Making the Right Environment to Write in an Elementary Classroom

By: Courtney Lee Donovan
and
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2009-2010 Park Forest Elementary School
Third and Fifth Grade Interns

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Description of Teaching Context

Courtney Donovan is a third grade intern at Park Forest Elementary school. In her third grade class, she is joined by her mentor teacher as well as twenty-two students. Although it is one class of twenty-two, the students show their individual personalities in their own unique ways. This class consists of twelve girls and ten boys. Academically, students have a wide variety of needs. There are eight children in the higher ability-reading group, seven children in the middle-ability reading group, and seven students in the basic/below basic reading group. Six of the students from the basic/below basic reading group leave her class during the day to attend title 1 reading. The other two students from this basic/below basic reading group attend book club during this time. In terms of writing, there are four levels of ability. These levels are below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced. In Courtney’s class four children are in the below basic group, twelve are in the basic group, four students are in the proficient group, and one is in the advanced group. At this stage in third grade, the benchmark is for students to be in the basic group; however, by the end of third grade they should all be proficient.

Courtney's students also differ greatly in their social and behavioral roles in the classroom. One of her students is medically diagnosed with ADHD and often has to be refocused. This student, as well as another student, are on the autism spectrum, but do not need fulltime help in the classroom. However, some of their autistic tendencies cause them to lose focus often during the day, especially during our writing period.

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Kelsey Rasmussen is a fifth-grade yearlong intern at Park Forest Elementary. Inside her classroom, she is joined by her mentor teacher, a paraprofessional, and twenty-one ten and eleven year old students. Ten of her students are girls, while eleven are boys. As a whole, her
classroom of students has a variety of academic needs. Three students receive additional support in Title I reading, while two students go to learning support for reading. One student, new to the district, has been referred to the Instructional Support Team for additional help in reading. Seven students receive speech therapy. In the fall, all twenty-one students reached benchmark, achieving basic in the fifth grade writing proficiency. By the end of the year, students are projected to achieve the proficient-level in writing. During the winter assessment, one student fell below basic, eleven remained at basic, eight achieved the proficient level, and one student scored advanced.

Behaviorally, three students have anxiety problems, especially while test taking. One student has Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and is not medicated. In addition to this student, three more struggle with paying attention and remaining on task, especially when writing.

**Wonderings and Questions**

Courtney observed her third graders struggling to begin writing, as well as to find their own ideas to write about. She noticed that their lack of interest in writing was prohibiting them from producing quality work in the time allotted. Kelsey noticed several of her fifth graders were resistant and hesitant to partake in prompt writing, such as district writing assessments. In addition, she noticed her students had a common lack of motivation to put forth their personal best during writing tasks. After observing their students for four months, Courtney and Kelsey decided upon a shared inquiry to discover techniques to implement in the classroom to motivate students to write. Thus derived their main wondering:

*How can we motivate our third and fifth grade students to write?*
While investigating interventions for motivating students to write, several sub-

wonderings emerged:

- How does presenting the opportunity to share finished work with classmates affect students?
- How can playing music affect students during writing?
- How does allowing choice in writing affect student motivation?
- How can publishing work on different mediums motivate students to produce higher-

quality work?

**Data Collection**

**Surveys**

We decided to conduct a student survey prior to any interventions to gain insight on students’ perception of writing. The survey included questions regarding students’ feelings about writing while in different locations, while listening to music, and when provided with choice. Students circled their response that was most fitting, based on the scale provided: not at all, some, and a lot. When we administered the pre-intervention student surveys, we received all 43 surveys in return. (See Appendix C1 for Pre-Intervention Surveys administered; See Appendix C2 for Pre-Intervention Survey results)

Because our interventions were driven by our results from the surveys, we distributed post-intervention surveys, which were utilized to find the effectiveness of the interventions implemented in our classrooms. Individual surveys were given to determine the success of playing music, sharing with classmates, providing student choice, and publishing on different mediums. These results, while accompanied by other methods of data collection, determined the overall efficacy of our interventions to motivate our students to write. (See Appendix C3 for
Post-Intervention Surveys administered; See Appendix C4 for Post-Intervention Survey results)

Interviews

Another form of data collection we chose to utilize was student interviews. Student interviews supplied us with a deeper insight into how students felt about the interventions implemented. Kelsey conducted student interviews to find out how her students responded to the provided time to share their writing pieces. The questions asked students about their selection of writing they shared, if they appreciated the peer feedback received, if they enjoy hearing classmates share their writing, and the chance of the students sharing again. Kelsey interviewed six students who shared in front of the class at least once. (See Appendix D1 for Fifth Grade Interview Questions)

Courtney conducted student interviews to find out how her students felt about the interventions she implemented. Her questions asked students how they felt about providing student choice, the ability to share their writing, and writing on different mediums. Courtney interviewed four students with differing views about writing, as discovered through the analysis of pre-intervention surveys. (See Appendix D2 for Third Grade Interview Questions)

Systematic Observations

In order to measure students’ engagement during writing, we created an engagement scale. Several writing sessions were observed to gain a more accurate representation of engagement levels. The scale to rate students’ engagement level ranged from one to three. When students received a one, it indicated that their engagement level was low. If they received a three, it signified a high engagement level in their activity. We observed students at fixed intervals of
five or ten minutes. At each interval, we scanned the room to gather the necessary observations about our students and then recorded our data. The observations provided data prior to implementing, as well as during the execution of the interventions. (See Appendix E1 for Systematic Observation Results; See Appendix E2 for the Engagement Scale)

