expression and the provision of authentic audiences, perhaps pen pals or other purposeful letter-writing. The reader is emphasized as both peers and teachers provide feedback, either in writing or in conferences (Atwell, 1987). The process approach encourages the use of the students’ own writing as the text for instruction in teaching the conventions of print (Atwell, 1987).
The writers’ workshop model is touted as a successful, appropriate process model for classes with students writing at different levels (Atwell, 1987). It is a model in which peers and teachers are frequent, consistent readers for the writer, providing the “external signals” that Scardamalia, Bereiter, and Goelman (1982) suggest that when missing is the reason some students struggle with writing. In writers’ workshop situations, readers provide the conversational reciprocity or feedback that a writer needs to produce more detailed or coherent text. For example, a pair of writers may conference after having read each others’ pieces and ask questions of each other to clarify issues that the reader finds unclear or problematic. But a writer who does not produce very much text receives comparable feedback in this model, i.e., a little writing can foster only a little feedback. For the writers’ workshop model to function, students must produce text at the onset. In the process approach, a teacher cannot teach writing in the absence of student writing.

Despite the popularity of the process approach in classrooms across America, the primary method for assessing a student’s writing on standardized tests, such as state proficiency tests, does not mirror the process approach. Sitting for proficiency tests, students are not being guided through the process of writing; they are being asked to produce as perfect a piece as possible within a restricted window of time. Again, a student must produce enough writing of a certain quality to be considered a competent writer.

Measuring/Evaluating Quality

Although Hillocks (1986) reported that “the evidence is overwhelming that length makes a difference in quality” (p. 83), he recommended it as an area of research as it relates to structural elaboration. He and other researchers (i.e., O’Donnell, Griffin, &
Norris, 1967) did not think that word count was in and of itself a useful indicator of development though others thought it was a good indicator of quality (Brigham, Graubard, & Stans, 1972; Videen, Deno, & Marston, 1982). The point is that increasing the number of words written for the sake of merely increasing the length of a paper is not academically useful. Any composition teacher will confess that despite designating length criteria, it is the quality of a piece that counts. Researchers likely recognized that a student could add random words without concern for correct context, usage, or even understanding and produce a longer text than previously. So most researchers who examine quantitative dependent variables also assess qualitative variables.

Determining what constitutes good writing is difficult, though many say they know it when they see it (Colgan, 1996). Researchers measure quality in different ways. Some consider countable indices as quality indicators. Brigham, Graubard, and Stans (1972) used number of different words and number of new words as quality measures. Deno, Marston, and Mirkin (1982) used standardized test scores to correlate countable indices to a standard quality indicator. Espin, Shin, Deno, Skare, Robinson, and Benner (2000) use a single teacher’s rankings as a quality indicator. Tindal and Parker (1991) use a more subjective measure, holistic scores, as a quality indicator. It is likely that because holistic scores have become ubiquitous in English classrooms, use of them in research has gained widespread acceptance.

**Holistic Scoring**

Holistic scoring is the process of scoring a piece of writing by examining and rating the presence of elements deemed important to the scorer(s). Mann (1988) reports that holistic scoring grew out of the need for a simple, efficient method for evaluating
relatively large numbers of student writing. As a result of the falling popularity of indirect measures of writing, teachers were faced with scoring actual writing instead of objective tests of writing knowledge. Marking and evaluating every important element of a writing piece is time consuming and tedious. In response to that need, the Educational Testing Service (ETS) sponsored the development of holistic scoring, dramatically more efficient than comprehensive grading (White, 1984). Despite the reference to predetermined criteria, the scoring occurs without prolonged examination of the essay. The holistic scoring process does not require the counting or tallying of the occurrence of a certain element, (e.g., misspellings), but instead requires assigning a score based on the impression the essay makes as a whole. According to White (1984) it does require, at its core, “a carefully developed and precise writing assignment (sometimes called a ‘prompt’)” (p. 403-404), and because it is difficult to get agreement on what good writing consists of, it is critical to “attempt to reduce unnecessary variability in the scoring process” (p. 404).

The first three ways to reduce variability in scoring, according to White (1984) are to (a) control the essay reading (i.e., have all evaluators reading and scoring at the same time and place and under the same conditions), (b) use a rubric, and (c) practice with sample or anchor papers. High reliability between or among holistic evaluators’ judgments can be achieved by implementing any one, two, or all three of these practices. Parker, Tindal, and Hasbrouck (1991) achieved an .80 interrater reliability (also known as interobserver agreement or IOA) before proceeding to actual scoring. Tindal and Parker (1991) had a range of interrater reliability from .73 to .88 on three dimensions of their subjects’ writing. Troia, Graham, and Harris (1999) achieved .96 interobserver reliability.
Videen, Deno, and Marston (1982) were much more generous, allowing a 24% interrater reliability for perfect agreement and 68% interrater reliability for agreement within one point on the rating scale (plus or minus) on writings in their study. White (1984) endorses holistic scoring as the most successful method of scoring writing in quantity, despite its limitations, because it is “practical and relatively reliable” (p. 408). Overall, holistic scoring is considered a valid and reliable evaluation tool when evaluators are trained properly (Cooper & Odell, 1977).

White’s (1984) recommended use of a rubric to define and weight criteria was heeded by several researchers. Graham and Harris (1989) used a simple seven-point rating scale whose points represented quality on a continuum from lowest (1) to highest (7). Tindal and Parker (1991) had raters use an experimenter-created one to five point rating scale based on criteria across three dimensions: story idea, organization, and conventions-mechanics. Englert, Wu, and Zhao (2005) used a zero to three-point rubric created by the experimenters. As long as evaluators are trained on its use, the scale can be flexible and germane to the particular writing assignment (White, 1984).

**Quantitative Measurement**

*Curriculum-based Measurement*

The primary purpose of curriculum-based measurement (CBM) is to provide teachers with help in improving student performance and evaluating the educational effectiveness of any one instructional strategy or tactic (Deno, 1992). A teacher begins with a measurement of a skill performance, implements instruction, and evaluates the skill performance again. Decisions to continue, tweak, or discard the instructional strategy or tactic are based on the difference, if any, in the pre- and post-measures. CBM
is a formative evaluation tool, so ongoing measurements are desirable. The measures used, therefore, must be simple and able to reflect growth, even if it that growth is minimally incremental. Fuchs and Deno (1994) propose the presence of three essential features for instructionally valid measurement. First, assessment must occur repeatedly (over time) on material that is of comparable difficulty. Second, the measurement must assess valid outcome indicators, i.e., those related to terminal skill or generalized outcomes. Third, assessing quality as well as quantity of student performance is necessary if the measure is to be instructionally useful. Number of Words Written and Correct Word Sequences have been shown through research to meet these qualifications.

*Number of Words Written*

Number of words written is a common quantitative measure of student writing productivity. It is a simple and straightforward measure used by researchers to measure writing performance, especially in studies with younger subjects. Moxley, Lutz, Ahlborn, Boley, and Armstrong (1995) had first through fourth graders write under a tight time condition and a relaxed time condition and self-record their word counts. Increases in writing rates accompanied increases in sentence complexity and details. These researchers particularly liked word count as a formative evaluation tool, but had no statistical comparisons of quality. Brigham, Graubard, and Stans (1972) examined the effects of a contingency of point awards on several measures, including number of words, number of new words, and number of different words. They discovered the largest change in the number of words point contingency, approximately double of the non-specific baseline contingency (i.e., points for general work behavior).
Other researchers have found number of words to be less reliable as a predictor of general student writing performance. Espin, Shin, Deno, Skare, Robinson, and Benner, (2000) reviewed four secondary studies and concluded that number of words written and words spelled correctly were not appropriate as scoring metrics for older students because they revealed only low to medium correlations with certain criterion measures. In their own study, they used a single teacher’s rating as their quality criterion in a study examining the writing of 112 seventh and eighth graders. They found that number of words written did not correlate highly with the teachers rating and suggest that a more complex measure be used for older students. Although they showed no inter-rater reliability data, the teacher ratings correlated highly with the district writing test. Still, the possibility of an unstable criterion measure exists.

In a study of third through fifth graders, Tindal & Parker (1991) found low correlations between their quantitative measure (number of words written) and their qualitative measures (words spelled correctly and words sequenced correctly) relative to their previous research. They included a holistic score as a qualitative measure, but the two judges were required to holistically score the two sets of papers (one written in fall and one in spring) so that they fell on a normal curve of scores. This artificial construct may have prevented a judge from assigning a score he or she felt reflected the true quality of an essay, either higher or lower. This artificiality could have affected the correlation results.

Parker, Tindal, & Hasbrouck (1991) studied the essays of students across the grade spectrum, including second, fourth, sixth, eighth, and eleventh grades. Five countable indices were examined in comparison to holistic judgments: total words,
correctly spelled words, correct word sequences, percent correctly spelled words, and percent correct word sequences. They found total words to have the weakest validity coefficients and correct word sequences the strongest, though without second grade data, percent correct word sequences was also strong. These researchers were primarily interested in determining the suitability of these indices as screening tools so caution is warranted in extrapolating their conclusions for more descriptive purposes. Indeed, researchers should continue using number of words as a quantitative measure in their research, so that more can be discovered about its usefulness as an indicator of writing performance.

Correct Word Sequences

Measuring Correct Word Sequences (CWS) involves comparing each pair of words as they occur in a writing piece. If both words in the pair are correct in spelling and in the context of accepted English language use, the sequence is considered correct (Videen, Deno, & Marston, 1982). If either word is not correct in spelling or use, the sequence is incorrect. Videen, Deno, & Marston (1982) found Correct Word Sequences (CWS) to be a valid indicator of written expression proficiency. In their study of 50 elementary children in grades three through six, they found that CWS correlated significantly with five of their seven criterion measures, including holistic ratings and total words written. Espin, Shin, Deno, Skare, Robinson, and Benner (2000) found the correlation between CWS and holistic ratings moderately high in their study of 112 middle school students in four classes each completing four writing samples. Higher still was the correlation between the same holistic ratings and CWS – ICWS (incorrect word sequences). More recently, Walker, Shippen, Alberto, Houchins, and Cihak (2005) used
CWS as a measure in a single-subject design study to demonstrate the effectiveness of the *Expressive Writing* Direct Instruction Program.

**Research on Writing Interventions for Secondary Students with Mild Disabilities**

That students with mild disabilities have different writing difficulties and outcomes than their non-disabled peers is clear. Wong, Wong, and Blenkinsop (1989) investigated the cognitive and metacognitive aspects of writing problems in eighth and eleventh graders with learning disabilities by comparing their writing and answers on a questionnaire to a control group of normally achieving sixth and eighth graders. They concluded from their study that the normally achieving students “clearly surpassed” the students with disabilities on both quality and quantity of essay writing. In addition, they conclude that students with disabilities in this study demonstrated developmental delays in the cognitive and metacognitive aspects of writing, those important to the production of organized coherent text, such as awareness of text structure (e.g., compare and contrast).

Researchers have attempted to teach cognitive strategies with varied but successful outcomes. Montague, Graves, and Leavell (1991) investigated the effects of planning time and procedural facilitation on narrative compositions of seventh and eighth grade students. The 20 typical participants were assigned to a normally achieving writing group (NAW) and the 40 students with learning disabilities were randomly assigned to either a story writing group (LDW) or a story dictation group (LDD). The three groups wrote under three conditions, no planning (NP), planning time (PT), and planning time plus story cues provided on cue cards (PTC). The participants were given story enders, as opposed to story starters. The dependent measures were both quantitative and qualitative:
number of words, number of propositions (corresponding roughly to simple sentences), and ratings using a Story Quality Scale. The results indicate that qualitative differences between the two LD groups and the NAW group existed in the no planning/no procedural facilitation condition (NAW higher), but those differences were no longer evident when time and structure were provided. There were no differences in the dependent measures between the two LD groups; it did not seem to matter whether they dictated or wrote. It was noted, however, that the writing group took more time. Though there was no clear indication that any one condition resulted in more words written by the LDD and LDW groups, they significantly increased propositions when both planning time and procedural facilitation were provided. Not surprisingly, the NAW group consistently wrote more words than the LD groups across all conditions.

Wong, Butler, Ficzere, and Kuperis (1996) trained low achieving students (LA) and students with learning disabilities (LD) to plan, write, and revise opinion essays and compared the results to those of 20 untrained control participants, who were also LD or LA. Pretest and posttest measures were taken in the form of opinion essays written without the supports provided during intervention. The only dependent measures were quality scores given for clarity and cogency using a rating scale of 1 (lowest/poor) to 5 (highest/best). The pretest and posttest data on the trained participants indicate that their training improved their ability to produce persuasive and clear essays that maintained over time. The comparison of data from the two groups clearly demonstrated that the trained group surpassed the untrained group in the qualities of clarity and cogency. An interesting outcome of this study comes from results from pretest-posttest questionnaires attempting to measure self-efficacy. The trained participants thought themselves more
able to produce a quality essay and had a more positive view of their writing ability than the untrained participants, who maintained negative attitudes towards writing.

Wong, Butler, Ficzere, and Kuperis (1997) followed up their 1996 study with a nearly identical one, this time training the same suburban LD and LA students (ninth and tenth graders in this study) to plan, write, and revise compare-and-contrast essays instead of opinion essays, using approximately the same procedures as in their 1996 study. Their quality measures targeted clarity, aptness (i.e., were details used to compare and contrast), and organization. The results show that the trained participants improved significantly from pretest to posttest on all qualitative measures and that the improvements maintained over time. Interestingly, the trained participants did not show the same improvements in self-efficacy that they had in the previous study.

Page-Voth and Graham (1999) examined the effects of goal-setting on the writing performance and self-efficacy of 30 suburban seventh and eighth grade students with writing and learning disabilities. Students were randomly assigned to one of three groups: goal setting, goal setting plus strategy, and control. Statistical analysis and a pretest essay demonstrated no significant difference among the groups. Students wrote three more essays in which the two goal setting groups were asked to attain a specified goal pertaining to including a number of supporting reasons or refutations to be included in the essay. In addition to the goal, the strategy group was given a 6-step strategy for accomplishing the goal. The control group was provided with no goal and no strategy. Five dependent variables were measured: functional essay elements, essay quality, length, self-efficacy, and evidence of strategy use. Students in the goal setting groups
wrote more than the students in the control group and had higher quality scores, but goal setting plus strategy was not superior to goal setting alone in either measure.

De La Paz (1999) examined the effects of self-regulated strategy development (SRSD) on the writing of suburban middle school students with and without learning disabilities. 22 students participated, of which 6 were identified as learning disabled (LD), 6 were considered low achievers (LA), 6 average (AA), and 4 high (HA). Students were paired within the classes of three participating classes such that 2 LD students were paired, 2 LA were paired, 2 AA, and 2 HA (one class had no HA pair). The primary dependent variable was essay elements, but other dependent variables were length (as measured by number of words written) and quality (as measured by holistic scores on a scale of zero to 7). Participants were taught the SRSD strategies prior to writing. The first, known by the acronym PLAN, detailed the following prewriting steps: a) pay attention to the prompt, b) list main ideas, c) add supporting ideas, and d) number your ideas. The second strategy, known as WRITE, included steps to follow during composition: a) work from the plan, b) remember goals, c) include transition words, d) try to vary sentences, and e) use exciting words. As part of the instruction, students were given the holistic scale and had it explained to them. Instruction in the strategies included explanation, modeling, and collaborative practice. Baseline essays were written prior to strategy instruction. One class wrote six baseline essays, one class wrote eight baseline, and the third wrote nine. All classes wrote three essays post-instruction. The researchers assessed the effects of SRSD using a multiple probe design with multiple probes in baseline. The scores of the paired students, not individual scores, were averaged and graphed. As would be expected, LD students in baseline wrote the fewest number of
words and their essays were judged to be of the lowest quality. Post-instruction, LD students wrote two and a half times more, whereas the other groups only doubled the number of words they wrote. Higher quality ratings followed post-instruction as well, approximately doubling for all students. In fact, except for one exception (an essay by a student in the LD group) all post-instruction quality ratings were higher than the highest baseline scores.

Sturm and Rankin-Erickson (2002), interested in the prewriting stage of the writing process, examined the effects of two methods of concept mapping, handwritten and computer-generated, on the writing of 12 eighth grade students with learning disabilities and writing deficits. 50 prompts were presented to the students prior to the onset of the study. Students ranked the prompts according to their interest using a 5-point scale, 5 indicating high interest. The prompts with the highest average scores were used for the study. Two baseline essays were written prior to instruction on concept mapping. The steps to instruction were explanation/discussion, modeling, student mastery of steps/rehearsing, and guided practice and feedback. Concept mapping was taught during the first week of instruction, and the computer software program (Inspiration™) was taught during the second week of instruction. All students demonstrated mastery of the software program via a check-out system of key features. After instruction, students wrote two essays in each condition over the course of four weeks, for a total of six essays. The researcher varied the order of the writing conditions. The dependent variables included both quantitative and qualitative measures, i.e., number of words and holistic scores. The results demonstrate that all students wrote more and better over time, regardless of whether their concept mapping was handwritten or computer-generated.
Hallenbeck (2002) engaged four seventh grade resource room students in a year-long collaborative writing project involving expository writing. He employed a pretest-posttest design in which students wrote in September and then in May without any strategic assistance. During the course of the school year, students wrote two collaborative papers within two different partnerships using “think-sheets” to facilitate an understanding of the writing process. They also received writing instruction throughout the course of the year. Pretest-posttest analysis revealed improvement/increases in holistic scores and number of words written for 3 of the 4 students. The researcher’s primary purpose was to transfer responsibility for writing from teacher to student, to mitigate the “learned helplessness” that many students with disabilities develop. Perhaps it is for this reason that nothing was implemented to control for practice effects or the passing of time. It is possible that students would have written better and more regardless of the interim instruction or even if there was no interim instruction. The researchers relied on anecdotal evidence in the form of tape recordings of student conversation during instruction and collaboration to determine that the metacognitive strategies contributed to students relying less on teachers and more on themselves and each other.

Wallace and Bott (2001) examined the effects of a strategy to identify the main idea and supports on the paragraph writing of four eighth grade students with learning disabilities served in a resource room setting. This single subject design study utilized a multiple probe design across two alternating phases, a baseline phase and an instructional phase, ending with a baseline condition. During the Instruction phase, students learned each of the three parts of the strategy, including generating details, outlining ideas, and writing a paragraph. Each part of the strategy had outcome criteria that was measured in
percent correct. No measure of quantity was included. According to the researchers, subjects improved to criterion in paragraph writing from 56% to 72% during the study and then to 100% criterion in final probe sessions that maintained over time.

Walker, Shippen, Alberto, Houchins, and Cihak (2005) used the commercial Direct Instruction program Expressive Writing to improve the writing skills of high school students with disabilities. Using a variation of the multiple baseline design, the researchers conducted multiple probes across participants, including maintenance probes, for a total of 39 written responses over 50 days (though not consecutive until intervention began). The baseline condition consisted of assigned topic sentences to which students generated responses. The intervention condition consisted of the Expressive Writing lessons and included a paragraph writing section. Their two dependent variables were writing fluency, as measured by number of correct word sequences (CWS) per 3-minute response, and scores on the Test of Written Language, 3rd edition (TOWL-3), given as a pre- and posttest. While it is unclear whether students wrote more across time, they did write more correct word sequences (CWS) (as demonstrated by steady upward trends) and their posttest TOWL-3 scores were higher than the pretest. The students maintained their gains of CWS in the three maintenance probes that simulated the baseline condition.

Summary of the Literature

Research on the effects of writing instruction for students with mild disabilities demonstrates several key points:

1) Without exception, students with mild disabilities earn higher quality scores on writing produced after some sort of instruction.
2) In most instances, some sort of writing instruction produces increases in quantitative measures, such as number of words written.

3) Secondary students with disabilities benefit from instruction in writing strategies sometimes to the point that their writing is indistinguishable from the non-disabled peers.

4) Quality improvements are sometimes, but not as a rule, accompanied by increases in essay length.

5) Despite the demonstrated deficits of urban, low socioeconomic status, and culturally diverse students, most published research is conducted in suburban, predominately non-diverse settings. Despite the dire outcomes for high school students, they are not the subjects in most published writing research.
CHAPTER 3

METHOD

This chapter describes the participants, setting, experimenter, procedures, and the experimental design implemented for this study. The dependent variables are described and defined, as well as how they were measured. Also included is a list of materials used to conduct the study.

Participants

Eight participants were selected for the study. Of the eight, four were diagnosed with specific learning disabilities (SLD), three had a label of developmentally handicapped (DH), and one was diagnosed with attention deficit disorder (ADD). When originally made, these diagnoses were in accordance with the Ohio State Department of Education; however, of the eight participants, only two have been evaluated within the past year (of the onset of the study). The range of years since evaluation for the other six participants was between three and six years, though all six have had a review of records within the past three years. For the review of records, the school psychologist interviewed the student and selected teachers to determine if the student qualified for continuation of special education services. It was determined that all six still qualified.