Anecdotal Notes

While systematically observing the students, students often expressed their feelings about writing, which we would immediately write down to remember later. These notes were then analyzed to determine students’ feelings about writing and indicated what may or may not motivate them. Recording the notes helped us gauge students’ feelings objectively during the writing activity. This provided us with meaningful information about our students’ preferences for our interventions. (See Appendix F for Student Quotes)

Student Artifacts

As students produced work, artifacts were collected and used to help determine student motivation during a lesson. If a student wrote a longer piece, it specified that he or she spent more time writing than being off-task. Combining this data along with our systematic observations, we were able to make a more accurate evaluation of student engagement. Thus, student artifacts emerged as another piece to assess the motivation while writing. We collected student work during multiple lessons where interventions were implemented. The collection of student artifacts emerged from lessons where students were given choice, listened to music, wrote on different mediums, and shared their work. (See Appendix G for Student Artifacts)
Data Analysis

Once our data was complied, we were anxious to begin our analysis of this data. Since we used a variety of methods to collect data, we had multiple pieces of evidence to later develop and support our claims. In order to reach these conclusions, we categorized our data based on the means of gathering it. Following the categorization of the data, we started our analysis process.

Surveys

With our pre-intervention survey, we noticed that students in both grade levels displayed some interest in sharing their writing, selecting their own topic, and listening to music. This data drove our wondering about what classroom interventions to implement. Out of our 43 students, 40 expressed some or a lot of interest in sharing their writing with others. Furthermore, 42 students conveyed an interest in the selection of their own topic, while 31 students showed at least some interest in listening to music while writing. Because of these staggering results, our future interventions emerged. (See Appendix C2 for Pre-Intervention Survey Results)

Following our interventions, student surveys provided us with an overall view of the effectiveness of our interventions: sharing, playing music, and student choice. To incorporate sharing into our classrooms, we took a different approach in each grade. In third grade, Courtney notified her students of sharing prior to writing activities. In fifth grade, Kelsey invited her students to volunteer to share any writing to receive peer feedback. Overall, 13 out of the 17 third graders that were surveyed reported that they put more effort into work when they knew they would share with peers. Eighteen, out of twenty-one, fifth graders like hearing their classmates share, while nine are willing to share their own work. In addition, 16 fifth graders enjoy receiving feedback from their peers, whereas 14 students enjoy providing feedback for
their peers. Lastly, 16 students reported that the feedback was helpful for future writing drafts and activities.

After implementing music into our classrooms during writing, 31 students, overall, did not find the music distracting. In Courtney’s third grade classroom, 15 found listening to music while writing to be enjoyable. In Kelsey’s fifth grade classroom, 17 students found music calming, as 18 students found music relaxing\(^1\). When writing, 14 students find that music helps them concentrate more.

In our classrooms, we provided students with writing activities where they were given the freedom of student choice. Overall, 37/43 students across the two grade levels appreciate the opportunity to choose their own topic. The basis of student choice emerged from the activities executed in our classrooms. Courtney provided her students with the opportunity to choose their topic of writing among a number of prompts. Similarly, Kelsey’s students selected their own topic for a multi-genre magazine project.

From the analysis of our surveys, the positive impact of our interventions is evident. (See Appendix C4 for Post-Intervention Survey Results) The majority of the students expressed a greater interest in writing with the incorporation of sharing, music, and student choice.

**Interviews**

The interview questions that we asked our students differed, depending on the strategies implemented in each classroom. In addition, we ensured that we interviewed students across different ability levels. The results from Courtney’s interviews helped her determine the

\(^1\) We defined ‘calming’ as providing a tranquil writing environment, free of anxiety. We defined ‘relaxing’ as relieving tension, stress, and worry.
enjoyment level of her students while writing. All four students interviewed felt that student choice made writing more enjoyable. Three out of the four students expressed that using different mediums motivated them in their writing process. Similarly, three out of the four students liked having music play while they wrote. Lastly, two out of the four felt that they put more effort into work when they knew it would be shared with peers. When Kelsey interviewed her students, the results displayed students’ interest about sharing. The six students interviewed shared their writing with peers and expressed that they would all share again and enjoy hearing classmates share as well. The six students also stated that they like receiving feedback and found the feedback helpful. Meanwhile, four out of the six enjoy providing feedback to their classmates. Through the analysis of our interviews, it is apparent that the strategies implemented were successful across different ability levels of the students. (See Appendix D3 for Interview Analyses)

**Systematic Observations**

Using the engagement scale, we observed our classrooms for individual levels of student engagement and ranked students on a scale of one to three. During writing lessons where different mediums and student choice were implemented, Courtney found that students were engaged and motivated to write. Analyzing her data, the average engagement level of students during writing lessons incorporating different mediums was 2.81 out of 3. When implementing student choice into lessons, the average level of engagement was 2.76 out of 3. In Kelsey’s classroom, students were first observed writing their student choice project without listening to music. The average engagement level of students during this time was 2.19 out of 3. After her implementation, the fifth graders engagement level jumped 0.31 points to 2.5 while students listened to music during writing. Overall, our results display that integrating different mediums,
student choice, and music positively affect student engagement levels. *(See Appendix E1 for Systematic Observation Results; See Appendix E2 for the Engagement Scale)*

**Anecdotal Notes**

Another method of data collection was scribing comments made during a lesson or writing activity. The quotes gathered expressed students’ opinions about our interventions: music, sharing, different mediums, and student choice. Analyzing these quotes helped us determine what strategies were effective and why. We searched for a pattern among the quotes to see if multiple students shared similar opinions. The overall analysis of our strategies is enhanced through the students’ comments displaying intrinsic effect on student motivation. *(See Appendix F for Student Quotes)*

**Student Artifacts**

Along with our other methods of data collection, we gathered student artifacts to give us a stronger insight into how our interventions affected student writing. Many of the pieces we collected were completed when students were given choice and the opportunity to publish on different mediums. Comparing the use of different mediums with the students’ regular reading journal displayed that when students wrote on a different medium, the length of their writing increased. For instance, when students wrote predications on their Magic Fans, the length drastically increased from their predictions in their reading journals. Similarly, when students were provided the opportunity to choose their topic, they wrote surprisingly more than when limited with their writing topic. Displayed by these results, the use of different mediums and student choice verifies an increase in students’ motivation while writing. *(See Appendix G for Student Artifacts)*
Explanation of Findings (Including Claims and Evidence)

After a thorough analysis of the data through the methods summarized above, we identified patterns and trends across these methods. These patterns and trends allowed us to make four strong claims regarding our main wondering:

*How can we motivate our third and fifth grade students to write?*

**Claim #1: Providing opportunities where students are given a choice effectively engages students and encourages them to write.**

To investigate our main wondering, we integrated student choice during writing over several weeks. After implementing student choice and analyzing our student surveys, student artifacts, anecdotal notes, and systematic observations, we were able to conclude that providing students with a choice during writing successfully engages students and encourages them to write.

When comparing our student surveys, we discovered patterns indicating that students prefer being given a choice. As evident from the 37 students who appreciate the opportunity to have a choice when writing, student choice certainly plays a role in the level of student engagement and motivation to perform writing tasks. *(See C4 for Post-Intervention Surveys; See C5 for Student Survey Samples)*

We provided student choice in multiple writing assignments. After collecting student artifacts, our data suggested that providing student choice increased student engagement and motivation. This is made apparent by the length of the students’ writing. The artifacts that we gathered following these lessons were impressively longer by seven or eight sentences, as
compared to students’ writing when choice was limited. The extensive length of these artifacts further supports the increased level of engagement and motivation due to providing student choice. (See Appendix G for Student Artifacts)

After analyzing our anecdotal notes, students expressed their interest in student choice writing assignments. During a lesson, Courtney noticed an increase in student engagement when a student asked, “Can I take this home and work on it?” This simple question showed the student’s enjoyment of the activity, and he even wanted to take it home to improve his in-class writing. Similarly, during a later lesson involving student choice where they were to choose one prompt, a different student wondered, “Can I combine all four prompts to create a series?” The quote not only represents the student’s engagement, but his motivation to go above and beyond the assignment. Using these quotes as a source of our data shows an authentic connection to the individual students in our classroom and their enthusiasm to write during these lessons. (See Appendix F for Student Quotes)

Utilizing an engagement scale during our systematic observations allowed us to measure the individual engagement of each student. When Courtney observed engagement levels during student choice activities, she found students were highly engaged. With an average of 2.76 using the one to three scale, it is apparent that students were engaged and motivated for the majority of the writing activity. (See E1 for Systematic Observation Results; See E2 for the Engagement Scale)

Based on the methods described above, evidence proves that students enjoy activities where they are provided choice. Since we have found that students who enjoy activities are more
engaged and motivated, we have determined that students were positively influenced by the integration of student choice.

Claim #2: Playing music while students write provides a calm, relaxing environment, which inspires them to write.

To further investigate our main wondering, we implemented music during several writing activities. Following the execution of playing music while writing and analyzing our student surveys, anecdotal notes, and systematic observations, we were able to verify that music calms, relaxes, and inspires students while writing.

Our pre-intervention surveys first indicated to us that students might enjoy listening to music while they write. After incorporating music into writing time, we found that our students enjoy music and find it relaxing and calming. On the post-intervention surveys, 15 out of 17 third graders reported that they enjoy listening to music. Seventeen out of twenty-one fifth graders said that music calms them when writing, while eighteen find music relaxing. Our data displays that music has a positive impact on the students, as it is enjoyable and provides a calming and relaxing effect on the majority of the students. (See C2 for Pre-Intervention Survey Results; See C4 for Post-Intervention Survey Results; See C5 for Student Survey Samples)

“I can’t write anything; the music inspires me,” urged a student in Kelsey’s fifth grade classroom when music was not being played. In Courtney’s third grade classroom, one student declared, “It inspires me and makes it easier to think of something to write about.” These quotes, among many others, emphasize the influence of music on students when writing. Hearing students express these viewpoints about playing music has solidified our evidence of music impacting student writing, in an inspirational way. (See Appendix F for Student Quotes)
Over the course of several weeks, Kelsey systematically observed writing time in her classroom. Prior to playing music during this time, the average level of engagement was 2.19, displaying that students were somewhat engaged over the course of the writing period. After the integration of music, the average level of student engagement rose to 2.5. This increase indicates that playing music for her fifth graders has a positive effect on student engagement. Due to the strength of our evidence, it can be said that as students are more relaxed and calm, they are also more engaged and motivated to write. (See E1 for Systematic Observation Results; See E2 for the Engagement Scale)

Claim #3: Allowing students to share their work increases student effort and allows for helpful peer feedback.

Continuing our investigation of ways to motivate students to write, we implemented opportunities for students to share their writing. After integrating sharing time into our classrooms and analyzing our student surveys, anecdotal notes, and student interviews, we were able to conclude that student effort increases, and that students find peer feedback valuable.