Criteria for participant selection included (a) teacher identification of students who had difficulty with the task of producing writing (i.e., student produced a half page
or less when requested to write or needed extensive support from the teacher in the form of answers to questions or help coming up with ideas), (b) teacher recommendation that these students would benefit from an intervention designed to increase the length of their writing, (c) student reading level of at least 4th grade to promote independence with the prompts, (d) writing skills below the norm on a standardized writing test, (e) the presence of at least one IEP goal/objective for writing, and (f) student assent and parent consent to participate in the study and write weekly essays. The students, parents, teacher, and principal received, signed, and returned a consent/assent form before the onset of the study (see Appendix A for consent/assent forms). The forms contained a written description of the study and its purpose. The experimenter requested assent from the students as well as consent from their parents. All eight students identified themselves as African American and attended the same urban high school. Table 3.1 displays a summary of other demographic information for each participant (sex, age, grade, disability category, reading level, percentile rank on the Writing Process Test (WPT), and inclusion level).

The experimenter individually administered the Slosson Oral Reading Test (SORT-T) to determine each participant’s reading level before intervention began. In addition, the Writing Process Test was implemented individually or in small groups or dyads to determine percentile rank of students pertaining to writing skills (the test was designed to be implemented in any configuration from individual to group). Table 3.1 displays assessment information for each participant.
### Table 3.1: Student Demographic Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Disability Category&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Reading Level&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Percentile Rank on WPT&lt;sup&gt;d&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Level of inclusion (# of academic inclusion classes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>SLD</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4 (all)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>DH</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>DH</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>SLD</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>SLD</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>DH</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>SLD</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>ADD</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Age<sup>a</sup> = age at the onset of the study. Disability Category<sup>b</sup> = SLD is Specific Learning Disability; DH is Developmentally Handicapped; ADD is Attention Deficit Disorder. Reading Level<sup>c</sup> = determined from Slosson Oral Reading Test (SORT-R). WPT<sup>d</sup> = The *Writing Process Test*

### Setting

The study was conducted in an urban high school with an approximate enrollment of 580 students in grades 9-12 located in a large metropolitan area in the Midwest. All assessments and writing sessions took place in the special education resource room, the assigned classroom for each student during at least one designated blocked class period (i.e., two class periods joined together to make one 85 minute class) every other day. The
room was approximately 23” x 13” and contained a teacher’s desk, two student
computers, a media cart, two large bookshelves, one storage closet (not built in), a 5-
drawer filing cabinet, seven individual student desks and a 6-seat cluster of student desks
arranged in the center of the room to form a makeshift table. The school was a campus
design with several buildings between which students traveled and so were allowed to
carry backpacks and wear coats to class. Figure 3.1 shows a diagram of the room.

During writing sessions, the teacher placed the participants throughout the room,
with some sitting in the individual desks and others at the makeshift table. Writing
sessions were conducted in two groups according to student attendance in the teacher’s
classroom for English credit. The girls were assigned to be with the teacher on even days
from 12:25 p.m. until 1:50 p.m. and the boys on odd dates from 7:45 a.m. until 9:10 a.m.
In addition, most students were assigned to this teacher for a resource room during 2-3
non-blocked class periods throughout the week. In general, writing sessions were
conducted with the students in their groups during the aforementioned times, but due to
absences, tardiness, suspensions, and field trips, some sessions occurred at other times
throughout the week, sometimes individually. For example, during week nine, most of
the students attended an art exhibit at a local gallery on Wednesday, an even day that
week. The girls that went to the exhibit, therefore, did not have their second writing day
on that day even though that was their second writing day of the week. Their second
writing day occurred either on Thursday or Friday that week.
Figure 3.1. Diagram of Classroom.
Experimenter

The experimenter was a doctoral candidate in the School of Physical Activities and Educational Services (PAES) at The Ohio State University in the third year of her Ph.D. program in special education and applied behavior analysis. Before returning to graduate school for doctoral study, she spent five years substitute teaching, four years teaching mostly English and language arts, and two years teaching/tutoring students with specific learning disabilities. All teaching experience occurred at the middle and high school levels and in both urban and suburban environs. In the first year of the doctoral program, the experimenter conducted a study investigating the effects of pacing on the opportunities to respond and correct responding of at-risk urban second graders enrolled in a charter school summer school program.

Data Collectors

The primary data collector for number of words and correct word sequences was a graduate student in special education who self-declared a penchant for writing. During the time she served as data collector for this experiment, she was also completing her student teaching requirement for a Master’s in Education degree (M.Ed.). The experimenter had served as her supervisor for a practicum in a previous quarter, and had the opportunity to read and grade papers she had submitted for course requirements and knew her to be a competent writer with above average writing skills. The experimenter served as secondary data collector for number of words written and correct word sequences.

The evaluators who holistically scored the essays were experienced and certified/licensed high school teachers. Evaluator A was a secondary science-certified,
National Board-certified high school and middle school teacher whose experience was in urban settings in the same district as the participants but not at the same school. She had 15 years experience. She consistently required writing from her students and often had students with disabilities in her class. Evaluator B was a secondary English-licensed suburban high school teacher with one year of experience teaching freshman English using a curriculum with heavy emphasis on writing. Evaluator C was a secondary English-certified, part-time communication skills instructor at a community college for the last 7 years. Her classes are often composed of students from the urban setting, and she often has students who self-identify learning disabilities. She also taught English for ten years at a private high school.

Dependent Variables

The primary dependent variable in this study was number of words written. Secondary dependent variables were correct word sequences and holistic scores for each essay.

Number of Words Written

A data collector counted the number of words in each essay. If a word was written twice (e.g., I went to the the store), the repeated word was not counted. Abbreviations were counted as one word (e.g., OH for Ohio was counted as one word). Initials were counted as one word per initial if each initial stood for a word (e.g., J. F. Kennedy was counted as 3 words). An exception to the initials rule was if a word is typically referred to by initials, it would be counted as one word regardless of the number of initials (e.g., DVD is one word). If two words were combined into one word or one word separated into two, they were counted as they appeared, not as they should appear (e.g., alot was
counted as one word if it appeared as one word, though incorrect; *base ball* was counted as two words if it appeared as two words, though incorrect). Similarly, a misspelled word was still counted as a word. Unrecognizable words, whether due to spelling or handwriting, were still included in the word count.

**Correct Word Sequences**

Each pair of words in a student essay was considered a sequence. A sequence was considered correct if each of the two words in the sequence was correct in context, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and case (i.e., upper or lower). For example, in the sentence *The_boy_gav_his_Mom_ a_present.*, there are six possible sequences, as indicated by the underscores. The first sequence, between *The* and *boy*, is correct. The next, between *boy* and *gav*, is incorrect because *gav* is a misspelling of *gave*. The third sequence, between *gav* and *his*, is incorrect for the same reason as stated previously. The fourth sequence, between *his* and *Mom*, is incorrect because *Mom* should not be capitalized in this context. For that same reason, the next sequence is incorrect, the one between *Mom* and *a*. The final sequence, between *a* and *present*, is correct because both words are spelled correctly and are correct in case, the punctuation is correct (i.e., period after *present*), and grammar and context are appropriate. See Appendix B for an example of an essay scored for correct and incorrect word sequences.

**Holistic Scores**

Two evaluators holistically scored all the essays the participants produced. They used a 4-point rubric that they developed immediately prior to scoring. Evaluators also sparingly used a plus or minus when they felt they were wavering strongly between two
scores. A third evaluator scored the essays for which the first two evaluators gave scores that were more than one rubric point apart.

**Independent Variable**

The intervention condition in this study involved providing the participants with an extended prompt, which they used to produce a written draft. This varied from the baseline condition in which the students wrote using only a typical prompt, the type of prompt that can be found on standardized or proficiency tests.

*Typical Prompts*

Each typical prompt consisted of a one-page handout that contained background to the topic, the prompt, hints for writing a well-constructed essay, and instructions for brainstorming (see Appendix C for a sample typical prompt). At the top of the prompt was a place for participants to write name, date, and start and stop times. Prompts were developed and written by the experimenter at between a third and eighth grade reading level. Reading level was determined by modifying instructions for using the Raygor Readability Formula Chart (Gillet & Temple, 2000, p. 67). The instructions call for counting the number of sentences and long words (i.e., greater than six letters) in three 100-word passages and dividing by three to determine an average number of sentences and average number of long words; however, the prompts usually did not contain more than 200 words. Instead of using the average of the three passages, the counts from the one passage, or the average from two passages if there were enough words, were used to determine grade level.
**Extended Prompts**

Each extended prompt consisted of a seven-page packet (see Appendix D for a sample extended prompt). The first page was nearly identical to the typical prompt, with a background of the topic, the prompt, hints for writing a well-constructed essay, and instructions for brainstorming. In addition, the extended prompt’s first page contained a structure for participants to complete their brainstorming, usually in the form of lists. At the top of the first page was a place for participants to write name, date, and start and stop times. The second page contained a blank outline with instructions to aid in its completion. Each of the following pages contained instructions and questions for completing the rest of the essay, including an introduction and conclusion. In general, the instructions and questions were a transcript of the kinds of questions a teacher might ask a student struggling to produce the first draft of an essay. After the brainstorming and outline sections of the extended prompt, the instructions repeated the necessity to write in complete sentences. The last half of the last page of the packet gave concise instructions for copying certain sections of the packet onto lined paper so that the end result was a rough draft of a five-paragraph essay addressing the prompt on the first page.

Participants moved from baseline to intervention (i.e., typical prompts to extended prompts) individually, in pairs, or in tryads, depending on when their data on number of words written stabilized.

**Procedural Integrity**

A procedural checklist was used to assess the consistency of the implementation of the independent variable during each phase of the study and across the days of the
writing sessions (see Appendix E). The checklist contained the steps of implementation, as well as the script the teacher followed.

**Interobserver Agreement**

Interobserver Agreement data were collected on all three dependent variables and for procedural integrity.

**Experimental Design**

A multiple baseline across participants (Kazdin, 1982) was implemented to examine the effects of the extended prompt versus the typical prompt on the length and quality of first draft writing produced by the participants. An added design element was a return to baseline after the 11th writing session. Implementation of the intervention was based upon visual analysis of the graphical display of baseline data (i.e., number of words written). As baseline data stabilized (i.e., remained steady or showed a decreasing trend), students were moved out of baseline and into intervention, either individually, in pairs, or in tryads, depending on participants’ data patterns.

**Instructional Materials**

**Typical Prompts**

A one-page handout that contained background to the topic, the prompt, hints for writing a well-constructed essay, and instructions for brainstorming (see Appendix C for sample).

**Extended Prompts**

A seven-page packet containing the typical prompt, a brainstorming structure, a blank outline, and instructions and questions for completing the rest of the essay, including an introduction and conclusion (see Appendix D for sample).
Mini-lessons

The first writing session each week for each group of participants began with a brief lesson covering a writing skill topic. The first was on deconstructing a prompt (see second page of Appendix F).

Timer

A digital kitchen timer with a minute count-down feature and two timer displays was used to time each daily writing session during weeks six through twelve. It was set for 40 minutes at the onset of the session to signal a five-minute warning, and then set for five minutes to signal the end of the writing session.

Lined Paper

Whether using the typical prompt or extended prompt, the first draft of the essays were produced on (in the case of the typical prompts) or hand-copied onto (in the case of the extended prompts) college-ruled lined paper.

Pens and pencils

Students were instructed to use only writing utensils that would produce dark enough writing to copy well, preferably black ink pens. Many students preferred writing with pencil, however, so both pens and pencils were provided the students.

Rewards

Various tangible and edible rewards purchased by the experimenter ranging in price from ten cents to a dollar, including sour candy, chocolate, gum, potato chips, nail polish, hair gel, hair ribbons, pens, pencils, lotion, body spray, and fast food items (e.g., Frosty™, side salad, and French fries).
Procedures

**Mini-Lessons**

During both baseline and intervention, the teacher implemented a mini-lesson each week on the first writing day before students began writing (see sample lesson in Appendix F). The lessons were timed and took from five to eight minutes. The first lesson provided instructions on how to deconstruct a prompt. Successive lessons were geared towards deficits in writing mechanics noticed in the essays by the teacher and/or the experimenter as the study progressed. Lessons were created by the experimenter or teacher, or photocopied from existing commercial lesson manuals. The lessons were designed using the *I do – We do – You do* instructional strategy. During the first half of the lesson—the *I do* portion—the teacher presented instruction on the topic and modeled how to correct some incorrect examples provided for correction (e.g., comma use in a series). For the second half of the lesson—the *We do* portion—the participants took turns correcting (out loud) more incorrect examples provided. The *I do* portion was the independent practice of incorporating the lesson material in the writing of the essay.

**Baseline**

*First writing day*

The first day of the new week of writing began with the mini-lesson. At the completion of the lesson, the teacher presented the typical (i.e., one page) prompt (see sample in Appendix C). The school schedule was such that students and teachers had an even date schedule and an odd date schedule (sometimes referred to as an A-B schedule). Due to scheduling, the boys were scheduled in the teacher’s room on odd dates at 7:45 until 9:10. The girls were scheduled on even dates from 12:25 to 1:50. Each student then
had various other times/dates for which they were scheduled to be in the teacher’s class (as a resource room). Typically, there were two first day writing sessions, one for the boys on the first odd date of the week in the first class period of the day and one for the girls on the first even date of the week in the middle of the day. Due to absences, tardiness, field trips, and other course requirements on any given day, a participant may have missed the first day and would be given the mini-lesson and prompt individually on another day and/or at another time of the day.

Before beginning each writing day, the teacher placed students where she felt they would best function that day depending on recent student interactions (e.g., the girls were especially “chatty” with each other on Mondays because they had not seen each other for the weekend, so the teacher found she had to separate all of them; on other days, two girls may be in an ongoing fight/argument over any number of perceived offenses, so just those two had to be separated; in general, the boys all sat together at the center makeshift table unless one chose to sit at a desk on the periphery of the room).

Using the procedural checklist (see Appendix E), the teacher began the weekly session with, “Does everyone have something to write with?” (step 1 on the checklist) while noting the start time on the checklist. It was intended that the instruction portion and mini-lesson take no more than fifteen minutes, ten minutes for the mini-lesson and five minutes for the instructions. After noting that everyone had writing utensils and adequate space to write, the teacher began that week’s mini-lesson (step 2 on the checklist), noting the start time in the space provided on the checklist. After the completion of the lesson, she also noted the stop time in the space provided, then proceeded to step 3 of the checklist, distributing the writing prompt to the students. For
step 4, she read, “Your assignment is to write a 5-paragraph essay about ______ (each week the teacher filled in the blank with whatever the prompt topic was that week). What you have been given will help you develop a complete first draft. If you have any questions during the writing, please ask.” Step 5 was skipped during the first two weeks as it applied only to the condition of some or all participants using the extended prompt.

The sixth step was to read the prompt to the participants. Step 7 emphasized the brainstorming section. The teacher read, “Notice the brainstorming section. Brainstorming is when you come up with as many different ideas to write about as you can. For this essay, you’ll write what you brainstorm on the paper in front of you. Write as many different ideas as you can think of. When your list is done, you’ll pick from that list to write. Again, use the paper that has the prompt typed on it to brainstorm.” To fulfill step 8, she asked if there were any questions and answered any the participants had. The last step before the participants began writing (step 9) was to inform them of the time constraints. She read, “You have two 45-min sessions (over two days) to write. Please write your name, date, and the time you start and stop at the top of the prompt. Write only your name on the lined paper. You can now write _____ (the time) at the top of the prompt. You may begin.” After intervention began for the first students who moved out of baseline, this step was revised with this addition, “When you finish the packet, you will have a separate 45-min session to copy your packet information onto lined paper. Anyone writing with just the one-page prompt may also use a separate 45-min session to copy your essay if you so desire.”

For the first five weekly sessions, the teacher used her watch and the classroom clock to keep time, but several times she lost track of the time because her classroom
responsibilities also included reading tests and large portions of text to mainstreamed students who came into her class at various times during the day. During the first three weeks of the study, this was not a problem as every student self-regulated and turned in their essays before the 45 minute block of time ended. The experimenter provided a timer after week five, subsequent to all students in one group (i.e., the girls) receiving five extra minutes on the first day of the weekly writing session because the teacher was assisting a tutoring student with a test.

Steps 10 through 14 addressed various scenarios and procedures possible during the writing portion of the session. Step 10 addressed question asking, instructing the teacher to answer any questions pertaining to understanding the prompt but to avoid those pertaining to writing form or mechanics. To these questions, she was instructed to respond, “Do the best you can. It’s a first draft; you can make changes later.” If a student really wanted the spelling of a word, they were told they could look in a dictionary available in the room. Only two students on two separate occasions availed themselves of this option. Step 11 addressed the situation of students finishing earlier than the 45-min time frame. If they self-declared they were finished, they were told to write the end time at the top of the prompt. When the timer signaled, if there were students still writing, the teacher announced a 5-min warning and reset the timer for five minutes (step 12). Step 13 instructed her to ask participants to stop writing at the end of forty-five minutes, which she did when the timer signaled the second time. She also had the participants write the end time at the top of the prompt. This step also instructed her to be sure all prompts had names, dates, and times provided. Step 14 was the instruction to collect the prompts and essays.
Second writing day

Due to scheduling, the second writing day for boys usually occurred on the second odd date of the week and for the girls on the second even date of the week. Occasionally, the need arose for the teacher to implement the second writing day individually and/or on a different date or at a different time, usually due to absences, tardiness, field trips, and/or obligations pertaining to their other coursework. The second writing day, however, never occurred on the same day as the first writing day.

The teacher also had a checklist for the second writing day (see second page of Appendix E). At the beginning of this writing day, the teacher asked if everyone had a writing utensil and made sure that everyone had ample writing space (Step 1 on the checklist). She noted the time and wrote it in the appropriate place on her checklist as the start time; the intent was for the instructions for the second writing day to take no more than five minutes. As indicated in step 2, she provided all participants with their essays and prompts, and to fulfill step 3 she read, “Please begin at the point where you left off during our last session. You have forty-five minutes to write today. If you would like to read over what you wrote during our last session and/or make any changes, you may. Please put your starting and ending times at the top of the prompt next to or under the previous times. You may now write ______ (the time) at the top of the prompt.” At this point the teacher set the timer for forty minutes.

After the third week, a new step was added and read to all students regardless of whether they were in baseline or intervention. Step 4 instructed the teacher to read, “When you finish the packet, you will have a separate 45-min session to copy your essay
onto lined paper, if you don’t finish doing that today. Anyone writing with just the one-page prompt may also use a separate 45-min session to copy his or her essay.”

If a subject had completed his or her essay during the first 45-min session and wanted to turn in the essay at this point, step 5 instructed the teacher to ask, “Are you sure you wouldn’t like to write more?” If the student insisted he or she was finished, step 5 also prompted the teacher to have the participant write the same ending time as the starting time for that session and collect the prompt and essay. At this point, the instructions for the second writing session were complete, so the teacher was to write the ending time for the instruction period at the top of her checklist. The remaining five steps on the second writing session checklist were identical to the last five steps of the first session checklist.

*Third writing day*

The teacher had a checklist for the third day (see page 3 of Appendix E). After the third week of the study, both baseline and intervention required a potential third writing day, which was to be used only to copy the essay, not produce any of the essay. This option was provided because during intervention, students had to reproduce a first draft essay onto lined paper from the intervention packet. No student in baseline condition needed to utilize a third day option because there was no reason for them to recopy their first draft essay as it was already produced on lined paper.

Rewards were delivered on the last day of the week after all students had completed their essays and turned them in to the teacher.
Intervention

Participants whose data had stabilized or established a downward trend during baseline condition were given an extended prompt (see sample in Appendix D) instead of a typical prompt.

First writing day

The first day of the weekly writing session began with the mini-lesson for intervention as well as baseline. Beginning in week 3, these two conditions were concurrent as the first student moved into intervention while the others remained in baseline. At the completion of the lesson, the teacher presented the extended prompt (i.e., seven page packet).

The teacher used the same procedural checklist during intervention that she did in baseline. All steps were identical as those in baseline except for Step 5, which was skipped during the first two weeks of the study when all students were in baseline condition. When at least one student entered intervention, step 5 was included and the teacher read,

“Some of you have a packet of papers instead of just a one-page writing prompt. You are to complete the packet by answering the questions or responding to the directions. Be sure to write your answers in complete sentences beginning on page 3! Then, when you are done with the packet, follow the directions on the last page to rewrite your answers into a completed first draft essay. Remember, you must write in complete sentences in the packet beginning on page 3!”

Second writing day

As in baseline, the second writing day during intervention never occurred on the same day as the first writing day. The teacher had the same checklist for the second
writing day that she used during baseline (see second page of Appendix E). All steps and procedures were the same as in baseline.

Third writing day

The teacher used a checklist for the third writing day as well (see third page of Appendix E). The first two steps required the teacher to check that each subject had a writing utensil and ample writing space, and then provide them with their prompts and essays. Step 3 instructed her to say, “You have 45 minutes to copy your essay. This time is to be used only for copying, not revising or editing.” At this point she instructed students to write their starting time for the third day at the bottom of the prompt, and she set the timer (after week 5) for 40 minutes. The last five steps of the third writing day checklist were identical to the last five steps of the checklists for the first and second days. When the timer signaled, the teacher reset it for five minutes and gave a verbal 5-min warning. When the timer signaled again, she collected all prompts and essays, being sure that only names appeared on the newly copied draft.