In both classrooms, post-intervention survey results showed that students benefit from sharing. Thirteen out of seventeen third graders reported that they put more effort into their work when they knew their work would be shared with peers. In fifth grade, 16 students, out of 21, expressed that feedback they received from their peers was helpful for future writing tasks. These survey results display that the majority of students benefit from the sharing of their work because of an increase in student effort and the receiving of helpful feedback from peers. (See C4 for Results of Student Surveys; See C5 for Student Survey Samples)
“When do we get to share?”, “Can I share mine first?”, “Is it okay if I share mine?” chirped third graders when Courtney mentioned that sharing would follow a writing task. The enthusiastic remarks from the students verified that providing students with the opportunity to share their writing motivates them to put more effort into their work. If students display eagerness to share, they will work harder to produce their writings. *(See Appendix F for Student Quotes)*

Student interviews were conducted in Kelsey’s fifth grade classroom with six students who had volunteered to share their work. In analyzing their responses, all of them liked receiving feedback from peers, found it valuable and authentic to their work, and would share again. Here, students’ enthusiasm to share is demonstrated by the willingness to share again. Finding it helpful, students took peer feedback into consideration to make revisions to their writings, and, in turn, put more effort into their writing during the revision process. Overall, we found that giving students the opportunity to share their work benefited their writing through valuable peer feedback and increased effort. *(See D3 for Interview Analyses)*

**Claim #4: Providing different mediums captivates students’ interest and increases intrinsic motivation to write.**

During the implementation of our sub-wonderings, a new question emerged. Courtney found that when her students published their work on different mediums, they were more interested and motivated to write. Through the emergence of the different mediums sub-wondering, we utilized student quotes and artifacts to measure their interest level and motivation while writing.
Courtney first noticed that different mediums motivated students when a student asked, “Can I stay in for recess to finish my fan?” While the assignment required a story summary, which students are used to writing in their reading journals, students demonstrated enthusiasm to write on a different medium, a magic fan. Normally, in their reading journals, predictions would consist of two or three sentences. However, student artifacts were gathered and consisted of ten sentences in length. Through the use of different mediums, students became more interested and were even willing to give up their recess to complete writing assignments. The increased length of students’ predications indicates students were intrinsically motivated to write on different mediums. (See Appendix F for Student Quotes; See Appendix G for Student Artifacts)

Reflections and Implications for Future Practice

As enthusiastic learners, we were eager and fortunate to have the opportunity to complete a teacher inquiry. We began this process by looking within our own classrooms to discover ways to motivate students to write. We anticipated that the strategies we implemented would create an environment where students would be engaged, motivated, and inspired to write. After completing our inquiry, we are confident that our strategies positively influenced students during writing time. As a result, we plan to utilize many of these same strategies in our own classroom in the future. In addition to using these strategies, we also plan to include strategies, such as technology, read alouds, and sitting somewhere comfortably.

At the beginning of our inquiry, original sub-questions inquired about the use of technology and read alouds; however, we did not gather enough data to make any sufficient claims regarding these two strategies. We feel that these two strategies may be useful to implement in future years. Based on the data we did collect, we believe technology and read
alouds provide a motivational factor to engage students to write. Some of the evidence to support these future implications include overhearing student remarks, collecting artifacts, and assessing student work.

While our actual strategies were implemented, we noticed students like to write where they are comfortable. We feel that restricting students to a hard, cold, metal chair hinders their engagement level and can increase their time off-task. To avoid this, we feel strongly about encouraging students to use the classroom environment, which may include the large carpet area, rugs, couches, etc. We will accompany this freedom around the room with the strategies that we have found to be most useful through this inquiry.

Reflecting upon the most useful strategies, we firmly feel that the effectiveness of these strategies is dependent on the classroom of learners. Each year will present a new group of learners with different needs, which must be accommodated, in order to challenge and attain students’ personal best. Because of the ever-changing classroom learners, our strategies must be flexible and reflect the needs of our students. Even though we have made strong claims about four strategies, we know that these strategies may not be the best for every classroom.

Since there is not just one strategy that will work across every classroom and every grade level, we are aware that our inquiry will be ongoing. Each year, we will question strategies that fit our students the best. Additionally, through our inquiry, we learned how valuable the inquiry process is to our professional development and to the success of our students. We are willing to continue to inquire about the best strategies to motivate students to write, as well as embark on new inquiry journeys that deal with other classroom strategies or teacher needs.
Appendix A - Inquiry Brief

Motivating Students to Write

**Context**

Kelsey Rasmussen is a fifth-grade yearlong intern at Park Forest Elementary. Inside her classroom, she is joined by her mentor teacher, a paraprofessional, and twenty-one ten and eleven year old students. Ten of her students are girls, while eleven are boys. As a whole, her classroom of students has a variety of academic needs. Three students receive additional support in Title I reading, while two students go to learning support for reading. One student, new to the district, has been referred to the Instructional Support Team for additional help in reading. Seven students receive speech therapy. In the fall, all twenty-one students reached benchmark, achieving basic in the fifth grade writing proficiency. By the end of the year, students are projected to achieve the proficient-level in writing. During the winter assessment, one student fell below basic, eleven remained at basic, eight achieved the proficient level, and one student scored advanced.

Behaviorally, three students have anxiety problems, especially while test taking. One student has Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and is not medicated. In addition to this student, three more struggle with paying attention and remaining on task, especially when writing.

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Courtney Donovan is a third grade intern at Park Forest Elementary school. In her third grade class she is joined by her mentor teacher as well as twenty-two students. Although it is one class of twenty-two, the students show their individual personalities in their own unique ways. This class consists of twelve girls and ten boys. Academically, students have a wide variety of
needs. There are eight children in the higher ability-reading group, seven children in the middle-ability reading group, and seven students in the basic/below basic reading group. Six of the students from the basic/below basic reading group leave our class during the day to attend title 1 reading. The other two students from this basic/below basic reading group attend book club during this time. In terms of writing, there are four levels of ability. These levels are below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced. In Courtney’s class four children are in the below basic group, twelve are in the basic group, four students are in the proficient group, and one is in the advanced group. At this stage in third grade, the benchmark is for students to be in the basic group; however, by the end of third grade they should all be proficient.

Courtney's students also differ greatly in their social and behavioral roles in the classroom. One of her students is medically diagnosed with ADHD and often has to be refocused. This student, as well as another student, are on the autism spectrum, but do not need fulltime help in the classroom. However, some of their autistic tendencies cause them to lose focus often during the day, especially during our writing period.

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Within their classrooms, students have a variety of academic and behavioral needs, which need to be considered when planning and integrating writing interventions. Being in two self-contained classrooms in two different grade levels will provide us with the opportunity to intervene, collect, and analyze data spanning across both grade levels.

**Rationale**

After observing their students for four months, Kelsey and Courtney decided upon a shared inquiry to discover techniques to implement in the classroom to motivate students to write. Because of the heavy emphasis on standardized testing, students are required to write more
and more, intensifying their stress and lessening their creativity and expression. Since writing is important to integrate across subject areas throughout each day, these interns want to find techniques to motivate discouraged and struggling writers.

Kelsey and Courtney have had the opportunity to be involved in a Professional Development opportunity focusing on integrating Park Forest's School Yard into the curriculum. Each School Yard Project (SYP) group tries to find different strategies to enhance students' learning. Both of the groups Kelsey and Courtney are involved in centered their strategies on using nature to motivate students to write. Having the opportunity to be involved sparked a wondering of how students can become motivated to write.

Inside their classrooms, these interns have also observed students' unwillingness to write. Courtney observed that her third graders were struggling to begin writing as well as to find their own ideas to write about. She noticed that their lack of interest in writing was prohibiting them from producing quality work in the time allotted. Kelsey noticed several of her fifth graders are resistant and hesitant to partake in prompt writing, such as district writing assessments. In addition, she noticed her students had a common lack of motivation to put forth their personal best during writing tasks.

**Wonderings**

*Main Question:* How can we help motivate our third and fifth grade students to write?

*Sub-Questions:*

- What techniques can motivate students to write?
- How do read alouds encourage students to write?
  - How does presenting the opportunity to share finished work with classmates affect students’ writing?
  - How can implementing technology excite students to write?
  - How does playing music affect students during writing?
- How does allowing choice in writing affect student motivation?

**Data Collection**

*Surveys*
Using surveys will allow us to collect data about how students feel about writing. Their responses will provide us with information about how we can improve writing in our classrooms, driving our interventions. After our intervention, follow-up surveys will be distributed and provide us with data about how our students’ feelings have changed about writing.

Surveying the parents will provide us with an insight on how they feel their children like writing. The surveys will offer a chance to gather data of typical writing behaviors at home, including frustration-levels and parental support.

**Interviews**

Student interviews will supply us with a deeper insight about how students feel about writing and why. Interviews following writing lessons or projects will provide us with immediate and more complex information about how we can improve writing in the classroom through various techniques.

Interviewing colleagues will provide us with expert insight on implementing particular techniques in the classroom. For instance, interviewing Patti Begg, Elementary School Music Teacher, will supply us with an expert opinion on playing music during writing time to ignite imaginations. Furthermore, informal interviews with other teachers at Park Forest Elementary will offer us a chance to gather their perspective on teaching writing in their classrooms.

**Anecdotal Notes**
Making observations and taking notes will provide us with evidence on the effects of various strategies implemented to motivate students to write. Recording notes during lessons and independent writing time will enable us to gather data on how engaged students are over a period of time. Anecdotal notes will also help us recognize patterns of behavior resulting from the implementation of various strategies. This will provide us with an overall synopsis of how our interventions worked in our classrooms over the course of our inquiry.

**Artifacts**

During our inquiry, we will collect artifacts to analyze student work. We will analyze their work to check if any improvement was made. This analysis can help us determine if students were motivated to do their personal best, or if they were unmotivated to complete the writing assignment. We will analyze their work based on length and content (language).

**Timeline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week #: Sunday - Saturday</th>
<th>What <strong>are</strong> we doing?</th>
<th>What is <strong>due</strong>?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1: Feb. 7-13</td>
<td>Inquiry Brief Draft</td>
<td>Inquiry Brief - Wed. Feb. 10</td>
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<td>Annotated Bib Draft</td>
<td>Annotated Bib - Wed. Feb. 10</td>
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<td>Continue collecting baseline data</td>
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<td>Week 2: Feb. 14-20</td>
<td>Distribute student surveys</td>
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<td>Take observation notes</td>
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<td>Revise Brief and Bibliography</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop resource interview questions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Collect student artifacts</td>
<td>Revised Bib - Wed. Feb. 24</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Compile data from student surveys</td>
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<td>Develop parent survey</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop student interview questions</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Week 4: Feb. 28-Mar. 6 | Take observation notes  
Collect student artifacts  
Distribute parent surveys  
Conduct student interviews  
Interview resources |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Week 5: Mar. 7-13     | Compile data from parent surveys  
Analyze all collected data  
Develop claims  
Discuss intervention strategies |
| Week 6: Mar. 14-20    | Implement interventions  
Take observation notes  
Collect student artifacts |
| Week 7: Mar. 21-27    | Continue to implement interventions  
Take observation notes  
Collect student artifacts  
Develop student interview questions  
Begin writing paper |
| Week 8: Mar. 28-Apr. 3| Continue to implement interventions  
Take observation notes  
Collect student artifacts  
Conduct student interviews  
Develop student post-survey  
Develop parent post-survey  
Continue writing paper |
| Week 9: Apr. 4-10     | Distribute student post-survey  
Distribute parent post-survey  
Compile data from post-surveys  
Continue writing paper |
| Week 10: Apr. 11-17   | Analyze data  
Finalize draft |
| Week 11: Apr. 18-24   | Revise paper  
Plan presentation |
| Week 12: Apr. 25-May 1| Revise paper  
Prepare for presentation |
| Week 13: May 2-8      | Finalize paper; abstract  
Prepare for presentation  
Present at the conference |
| Week 14: May 9-15     | Submit Online |