Student K’s IEP indicated an allowance for the use of a computer/word processor for long writing tasks. The experimenter was not made aware of this accommodation until after Student K’s first intervention essay was written, during week 8. She did not utilize the computer during either baseline condition. She did use it during intervention, for essays nine, ten, and eleven. Both the teacher and experimenter reiterated the instruction that she was to copy only and not utilize any of the correction functions of the word processing software.

As in baseline, rewards were delivered on the last day of the week after all students had completed their essays and turned them in to the teacher.
Baseline II

For weekly writing session 12, all students were given a typical prompt. One student was absent during this twelfth week so she was administered the typical prompt during the next week. The same procedures that were utilized during the first baseline condition were utilized during this condition. No student wrote beyond a first writing day, though more than one day was available. Rewards were delivered on the last day of the week after all students had completed their essays and turned them in to the teacher.

Data Collection

After all participants completed writing each week, the experimenter collected all essays and placed Post-it™ notes over names and any other identifying information. Each student was assigned a letter of the alphabet starting with the letter J. The experimenter did not want to use the letters A, B, C, D, E, or F because those letters coincided with grades teachers typically use to evaluate student work, and she wanted to be sure that the holistic evaluators would not be even subconsciously influenced by those letters being present on the essays. The letters J, K, L, M, N, O, P, and R were used. The letter Q was assigned to a mainstreamed student who participated in the study but not the intervention because his time in this teacher’s classroom was much more limited than the other students. Consequently, his data were not included in the study (see Appendix G for Q’s data).

After letters were assigned to each student’s essays, Roman numerals were assigned. Roman numbers were used instead of Arabic numbers so as to avoid any confusion with holistic scores, which were to be Arabic numbers placed directly onto the evaluators’ copies of the essays. Before the study began, each topic was assigned a
Roman numeral. It was important that the holistic evaluators not know the order in which the essays were written, so the essay topics were assigned numerals randomly. The experimenter intended for 15 essays to be written over the course of the study, so the Roman numerals assigned ranged from I to XV. The study ran three weeks shorter than intended, so the last three topics were not used, those assigned with Roman numerals II, III, and VII.

Six copies were made of each essay, one for the primary data collector to count words and correct word sequences, one for the secondary data collector to count words and correct word sequences, one for each of the holistic score evaluators, and one for the teacher. The originals were kept in a locked file cabinet in case any one of the data collectors or teacher lost her copies of the essays. There was no copy machine in the building in which the study took place, so essays were taken to a local copy center to be copied. The primary data collector was given her copies on that same day (usually Friday once intervention began). The primary data collector had until Sunday evening to complete data collection on the primary dependent variable, Number of Words Written, so that data could be examined and decisions made regarding which participants would be moved from baseline to intervention before the next weekly writing session began. The teacher’s copies were given to her the next time the experimenter was in her classroom, usually at the start of the next week. Holistic scoring did not occur until the completion of the last week of writing, so the evaluators’ copies were kept with the originals in a locked file cabinet until that time.
Number of Words Written

The experimenter trained the primary data collector using essays written for the *Writing Process Test* (Warden & Hutchinson, 1992) given to the participants just prior to the onset of the study. During training, the experimenter explained that the data collector would receive a new batch of essays at the end of each week from which she was to derive word and word sequence counts. The experimenter explained the definitions of the dependent variables. The data collector was shown the preferred strategy for counting the number of words in each essay. This strategy was developed because of the tedious nature of hand-counting the number of words in each essay, which needed to be done because essays were handwritten, not word processed. In addition, the experimenter did not expect the essays produced to be as long as they were. During participant selection, months before the onset of the study, the teacher showed the experimenter essays written by some of the students considered for the study. Those essays were less than half a page, some only a few lines. Due to these samples, the experimenter anticipated that the participants would not produce much more than a half page of writing, at least during baseline. For this reason, the experimenter anticipated a relatively straightforward procedure for counting number of words. In fact, the essays were so long that tedium on the part of both data collectors resulted in frequent miscounts. The primary data collector especially had an issue with fatigue as she often had only 24 to 36 hours to complete the word count portion of data collection so that decisions could be made regarding moving participants from baseline to intervention.

The data collector was instructed to keep a running tally along the right margin of the paper at the end of each paragraph, or if there was no paragraphing, every 50-60
words, depending on how many words were in the last line counted (i.e., she was to count to the end of the line and not stop in the middle of a line). This procedure was recommended as a time-saving method so that if she lost count she could easily go back to the last number written rather than starting over. The experimenter also explained how to count abbreviations, misspelling, initials, and unrecognizable words as defined previously in the Dependent Variables section. She was also given a written list of these guidelines.

The primary data collector counted the number of words for each essay twice. If the numbers matched, that was the word count for that essay. If they did not match, the data collector counted the words a third time. She was instructed to count a fourth time if the third number did not match either of the first two, but she never had to count a fourth time.

**Correct Word Sequences**

Training for correct word sequences was also completed using writing samples from the *Writing Process Test* and the definition of correct word sequences as explained previously in the Dependent Variables section. The primary data collector and the experimenter (secondary data collector) went through the first sample essay sequence by sequence, discussing each until they agreed upon whether the sequence was correct or incorrect.

The primary data collector recorded the number of correct word sequences with a running total and the incorrect word sequences with an “x.” At the completion of scoring each essay, she tallied the number of incorrect word sequences, the number of correct sequences, and the total number of word sequences. A percent correct word sequences
was then derived by the experimenter by dividing the number of correct sequences by the total number of sequences and multiplying by 100 (See Appendix B for a sample copy of an essay scored for correct word sequences).

**Holistic Scoring**

After the final week of writing, two evaluators holistically scored the essays. Holistic scoring needed to be done after all essays were written, otherwise evaluators would know the order in which the essays were written, contributing to potential bias in scoring. Both evaluators were licensed or certified secondary teachers, one in science with 15 years of urban experience; the second in English with 1 year of experience in a suburban high school. The evaluators developed a basic 4-point rubric from their own experience grading writing and with guidance from the experimenter. A 4 on the 1-to-4 point scale represented the best possible score and a 1 represented the worst. Both evaluators were familiar with writing rubrics and used them when grading their own students’ writing. At this point, evaluators were informed that these were first drafts, so the rubric needed to reflect that point (e.g., overemphasis on spelling errors would be inappropriate since the procedures instructed students to not worry about spelling).

After the rubric was developed, the evaluators were given four sample essays written by a student from the same school and teacher as the participants. The essays were used to anchor the evaluators to the rubric. Anchoring is a process by which writing evaluators fine-tune their grading to a set of established criteria instead of relying on unspecified criteria (White, 1984). The anchoring process requires evaluators to reach consensus on the holistic scores assigned to essays. The process is intended to promote some objectivity to the otherwise subjective procedure of essay scoring. For this process
with these evaluators, one sample essay was selected and each evaluator was instructed to read the essay and assign a score independently. Because these essays were first drafts and because these students have disabilities, the evaluators were instructed to be generous with the rubric ratings. This instruction was given to offset the scorers’ potential inclination to score low as these were drafts and admittedly rough draft pieces. If the evaluators scored how they typically might, the range of scores would likely be restricted to 1’s and 2’s. After the evaluators read and scored, the scores were compared. Evaluator A scored the essay a 2, and Evaluator B scored it a 3. The experimenter asked each evaluator to provide a rationale for her score, explaining that the goal was to reach consensus. The experimenter emphasized to the evaluators that neither should “give in” to the other but to change a score only if they understood and agreed with the rationale provided by the other evaluator. Each evaluator defended her score, citing the rubric as the source of her criteria. On the first sample essay, Evaluator A agreed with Evaluator B’s rationale for a 2 and changed her score, resulting in a consensus.

During the verbal rationale portion of the anchoring, Evaluator B mentioned that she felt the essay to be a “high 2.” In response, Evaluator A said that though she scored the essay a 3, she felt it was a “low 3.” At this point, Evaluator B requested that they be allowed to assign a plus or minus to the scores if they felt an essay leaned towards one score or another. Evaluator A echoed the request. The experimenter agreed, with the caveat that the plus and minus be used sparingly. Both evaluators agreed that the presence of the plus or minus was their way of indicating they it was difficult to assign that particular essay a clear rubric score and that they were tending towards the next higher or lower rubric number. Evaluators then moved on to the next sample essay.
Both evaluators scored the second sample anchoring essay a 3-. Since they gave the same score, consensus existed, but the experimenter asked them to provide rationale anyway as part of the anchoring process. The scoring for the third and fourth sample anchoring essays proceeded similarly. Evaluator A scored the third and fourth essays a 3- and a 1+, respectively. Evaluator B scored the same essays a 3 and a 1, respectively. Both evaluators provided their rationales for the scores. At this point, the anchoring process ended.

Once the anchoring process was complete, evaluators individually and independently scored the participants essays during two sessions. After the experimenter recorded the scores, she removed any essays that were scored more than one point apart (i.e., if Evaluator A scored one essay a 1 and Evaluator B scored the same essay a 3, that essay was removed and set aside). A fresh copy of each of those essays was given to a third evaluator with each of the scores written at the top. Evaluator C was also a secondary-certified English teacher with experience at both the high school and community college levels. That evaluator was given copies of the prompts and the rubric and asked to determine which score best represented that essay according to the criteria in the rubric. She did not participate in the rubric development or the anchoring process.

After the evaluators finished scoring, they requested information regarding the purpose and procedures of the study, and the experimenter provided that information.

Interobserver Agreement

*Number of Words Written*

IOA data were recorded on 100% of the essays for number of words written. The primary data collector counted the number of words in each essays twice. If the number
for the first and second counts was the same, she wrote that number at the top of her copy of the essay. If she came up with different numbers she counted a third time. If that third number matched one of the numbers in the first two counts, she wrote that number at the top of the essay. At no time did she count a third time and come up with a number that did not match one of the two first numbers, but she was instructed that if that were to happen, she was to continue the counts until she arrived at a number that did match.

The experimenter served as secondary data collector. The experimenter also counted the number of words in each essay, wrote that number at the top of the essay, and compared that number to the primary data collector’s count. If the number matched, interobserver agreement was considered 100% for that essay. If the number did not match, the secondary data collector counted a second time. If the new number matched the primary data collector’s count, IOA was considered 100% for that essay. If the new number did not match the primary data collector’s count but was the same number that the secondary data collector counted the first time, that number became the secondary data collector’s count for the essay. The number was compared to the word count derived by the primary data collector. The lower of the two numbers was divided by the higher of the two numbers and multiplied by 100 to establish the IOA for number of words written.

Correct Word Sequences

Each week, two or three essays were selected for IOA data collection from all the essays collected (usually eight, but not all students wrote every week, so the number of essays written weekly ranged from four to eight) for a total of 39% if all essays. An item-by-item comparison of the word sequences was completed by the experimenter (acting as secondary data collector), who noted whether the two data collectors agreed or disagreed
on the correctness of each word sequence. If the two agreed, the experimenter scored an “A” on the IOA data collection sheet (see Appendix H). If they disagreed, a “D” was scored. For each essay, agreements were totaled and disagreements were totaled. An IOA percentage for correct word sequences was derived by dividing agreements by agreements plus disagreements and multiplying by 100.

*Holistic Scoring*

To determine interobserver agreement (a.k.a. interscorer reliability in some writing research, e.g., Tindal & Parker, 1991) on holistic scores, the experimenter added exact matches (i.e., when evaluators gave the same score to an essay) and near matches (i.e., when evaluators gave essays a score within 1 point of the other), divided that sum by the total number of scores, and multiplied by 100.

The subjective nature of writing assessment makes interscorer agreement difficult to achieve. The anchoring process described in the procedures is one way to make the subjective process of holistic scoring more objective, yet a high percentage of identical scores after this process would still be unusual. The literature on scoring supports the idea that scores that come within one point of each other are acceptable given the subjective nature of the task (Tindal & Parker, 1991). Tindal and Parker used both hits (exact agreements) and approximate hits (scores that were 1 point or less apart) to calculate reliability between scorers who used a 5-point scale to score essays written by elementary students in a study utilizing both quantitative and qualitative measures.

*Procedural Integrity*

The teacher used a procedural checklist throughout the course of the study, a different checklist for each day of writing (see Appendix E). The checklist contained the
steps of implementation, as well as the script the teacher followed. The experimenter trained the teacher on the use of the checklist prior to the onset of the study. After the teacher reached 100% accuracy for two consecutive role-plays with the experimenter, baseline data collection began. The teacher used the checklist during implementation. The experimenter completed the checklist on 25 of the 83 writing days, completing IOA on 30% of the writing days.

Despite having the procedural checklist, the teacher did not always complete it by checking off each step. The teacher’s instructional duties were concentrated not only on the 8 students participating in the study. In addition, she was required to provide special education services to ten other students assigned to her resource room whenever they needed those services. For example, a student would come to her room to have a test read, to use a computer and/or her support to compose a paper, to receive math support in a science class, or for assistance with class assignments. To either make room for these students and/or to minimize the distraction, the teacher would often place study participants in the hallway or a nearby (small) tutor room, space permitting. It was also not unusual for the teacher to be responsible for students assigned to the nearby tutor when the tutor was absent, which occurred frequently during the course of the study (i.e., approximately eight full and ten partial days coinciding with writing days in the study). On these occasions, there were usually eight students in the room, four in the study and four receiving services from the teacher (on at least two occasions there were ten students in the room). The result of these additional responsibilities was that the teacher sometimes lost track of the timing (until the use of a timer was implemented) and/or forgot to check off items on the procedural checklist. Also, on two occasions, she let a
student keep writing who requested to be allowed to keep writing past the forty-five minute mark.

Social Validity

The week after participants finished the last writing prompt (prompt 12) they were given a Student Satisfaction Survey created by the experimenter but delivered by the teacher without the experimenter present (see Appendix I). After all participants completed the Student Satisfaction Survey, the experimenter delivered the Teacher Satisfaction Survey (see Appendix J) to the teacher who implemented the procedures in the study.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings of the study by individual participants and a summary of findings with group data. The first two sections present the interobserver agreement and procedural integrity data. Number of words written, percent correct sequences, and holistic scores are reported in the third section. Finally, social validity data is presented in the fourth section.

Interobserver Agreement

Number of Words Written

The experimenter (serving as secondary data collector) obtained interobserver agreement (IOA) for 100% of the essays for number of words written. Interobserver agreement was established by comparing the word counts obtained by the primary and secondary data collectors, dividing the lower number by the higher number, and multiplying by 100. Table 4.1 provides a summary of IOA per student for number of words and correct word sequences. Percentage of agreement for number of words written was 99.4% overall with a range of 97.5% to 100%. IOA was 100% on 41% of the essays and 99% or greater on 85% of the essays.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>No. of Words Written&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Correct Word Sequences&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>99.4%</td>
<td>89.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>99.4</td>
<td>84.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>99.2</td>
<td>97.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>99.2</td>
<td>85.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>99.7</td>
<td>92.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>99.6</td>
<td>91.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>99.9</td>
<td>91.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>99.6</td>
<td>90.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>99.5</td>
<td>90.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>99.6</td>
<td>91.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>99.5</td>
<td>88.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>99.0</td>
<td>88.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|        | Mean 99.4%                     | 89.9%                            |

| Range<sup>c</sup> | 97.5 to 100 | 81.9 to 97.3 |

Table 4.1: Percentage of Interobserver Agreement for Each Dependent Variable by Weekly Writing Session

Note. Number of Words Written<sup>a</sup> = IOA data collected on 100% of essays. Correct Word Sequences<sup>b</sup> = IOA data collected on 39% of essays. Range<sup>c</sup> = range data is from individual essays.
Percent Correct Word Sequences

A total of 83 essays were written by the 8 participants. The experimenter obtained IOA for 32 of the 83 essays, or 39%. Essays were randomly selected by the experimenter; however, no essay from the same participant was used for IOA data collection two times in a row. Table 4.1 provides a summary of IOA per week for number of words written and correct word sequences. Interobserver agreement was 89.9% overall with a range of 81.9% to 97.3%.

Holistic Scores

To determine interobserver agreement on holistic scores, the experimenter added exact matches (i.e., when evaluators gave the same score to an essay) and near matches (i.e., when evaluators gave essays a score within 1 point of the other), divided that sum by the total number of scores, and multiplied by 100. The two primary evaluators for holistic scoring matched exactly on 38 of the 83 scores and nearly matched on 35 of the 83 scores for a total of 73 exact or near matches, or 89%.

Procedural Integrity

IOA data was collected on 25 of 83 checklists, or 30% of total writing days. The experimenter collected IOA data on 13 of the 32 First Days, 11 of the 41 Second Days and 1 of the 9 Third Days, 41%, 27%, and 11% respectively. Using the same procedural checklist that the teacher used, the experimenter checked off each step as the teacher implemented it, or wrote NA for steps that weren’t applicable to that writing experience (e.g., occasionally, all of the students would turn in their essays prior to the five minute warning, so the step in which the teacher gives the five minute warning was not implemented). The experimenter compared teacher-completed checklists to
experimenter-completed checklists to determine the percentage of agreement on steps completed. IOA for First Days was 90%; for Second Days, 89%; and Third Days, 87%. Overall, IOA for procedural integrity on steps completed across all writing days was 89%.

Dependent Variables

Number of Words Written

Results for Number of Words Written for each participant across all conditions is shown in Figure 4.1.

Student O

Baseline. The first graph in Figure 4.1 shows the results for Number of Words Written for Student O across all conditions. Student O wrote 151 words in Session 1 and 92 words in Session 2 for an average of 122 words during baseline condition.

Intervention. Use of the extended prompt was implemented during Session 3 for Student O. During eight sessions, Student O averaged 271 words per essay with a range of 194 to 427 words.

Baseline II. A return to baseline condition was implemented for the last writing session, Session 12. All students wrote in response to a typical prompt during this last session. Student O’s essay contained 152 words.

Student J

Baseline. The second graph in Figure 4.1 shows the results for Number of Words Written for Student J across all conditions. Student J wrote 202 words in Session 1, 191 words in Session 2, and 175 words in Session 3 for an average of 189 words during baseline condition.
Figure 4.1. Number of words written by participants when using a typical prompt and extended prompt.
Figure 4.1 continued
**Intervention.** Use of the extended prompt was implemented during Session 4 for Student J. During seven sessions (he did not produce an essay in Session 4). Student J averaged 255 words per essay with a range of 213 to 322 words.

**Baseline II.** A return to baseline condition was implemented for the last writing session, Session 12. All students wrote in response to a typical prompt during this last session. Student J’s essay contained 199 words.

**Student P**

**Baseline.** The third graph in Figure 4.1 shows the results for Number of Words Written for Student P across all conditions. Student P did not produce an essay in Session 1 (he began attending this school the next week), but wrote 207 words in Session 2 and 144 words in Session 3 for an average of 176 words during baseline condition.

**Intervention.** Use of the extended prompt was implemented during session 4 for Student P. During eight sessions, Student P averaged 175 words per essay with a range of 111 to 267 words.

**Baseline II.** A return to baseline condition was implemented for the last writing session, Session 12. All students wrote in response to a typical prompt during this last session. Student P’s essay contained 163 words.

**Student R**

**Baseline.** The fourth graph in Figure 4.1 shows the results for Number of Words Written for Student R across all conditions. Student R wrote 165 words in Session 1, 202 words in Session 2, and 130 words in Session 3 for an average of 166 words during baseline condition.
Intervention. Use of the extended prompt was implemented during Session 4 for Student R. During eight sessions, Student R averaged 418 words per essay with a range of 284 to 529 words.

Baseline II. A return to baseline condition was implemented for the last writing session, Session 12. All students wrote in response to a typical prompt during this last session. Student R’s essay contained 302 words.

Student M

Baseline. The fifth graph in Figure 4.1 shows the results for Number of Words Written for Student M across all conditions. Student M wrote four baseline essays: 108 words in Session 1, 131 words in Session 2, 121 words in Session 3, and 139 words in Session 4 for an average of 125 words during baseline condition.

Intervention. Use of the extended prompt was implemented after Session 4 for Student M. During five sessions (no essays written for Sessions 5 and 7), Student M averaged 246 words per essay with a range of 175 to 313 words.

Baseline II. A return to baseline condition was implemented for the last writing session, Session 12. All students wrote in response to a typical prompt during this last session. Student M’s essay contained 108 words.

Student L

Baseline. The sixth graph in Figure 4.1 shows the results for Number of Words Written for Student L across all conditions. Student L also wrote four baseline essays: 84 words in Session 1, 374 words in Session 2, 171 words in Session 3, and 131 words in Session 4 for an average of 190 words during baseline condition.
**Intervention.** Use of the extended prompt was implemented after Session 4 for Student L. During four sessions (no essays written for Sessions 5, 7, and 11), Student L averaged 289 words per essay with a range of 176 to 428 words.

**Baseline II.** A return to baseline condition was implemented for the last writing session, Session 12. All students wrote in response to a typical prompt during this last session. Student L’s essay contained 102 words.