| Inquiry Draft - Fri. Apr. 16 |
| Conference - Sat. May 8 |
| Submit Online - Sun. May 16 |
Appendix B - Annotated Bibliography

References


This book demonstrates how to apply teaching strategies to help students succeed in writing to a prompt when student choice is not in fact a choice. The author also includes suggested strategies to use for addressing timed-test situations. It provides teachers with more techniques to use to help students work with assigned topics, especially when taking a test. This resource will be good to use since many of the assessments we give have specific prompts students must answer. Our hope is to help motivate students to write using new strategies, such as giving students choice. However, sometimes those strategies are hard to implement when the district gives you an assessment that puts limitations on student choice. This book will help give some ideas on how to provide student choice when we are given these limitations.


Patricia Begg is the vocal music teacher at Park Forest Elementary, teaching kindergarten through fifth grade students. In her classes, students explore rhythm by dancing to music, improvise with instruments, and sing. Patti Begg will provide knowledge about how using music in an elementary classroom may affect students. Her experience will supply useful information to integrate music during students’ writing time over the course of the day. Her insight will play a role in driving our implementation of music during writing time.
Bettoli, D., & Sweeney, J. (1999). *Prompt-a-day! (Grades 3-6)*. PA: Scholastic Teaching Resources (Teaching).

This book includes 625 thought provoking writing prompts that you can use for every day of the school year. Each prompt is tied to a specific day of the year and includes an important event that happened on that day. It then goes on to include a writing prompt that deals somewhat with the fact of the day. For instance, April 11th says: Today marks the first day of the annual Ozark UFO conference in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. Prompt: List three questions you might have for a visitor from outer space, or, describe what you think a visitor from outer space would look like. One of my sub-questions is whether or not a read aloud before writing will help motivate students. These short stories or facts may be a good starting point to use since they also include a nice writing prompt that is appropriate for my third grade students.


Published in *Childhood Education*, an education journal, Basanti Chakraborty and Sandra Stone provide readers with a recipe for motivating students to write. Within their article, they offer ideas for lessons on descriptive writing, expository writing, and narrative writing. Standardized testing now centers their writing prompts and assesses students on these three writing areas. These creative lessons provide an interesting approach to introduce students to the aspects of each area of writing. Lastly, this resource encourages readers to provide students with the opportunity to share their work with an Author’s
Chair and to publish their work as an extra source of motivation. To allow for students to share their work, implementing an Author’s Chair is one technique to emphasize students’ sharing or celebrating their masterpieces!

Evans, J. (2001). *Writing in the elementary classroom: A reconsideration.* Chicago: Heinemann. This book by Janet Evans provides teachers with a new perspective on writing in the classroom. Evans focuses on the different types of writing, such as poetry, nonfiction, and narratives, and provides information of how to effectively execute it in the classroom. In her book, Evans also mentions the benefits of using picture books as writing, showing a connection across reading and writing. In addition, she dedicates a chapter to how computers can motivate students and provide an edge to their writing. Lastly, Evans provides graphic organizers to make writing informational texts more fun to use. Informational texts are the focus of a writing project. Her book contributes several ideas of how to encourage students to write. Although she emphasizes a lot of points to use in classrooms, her information about technology and read alouds will be helpful when considering how to approach our interventions.


This article discusses how various types of music have affects on moods. Throughout the article, it is emphasized that even though music boosts moods, various music plays
different roles on emotions. This article highlights the benefits of classical music due to its ability to empower and establish a calm and creative mind. Although it is not a popular form of music, this article encourages the use of classical music to establish a productive, less stressful work environment. The article’s points of emphasis will strongly influence our consideration of what music to play for students while writing.


This article discusses some of the reasons behind why students are not motivated to write. It also talks about including family members in the process. The author talks about how to implement simple strategies that can have lasting effects, such as renaming a lesson from “grammar” to “glorious grammar”. Before implementing strategies to motivate students to write, it is important to have an understanding about why they are not motivated. These simple strategies can be easily implemented and can be a good way to begin our interventions.


This article is about a study that was done in a second grade classroom. The author had nineteen students participate in ten, fifteen-minute writing sessions, each accompanied by
a type of background music. He analyzed the writing for tone, consistency, and number of words to see which music effected students the most. Since one of our sub-questions is to find out how music can affect student writing and motivation, this article can help us decide which music to use, or if music should be used at all.

Robin Lallement is the learning support teacher at Park Forest Elementary School. She works with several of Courtney’s students throughout the week. We will be interviewing her to get her view of these students’ attention problems and how it might be affecting their school day activities, such as writing. A major problem Courtney sees in her classroom is the lack of focus that her students with attention disorders have. Talking with a colleague who works with them often will give a better insight into how we can meet these students’ needs and what strategies might work best for them.