**Student K**

**Baseline.** The seventh graph in Figure 4.1 shows the results for Number of Words Written for Student K across all conditions. Student K wrote six baseline essays. She averaged 193 words an essay during baseline condition with a range of 124 to 250 words.

**Intervention.** Use of the extended prompt was implemented after Session 6 for Student K. As indicated on the graph, essays nine, ten, and eleven were written with the assistance of a computer. She wrote only one essay without computer assistance. That essay contained 458 words.

**Baseline II.** A return to baseline condition was implemented for the last writing session, Session 12. All students wrote in response to a typical prompt during this last session. Student K’s essay contained 421 words.

**Computer Assistance.** For essays nine, ten, and eleven, Student K utilized an accommodation outlined in her IEP to use a computer for writing. The resulting data of the computer-assisted essays differed enough from their original form in the extended prompt packet to warrant exclusion from the data analysis. With these essays factored in, Student K averaged 568 words per Intervention essay with a range of 458 to 641 words.
Student N

Baseline. The eighth and last graph in Figure 4.1 shows the results for Number of Words Written for Student N across all conditions. Student N wrote four baseline essays: 123 words in Session 1, 105 words in Session 2, 179 words in Session 4, and 141 words in Session 6 for an average of 137 words during baseline condition.

Intervention. Use of the extended prompt was implemented after Session 6 for Student N. Student N produced no essays for Sessions 7 and 8. He wrote 180 words in Session 9, 240 words in Session 10, and 211 words in Session 11. Student N averaged 210 words per essay in the Intervention condition.

Baseline II. A return to baseline condition was implemented for the last writing session, Session 12. All students wrote in response to a typical prompt during this last session. Student N’s essay contained 193 words.

Group Results for Number of Words Written

Table 4.2 displays the aggregated data for the participants.

Baseline and Baseline II. Participants as a group averaged 170.4 words written with a typical prompt in the baseline sessions combined with a range of 84 to 421 words.

Intervention. Participants as a group averaged 290.5 words writing with the extended prompt in the intervention condition with a range of 111 to 529 words (without data from Student K’s computer-assisted essays). The average change in number of words written during intervention was 290.5 words with a range of 3.8 to 232. In other words, the participants as a group wrote an average of 120.1 more words during intervention than in baseline conditions combined.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Combined Baselines (# of sessions)</th>
<th>Intervention (# of sessions)</th>
<th>Change in No. of Words During Intervention on Mean Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Range</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>131.6 (3)</td>
<td>92-152</td>
<td>271.1 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>191.8 (4)</td>
<td>175-202</td>
<td>255.1 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>171.6 (3)</td>
<td>144-207</td>
<td>175.4 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>199.8 (4)</td>
<td>130-302</td>
<td>418.3 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>121.4 (5)</td>
<td>108-139</td>
<td>246.4 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>172.4 (5)</td>
<td>84-374</td>
<td>289.3 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>226.0 (7)</td>
<td>124-421</td>
<td>458.0* (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>148.2 (5)</td>
<td>105-193</td>
<td>210.3 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group</strong></td>
<td><strong>170.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>84-421</strong></td>
<td><strong>290.5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2. Individual and group means for Number of Words Written across conditions. Asterisks (*) indicate that the data reflects only one of K’s essays, the one produced during Intervention without computer assistance.
Percent Correct Word Sequences

Results for Percent Correct Word Sequences (CWS) for each participant across all conditions is show in Figure 4.2.

Student O

Baseline. The first graph in Figure 4.2 shows the results for Percent Correct Word Sequences for Student O across all conditions. Student O scored 70.4% and 73.9% in Sessions 1 and 2 respectively for an average of 72.1% CWS during baseline condition.

Intervention. Use of the extended prompt was implemented during Session 3 for Student O. Across eight sessions, Student O averaged 76.1% CWS with a range of 73.8% to 79.4%.

Baseline II. A return to baseline condition was implemented for the last writing session, Session 12. All students wrote in response to a typical prompt during this last session. Student O scored 69.2% for CWS.

Student J

Baseline. The second graph in Figure 4.2 shows the results for Percent Correct Word Sequences for Student J across all conditions. Student J scored 61.3%, 73%, and 79.7% in Sessions 1, 2, and 3 respectively, for an average of 71.3% CWS during baseline condition.

Intervention. Use of the extended prompt was implemented during Session 3 for Student J. Across seven sessions, Student J averaged 68.1% CWS with a range of 58.1% to 81.2%.
Figure 4.2. Percent correct word sequences of student essays when using the typical prompt and extended prompt.
Figure 4.2 continued
Baseline II. A return to baseline condition was implemented for the last writing session, Session 12. All students wrote in response to a typical prompt during this last session. Student J scored 60% for CWS.

Student P

Baseline. The third graph in Figure 4.2 shows the results for Percent Correct Word Sequences for Student P across all conditions. Student P was not present for Session 1 and so did not produce an essay. He scored 90.3%, and 86.8% in Sessions 2 and 3 respectively, for an average of 88.5% CWS during baseline condition.

Intervention. Use of the extended prompt was implemented after Session 3 for Student P. Across eight sessions, Student P averaged 80.2% CWS with a range of 72.6% to 92.7%.

Baseline II. A return to baseline condition was implemented for the last writing session, Session 12. All students wrote in response to a typical prompt during this last session. Student P scored 77.4% for CWS.

Student R

Baseline. The fourth graph in Figure 4.2 shows the results for Percent Correct Word Sequences for Student R across all conditions. Student R scored 73%, 80.1%, and 86.1% in Sessions 1, 2, and 3 respectively, for an average of 79.7% CWS during baseline condition.

Intervention. Use of the extended prompt was implemented during Session 4 for Student R. Across eight sessions, Student R averaged 80% CWS with a range of 70.1% to 86.5%.
Baseline II. A return to baseline condition was implemented for the last writing session, Session 12. All students wrote in response to a typical prompt during this last session. Student R scored 80.8% for CWS.

Student M

Baseline. The fifth graph in Figure 4.2 shows the results for Percent Correct Word Sequences for Student M across all conditions. Student M wrote four essays in the baseline condition and scored 78.6%, 71.7%, 61.9% and 62.9% in Sessions 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively, for an average of 68.7% CWS.

Intervention. Use of the extended prompt was implemented after Session 4 for Student M. Across five sessions (no essays produced for Sessions 5 and 7), Student M averaged 71.3% CWS with a range of 65.3% to 78.8%.

Baseline II. A return to baseline condition was implemented for the last writing session, Session 12. All students wrote in response to a typical prompt during this last session. Student M scored 78.8% for CWS.

Student L

Baseline. The sixth graph in Figure 4.2 shows the results for Percent Correct Word Sequences for Student L across all conditions. Student L also wrote four essays in the baseline condition, scoring 65.4%, 74.8%, 64.3%, and 58.9% in Sessions 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively, for an average of 65.8% CWS during this condition.

Intervention. Use of the extended prompt was implemented after Session 4 for Student L. Across four sessions, Student L averaged 64.9% CWS with a range of 56.3% to 70.9%.
Baseline II. A return to baseline condition was implemented for the last writing session, Session 12. All students wrote in response to a typical prompt during this last session. Student L scored 66% for CWS.

Student K

Baseline. The seventh graph in Figure 4.2 shows the results for Percent Correct Word Sequences for Student K across all conditions. Student K wrote six essays during baseline condition. She averaged 61.5% CWS with a range of 16.1% to 60%.

Intervention. Use of the extended prompt was implemented after Session 6 for Student K. As indicated on the graph, essays nine, ten, and eleven were written with the assistance of a computer. She wrote only one essay without computer assistance. For that essays she had 48.1% CWS.

Baseline II. A return to baseline condition was implemented for the last writing session, Session 12. All students wrote in response to a typical prompt during this last session. Student K scored 45.2% for CWS.

Computer Assistance. For essays nine, ten, and eleven, Student K utilized an accommodation outlined in her IEP to use a computer for writing. The resulting data of the computer-assisted essays differed enough from their original form in the extended prompt packet to warrant exclusion from the data analysis. With these essays factored in, Student K averaged 65% CWS with a range of 48.1% to 75.4%.
**Baseline.** The eighth and last graph in Figure 4.2 shows the results for Percent Correct Word Sequences for Student N across all conditions. Student N scored 76.1%, 84.9%, 74.1%, and 71.1% in Sessions 1, 2, 4, and 6 respectively (no essays produced in Sessions 3 and 5), for an average of 76.6% CWS during baseline condition.

**Intervention.** Use of the extended prompt was implemented after Session 6 for Student N. He produced no essays during Sessions 7 and 8, but for sessions 9, 10, and 11 he scored 71.8%, 70.1%, and 78.3% CWS respectively, for an average of 73.4% CWS in the intervention condition.

**Baseline II.** A return to baseline condition was implemented for the last writing session, Session 12. All students wrote in response to a typical prompt during this last session. Student N scored 74.2% for CWS.

**Group Results for Percent Correct Word Sequences**

Table 4.3 displays individual and group means for percent correct word sequences.

**Baseline and Baseline II.** As a group, participants averaged 69.8% correct words sequence when writing with a typical prompt in the baseline conditions with a range of 16.1% to 90.3%.

**Intervention.** As a group, participants averaged 70.3% correct word sequences when writing with the extended prompt during the intervention condition with a range of 48.1% to 86.5% (without data from Student K’s computer-assisted essays). The average change in percentage of correct word sequence during intervention as compared to baselines was +.5% with a range of 0% to 6.5% change.
Table 4.3. Individual and group means for Percentage of Correct Word Sequences across conditions. * This data reflects K’s only essay produced during Intervention without computer assistance.

Holistic Scores

The rubric contained criteria that evaluators used to score essays a 1, 2, 3, or 4 with 4 being the highest score possible and 1 being the lowest. Table 4.4 displays the rubric that the evaluators developed with guidance from the evaluator. The evaluators determined that an essay receiving a 4 (a) addressed the prompt/topic; (b) was well-organized with evidence of paragraphing; (c) contained good detail/word choice and extended beyond predictable responses; (d) showed evidence of higher level thinking; and (e) had a majority of complete sentences/sentences with appropriate structure. Essays
Table 4.4: Holistic Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Holistic Score</th>
<th>Key Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 4              | Addresses the prompt/topic  
|                | Well-organized – evidence of paragraphing  
|                | Good detail/Word choice/Extension  
|                | Evidence of Higher Level Thinking  
|                | Appropriate Sentence Structure – majority are complete sentences |
| 3              | Most or all criteria in 4 are present but not to the degree of excellence as 4  
|                | and/or missing one or more key criteria mentioned in 4 |
| 2              | Predictable responses  
|                | Sentence level errors make reading/understanding difficult and/or missing more than one criteria mentioned in 4 |
| 1              | Surface/mechanical errors so prevalent as to interfere with understanding essay and/or missing most key criteria mentioned in 4 |

receiving a 3, 2, or 1 demonstrated progressively fewer of the established criteria and/or at a progressively less competent level. Appendix K contains sample essays from each participant on which both evaluators matched scores exactly. In addition, two essays for each student are shown, one as an example of the lower two scores (i.e., 1 or 2) achieved in Baseline and one as an example of the higher two scores (i.e., 3 or 4) achieved in Intervention. The exceptions are Students J and P; the evaluators agreed on only one of Student J’s essays, the seventh, so only that essay is included. Both of Student P’s essays are from Intervention, and the low score is from later in the Intervention. The evaluators’ score is shown circled in the top right hand corner of each essay.

**Student O**

*Baseline.* Table 4.5 shows the results of the holistic scoring for Student O in all conditions. She wrote two essays in the baseline condition. The evaluators scored her first baseline essays a 1 and a 3. Because there was no consensus for her first baseline essay, a
<table>
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<th>Evaluator A Scores</th>
<th>Evaluator B Scores</th>
<th>Evaluator C Scores</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5: Holistic Scores for Student O

Note. Evaluator C scored only essays that Evaluators A and B scored more than 1 point apart.
### Table 4.6: Means and Modes of Holistic Scores (Evaluators A & B combined)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mode</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Extended Prompt</td>
<td>Typical Prompt&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Typical Prompt&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>1.9</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4* (3, 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
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<td>2.5</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
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<td>1.5</td>
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Note. Typical Prompt<sup>a</sup> = Baseline condition, Typical Prompt<sup>b</sup> = Baseline II (BLII) condition. Mode<sup>c</sup> = Two scores listed indicates a bimodal data set. In BLII condition, all scores were bimodal because neither evaluator gave the last essays the same score. Asterisks (*) indicate when K’s data from the essays that were produced with computer assistance were excluded. Numbers in parentheses include data from computer-assisted essays.
third evaluator was asked to determine which of the two scores best reflected the criteria of the rubric. Evaluator C determined the essay to be a 1. Both evaluators scored the second baseline essay a 1. The mean of all baseline scores is 1.5. The mode is 1. Table 4.6 shows the mean and mode of each student’s scores in all conditions.

**Intervention.** Student O wrote eight essays in the intervention condition. She did not write an essay for prompt/week seven. The evaluators match on essays four, five, eight, nine, and eleven, scoring those essays 3, 1, 3, 2, and 2 respectively. Essays three, six and ten were near matches: 2, 3; 1, 2; and 1, 2 respectively. The mean of all intervention scores is 2. The mode is also 2.

**Baseline II.** The last essay produced was in the return to baseline condition. Evaluator A scored it a 1, and Evaluator B scored it a 2. The mean of these two scores is 1.5. The data set is bimodal (1, 2).

**Student J**

**Baseline.** Table 4.7 shows the results of the holistic scoring for Student J in all conditions. He wrote three essays in the baseline condition. The evaluators’ scores for his baseline essays were near matches: 3, 4; 3, 2; and 4, 3. The mean of all baseline scores is 3.2 and the mode is 3. Table 4.6 contains Student J’s mean and mode scores in all conditions.

**Intervention.** Student J wrote seven essays in the intervention condition. He did not write an essay for prompt/week five. The evaluators exactly matched on only essay seven, scoring it a 3. Evaluator A scored both essays four and six a 2, and Evaluator B scored both of those essays a 3. For essays eight, nine, ten, and eleven the evaluators gave scores of 2, 4; 1, 3; 1, 2; and 3, 2. The mean of all intervention scores is 2.3 and the mode
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
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<th>Evaluator A Scores</th>
<th>Evaluator B Scores</th>
<th>Evaluator C Scores</th>
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<tr>
<td>Baseline II</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7: Holistic Scores for Student J

Note. Evaluator C scored only essays that Evaluators A and B scored more than 1 point apart.
is 3. The evaluators did not reach consensus on essays eight and nine; Evaluator C scored those two essays 2 and 3 respectively.

**Baseline II.** The last essay produced was in the return to baseline condition. Evaluator A scored it a 2, and Evaluator B scored it a 1. The mean of these two scores is 1.5 and the data set is bimodal (1, 2).

**Student P**

**Baseline.** Table 4.8 shows the results of the holistic scoring for Student P in all conditions. He wrote two essays in the baseline condition (beginning in the second week). Both evaluators scored essay two a 3 and essay three a 2. The mean of all baseline scores is 2.5 and the data set is bimodal (2, 3). Table 4.6 contains Student P’s mean and mode scores in all conditions.

**Intervention.** Student P wrote eight essays in the intervention condition. The evaluators exactly matched on essays four through seven (4, 2, 2, 3 respectively) and essays nine and eleven (1 and 3 respectively). Evaluator A gave essays eight and ten a 1; evaluator B gave those same essays a 2. The mean of all intervention scores is 2.3 and the mode is 2.

**Baseline II.** The last essay produced was in the return to baseline condition. Evaluator A scored it a 1, and Evaluator B scored it a 3. Evaluator C selected 1 as the more appropriate score. The mean of the primary evaluators’ scores is 2, and the data set is bimodal (1, 3).

**Student R**

**Baseline.** Table 4.9 shows the results of the holistic scoring for Student R in all conditions. She wrote three essays in the baseline condition. The evaluators scored her
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Essay Prompts</th>
<th>Evaluator A Scores</th>
<th>Evaluator B Scores</th>
<th>Evaluator C Scores</th>
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<tr>
<td>Baseline II</td>
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</table>

Table 4.8: Holistic Scores for Student P

Note. Evaluator C scored only essays that Evaluators A and B scored more than 1 point apart.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Essay Prompts</th>
<th>Evaluator A Scores</th>
<th>Evaluator B Scores</th>
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</table>

Table 4.9: Holistic Scores for Student R

Note. Evaluator C scored only essays that Evaluators A and B scored more than 1 point apart.
first baseline essays 1, 3; 4, 3; and 2, 2 respectively. Evaluator C determined the first essay to be a 1. The mean of all baseline scores is 2.5. The data set for baseline is bimodal (2, 3). Table 4.6 shows Student R’s mean and mode scores in each condition.

**Intervention.** Student R wrote eight essays in the intervention condition. The evaluators matched on essays four, six through nine, and eleven, scoring essay eleven a 3 and all the others a 4. They scored essays five and ten 4, 3 and 3, 4 respectively. The mean of all intervention scores is 3.8. The mode is 4.

**Baseline II.** The last essay produced was in the return to baseline condition. Evaluator A scored it a 3, and Evaluator B scored it a 4. The mean of these two scores is 3.5. The data set is bimodal (3, 4).

**Student M**

**Baseline.** Table 4.10 shows the results of the holistic scoring for Student M in all conditions. She wrote four essays in the baseline condition. Both evaluators scored her first essay a 1. The scores for essays three and four were both 1, 2. They scored essay two 3, 2. The mean of all baseline scores is 1.6, and the mode is 1. Table 4.6 shows Student M’s mean and mode scores in each condition.

**Intervention.** Student M wrote five essays in the intervention condition (no essays for sessions five and seven). The evaluators matched only on essay ten, scoring it a 4. They nearly matched on essays six and eight; those essays both received a 3 and a 4. Essays nine and eleven were both scored 2, 3. The mean of all intervention scores is 3.2. The data set is bimodal (3, 4).
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<th>Condition</th>
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Table 4.10: Holistic Scores for Student M

Note. Evaluator C scored only essays that Evaluators A and B scored more than 1 point apart.
Baseline II. The last essay produced was in the return to baseline condition. Evaluator A scored it a 1, and Evaluator B scored it a 2. The mean of these two scores is 1.5. The data set is bimodal (1, 2).

Student L

Baseline. Table 4.11 shows the results of the holistic scoring for Student L in all conditions. She wrote four essays in the baseline condition. Both evaluators matched on three of those essays, scoring her first essay a 1, her second essay a 4, and her fourth a 3. They scored her third essay 1, 2. The mean of all baseline scores is 2.4, and the mode is 1. Table 4.6 shows Student L’s mean and mode scores in each condition.

Intervention. Student L wrote four essays in the intervention condition (no essays for sessions five, seven, and eleven). The evaluators scored essay six a 2 and a 4. Evaluator C chose a score of 2. The evaluators matched only on essay nine, scoring it a 3. They nearly matched on essays eight and ten; those essays were scored 4, 3 and 3, 4 respectively. The mean of all intervention scores is 3.3 and the mode is 3.

Baseline II. The last essay produced was in the return to baseline condition. Evaluator A scored it a 1, and Evaluator B scored it a 2. The mean of these two scores is 1.5. The data set is bimodal (1, 2).

Student K

Baseline. Table 4.12 shows the results of the holistic scoring for Student K in all conditions. Student K wrote six essays in the baseline condition. The primary evaluators matched scores on five of those essays; they scored essays one, two, and five a 2; essay four a 3; and essay six a 1. They scored essay three a 1 and 2. The mean of all baseline scores is 1.9, and the mode is 2. Table 4.6 shows Student K’s mean and mode scores in
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Table 4.11: Holistic Scores for Student L

Note. Evaluator C scored only essays that Evaluators A and B scored more than 1 point apart.
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<td></td>
<td>9*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11*</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseline II</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.12: Holistic Scores for Student K

Note. Evaluator C scored only essays that Evaluators A and B scored more than 1 point apart. Asterisk (*) indicates essays that were produced with computer assistance.
each condition. The asterisks indicate essays produced with computer assistance that were still submitted for evaluation.

*Intervention.* Use of the extended prompt was implemented after Session 6 for Student K. As indicated in the table, essays nine, ten, and eleven were written with the assistance of a computer. She wrote only one essay without computer assistance. She did not write an essay in the seventh week. The evaluators matched on scores for the eighth essay, both scoring it a 4. The mode score for intervention is also 4.

*Baseline II.* The last essay produced was in the return to baseline condition. Evaluator A scored it a 1, and Evaluator B scored it a 3. Evaluator C determined it to be a 1. The mean of the two primary scores is 2. The data set is bimodal (1, 3).

*Computer Assistance.* For essays nine, ten, and eleven, Student K used a computer, an accommodation provided by her IEP. The resulting data of the computer-assisted essays differed enough from their original form in the extended prompt packet to warrant exclusion from the quantitative data analysis, though these essays were still submitted for holistic evaluation. The evaluators matched on essay nine, scoring it a 3. They scored essays ten and eleven 3, 1 and 4, 2 respectively. Evaluator C chose 1 for essay ten and 2 for essay eleven. With these scores factored in, the mean of all intervention scores is 3 and the data set is bimodal (3, 4).

*Student N*

*Baseline.* Table 4.13 shows the results of the holistic scoring for Student N in all conditions. He wrote four essays in the baseline condition (no essays for Sessions 3 and 5). The evaluators scored essay one a 1 and a 3. Evaluator C determined it to be a 1. Both evaluators scored essay two a 1, and they identically scored essays four and five a 2 and a
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Essay Prompts</th>
<th>Evaluator A Scores</th>
<th>Evaluator B Scores</th>
<th>Evaluator C Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>no essay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>no essay</td>
<td>no essay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
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<td>no essay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>no essay</td>
<td>no essay</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Baseline II</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.13: Holistic Scores for Student N

Note. Evaluator C scored only essays that Evaluators A and B scored more than 1 point apart.
3 respectively. The mean of all baseline scores is 1.8 and the mode is 1. Table 4.6 contains Student P’s mean and mode scores in all conditions.

**Intervention.** Student N wrote three essays in the intervention condition (no essays for Sessions 7 and 8). The evaluators scored essay six a 2 and a 3. The evaluators exactly matched on essays nine and ten, scoring both a 3. They scored essay eleven a 1 and a 2. The mean of all intervention scores is 2.5 and the mode is 3.

**Baseline II.** The last essay produced was in the return to baseline condition. Evaluator A scored it a 2, and Evaluator B scored it a 3. The mean of these scores is 2.5, and the data set is bimodal (2, 3).

**Group Results for Holistic Scores**

**Baseline.** Table 4.6 displays group mean and mode scores. As a group, participants had a mean holistic score of 2.2 for essays written with a typical prompt in the first baseline condition. The mode holistic score for the group was 1.

**Intervention.** As a group, participants had a mean holistic score of 2.9 for essays written with an extended prompt. When Student K’s computer-assisted essays are factored in, the group mean holistic score is 2.8. The mode holistic score for extended prompt essays was 3.

**Baseline II.** As a group, participants had a mean holistic score of 1.8 for the essay written in the return to baseline condition. The mode holistic score for this condition was 1.

**Baseline and Baseline II combined.** As a group, participants had a mean holistic score of 2.1 for all essays written with a typical prompt. The mode holistic score of the combined baseline conditions was 1.
Social Validity

Students’ Opinions

Results of the social validity questionnaire (see Appendix I) that was given to participants are displayed in Table 4.14.

In response to the first question on the Student Satisfaction Survey, five of the eight participants felt they wrote either a little (3 participants) or a lot (2 participants) better using the extended prompt, two felt they did not write better at all or not very much, and one didn’t know.

In response to the second question about how easy it was to use the extended prompt packet, seven of the eight responded that it was either a little (3 participants) or a lot (4 participants) easy, as opposed to not at all or not very easy.

In response to the third question, five of the eight participants indicated that they felt they could write a little or a lot more without the packet than they could with the packet, indicating a lack of awareness that they generally wrote longer essays with the extended prompt than without it. One possible reason for this could be that students now knew they could write more and so assumed it to be possible to continue doing so. More likely, however, is that the students preferred writing without the prompt (because it did not take as much time or effort) that they were trying to prevent the possibility of having to write in response to extended prompt packets in the future.

In response to the fourth question asking whether they thought that using the extended prompt was a good way to learn to write a basic 5-paragraph essay, seven of the eight students answered either maybe (3 participants) or absolutely (4 participants).
In response to the fifth question, half the students thought they could maybe (2 participants) or absolutely (2 participants) create their own extended prompt but half did not know (2 participants) or did not at all think they could (2 participants).

In responding to question six, whether they actually liked using the extended prompt, only three participants indicated they liked it a little or a lot and three did not know. Two indicated they did not at all like using the packet.

Questions 7 and 8 referred to the use of rewards in the study. Six of the eight participants indicated the rewards were a little or a lot important to them, one did not know, and one did not think the rewards were at all important. Interestingly, six of the eight indicated they would have been just as likely to write without the rewards as with them.

Teacher’s Opinions

The teacher completed a social validity survey (see Appendix J for completed survey) as well, though she was privy to the purposes of the study and the research questions. The Likert scale answers and questions were similar, except written for her point of view (e.g., the first question asked, “Do you feel your students wrote better using the extended prompt?”), and she was not asked about rewards. Her last question asked how much she liked having the students use the extended prompt. She chose the two most favorable answers for all of the questions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Questions</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you feel you wrote better using the extended prompt?</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How easy was it to use the packet?</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do you feel that you can now write as much without the packet as you could with the packet?</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Do you think using the packet is a good way to learn to write a basic 5-paragraph essay?</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Do you think you could create your own extended prompt?</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>1, 3, 4, 5</td>
<td>1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Did you like using the packet?</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. How important were the rewards to you?</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. How likely would you have been to write without the rewards?</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1-5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.14: Students’ Survey Results

Note. The questionnaire had a Likert scale for answers, 1 being the least favorable and 5 being the most favorable.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter presents a discussion of the results of a study that investigated the effects of two different kinds of prompts on the length and quality of first draft essays written by urban secondary students with mild disabilities. Specifically, the study focused on how to increase the number of words participants produced while subsequently maintaining—indeed possibly increasing—quality. Essays were assessed with both quantitative and qualitative measures during a typical prompt condition, an extended prompt condition, and a return to the typical prompt condition. Limitations of the study are discussed, and data are analyzed relative to the five research questions presented in Chapter 1. In addition, implications for practice and suggestions for future research are addressed.

Research Questions

*Research Question 1: What is the effect of using an extended prompt versus a typical prompt on the number of words written in initial drafts by urban secondary students with mild disabilities?*

Data from the typical prompt and extended prompt conditions demonstrate that seven of the eight participants averaged more words per essay with the extended prompt than with the typical prompt. One student, P, averaged 4 fewer words in intervention than
In either baseline condition. For 5 of the participants, the average was 116 words or more during intervention. Four participants doubled their number of words. An examination of the ranges of number of words written shows that the shortest essays written during intervention by 6 of the 8 participants were longer than their longest essays in baseline.

All 8 students wrote fewer words in Baseline II than in the intervention condition, and 5 wrote fewer words in Baseline II than in the original baseline condition. This indicates that the extended prompt was useful for producing a higher word count than a typical prompt. These findings support those of Hallenback’s (2002) study, in which 3 of the 4 students demonstrated impressive gains in number of words written. Two of his participants more than doubled and the third tripled the number of words from pretest to posttest.

The group data support the use of the extended prompt as a tool to increase the length of student writing. As a group, the participants averaged slightly more than 70% more words writing with the extended prompt than with just the typical prompt, a robust change even when factoring in the less-than-4-word difference between Student P’s combined baselines and intervention word counts. Children with mild disabilities are often reluctant to write. In order to improve students’ writing skills, it is helpful for teachers to have the students write so that specific writing deficits can be identified. Getting students to write more is usually the first intervention a teacher attempts. Additionally, longer essays are viewed more positively by teachers even if there is no qualitative difference in the student’s writing from a shorter essay. The extended prompt promoted higher quantities of writing, providing the teacher with more opportunities to analyze students’ writing needs.
Hillocks (1986) concluded from his meta-analysis that further research examining length of writing is warranted for what it can reveal about structural elaboration. The present study produced quantitative results that were similar to all but one of the studies reviewed in the previous chapter that had length as a dependent variable. Page-Voth and Graham (1999) demonstrated similar increases in number of words using goal-setting strategies. The mean number of words in essays written by one experimental group was twice the mean number of words written by the control group. Overall, the experimental groups produced approximately 50% more writing than the control group. Subjects in De La Paz’s (1999) study wrote two and a half times more post instruction. The mean number of words written in any of the three conditions in the Sturm and Rankin-Erickson (2002) study was almost double than that of baseline. In comparison, the present study demonstrated similar results. Figure 5.1 displays the mean number of words written in each condition.

Only one student did not show a noticeable increase from baseline to intervention. Student P wrote approximately the same amount in each condition. In contrast, 4 participants more than doubled the mean number of words written in the intervention condition from baseline, 1 participant increased by 68%, and the last 2 participants increased by 42% and 33%.

Two of the researchers in the studies reviewed did not control for the practice effect of writing, i.e., that students’ writing may improve over time due to the increased opportunities to write. The data in this study, however, demonstrated all students decreased word production in Baseline II, indicating it is likely that practice effects were not the reason for increases during the intervention.
It is possible that the typical prompt alone would have been enough to produce meaningful improvements in number of words written in compared with the presentation of a topic. Despite its label in this study, a typical prompt may not be at all typical in some secondary settings. It is possible, indeed likely, that many teachers provide students with only a topic, perhaps only one or two sentences to prompt writing. If following the advice of advocates of the writing process, they may even give no more of a prompt than the instruction to “write about whatever you want.” The typical prompt in this study contained information on the form the writing should take, clues as to whom the audience should/would be (albeit an inauthentic audience as writing process purists would see it),
and directions to prewrite/brainstorm before drafting. The teacher involved in the study noted that students wrote longer baseline essays than they typically did for writing assignments for her and for some mainstream class assignments. The researcher saw writing samples from five of the students several months before the onset of the study during the process of participant selection. None of those writing samples was longer than a half page and at least two were only 2-3 sentences long. It may be that using a topic only as a baseline prompt and a typical prompt as the intervention would have produced similar gains. Perhaps even more meaningful increases would have been noted had the study compared a topic only to the extended prompt.

Research Question 2: What is the effect of using an extended prompt versus a typical prompt on the percent correct word sequences in initial drafts written by urban secondary students with mild disabilities?

Figure 5.2 displays the mean percent correct word sequences (CWS) in each condition for each student. Correct word sequences is essentially a measure of sentence level errors, mostly mechanical (i.e., spelling, punctuation, and capitalization). In general, the average percent CWS did not change much from condition to condition. Four participants had higher percentages of CWS using the extended prompt. Student K had the highest average percent increase with a 6.5% improvement from baseline to intervention. (It should be noted that only one Intervention essay is being considered in the analysis, the one not produced with computer assistance.) Student O improved CWS with the extended prompt an average of five percentage points, and Student M only .6 percentage points. Four students averaged a lower percentage CWS with the extended
prompt, but the difference was less than five percentage points (e.g., Student L averaged 65.8% CWS when writing with the typical prompt in both baseline conditions and averaged 64.9% CWS when writing with the extended prompt, a difference of .9%).

The one study reviewed that used CWS as a measure used number of CWS, not percent correct. Using a frequency count is recommended in the CWS literature and typically the frequency count is taken on 3-min writing samples. In the case of the Walker, Shippen, Alberto, Houchins, and Cihak (2005) study, a 3-minute sample from the beginning of the writing session was used. In the present study, it was not possible to conduct such a frequency count due to lack of consistency of the time limit (discussed
later in the Limitations section). In addition, anecdotal observations indicated that many 3-minute segments would have yielded no data as students were frequently off-task during writing periods. The researcher was interested in assessing this variable (i.e., CWS) as it related to an increase in number of words. In other words, the researcher wanted a measure that was consistent across an entire episode of writing regardless of the number of words written and amount of time spent writing. Regardless, the results of the Walker et al. study demonstrated higher rates of CWS after instruction. In contrast, the present study showed that half the students increased CWS and half decreased, all maintained relatively stable percentages of CWS between baseline and intervention.

Overall, the participants as a group had only a slightly higher percentage of correct word sequences using the extended prompts than the typical prompts, a .5% difference. In general, because most students wrote more words with the extended prompt, it can be said that students do not write meaningfully more mechanical errors when they compose more text, though some may write fewer. This is not a wholly unexpected outcome given the literature on the writing of students with mild disabilities, specifically learning disabilities. Neither the typical nor extended prompt provided instructional elements directed at the sentence level mechanics measured by correct word sequences; however, the emphasis on the production of first drafts may have relieved the pressure to focus on the mechanical aspects of writing that students with disabilities have a tendency to do (Graham & Harris, 2000). Since the participants produced first drafts whether using a typical or extended prompt, one would not expect much difference between the sentence level errors. It would not have been unexpected, perhaps, to see a degradation in the percentage of CWS in the students who had robust increases in
numbers of words written, possibly due to fatigue (i.e., these students were not used to writing so frequently or so much, so it would not be surprising to see more errors).

However, the participants with the highest increases, Student K (232 mean words) and Student R (218.5 mean words) either increased percent CWS (Student K, 6.5%) or had no change. Apparently, writing more text does not necessarily coincide with writing proportionally more errors.

Research Question 3: What is the effect of using an extended prompt versus a typical prompt on the holistic/rubric scores of initial drafts written by urban secondary students with mild disabilities?

An examination of the intervention and combined baseline (i.e., Baseline and Baseline II together) data reveal that for six of the eight participants, mean holistic scores were higher for essays written with the extended prompt than for those written with the typical prompt. One student (J) had a mean holistic score that was lower in intervention than combined baselines. The other student (P) had identical mean scores in the two conditions; interestingly, he was the student who wrote an average of 4 fewer words in intervention than in the combined baseline conditions.

An examination of the mode holistic scores indicates that the two primary evaluators more frequently scored intervention essays higher than baseline essays. Of the eight participants, the modes of intervention holistic scores were higher than the modes of baseline scores. The exceptions were the same two students mentioned in the previous paragraph. Student J had identical (combined) baseline and intervention modes. Student P had a higher mode score for essays written with the typical prompt than for those written with the extended prompt. In summary, 6 of 8 students had higher mean holistic scores.
during intervention than baseline. This implies that the extended prompt promoted more structure in the students’ essays and better overall quality.

Student K’s data warrants mention here. When analyzing group data and her individual data for the dependent variables of number of words written and %CWS, the data resulting from her computer-assisted essays were excluded. However, those data were included in the holistic data analysis because excluding them had only minor impact on the results. The only two items that changed were the mean Intervention holistic score; it increased from 2.8 to 2.9 when those 3 essays were excluded. In addition, the mode scores for her individual holistic scores changed from a bimodal data set of 3, 4 to a mode score of 4. This change had no impact on the group mode for Intervention holistic scores.

The results of this study support the conclusions of Hillocks’ (1986) epic study and the more recent studies reviewed in the prior chapter. Hillocks concluded from his meta-analysis that longer writing pieces are usually evaluated as higher quality than shorter writing. Table 5.1 shows that 7 of the 8 participants’ longest essays received higher holistic scores than their shortest essays. It is likely that longer essays receive higher quality scores, not simply because they are longer (though that may play into an evaluator’s bias) but because they contain more of the criteria an evaluator deems critical in a quality essay. This supports the idea that producing more words in an essay is not necessarily better but producing a better essay usually means producing a longer essay.

The idea that longer essays scored higher than shorter ones, however, does not hold true across all essays. For instance, Student K’s second longest essay (only 20 words shorter than her longest and both written with computer assistance), received the lowest possible holistic score. Perhaps length can be seen as some sort of marker (i.e., “This 5-
sentence essay isn’t long enough to contain four well-developed ideas for conserving fuel.”), but it also indicates a need for additional research to further analyze the effects of the extended prompt on writing quality.

Though none of the studies reviewed in the previous chapter analyzed the relation between length of text and quality, all reported that students had higher quality ratings after a writing intervention. A key point is worth repeating here. In every study in which some sort of intervention was provided, students with disabilities produced higher quality writing. It could be just planning time (Montague, Graves, & Leavell, 1991), strategy instruction (De La Paz, 1999), or Direct Instruction (Walker, Shippen, Alberto, Houchins, & Cihak, 2005). Critical to improved writing is instruction, and of course, opportunities to write. With an intervention that increases the amount of writing a student produces, teachers are better able to tailor instruction to individual student’s needs.

Research Question 4: What is each student’s opinion of the extended prompt?

Overall, the students’ opinions regarding use of the extended prompt, including ease of use, writing outcomes, feelings towards its use, and as a supportive tool ranged from the two extremes of favorable and unfavorable. In general, most students felt they wrote better with the extended prompt, that it was easy to use, and that it was a good way to learn to write a basic 5-paragraph essay. Half the participants thought they could probably create their own extended prompts, but half did not think so or were certain they could not. Most students thought they could write as much without the extended prompt as with it, though they did not do so. This indicates that either they were not aware of the lengths of their essays or were not associating what they could do with what they actually did. Another possibility exists, however. One student asked, in the presence of the others,
if the researcher was going to return to do research during the next school year. This question was asked and answered (the answer was “I hope so.”) before students completed the Satisfaction Survey. It is possible that the students indicated they thought they could write more without the extended prompt because they disliked it so much that they hoped to discourage the researcher from implementing it during the next school year.

Most students either did not at all like using the extended prompt or did not know. However, one participant during the last week of school and after the study was complete asked if the experimenter would be returning to run the study again next year. When asked why, the participant responded, “I liked writing to those [extended] prompts. Only three indicated they liked it a little or a lot. This outcome is understandable given that the extended prompt resulted in more reading and more writing; essentially, students had to work more and possibly harder to complete the extended prompt packet.

Questions 7 and 8 referred to the use of rewards in the study. Six of the eight participants indicated the rewards were a little or a lot important to them, one did not know, and one did not think the rewards were at all important. Interestingly, six of the eight indicated they would have been just as likely to write without the rewards as with them.

Research Question 5: What is the teacher’s level of satisfaction with and opinion of the extended prompt?

Overall, the teacher was quite satisfied with the use of the extended prompt. Anecdotal evidence in the form of conversations with the experimenter indicates that she was open to any help in providing writing instruction for her students. She may have been
just as satisfied with only the mini-lessons and typical prompts. Unsolicited comments throughout the study, as well as those on the survey form, indicate her satisfaction with the extended prompt. Sample comments from the questionnaire:

- The extended prompt allowed the students to organize their thoughts more clearly … writing to the extended prompt clearly helped some of the students write better.
- I really believe it’s a helpful way for the students to learn how to write.
- I will definitely use extended prompts in the future with my students.

Comments from throughout the study:

- They truly seemed disappointed not writing this week (during a week when the schedule prohibited implementation of the study)!
- I can’t believe they’re saying they like to write!
- I’m amazed! {student name} wanted to keep writing! She never wants to write!
Limitations of the Study

Participant Characteristics

The participants in this study were 5 females and 3 males with mild disabilities (specific learning disabilities, developmental handicaps, and attention deficit disorder). All are African American students in a large urban district. It is not known the extent to which the results of this study can generalize to students a) from other ethnic groups, b) in suburban or rural districts, and/or c) without disabilities.

Setting

The study took place in a resource room setting in which there were never more than eleven students present (though the small size of the room made the presence of so few students distracting for those participating in the study). It is not known the extent to which the results of this study could generalize to an inclusive setting or a non-inclusive general education classroom.

Length of Study

This study took place over the course of 12 weeks. It is arguable that 12 writing opportunities is not enough to make a significant impact on a skill as complex as writing. The length of the study in combination with the time limit also precluded students from developing their essays into finished products. Though the teacher and experimenter intended that at least one or two of the essays be revised and polished, the students were beginning a new writing assignment each week, having had only enough time the week before to produce a first draft. In addition, the lengths of the last few essays in the study, particularly the last, may have been influenced by the end of the school year and all of the restlessness and lack of focus that affects many students at that time of the year. A more
desirable approach to a writing study would be to have participants write more essays
over the course of the entire school year and periodically choose one to develop, revise,
and polish.

*Time Limit*

Participants were allotted 45 minutes per day for each of two days of the week to
compose their essays. This limitation was necessary because students attended English
class in the setting of the study (resource room) for only two to three days a week due to
the blocked (i.e., double period) scheduling of this particular school. During the first two
weeks of the study, when all participants were in baseline, participants were told they had
two 45-minute periods over two days to complete a first draft. During that first week, no
student wrote for longer than 41 minutes. The average writing time for the first essay was
40 minutes. During the second week, Student L wrote for 80 minutes but none of the
other students wrote for longer than 28 minutes. The average writing time for the second
essay was 32 minutes even with the 80-minute essay (the average time was 25 minutes
without Student L’s writing time).

When the first participant entered intervention during week 3, there was no
problem with the two 45-minute writing periods. The student writing with the extended
prompt wrote for 38 minutes and the students writing with the typical prompt all wrote
for 28 minutes or fewer. The average essay time during week 3 was 21 minutes.

When three more participants entered intervention during week 4, it became
apparent after the first writing day that though the composition of the essay with the
extended prompt could be completed within the two 45-minute periods, the study
procedures needed to be adjusted to allow a third day for copying the text onto lined

117
paper. At this point, a third 45-minute period was added to the weekly writing session to allow for copying only, but no composition. Though no participant would have needed a third 45 minute period to copy their compositions during baseline (indeed, they did not even use the second 45 minute period, and they were already composing on lined paper so they did not need to copy), it is not known what effect consistent time period allocation would have had on their writing.