Susan Lunsford is currently a Professional Development Associate, or student teaching supervisor. Formally an elementary school teacher, Susan is an expert in using read alouds in her classroom focusing on any part of the curriculum. She will provide valuable information of how using read alouds to introduce writing lessons will encourage students to write. Her experience will contribute reasons why read alouds are beneficial in every part of the curriculum, especially writing. The expertise Susan will offer provides us with a further understanding of how we can implement read alouds with writing as part of our interventions.

J. Mendel, a St. Louis teacher, blogs about integrating technology in the classroom. Although an informal resource, Mendel offers several ideas of how to use technology to motivate students to write. Mendel’s experience as a teacher offers a rhetoric for using his blog as a reliable source of the value of technology in the classroom. On his blog, Mendel urges the importance of varying the end product to prevent student boredom. He insists on using Web 2.0 sites to allow students the opportunity to create their own comic, shape poem, and book for example. Mendel also provides readers with ideas of how to make the planning stages of writing more fun for the students. The resources he provides are simple starts to add another dimension to students’ writing. Mendel’s ideas will contribute to implementing technology as part of our writing intervention. Students in fifth grade may even choose to create the own comic to include in their SchoolYard Zine.


This book is a handbook that discusses many of the different stages of writing. It talks about the stages of curriculum, the evaluation method, scope and sequence, writing in the elementary school, and assessment. This book also includes a variety of writing topics. Many of the topics are just phrases that the students use to create a writing piece. For instance, one topic is: The mouse who thought he was a cat. Students would then write about why he thought he was a cat and so on. Since one of my sub-questions deals with
student choice I can use this book to pick topics from. My hope is to choose three of these interesting topics and give them to the students. Students will then have a choice of which topic they want to pick and can even choose how they want to go about answering this prompt.


*Because Writing Matters* is a resource urging the importance of writing in schools. Carl Nagin emphasizes the importance of integrating writing across multiple areas of the curriculum. He insists writing needs to be present in multiple subject areas to improve young writers. In addition, his book involves multiple strategies focusing on the writing process, as well as the writing product. Lastly, Nagin encourages teachers to implement planning time, multiple drafts, a teacher-student discussion or conference, and portfolios. These school practices listed above were proved to lead to higher scores in writing as assessed by the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Nagin’s points are important to consider when planning our intervention. Leaving time to conference with students and for students to gather a portfolio of work to display may help them feel more confident about their writing.


This website discusses multiple ways to help motivate students to write. The author of
this article believes that the number one ingredient to motivating creative writers is creating enthusiasm. On this website the grades are broken up into K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. This will be helpful when we are trying to decide which strategies will be best used in our individual grades. A strategy that might work best for second grade may not be helpful at all in third grade. For instance, providing a read aloud before a writing lesson might work better in third grade than it would in fifth. On the other hand, incorporating higher-level technology will be more suited for fifth grade than it would be for third.


This website is directed more towards parents but is also useful for teachers. It explains how parents can help motivate their children to write. This website discusses how to encourage younger writers as well as students in the upper grades. Many of the ideas talked about on this website are ones that we have talked about including in our inquiry. It also discusses ways in which students can be motivated to write by doing writing activities at home. This website can be a source that we use to help us decide how to implement some of our strategies in the classroom.


The International Reading Association and National Council of Teachers of English joined forces and created readwritethink.org. Home to resources for teachers and parents,
readwritethink.org offers several ideas for lesson plans integrating writing. This online resource also provides ways to motivate reluctant writers at home and at school. In addition, this website offers valuable strategies about teaching with technology and teaching writing. Lastly, it provides online resources to integrate technology with writing, such as a shape poem maker and a flipbook maker. Readwritethink.org serves as a beneficial resource due to its culmination of lesson plans, strategy guides, and interactive activities accessible to teachers, parents, and students. The lesson plans available will serve as a great resource to use when trying to find ideas for lessons during our interventions. In addition, the technology resources it provides can be considered when implementing technology into our interventions.


David Rockower is a sixth grade teacher at Mount Nittany Middle School. His writing curriculum is largely based on the idea of student choice. Since student choice is one area we will be examining in our inquiry, interviewing David can give us some insight into how he implements this strategy. Since we would like to include student choice in assignments without changing the curriculum, David will be a good resource to go to when trying to do this.


In this book, Tom Romano introduces readers to multigenre papers by discussing genres, subgenres, strategies, and style techniques students can use while writing. Multigenre
papers or projects focus on one topic, but multiple genres of writing are produced on the same topic. This multigenre project parallels the zine project fifth graders in my classroom do every year. Romano’s book will provide a resource of what other genres students can choose for their final product, emphasizing self-choice. Creating a project menu of possibilities of what students can do could ignite a sense of curiosity and purpose for students to execute and take ownership.


Henny Putri Saking Wijaya and Herwindy Maria Tedjaatmadja contributed to a thesis at Petra Christian University, based out of Indonesia about the usefulness of music when writing. Wijaya and Tedjaatmadja offer results from a study of how music influences writing. Based off of the results, the authors provide readers with several reasons of why music contributes to the stimulation of learners. Mentioning that music offers a relaxing environment, Wijaya and Tedjaatmadja urge that it creates the opportunity for students to expand their attention span, allowing for the search of more ideas. Using this as a resource will solidify the purpose for exploring how music could affect students while writing. The expertise provided encourages our intervention of implementing music during writing time.

This website lists different strategies that have been found to motivate students to write. The author includes ideas such as connecting students to their community, having them write to other students, and writing about what concerns them most. This website will be good to look out while we are deciding which strategies we think will be most beneficial to implement in our own classrooms. Since we have many sub-questions about our main wondering, being able to narrow down which strategies to implement will be difficult. Having the opportunity to look at other studies that have been done will help us decide which ones we think will be best to use.
Appendix C1 - Pre-Intervention Surveys

Third Grade Writing Survey

Name________________________________________________ Date__________________________________

Circle the answer you agree with most.