Computer-Assistance

Student K’s individual education plan (IEP) provides for the use of a computer as an accommodation for writing. The experimenter was not aware of this accommodation until eight weeks into the study, when the participant asked to be allowed to use the computer instead of hand-copying text from the extended prompt packet to lined paper. The accommodation was provided to her beginning in the ninth week. Her ninth, tenth, and eleventh essays were produced with computer assistance. She opted to hand write the last essay. Despite being told that she was only allowed to copy text from the packet to her computer copying, a comparison of the two documents revealed that changes had been made. (See Appendix L for an example of the typed copy of essay Student K’s tenth essay.) The most salient difference was number of words written (e.g., the typed copy of essay ten contained 621 words but was only 487 words long in the packet.

Interestingly, she corrected some of her errors when transcribing, but also made other errors when word processing, including misspellings, word omissions, and usage and sentence structure errors. It was apparent that she did not utilize the spell-check and grammar-check functions (as she was told not to), but the auto-correct functions of the software (e.g., automatic capitalization of first word in a sentence) were not disabled and
so were utilized. Despite this, the %CWS in the packet document and word processed
document differed by less than five percentage points, although the word processed
document had the higher %CWS. Of the three essays produced with computer assistance,
essay 10 was the only one that Student K utilized the third writing day option, so
technically she was still allowed to draft during the time she took for essays nine and
eleven. However, since no other student was allowed nor took advantage of the
opportunity to edit/revise when transcribing, it was decided that excluding the essays
from the analysis of quantitative data was the best way to minimize the effects of this
uncontrolled variable and reduce their impact on the limitations of the study.

Despite the meaningful difference in number of words written when using a
computer, it was believed that the use of the computer did not unduly influence holistic
scores, so the data was included in holistic score analyses. In point of fact, the one essay
Student K wrote during the Intervention condition without computer earned an agreed
upon 4. None of the computer essays earned a score that high: one earned an agreed upon
3 and the other two differed by more than one point. Evaluator A thought they were high
quality and scored them a 3 and 4, respectively. Evaluator B thought they were of low
quality and assigned them a 1 and 2, respectively. The Evaluator C agreed with Evaluator
B and scored them 1 and 2. It turned out that excluding the data resulted in only one
difference: the mean holistic group score for the Intervention condition increased a tenth
of a point to 2.9 from 2.8. For this reason, all data was reported with notations that the
essays were produced with computer assistance, but it is recognized that the use of the
computer may have influenced the evaluators’ scores either because of the length or
quality of the essays and so computer assistance is recognized as a limitation of the study.
Students’ Interest in Topics

Graves (1994) advocates that students write on topics of interest to them, usually topics they choose, in order for writing to be a more meaningful experience and therefore, presumably, for them to produce a better quality piece. The writing process professional literature supports the idea that students write to topics of their choice and preferably for real purposes. The reason given usually pertains to the idea that it is less contrived situation, and perhaps it is the assumption that a topic that is of interest to a writer will result in better writing. The research literature is silent on this topic. No studies could be found that examined choice as a variable, though one study did consider it in the selection of topics (i.e., Sturm & Rankin-Erickson, 2002).

The participants in this study were provided a new topic each week, but all students wrote on the same topic and were not given a choice in topics. This was done for two reasons. First, having students write on the same topic at the same time added control to the experimental situation. Second, the development of extended prompts involved some preparation, so many of the prompts were created before the onset of the study. In an effort to minimize the possibility that students wrote more or better in response to topics they preferred, the experimenter assessed the students’ interest levels in the topics provided.

At the end of the study, the experimenter asked the students to rank the prompts from one to 12, one being the one they liked the most and 12 being the one they disliked the most (see first page of Appendix I). Students did not have access to their essays when they ranked the topics; they were asked to rank from memory. Table 5.1 displays the two longest essays and the two shortest essays, as well as the ranks of the two most liked
essays and the two most disliked essays. Included in the table for comparison is the third
dependent variable, holistic scores.

The data in Table 5.1 show that two students’ (L and M) longest essays were also
the topics they ranked as their most liked topics. Student K’s second longest essay was
also the essay she ranked as her second most-liked topic. In contrast, Student R ranked
her longest essay her most disliked topic, and Student P ranked his longest essay his
second most disliked topic.

In comparison, 3 students (J, N, and P), ranked their shortest essays as topics they
most disliked. Student J also ranked his second shortest essay as his second most disliked
topic. Student R ranked her shortest essay as her second most disliked topic and Student
O ranked her shortest essay her second most disliked topic. In contrast, Students M and R
ranked their second shortest essay as their second most liked topic. Essentially, it is
difficult to determine whether or not the length of any particular essay was influenced by
whether or not a student liked or disliked the topic.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Essay No. (# of words)</th>
<th>Student Rank</th>
<th>Holistic Scores</th>
<th>Essay No. (# of words)</th>
<th>Student Rank</th>
<th>Holistic Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>8 (322)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3 (175)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 (296)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>2 (191)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>9 (641)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6 (124)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 (621)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 (157)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>8 (428)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4-3</td>
<td>1 (84)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 (374)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12 (102)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>8 (313)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>1 (108)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11 (293)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>12 (108)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>10 (240)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 (105)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11 (211)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>1 (123)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>4 (427)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 (92)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11 (275)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12 (152)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>4 (267)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8 (111)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 (218)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9 (128)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>8 (529)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3 (130)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 (515)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 (165)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1. Ranks and holistic scores for the two longest and two shortest essays. Ranking ran from most liked (1) to most disliked (12). Two scores in the holistic score column indicate that the primary evaluators differed by only one point, so a third evaluator did not re-score.
The same can be said for the influence of liked and disliked topics on holistic scores. Some of the highest holistic scores were given to papers that students ranked as their most disliked topics (e.g., Students J and N), and some of the lowest holistic scores were given to essays that students ranked as their most liked topics (e.g., Students O and R).

During the course of the study, the only prompt any students verbally indicated they liked was Prompt 6, “Extreme Makeover: Home Edition.” Students O indicated a strong liking for it, commenting, “Why can’t they all be this good?” Students R and L also mentioned that they liked this prompt. None of these participants, however, ranked this prompt in their top three most-liked topics. For none of them was essay 6 the longest essay. Student R did receive the highest possible holistic score for this essay, but she also received the highest score on seven other essays; the other two students received low holistic scores for this essay. Perhaps they forgot they liked it by the time they ranked or perhaps other topics were, indeed, more liked. Despite this possibility, students’ interest level as a variable influencing length and quality was minimized with the ranking survey. Because the best and/or longest student writing does not always correlate with the declared favorite topic in this study, it is not likely that a favored topic was a variable that influenced length and quality of writing.

Multiple Components

The intervention in this study—the extended prompt—has several components: a structure for brainstorming and outlining; written instructions for developing an introduction and thesis statement, as well as for developing a conclusion with restatement
of the thesis; and questions and support for developing three body paragraphs. It is not known if similar results could have been accomplished with an intervention containing just one of these components or if the combination is required. In addition, since one of the purposes of the study was to increase the number of words written, it is possible differential reinforcement of more words written may have produced similar or better outcomes on one or more of the dependent variables.

*Instructional Materials*

The reading level of the participants ranged from grade 4.0 to grade 8.1. The reading level at which the prompts were written had approximately the same range, from grade 3 to grade 8. Readability levels were calculated by modifying the Raygor Readability Formula (Gillet & Temple, 2000). The formula entails selecting three 100-word passages and finding the average number of sentences per sample and the average number of words longer than six letters. The Raygor Readability Formula chart is then used to pinpoint reading level at the appropriate intersection of the two axes, one for number of sentences and one for number of six-letter words. In this study, the prompts typically did not contain enough text to use three 100-word samples, so usually only one 100-word sample was used, as well as the actual number of sentences and six-letter words instead of averages. Consequently, at any given time a participant may have been writing to a prompt above his or her reading level. Although the teacher read the prompt to the participants, and participants were allowed to (and did) ask questions, it is not known what effect the reading level of the prompts had on the outcomes of the study.

The topics and prompted were generated by the experimenter previous to the onset of the study, necessary due to time constraints but precluding student input on
topics. It is not known what effect writing to teacher-assigned writing had on the quality and quantity of the essays produced.

Rewards

It is not unusual for secondary students with mild disabilities to have reduced motivation for writing as a result of years of academic failure in elementary school (Wong, Butler, Ficzere, & Kuperis, 1996). Reluctance to write was a condition both the researcher and teacher were concerned about, so students were provided rewards at the end of each weekly writing session (i.e., across all conditions) if they answered positively to the question, “Did you do your best this week on your writing?” The experimenter provided rewards to the teacher, who then distributed them to the students. The types of rewards were selected from a running list of options written by students on a large white board in the room. After a few weeks, it was evident that the most popular rewards were potato chips in a tube (i.e., Lays Stax™) and candy (e.g., sour candy, chocolate bars, and gum). For most weeks, the selection of rewards contained these items. To prevent satiation, the experimenter occasionally offered different choices (e.g., Junior Frostys™ from a nearby Wendys™). Students did not know ahead of time what the actual rewards would be for that week. The cost of rewards was approximately one dollar or less each.

Though only one student indicated on the Student Satisfaction Survey (see Appendix I) that she was not at all or not very likely to write without the rewards, all but one indicated that the rewards were a little or a lot important to them. It is possible that having the rewards available to them made it more likely that they would actually complete an essay, whereas in previous writing situations without rewards they may have not completed a writing piece, not at all uncommon for students with disabilities (Wood,
2002). Because most teachers do not provide rewards for writing, neither tangible nor edibles, it is not known how the results of this study will generalize to situations in which no rewards are provided for writing.

Implications for Practice

Applebee (1981), using a broad definition of writing, determined that although 44% of all observed lesson time in secondary schools involved writing activities (e.g., taking notes, fill-in-the-blank and short answer tests), only 3% of the observed time involved writing of a paragraph-length or more. It is likely that students with the greatest need spend even less than 3% of their lesson time writing, as Mercer (1997) indicates that writing is not often emphasized in instructional programs for students with learning disabilities. As is the case with reading and reading instruction, with such little multi-sentence writing occurring, student writing is not going to improve. This study indicates that providing structural support for writing for students with mild disabilities noticeably improves their first drafts. What is not clear is how much the increased opportunity alone contributed to improved drafts. Certainly the outcomes of this study support more writing opportunities and instruction for secondary students with mild disabilities.

In addition to more writing opportunities and instruction, secondary students with mild disabilities should also be provided some structural support for the drafting process. Assigning a topic or even providing a typical prompt may not be enough for a student with a mild disability to produce text that would be considered competent writing. Many teachers in the general education class may argue that there just is not enough time to provide support and writing instruction at the level these students need, but this study indicates that one-on-one time is not necessarily required, that a standard extended
prompt delivered in place of a typical prompt or topic can provide the support and instruction needed to produce more competent writing.

It is possible that students with mild disabilities write so little because the task demands of writing overwhelm them (Graham, Harris, MacArthur, & Schwartz 1991). Graham (1990) demonstrated that when the mechanical demands of writing are removed via dictation, students generated more text of higher quality than when handwriting. This makes sense given students with disabilities tend to have greater problems with the mechanics in their writing than their non-disabled peers (Graham, Harris, MacArthur, & Schwartz, 1991). Considering the degree to which mechanics interfere with the writing process, it would not be surprising to see a decrease in percentage of CWS in longer essays compared to shorter. Three of the students in the present study showed minimal decreases in percent CWS, and only one showed a robust decrease. The extended prompt did not provide any instructional support regarding the mechanics of writing, though the mini-lessons provided throughout the study did. That half the students in the present study even minimally increased their percentage of CWS has important implications for practice. Students with mild disabilities can produce more text with structural supports without overwhelming their ability to produce correct mechanics at the sentence level.

Suggestions for Future Research

Replication

An important next step in this study is replication. It would be important to repeat this study, addressing the limitations when possible, and determining if the results can be repeated. Including more students would be desirable, as would replicating in different school settings, both suburban and rural; in different service delivery settings, such as the
inclusive setting; and with students with deficits in writing, whether they had a mild disability labels or not.

*Computerized Prompts*

Though the research regarding writing with computerized assistance is unclear, many students with writing goals on their individualized education plan (IEP) have the option to use a computer or word processor when producing text of significant length. Though it cannot be ascertained for certain what the benefit is for students to do so, using a computer to “transcribe” from the packet to the final first draft copy (for the one student in this study allowed to use a computer) resulted in a fairly large number of words written beyond what she wrote in the packet. For students not used to writing frequently and/or writing more than a paragraph at a time, fatigue could be a factor in number of words produced and possible quality of the text produced. In this study in particular, the extended prompt procedure required students to copy text written in the extended prompt packet onto lined paper. Several students on several different occasions noted the tedium of this portion of the procedure. Software programs allow for a cut-and-paste option, eliminating the need for retyping or hand-copying. It is also possible to develop a software program that would reconfigure the text produced in response to the extended prompt into the appropriate 5-paragraph essay with one keystroke. In addition, some auto-correct functions (e.g., for capitalization of the first word in a sentence) are reliable and can contribute to a higher quality draft. Also, if students are competent typists, they could feasibly produce more text in less time, allowing for more opportunities to write, i.e., more data points. The problem, of course, is that many school districts, urban environments in particular, do not have a sufficient number of computers for several
students to be composing at the same time. In the classroom that this study took place, for instance, only two computers were available.

**Generalization & Maintenance**

One of the important aspects of any instructional strategy is whether it is useful in producing the desired behavior in environments in which the desired behavior has not been taught. An aspect of this study that was included in the proposal was to probe participant writing in other classes. Although some participants were finishing writing assignments for other classes as the study was beginning, no participant during the study was assigned or produced writing of more than a paragraph in length for any class other than the class in which the study took place. Encouraging writing across the curriculum would also provide students opportunities to practice writing skills learned in English class. Extending the length of the study to the entire school year would better enable the experimenter to capture generalization and maintenance data, such as writing in other coursework.

**Fading the Extended Prompt**

Given that the extended prompts developed for this study were an instructional tool for developing a basic 5-paragraph essay, it would be pertinent to implement a systematic fading procedure to see if participants could eventually produce as good and long a first draft without the extended prompt as they did with it. They could write with the extended prompt until they mastered all parts of the essay. At that point, participants could be given an extended prompt with the instructional piece for writing a conclusion removed (but with a reminder to write a conclusion) and write with that type of extended prompt until data indicate they have mastered that type of prompt. The next extended
prompt could have the instructional piece for writing an introduction removed (but with a reminder to write an introduction). The supports for each body paragraph could be excluded one-by-one, and finally the prewriting supports, until the student is writing with just the typical prompt. A fading procedure like this would require a much longer study.

Extend Length of Study

A study extended beyond twelve weeks would be necessary for adding study features such as fading, generalization, and maintenance. In addition, it would allow for more opportunities for participants to write and provide the time necessary for them to take any number of the drafts through the complete writing process (i.e., revision and publication). Having a study begin at the onset of a school year and end several weeks before the school year ends might mitigate the collateral problems of suddenly expecting students who have not produced but one or two papers the entire school year to produce one each week. Those collateral problems included constant coaxing, high absenteeism for at least one student, and unpleasant complaints from the participants about having to write everyday.

Summary

This study examined the effects of an extended prompt versus a typical prompt on the first draft writing of urban secondary students with mild disabilities. Students wrote on one topic a week, beginning with a typical prompt. As the length of their essays stabilized (i.e., remained similar or decreased), students were moved into the intervention condition, writing with an extended prompt. During the last writing opportunity, all participants returned to the baseline condition and wrote using a typical prompt again.
Dependent variables were number of words written, percent correct word sequences, and holistic scores.

Eight African American students attending an urban high school participated in the study. Five were female and three were male. Five were in tenth grade, two in eleventh, and one ninth. All had the same resource room teacher, and all but one were assigned to her for one to four academic classes, including English. One student was mainstreamed for all his classes. All participants struggled with writing and each had at least one writing goal on his or her IEP. All but one participant averaged more words per essay writing with the extended prompt than with the typical prompt, and all eight wrote fewer words in the return to baseline essay than their average intervention essay. All wrote approximately the same percentage of correct word sequences during intervention as during baseline (i.e., within 8.4%) and all wrote approximately the same percentage in the return to baseline essay (i.e., within 8.1%). Finally, all but two participants had higher mean holistic scores in intervention than in baseline and all but one had higher mean holistic scores during intervention than for the return to baseline essay (the one had identical intervention and return to baseline mean scores).

The results demonstrate that although further research is needed on several components of this study and in writing in general, the extended prompt is an effective tool for increasing the length of first draft essays while maintaining, and for the majority of students improving, the quality of writing.
References


APPENDIX A

ASSENT/CONSENT FORMS
January 19, 2005

Dear (Parent)

I am a doctoral student in the Special Education/Applied Behavior Analysis program at The Ohio State University. I am in the process of planning my dissertation research, which I will be conducting at Ft. Hayes High School. I will be conducting this research under the supervision of Dr. Ralph Gardner, Associate Professor, of the school of Physical Activity and Educational Services at The Ohio State University. I am writing to you to explain my research and to ask for your permission to include ______________ in my study. The following is a description of the study I am planning to conduct, along with an explanation of your rights.

This study will involve ______________’s voluntary participation. It involves repeated writing opportunities for students who have a difficult time getting their thoughts onto paper. The purpose of this study is to compare two writing strategies. ______________ will be writing essays on 8-12 different occasions, each time on a different topic chosen by the teacher and/or me. Your child will be completing the writing assignments as required class work anyway, but if you allow his/her participation, his/her essays will be 1) copied, 2) have his/her names removed, and 3) be graded by evaluators who do not know whose essays they are scoring. Those evaluations will in no way impact your child’s English grade. The evaluation scores will be used to compare two writing strategies and to compare each student’s earlier writing to their later writing.

The writing sessions will occur at school in your child’s special education classroom. Your child will be asked to write several essays, at least one week apart. He/she will have three class periods to write, the normal amount of time that the teacher allows for writing a first draft. In addition, should you give consent, the teacher will provide me with a representative sample of your child’s writing done before the study begins, so that I have something to compare his/her
later writing to, and your child’s writing grades for this year. She will also provide me with your
child’s proficiency scores (writing portion only). This information will be held in strict
confidence and utilized for data analysis purposes only.

If at any time your child wishes to stop participating, s/he can withdraw from the study
without any negative consequences. If you are interested in allowing your child to participate in
this study, please sign the attached experiment consent form. Keep the extra copy for your
records. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 614-486-9391. I would be happy
to explain anything that is not clear in this letter or answer any questions that arise.

You are not obligated to participate in this research. Neither you nor your child will be
penalized in any way for not participating. If your child decides to participate, he/she has the
right to withdraw from the research at any time without prejudice to you or him/her. The original
essays written as a result of this study will be kept by me (the researcher) and kept locked in a
filing cabinet, but the teacher will receive copies and these may become a part of your child’s
permanent records. Should the results of this research be published in the future, it will be without
the participants’ real names. I will be happy to share any results with you if you are interested.
Thank you, and should you choose to participate in this research, I look forward to working with
your child’s class.

Sincerely,

Theresa (Terri) Hessler  
Doctoral Student

Dr. Ralph Gardner, III  
Associate Professor

Enclosures

cc: principal, special education teacher
Experiment Assent Form

STUDENT ASSENT

I, ______________________________ (student name), agree to participate in the research study conducted by Theresa (Terri) Hessler under the direction and guidance of Dr. Ralph Gardner. They have explained the purpose of the study and the duration of my participation. They have explained the possible benefits of this research.

I acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to obtain additional information regarding the study and that any questions I have raised have been answered to my full satisfaction. Furthermore, I understand that I am free to withdraw my assent at any time and to discontinue participation in the study without prejudice to me.

Yes  No

☐ ☐ I agree to participate in the study run by Theresa (Terri) Hessler and supervised by Ralph Gardner III. I understand that I would be completing the writing assignments anyway for grades in my English class and that the evaluations done for the study will in no way impact my English grade.

☐ ☐ I give assent to Terri Hessler and Ralph Gardner III to have access to my English writing grades for the 2003-2004 school year.

☐ ☐ I give assent for Terri Hessler and Ralph Gardner III to have access to my scores from the writing portion of the most recent state proficiency test.

_________________________________________  __________________________
Student signature                        date
PARENT CONSENT

I, ______________________________ (parent of student above), give my consent for ___________________________ (student name) to participate in the research study conducted by Theresa (Terri) Hessler under the direction and guidance of Dr. Ralph Gardner. They have explained the purpose of the study and the duration of my participation. They have explained the possible benefits of this research.

I acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to obtain additional information regarding the study and that any questions I have raised have been answered to my full satisfaction. Furthermore, I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time and to discontinue participation in the study without prejudice to me.

Yes  No

☐ ☐ I give consent for my child to participate in the study run by Theresa (Terri) Hessler and supervised by Ralph Gardner III. I understand that my child would be completing the writing assignments anyway for grades in English class and that the evaluations done for the study will in no way impact the English grade.

☐ ☐ I give my consent for Terri Hessler and Ralph Gardner III to have access to my child’s English writing grades for the 2003-2004 school year.

☐ ☐ I give consent for Terri Hessler and Ralph Gardner III to have access to my child’s scores from the writing portion of the most recent state proficiency test.

______________________________  ________________________
Parent signature        date
TEACHER AGREEMENT TO COOPERATE IN AN INVESTIGATIONAL STUDY

The Effects of an Extended Prompt Versus a Typical Prompt on the Length and Quality of First Draft Essays by Urban Students with Mild Disabilities

I, __________________________, agree to allow researchers from the Ohio State University’s School of Physical Activity and Educational Services (PAES) to implement a writing intervention with my students, _______________, _______________, _______________, _______________, _______________, _______________, _______________, and _______________, during resource room hours.

The experimental (research) portion of this study: Over the course of the study, my students will be asked to write several essays. Students will use either an extended prompt or a typical prompt, both provided by the researcher. For the final essay, all students will use a typical prompt. In order for a student to participate in this study, he/she must have a mild disability.

I am asked to provide a copy of a representative writing sample for each student that was written before the onset of this study. The researchers will collect and keep the student’s essays produced during the study.

1. **Purpose of the study:** To see if a student with a mild disability can produce a longer essay of better quality with an extended prompt than with just a typical prompt.

2. **Discomforts and risks reasonably to be expected:** None known for the cooperating teacher. Forms with my name or other identifying information may be made available to the Institutional Review Board.

3. **Possible benefits for subjects/society:** The study will enable researchers to determine what effects this behavioral strategy has on children with mild disabilities who produce inadequate texts for writing assignments. This may well benefit other children with mild disabilities.

4. **Anticipated duration of subject's participation (including number of visits):** The study involves 8-12 separate writing sessions to be scheduled by the researcher at least one week apart and at my convenience. If I have any questions I may call the researcher at 614-486-9391.

My cooperation with this study is entirely voluntary. If I do cooperate, I may withdraw at any time. If I have any questions about the study procedures, I may contact Terri Hessler at 614-486-9391 or Dr. Ralph Gardner at 614-292-3308.

Signed __________________________

(Cooperating Teacher)

Date ___________ Time ___________
PRINCIPAL CONSENT FOR AN INVESTIGATIONAL STUDY

The Effects of an Extended Prompt Versus a Typical Prompt on the Length and Quality of First Draft Essays by Urban Students with Mild Disabilities

I, ______________________________, principal, agree to allow researchers from the Ohio State University’s School of Physical Activity and Educational Services (PAES) to implement a writing intervention at ______________________________ (name of school).

The experimental (research) portion of this study: Over the course of remainder of the school year, ______________________’s (teacher) students will be asked to write several essays. Students will use a writing prompt then a writing packet provided by the researcher.

The students’ teacher will be asked to provide a copy of a representative writing sample that the students wrote before the onset of this study. The researchers will collect and keep the students’ essays produced during the research.

5. Purpose of the study: To see if a student with a mild disability can produce a longer essay of better quality with a writing packet than with just a prompt.

6. Discomforts and risks reasonably to be expected: None known for the cooperating teacher. Forms with my name or other identifying information may be made available to the Institutional Review Board.

7. Possible benefits for subjects/society: The study will enable researchers to determine what effects this behavioral strategy has on children with mild disabilities who produce inadequate texts for writing assignments. This may well benefit other children with disabilities, and other students who may have difficulty passing state writing proficiency tests.

8. Anticipated duration of subject's participation (including number of visits): The study involves 8-12 separate writing sessions to be scheduled by the researcher at least one week apart and at the teachers’ convenience. If I have any questions I may call the researcher at 614-486-9391.

I understand that cooperation with this study is entirely voluntary and students/teachers may withdraw at any time. If I have any questions about the study procedures, I may contact Terri Hessler at 614-486-9391 or Dr. Ralph Gardner at 614-292-3308.

Date __________ Time __________ AM PM Signed ______________________________

(Principal)
APPENDIX B

SAMPLE ESSAY SCORED FOR CORRECT WORD SEQUENCES
I want to work so that I can get a chance to practice my independence and support myself. I also want to work so I can get the things I want my parents won't get. I worked around a lot of children. I like kids so that's good. I have a summer job. I would like to have a cosmetology job, a chef job, and a music job.

I want to work in a hair salon over the summer because I love to cut hair and I would like to be a cosmetologist when I grow up. I like this job. I can learn the proper way to wash, condition, and dry hair. I can have fun and meet new people. Some skills I would need are a positive attitude and a great personality. And I have to be a person who likes to talk. I would learn how to cut hair and prepare me when I get my own hair salon.

I also want to take a job at a restaurant and see how they work. I can learn how to create nice foods and maybe healthy foods that can help people. I need to be a positive person at this job because there will be a large amount of people that I will need to help and that will help me.
I would also need patience and I need to communicate also in this job. I will learn about measuring and learn just how to work with others. This is things I will need to know if I want my own shop.

I would like to work at a music industry so that I can learn the secrets of the music industry. I want to be a singer one day so that I need to be prepared. I need to know who can be trusted, how to work equipment and things like that. I need to have all the skills if needed for my other jobs to work in this one.

I would like to be a Really a hair stylist and a singer so there is alot of stuff I need to know. It would be great to get to have a job that I enjoy.
APPENDIX C

SAMPLE TYPICAL PROMPT
Time Capsule

Writing Prompt # 5

A time capsule is a container (usually metal) that is filled with items that represent that period of time. A time capsule from the 1960’s might contain a picture and article about John F. Kennedy (because he was president at the beginning of the decade), and a model of a rocket (because the government spent a lot of time, effort, and money to get a man into space and then to the moon).

What 3 items would you put in a time capsule to represent you during your high school years? Each paragraph you write should be about one of those items. Name and explain the items and then tell how they represent you in your high school years. The best essays will contain stories that illustrate your points.

Good writers plan what they are going to write. You can start by using this page to brainstorm a list of items, things you use everyday. For example, brush, nail file, fork, etc. You could also list food and drinks you enjoy and favorite clothing and games.
APPENDIX D

SAMPLE EXTENDED PROMPT
Writing Prompt #5 - Time Capsule

A time capsule is a container (usually metal) that is filled with items that represent that period of time. A time capsule from the 1960’s might contain a picture and article about John F. Kennedy (because he was president at the beginning of the decade), and a model of a rocket (because the government spent a lot of time, effort, and money to get a man into space and then to the moon).

What 3 items would you put in a time capsule to represent you during your high school years? Each paragraph you write should be about one of those items. Name and explain the items and then tell how they represent you in your high school years. The best essays will contain stories that illustrate your points.

Step 1. Brainstorm

Good writers plan what they are going to write. You can start by using this page to brainstorm a list of items, things you use everyday. For example, brush, nail file, fork, etc. You could also list food and drinks you enjoy and favorite clothing and games.

1.        7.
2.        8.
3.        9.
4.        10.
5.        11.
6.        12.

Brainstorming done - good job!

List three of your favorites from the list you brainstormed.

_______________________      _____________________   ___________________
Step 2. Outline

I. My time capsule
   A. Introduction & background on you (you’ll do this later)

   B. First item __________________________
   1. General description/explanation
      ______________________________________________________
      ______________________________________________________
   2. What about you does it represent?
      ______________________________________________________
      ______________________________________________________

   C. Second item __________________________
   1. General description/explanation
      ______________________________________________________
      ______________________________________________________
   2. What about you does it represent?
      ______________________________________________________
      ______________________________________________________

   D. Third item __________________________
   1. General description/explanation
      ______________________________________________________
      ______________________________________________________
   2. What about you does it represent?
      ______________________________________________________
      ______________________________________________________

   E. Conclusion (You’ll do this later.)

You’ve completed your outline!

153
Tell about yourself. What do you like? What do you dislike? What drives you crazy? What makes you special? (Don’t include your name in this section.)
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
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____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
Write a couple of sentences here about how you want to always be remembered, even after you’re gone. Then fill in the end of the sentence at the end of the page with the 3 items you want to include in your time capsule.
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
The 3 things I would want to include in my time capsule so that people will know who I am are …
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________. (This last sentence is your thesis statement.)

Introduction
Step 4. Rough Draft - Paragraph B. First item.

Write a complete sentence about the first item you’ll include:

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Describe in more detail what it is:

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Answer these questions in complete sentences:

- How does this item represent you? How/why is it important to you?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

- Tell a story that shows how this item represents you or is important to you.
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
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1st body paragraph
Step 5. Paragraph C. Second item.

Write a complete sentence about the second item you’ll include in your time capsule.

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Describe in more detail what it is:

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Answer these questions in complete sentences:

- How does this item represent you? How/why is it important to you?
  
  ____________________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________
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- Tell a story that shows how this item represents you or is important to you.
  
  ____________________________________________________________________
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2nd body paragraph
Step 6. Paragraph D. Third item.
Write a complete sentence about the third item you’ll include in your time capsule.

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Describe in more detail what it is:

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Answer these questions in complete sentences:
- How does this item represent you? How/why is it important to you?
____________________________________________________________________
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- Tell a story that shows how this item represents you or is important to you.
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3rd body paragraph
Step 7. Conclusion.

Try to reword or rephrase your thesis statement (bottom page 3). Many writers find this really hard to do, so if you can’t think of a way to reword it, just rewrite it word-for-word here.

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
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Step 9. Putting it all together. Remember! New paragraphs are indented 5 spaces from the left of the page.

Transfer your writing from this packet in your own handwriting, by following these directions:
- Start by writing what you have on p.3 (step 3).
- Write p. 4 (step 4) as a new paragraph.
- Now type/write p. 5 (step 5) as a new paragraph.
- Write p. 6 (step 6) as a new paragraph.
- Finally, write what you have on p. 7 (step 7) as a new paragraph.

Congratulations! Your rough draft is complete!

Conclusion
APPENDIX E

PROCEDURAL CHECKLIST
Teacher Self-Checklist for Writing Sessions

1st Writing session for each prompt – Take no more than 15 min.

Writing Prompt #_____ start time: _____   end time (after #9): _____ total: ________

Students in BL: ______________________________________________________________________
Students in INT: ______________________________________________________________________

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Check that students have a writing utensil (provide one if needed), lined paper, and clear, ample writing space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Mini-lesson: 10 min start: _____ end: _____ total: ________</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Provide subjects with writing prompt.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Read the following: “Your assignment is to write a 5-paragraph essay about _______. What you have been given will help you develop a complete first draft. If you have any questions during the writing, please ask.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>“Some of you have a packet of papers instead of just a one-page writing prompt. You are to complete the packet by answering the questions or responding to the directions. Be sure to write your answers in complete sentences beginning on page 3! Then, when you are done with the packet, follow the directions on the last page to rewrite your answers into a completed first draft essay. Remember (get their attention here), you must write in complete sentences in the packet beginning on page 3!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Read the prompt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>“Notice the brainstorming section. Brainstorming is when you come up with as many different ideas to write about as you can. For this essay, you’ll write what you brainstorm on the paper in front of you. Write as many different ideas as you can think of. When your list is done, you’ll pick from that list to write. Again, use the paper that has the prompt typed on it to brainstorm.”</td>
</tr>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>“Any questions?” Answer any questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>“You have two 45-min sessions (over 2 days) to write and a 3rd 45-min session to copy your essay onto lined paper if you’re working with the packet. If you aren’t working with the packet, you may also have that 3rd 45-min session to copy your essay if you want. Please write your name, date, &amp; the time you start and stop at the top of the PROMPT. Write only your name on the lined paper. You can now write _____ (tell them the time) at the top of the prompt. You may begin.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>During the writing session, answer all questions regarding understanding and/or reading the template or writing prompt. If the student has questions related to writing form or mechanics, tell him/her that you will help him/her with that after he/she is finished with the first draft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>If students finish before the end of the 45 min, remind them to write the end time under the start time at the top right of their paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>When 40 min has passed, tell students there are 5 min remaining.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>At the end of 45 min, ask students to stop writing, have them write the end time on the prompt, &amp; remind them they will be able to write more during the next session. Be sure all prompts have name, date, &amp; start and stop time at the top and lined papers have only names.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Collect the prompts and essays.</td>
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</table>
2nd Writing Session Teacher Self-Checklist – Take no more than 5 min.                                    IOA?

Date: ___________________

Students in BL: _______________________________________________________________________

Students in INT: _______________________________________________________________________  

Start: _______  Stop time for instructions (after #5): _______  Total Time: __________

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<tbody>
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<td>1.</td>
<td>Check that students have a writing utensil (provide one if needed) and clear, ample writing space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Provide all subjects with their papers from the previous session.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Read the following: “Please begin at the point where you left off during our last session. You have 45 minutes to write today. If you would like to read over what you wrote during our last session and/or make any changes, you may. Please put your starting and ending time at top of THE PROMPT next to or under the previous times. You may now write ___________ (tell them the time) at THE TOP OF THE PROMPT.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>“When you finish the packet, you will have a separate 45-min session to copy your packet information onto lined paper if you don’t finish it today. Anyone writing with just the one-page prompt may also use a separate 45-min session to copy your essay if you so desire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>If students self-declare that they completed the draft the session before, ask one time, “Are you sure you wouldn’t like to write more?” If they respond in the negative, have them write the same ending time as starting time for this session under the starting time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>During the writing session, answer all questions regarding understanding and/or reading the template or writing prompt. If the student has questions related to writing form or mechanics, tell him/her that you will help him/her with that after he/she is finished with the first draft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>If students finish before the end of the 45 min, remind them to write the end time under the start time at the top right of their paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>When 40 min have passed, tell the students they have 5 min to complete the first draft. ___________ (time to give 5 min. warning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>At the end of 45 minutes, be sure student names are only on the 1st page and the new starting and ending time is listed. ___________ (ending time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Collect the prompts and essays.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3rd Writing Session Teacher Self-Checklist – Take no more than 5 min.

Date: ___________________

Students in BL: ______________________________________________________

Students in INT: _____________________________________________________

Start Time: ________ Stop time for instructions (after #4): ________ Total Time: __________

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Check that students have a writing utensil (provide one if needed) and clear, ample writing space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Provide all subjects with their papers from the previous session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>“You have 45 minutes to copy your essay from the packet to the lined paper. Follow the directions on the last page of the packet. This time is to be used only for copying, not revising or editing.” (To any students using the prompt --not the extended prompt—who are participating during this session): “You may copy your essay. This time is to be used only for copying, not revising or editing.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Please put your starting and ending time at THE BOTTOM of the prompt. You may now write ___________ (tell them the time) at THE BOTTOM of the prompt.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>During the writing session, answer all questions regarding understanding and/or reading the template or writing prompt. If the student has questions related to writing form or mechanics, tell him/her that you will help him/her with that after he/she is finished with the first draft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>If students finish before the end of the 45 min, remind them to write the end time under the start time at the top right of their paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>When 40 min have passed, tell the students they have 5 min to complete the first draft. ____________ (time that you will give 5 min. warning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>At the end of 45 minutes, be sure student names are only on the 1st page and the new starting and ending time is listed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Collect the prompts and essays.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX F

SAMPLE MINI-LESSONS
Mini-Lesson #7   Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement

Today’s lesson is about choosing the correct pronoun form, either singular or plural. Some pronouns are he, she, they, we, everyone, someone, somebody, and you. Possessive pronouns are words like his, her, and their.

Sometimes in your writing, you use pronouns like everyone, someone, he, and she then follow with a possessive pronoun later in the sentence. For example:

Everyone likes hot fudge on his or her ice cream.

In the above sentence, the pronouns are everyone and his and her. Everyone is the antecedent, meaning it comes before the other one(s). When you have a pronoun antecedent and a pronoun that follows, they must agree in number. Since Everyone is singular, the next pronoun must be singular (his or her) not plural (their).

Many people goof this up and write something like: Everyone likes hot fudge on their ice cream. This is incorrect.

These are singular pronouns and need to be followed with singular pronouns.

everyone everybody somebody someone anyone

The pronoun that follows the above pronouns should NEVER be plural (e.g., their).

DIRECTIONS: In the following sentences, make sure the 2nd pronoun agrees with its antecedent. If it doesn’t, change it so that it agrees.

1. Everyone gets their hot dog for free today!

2. Somebody left their coat on the table.

3. Someone dropped his or her keys on the lawn.

4. No one here seems to know their social security number.

5. Can anyone tell me their social security number?

6. Everybody has a right to their opinion.
Mini-lesson #1 Deconstructing a Prompt

In addition to telling you what to write about, a writing prompt will tell you several other things.

- First, it will give you background to introduce the topic of your writing.
- It will also tell you what form your writing should take, for example, a letter, an essay, a poem, a song, or a diary entry, just to name a few. Sometimes the prompt doesn’t say outright. If so, you should just write a basic essay.
- A prompt will also give you some idea of how many body paragraphs to write.
- Sometimes it will even give you an idea about what to write in your conclusion.
- The prompt might even give you hints about how to plan what to write.

Here’s a sample prompt:

Can you imagine not being able to see colors? Colors make our world beautiful. Colors make flowers pretty and certain clothes look good on you. What are your favorite colors?

Write me a letter that explains what your three favorite colors are and why they are your favorite colors. Be sure to include what items in the world are those colors and how those colors and items make you feel. Finally, of those three colors, choose your very favorite and imagine everything you own being that color.

Be sure to plan or think about what you will write about before you actually start writing. Perhaps you can start by listing all the colors you can think of and items that are those colors.

The background that introduces the topic is “Can you imagine not being able to see colors? Colors make our world beautiful. Colors make flowers pretty and certain clothes look good on you. What are your favorite colors?” Underline or highlight that section.

The form this writing should take is a letter. The prompt says, “Write me a letter...” Underline or highlight that part.

This prompt tells you to write 3 body paragraphs, one each about a color you like. “...explain what your three favorite colors are and why they are your favorite colors. Be sure to include what items in the world are those colors and how those colors and items make you feel.” Underline or highlight that part.

This prompt also tells you what your conclusion paragraph should be about: “...choose your very favorite [color] and imagine everything you own being that color.” Underline or highlight that part.

The planning advice in this prompt is to list all the colors you can think of and items that are those colors. Find that section and highlight or underline it. Now, you won’t actually write to this prompt. Instead, read the second prompt. I’ll ask you some questions and you’ll use the prompt to answer them. {Ask someone to read the prompt.}

Sample prompt:
There are a great variety of animals on our planet. Sure, there are some animals that are similar to others, like the horse, donkey, and zebra. But there are also animals that are not like any others, like elephants, giraffes, and kangaroos. Or are they really that unique? Perhaps there are animals with characteristics similar to elephants, giraffes, and kangaroos.

Write an essay in which you compare elephants, giraffes, and kangaroos to at least three other animals that are similar in some way (i.e., compare the elephant to another animal, compare a giraffe to another animal, and compare the kangaroo to another animal). Finally, decide which of the three animals is least like any other animal and explain why.

It is a good idea to plan before you write. Perhaps you can brainstorm a list of animals and then circle those that have characteristics similar to elephants, giraffes, or kangaroos.

DIRECTIONS: Answer the questions below using the prompt above.

1. Underline or highlight the part that tells you what form your writing should take. (give time & ask)
   (Answer: Write an essay)

2. How many body paragraphs will you write and what will each one be about?
   (3: elephant, giraffe, kangaroo)

3. Does this prompt tell you what your conclusion should be about?
   (yes)

4. Underline or highlight what your conclusion should be about. (give time & ask)
   (Which of the 3 –elephant, giraffe, or kangaroo—is least like any other animal.)

5. What advice for prewriting/planning/brainstorming does this prompt give?
   (list animals and circle those that are similar to elephant, giraffe, or kangaroo)

6. Highlight or underline the background part of the prompt.
   (entire first paragraph)

7. You won’t actually write to this prompt, either. Instead, you will get a new prompt and actually write to that. Think about what you’ve learned about deconstructing prompts as you begin this writing assignment.
APPENDIX G

STUDENT Q’S DATA
Student Q was an inclusion student who was assigned to the resource room for only two class periods per week. Because he had limited time for writing, he participated in the weekly writing but never received the intervention; he always wrote with the typical prompt only. Because his data was not to be included in the analysis of this study, his essays were not holistically scored.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Q’s Data</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Condition</td>
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<td>Baseline</td>
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<td>Mean # Words</td>
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<td>237</td>
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</tbody>
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APPENDIX H

DATA COLLECTION SHEET FOR CORRECT WORD SEQUENCES
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172
APPENDIX I

STUDENT SATISFACTION SURVEY
Student Survey

Your honesty on this is as important to the study as the writing you've done.

Which prompts did you like the most and which did you not like at all? Rank the prompts in order of how much you liked them, 1 being the prompt you liked the most and 10 being the one you disliked the most.

___ Newsletter article about teen fashion
___ The 3 senior awards you’d want for yourself or your friends
___ Writing about a pet – making one up or writing about one you’ve had or have
___ Pen pal letter to someone in southern California about our seasons
___ 3 items in a time capsule that represent you during high school
___ 3 rooms that you’d want made over if Extreme Makeover: Home Edition chose you
___ Summer jobs you might like to have
___ Eulogy (speech at a funeral) about yourself
___ Letter to a friend about their risky behavior
___ Ways your school can be improved
___ Places you’d like to go this summer
___ The prom prompt

Name ________________________________
Circle the number that is above the answer that most closely matches how you feel. Please do not put your name on this form.

1. Do you feel that you wrote better using the packet?

   1         2      3          4      5
   |______________|_______________|_______________|_______________|
   not at all                not very much              I don't know                a little     a lot!

2. How easy was it to use the packet?

   1         2      3          4      5
   |______________|_______________|_______________|_______________|
   not at all                not very               I don't know                      a little     a lot!

3. Do you feel that you can now write as much without the packet as you could with the packet?

   1         2      3          4      5
   |______________|_______________|_______________|_______________|
   not at all                not very               I don't know                      a little     a lot!

4. Do you think using the packet is a good way to learn to write a basic 5-paragraph essay?

   1         2      3          4      5
   |______________|_______________|_______________|_______________|
   not at all                not very much            I don't know               maybe        absolutely!

5. Do you think you could create your own packet if someone gave you a topic?

   1         2      3          4      5
   |______________|_______________|_______________|_______________|
   not at all                not likely               I don't know               maybe        absolutely!
6. Did you like using the packet?

1             2                3          4             5
hated it      disliked it     it was OK  liked it      liked it a lot!

7. How important were the rewards to you?

1            2               3          4            5
not at all important  not important    did not care     important      very important

8. How likely would you have been to write without the rewards?

1             2                3          4             5
not very likely  not likely      did not care     likely        very likely

Comments:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
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________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX J

COMPLETED TEACHER SATISFACTION SURVEY
Teacher Satisfaction Survey

Circle the number that is above the answer that most closely matches how you feel.

1. How much better do you think your students wrote using the extended prompt?

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<tr>
<td>not at all</td>
<td>not very much</td>
<td>I don't know</td>
<td>a little</td>
<td>a lot!</td>
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Comments/suggestions:

The extended prompt allowed the students to organize their thoughts more clearly. I'm not sure the students always "processed" how the paper was being set up or how the extended prompt was helping them, but writing to the extended prompt clearly helped some of the students write better.

2. How easy was it for you to have students use the extended prompt versus the regular prompt?

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<td>I don't know</td>
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<td>a lot!</td>
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Comments/suggestions:

It was no more difficult for me to have the students use the extended prompt versus the regular prompt. The only part that was difficult was how some of the students complained when they received the extended prompt. Some of the students just looked at it as having to do more, "work.” Sometimes it seemed that the students just wanted to “get done” with the writing instead of actually processing how the extended prompt was helping them.

3. How easy do you think it was for them to use the extended prompts?

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<td>not very</td>
<td>I don't know</td>
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Comments/suggestions:

Once the process began of writing their essay onto lined paper, there was sometimes difficulty in how the students should organize everything. Some of them seemed confused in the beginning or had a lot of questions the first time they wrote to the extended prompt. However, it seemed once they got the hang of it, they were fine.
4. How likely are you to use extended prompts in the future?

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Comments/suggestions:

I love the idea of using the extended prompt as a tool for teaching my students how to write a basic 5-paragraph essay. I really believe it’s a helpful way for the students to learn how to write. I will definitely use extended prompts in the future with my students.

5. Do you think using extended prompts is a good way to learn to write a basic 5-paragraph essay?

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<td>not at all</td>
<td>not very much</td>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>maybe</td>
<td>absolutely!</td>
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Comments/suggestions:

Yes, of course!

6. Do you think you could create your own extended prompts?

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<td>not likely</td>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>maybe</td>
<td>absolutely!</td>
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Comments/suggestions:

Yes, using the extended prompts from the study as a guide, I could very easily create additional extended prompts for my students.

7. How much did you like using the extended prompt versus the regular one?

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Comments/suggestions:

I liked how the extended prompts allowed the students to organize a paper more effectively. The only difficult part was overcoming the complaints that many of the students made when they wrote to the extended prompt (due to the extended prompt being longer than the regular prompt).
Why I want a summer job. I think it would make me more independent and help me out. Jobs could also help me become depend on my mother. My opinion is that any public could benefit of me in being responsible by work.

The first job I would want would be a salesperson. I would be able to work at home. The goals of my job would be to help my daughter. The job would be quiet and busy. You would need skills which include the knowledge of sales. Your work would be very much into what you would be able to do. This job would be good for you. This job would be very hard on your work. You would need to be able to sell.

The second job I would want would be a computer programmer. The job would be more difficult. The job would need you to be able to understand computers. This job would be harder to do. The job would be hard on your work. You would need to be good at computer programs.
The crew often loved to live on a
surprise gala en empty amplitie. Make your table and no
into table. The gala I chose nine all bid back
and every gala.
They way that I see boy's dress is they say all the time, paint's be real the time. They be trying to show off, the expensive clothes just like girls do. Like, gaucho clothes, ribbons. They always be trying to show off the under body one, like they said were when seven or don't where a shirt or cul. Never how they get there attention. Know girls oh my god, these girl in Ohio be acting worse then the boys. They be acting or should I say trying to act grown, how they be wearing gaucho men's clothes like their shirt under sweat pants. Tight, tight pants, skirts, sheets see three shirts, pants, it be off the hook, shorts that be showing their chest, surprise that be tight, see three, saggy tails, straps, belly shirts, baby seat clothes, tank tops. I'm not thinking or nothing I'm just telling you like it be. the boys and girls be off the hook.

12:44
12:47
We are gathered together today to celebrate the life of Gabrielle Ferguson, who was very sweet. She was hard working and willing to do anything for anybody. Gabby had two kids named Kellen who was 39, and Maxwell who is 34.

My grand children, Max; who is 5, Georgetta is 11, Anthony is 9, John David is 16, Minerva is 5 months old, DJ, grandson in 3 months old. 8 grandchildren, born of my boys and their wives.

She was a special ed. teacher for 34 years. She was 65 years old when she retired. She worked at Southwood Middle School, and she worked at Fort Hill High School. For a while at Fort Hill.

So many. She spent her retirement at home. She will greatly be missed, and we love her so much.

She was a great mother because she was always there for her kids no matter what. Once she still is there as well as grandmother, wife, aunt, and friend.

She spent her life being there for her kids, always taking them everywhere they needed to go. Always taking them everywhere.

Being there when they had problems through thick and thin, being the best of all in feeding them. She will always love them.
She made a very good impact in my community by helping, it stay clean, non violent and safe. Our church is the same way.

She went to love Zion Baptist Church at 1431 Madison Ave. She was a nurse there. She would help when most needed and very caring. Nobody can take her place. Gabby will be in people hearts and mine forever and never will be forgotten.

She spent most of my life at Child Day Cares and helping and being there for the kids when ever needed. She work at this school for 26 years. She was a Teacher when she retired. She could always win teacher awards. They could say about her she was very nice willing to do anything for anybody, no matter what. She was very friendly nice to the kids and they learned a lot from her.

I want to share with you the most wonderful thing about Gabby: She was willing to do anything for anybody, at any time. She was very greedy.
Who influences me most is because of the way I dress. Shows people who I am and what I do. What influences me is cute stuff like the pants, shirts and shoes. I think my attitude influences me because the way I dress or what I wear show my feelings for myself and for others. My style of fashion is: Air forces, Nike, Tims, Rock a Wear Ecko, baby phat and k-swiss. That's my style of clothes and shoes. I just like to be dress cute. 

LXIII

Done time: 1:37
See Ashlee H. I really do like you like and I do respect you and love you enough to ask you to stop. I know you are an intelligent person inside and I'm worried about the things you're doing. So as of me being your best friend, I'm asking you to stop doing those things and be on school.

I don't think it's a good idea for you to have sex because you can get pregnant. Also because you can get "HIV" and you can also get STD's.

I don't think skydiving is a good idea either because you might land wrong and break something in your body. You can also die from it. You could also get caught in the blades and your parachute could get stale.

I don't think it's a good idea for you to smoke either because you can get lung cancer. Also, you can get heart disease and you can also lose your voice from smoking too.

I think of these are bad because they all have consequences to them.
To tell you the truth, I really do like fashion. Like most of the time, I just get up and throw something on and be on my way. I really don't care about fashion. I'm not too much with that girly, girl stuff, but I do like wearing jeans and colored T-shirts. It's easier to put together and throw on. Short skirts and short short. I really don't like sweat suits. I only wear in the winter. Shoes, everyone wears different shoes. Some wear boots, or heels or even ski shoes. Everyone really has different shoes with different outfits.
The good things about my school is that we have an open campus and we have a great price. The bad things are we have some bad seeds. The bonding are sort of dated and spaced out. I like the majority of the class like Science and music, Japanese. The 3 things I would like to see improved are the big field, we should have tunnels in the winter fix-up an old building and putting a gym inside.

We should have tunnels in the winter time, when it cold. They should be heated also so the kids don't get sick. More kids will attend school, instead of being sick. Lot's of construction and help of other people.

We should also fix the dressers in the big field so no one hurt them sleeves. Better games we play in the field. They will need to put dirt down and grass. They will to ask people around the place what they want.

They should give the kids a gym, so every kid will have kind of sport they can play during common ground. It will be a better environment for more kids and we will also be involved in something. We will need to get permission student's and ask people.

The final subject was
The 3 things I would like to see improved are the big field, give me less homework, and make some tunnels. It would make school life a lot easier.
Today everybody's fashion is so different because boys wear jerseys, baggy pants, hats just like me, and the most expensive shoes that they can buy. The girls' fashion is different way different because they wear high hills, tight jeans, skirts, and they always have to get their hair done.

My favorite fashion stores are Underground Station, Foot Locker, Champs, Footaction, Re Sports, Dvorse, Finishing, and the designers are P. Diddy, Sean John, Mitchell and Ness, Throwback Jerseys. Yes, I have noticed that fashion has changed because in the 80's they would wear anything you wanted to and dress like your favorite artist or rock star but know you have to dress to impress and wear the most expensive things in order to get noticed.
Okay know I will be honest for this part but
I'm about to explain everything. The only thing
I like about this school is that the whole
campus part because Fort Hayes has a more
outlet when it comes to seeing your friends.
The other reason that you get a lot of help
by teachers and your school is-safe I
guess or hope. The only thing about this
school that I dislike about it is that
the teachers are so mean when you do
something wrong. My grades, my attitude
and attendance.

By getting more good people into this
school because there's some kids that
are bad that make this school Fort
Hayes is a "Ghetto" school because
kids these days like to claim "Blood"
or "Crip" and we can get killed just
by saying or being that. This improvement
will make this school more college like
descent school. That this school could
not get attacked or people would not
get jumped. We could save a lot of kids
lives by keeping Fort Hayes a safe
school or place to be. More security
needs to be enforced to this school
so our parents could keep their youngests
in this school.
New desk because these desks we got have been here ever since Fort Hayes have been established so we can have a better. So when new kids come in this school they won't be saying that this school is so poor.
One of my awards that I would receive is the most humorous person. Because I make a lot of people laugh. And when someone is sad I cheer them up. And another award I would receive is the most beautiful girl in the ninth grade. Because I know I'm pretty and very talented, and I'm also very confident. One of the awards I would give to my friend Cathy is most beautiful tenth grade student. She is also very talented in singing and drawing. One of the ways that Sami is talented in singing.
Hello, my name is [Redacted]. I live in Columbus, Ohio. I attend JohnJay's High School. One of the things that I like about my school is that it has friendly teachers, and I like my art class. One of the things that I dislike about my school is people who start trouble for no reason at all. I live near my mom and dad and my brother. I am adopted. My neighborhood is sometimes loud. But okay. I live by a lot of stores. The store name is [Redacted] and they sell lots of stuff. I have a lot of friends that live in my neighborhood, and some of them are from elementary and middle school. When I'm in school, I like to write poems and songs and etc. I also love to hang out with my friends. I also like to watch television. In Ohio, we have very different weather. We have cold and warm and sometimes very hot days. In the spring, the weather is okay. In the spring time there are flowers, and sometimes there are very colorful. The flowers attract insects, and other things like bees and birds. Spring normally comes in the middle of March. One of the favorite things I like to do in the spring is hang out with my friends and watch television. I also like to talk on the phone. One of the things I do in the spring is hang out with my friends. Because I normally don't get a chance to enjoy my self in the fall, it gets a little cold, and sometimes it's hot. Leaves grow on the tree. In the fall, we go gone.
leaves and flowers that are very colorful. Around December it gets warmer a little bit. The best part about fall is that I hang out with my friends and take a walk in the phone. One of the special days that occur during the fall is birthdays. I like to hang out with my family and we go by myself. In the winter it is very cold and sometimes snowy. Winter comes in February. The best part I like about winter is that I get snow deep and I get to sleep in. In Columbus, Ohio we have very different kinds of weather. Columbus, Ohio has three seasons like summer, spring and fall. Alysha hello, you should come to Columbus, Ohio because the weather is great. So come and enjoy your self. One of the favorite things that I like is that I like to go skiing.
My name is [redacted]. I live in Columbus, Ohio. I go to [redacted] High School. I mostly like hanging with my friends. I hate the work. I live with my mom. I know people in my neighborhood but I don’t have any friends. I like to go to the movies and hang out with my friends. All the seasons have different weather.

Plants start to grow, and it's sunny out, and it rains a lot. Snow melts and plants start to grow. Spring occurs during the month of March, April, May, and the beginning of June. My favorite part about spring is that it's nice, but Easter happens, and my birthday happens during spring. You can’t play in leaves, or go sledding during this spring time.

Leaves fall, rains, and maybe snow, days end quick, hardly sunny. Starting to get cold. Fall happens during the end of September, October, November, and the beginning of December. The weather starts to cool down. It's not "burning up hot". The holidays that occur in fall are, Halloween, and Thanksgiving. The things you can do are, taking leaves.

Snow, snow storms, ice storms. Snow clouds, snow falling. Snow covers the ground. The months when winter occurs are the end of December, January, February, and beginning of March. My favorite part about winter is [redacted].
When we get snow days. The holidays that occur during winter are Christmas, New Years, and Valentine’s Day. You can go sledding, playing in the snow and having snow ball fights.

All the seasons have different weather. Malia, my favorite season is spring, because the weather is just right.
It is harmful that if you do these things, then all kinds of things will happen. Drugs, drinking, that.

I don't think it's a good idea for you to use drugs. One reason is 'cuz you could get in a car crash. Another reason is you could go to jail. And the last reason is you could be

I don't think drinking is a good idea either. You may get in a car crash. Basically you will get drunk. You may have a blackout also.

I don't think it's a good idea for you to be a thief either. You could go to jail mostly. There's karma. So, it might come back. And mostly you will get caught.

Just do good in life. It could ruin your future.
I don't have a pet right now but I would like one. I would like a white lion cub. That is a very uncommon animal but I like to be different. I would name her Diva because she would be a diva. I would love my lion but not that much. I think I would do good with a baby pet because I can tame it and love it. My only problem was I wouldn't want to get too attached because after a while she'll be too big for my house and have to go to the zoo, but other than that I would do great.
I enjoy eating, singing and dancing. I also enjoy life. I also like to do hair, cook, go shopping, go to parties and always leave a good impression where ever I go. I hate ignorant people. The one thing that drives me crazy is hypocrisy. Imani Dillon, my little sister. She just does things she know irritates me a lot. What makes me special is that I'm nice and very generous all the time but I can get mean if someone takes me that far. I want to be remembered as a kind, sweet, loving young lady with a big heart.

The 3 things I would want to include in my time capsule is a Beyoncé cd and 3 news articles.

The first item I included was a Beyoncé cd. It's her first solo project away from Destiny's Child. This cd is like a pure work of art. A wonderful cd that should be in everyone's household and car. Beyoncé has inspired me to really want to pursue a career as a solo artist. She has touched my heart so much with her wonderful voice. She is very talented in singing, acting, dancing; she's a triple threat just like myself. She makes me want to pursue a career in music but as a solo artist not in a group because America saw the hardship of a group.

My second item is a news article about George Bush. An article telling a little bit about George Bush and where he stands.
To me it represents fear because this man
holds my future in his hands. If I was
old to war at 18 I could die, his fault.
By the time I graduate I might not be
able to have a chance to vote. She
is going to change that. After school programs
to help children failing is he going to
Stop it or continue if I don't know, you
don't know. Only George Bush knows.

My third item is a newsletter about
the recent tragedy about the boy that
killed 10 people. I being himself. Kids
today have changed. They're crazy. I'm
scared to go to school now. I don't
know when it might be a day I
could come to school yes...and they
gonna kill me. It's scary thing to think
about.

The items I included have touched
me or inspired me in some kind of
way.
APPENDIX L

STUDENT K’S COMPUTER-ASSISTED TENTH ESSAY

AND

EXTENDED PROMPT PACKET DRAFT
What’s good about fort hayes is that they have the ability to help you in any kind of help you need. Like when I came to this school they did not have a resource class. Because I could not be in a regular class and on a high school level they had to make a resource class not only for me others to. What’s bad about fort Hayes is the buildings look like they need to be remodel. Too many fights well there is going to be fight every where you go but not really supposed to happen here at fort Hayes only because this is a business school. Intercourse with others are interrupted any where especially at a professional school. What I like about fort Hayes is that I don’t have to go off campus to career center because it is just across campus. I also like it here because I get to get out of class and watch my teacher kids.

Remodel

Because the walls are crack and piling of the paint. And some buildings have so much mode in me it makes the building smell bad. If this is a business school and you have professional people come to your school don’t you want them to have a good say about for Hayes when they go back to work. You do not want to say bad things about your school. We need to some way to raise money.

Going off campus

Because we are in high school we need to get the right to get to go off campus because we are young adults. So if we do not like our school lunch we can go get something we do like. We need to act like young adults so we can get the honor of being one.

Copier machine

It is necessary to have one in every building so that teachers would not have to leave there class room when teaching one. Is so that teachers would not have to send there student across campus. Have a fun raiser to raise money.

Fort Hayes building s should be remodel because this is supposed to be a professional school. When you have people out of the school come in to our school you want this
place to at least look somewhat good looking. You want people to come to your school going back to their work saying fort Hayes is a very professional school you should go see for your self. Again I say like for example if you to set up your own day care. You have to keep your house clean, safe environment especially when the health inspector comes he does not want the house to be UN safe he wants to past you same for fort Hayes it has to be a safe, clean place. We do not need to raise money because the school boards all ready pays for it.

Going of campus should be a privilege for the people who actually deserve it. Because we are young adults in high school we should get the privilege to go off campus if we do not like school lunch. So if people do not want to eat school lunch we should be able to go off campus and get the food we want to eat. We should act right so we can get the privilege.

Copier would be nice to have in very building so that teacher would not have to seen or have the class room to go and copy. Again I say we should have copying machine in every building for the simple fact so the teacher would not have to leave or seen students over to another building. A fun raise would be helpful.
Step 3. Rough Draft - Paragraph A. Introduction - Background about your school.

Write in complete sentences.

Talk about your school. What's good, what's bad, you like, what you don't like.

What's good about Boatrees is that they have the ability to help you or in any kind of help you need. When I came to this school, they did not have a resource class. Because I could not be in a regular class on a high school level, they tried to make an resource class but only for white students. What's bad about Boatrees is the building looks like they need to be remodeled. It is very stuffy, and it is going to be fights everywhere. But it supposed to be here because this is supposed to be an professional school.

Interact with others and take pride in any other school especially not an professional school. What I like about Boatrees is that I don't have to go off campus to go to my career center because it is just across campus. And another thing I like going here is because I get to get out of class and work in my teacher's children.

"The 3 things I would like to see improved are: ____________________________

______________________________________________________________

(This last sentence is your thesis statement. You will end your introduction with this sentence.)

Introduction

Write a complete sentence about the first way you think your school can be improved.

- School's buildings should be remodeled because this is supposed to be a professional business school.

Answer these questions in complete sentences:

- Why is this improvement necessary?
  When you have people out of the school, come in to our school, you want it to be as little as possible. You want people coming to your school. Going back to their work feeling satisfied, is a very nice school, you should go see yourself.

- What are the benefits of this improvement?
  Again, I say the same. For example, if you want to set up a home day care, you have to want to keep your house clean, safe environment especially when the health inspector does, don't want your house to be unsafe for the kids or the kids that the home day care director people want to bring their kids there. Some Sea Scouts.
  It has to be a safe clean, no looking environment for the kids and the staff.

- What needs to be done to get this improvement made?
  We don't need to raise any money for anything because the school system pays for all of it.
Step 5. Paragraph C. Second suggestion.

Write a complete sentence about the second way you think your school can be improved.

Going off campus should be a privilege for the people who actually deserve it.

Answer these questions in complete sentences:

- Why is this improvement necessary?
  Because we are young adults in high school that should get the privilege to go off campus if we want to eat school lunch.

- What are the benefits of this improvement?
  So instead of people not wanting to eat school lunch we should be able to go off campus and get the food we like.

- What needs to be done to get this improvement made?
  We should act right so we can get the privilege.

2nd body paragraph

Write a complete sentence about the third way you think your school can be improved.

A copier machine would be nice in our building so that teachers would not have to exit or leave the classroom to go copy something off.

Answer these questions in complete sentences:

- Why is this improvement necessary?

Again I say we should have a copying machine in every building so teachers would not have to walk across campus to copy one little sheet.

- What are the benefits of this improvement?

So students will not have to leave classrooms to go all the way across campus to copy a sheet of paper when they can stay in the same building.

- What needs to be done to get this improvement made?

So far no one has been helpful.

3rd body paragraph