1. I like to write.
   Not at all  Some  A lot

2. Writing is boring.
   Not at all  Some  A lot

3. I enjoy writing notes and letters to people.
   Not at all  Some  A lot

4. I like writing at school.
   Not at all  Some  A lot

5. I have trouble thinking about what to write.
   Not at all  Some  A lot

6. It’s fun to write at home.
   Not at all  Some  A lot

7. I like to share my writing with others.
   Not at all  Some  A lot

8. Writing is fun.
   Not at all  Some  A lot

9. I wish I had more time to write at school.
   Not at all  Some  A lot

10. I think I am a good writer.
    Not at all  Some  A lot

11. How often do you write at home?
    Not at all  Some  A lot
12. I would enjoy doing writing projects.  
   Not at all    Some    A lot

13. I like to listen to music when I write.  
   Not at all    Some    A lot

14. I like to write when I get to pick my topic.  
   Not at all    Some    A lot

15. I think I am a good reader.  
   Not at all    Some    A lot

16. I like to read.  
   Not at all    Some    A lot

17. When I think of writing I feel:  
   Nervous    Excited    Unhappy    Scared

18. Where is your favorite place to write?  
   Somewhere comfortable    At my desk    Outside    Other ___________

Use the following types of writing to answer questions 19 and 20:

Writing Poems  
Writing Narratives  
Writing Persuasive Pieces  
Writing Informational Pieces

19. Which type of writing is your favorite? ____________________________

20. Which type of writing is your least favorite? ______________________

20. What writing activity have you enjoyed most this year?

21. What do you think would make you like writing more?
5th Grade Writing Survey

Name_____________________________ Date________________________

Circle the answer you agree with most. Please answer honestly.

1. I like to write.
   Not at all  Some  A lot

2. Writing is boring.
   Not at all  Some  A lot

3. I enjoy writing notes and letters to people.
   Not at all  Some  A lot

4. I like writing at school.
   Not at all  Some  A lot

5. I have trouble thinking about what to write.
   Not at all  Some  A lot

6. It’s fun to write at home.
   Not at all  Some  A lot

7. I like to share my writing with others.
   Not at all  Some  A lot

8. Writing is fun.
   Not at all  Some  A lot

9. I wish I had more time to write at school.
   Not at all  Some  A lot

10. I think I am a good writer.
    Not at all  Some  A lot

11. How often do you write at home?
    Not at all  Some  A lot

12. I would enjoy doing writing projects.
13. I like to listen to music when I write.
   Not at all, Some, A lot

14. I like to write when I get to pick my topic.
   Not at all, Some, A lot

15. I like to share my writing with my peers.
   Not at all, Some, A lot

16. I like to use the computer to publish my writing.
   Not at all, Some, A lot

17. I think I am a good reader.
   Not at all, Some, A lot

18. I like to read.
   Not at all, Some, A lot

19. When I think of writing I feel:
   Nervous, Excited, Unhappy, Scared

20. Where is your favorite place to write?
   Somewhere comfortable, At my desk, Outside, Other___________

Use the following types of writing to answer questions 21 and 22:

Writing Poems
Writing Narratives
Writing Persuasive Pieces
Writing Informational Pieces

21. Which type of writing is your favorite?_______________________________

22. Which type of writing is your least favorite?__________________________

23. What writing activity have you enjoyed most this year?
24. What do you think would make you like writing more?

Appendix C2 - Results of Pre-Intervention Surveys

Survey Analysis - Pre Intervention- Third Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<th>a lot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>like to write</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it's boring</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>notes/letters</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>write at school</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trouble thinking</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>write at home</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>share writing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>writing is fun</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more time at school</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good writer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>how often at home</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>writing projects</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>listen to music</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pick topic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good reader</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>like to read</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When thinking of writing I feel:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nervous</th>
<th>Excited</th>
<th>Unhappy</th>
<th>Scared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other- 2</td>
<td>&quot;Annoyed&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Happy&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Favorite place to write:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Somewhere Comfortable</th>
<th>At my desk</th>
<th>Outside</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Other - 2 "Secret Hideout" & "Under an apple tree"
### Survey Analysis - Pre Intervention - 5th Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>some</th>
<th>a lot</th>
<th>1 no ans*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>like to write</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>it's boring</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>notes/letters</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>write at school</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trouble thinking</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>write at home</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>share writing</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>writing is fun</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more time at school</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good writer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>how often at home</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>writing projects</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>listen to music</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pick topic</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>share with peers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good reader</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>like to read</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nervous</th>
<th>Excited</th>
<th>Unhappy</th>
<th>Scared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When thinking of</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>writing I feel:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other - 2 &quot;Happy&quot; &amp;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between Excited/Unhappy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhere Comfortable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At my desk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                      | 12      | 1      | 3      | 5      |
| Favorite place to   |         |         |         |        |
| write:              |         |         |         |        |
| Other - 3 "Anywhere"; 1 "Home"; 1 not specified |         |         |         |
Appendix C3 - Post-Intervention Surveys

Third Grade Writing Survey

Name_________________________________________ Date________________________

Circle the answer you agree with most.

1. I like to write.
   Not at all     Some            A lot

2. Writing is boring.
   Not at all     Some            A lot

3. I have enjoyed writing when I have been given a choice of what I want to write about.
   Not at all     Some            A lot

4. I put more effort into my work when I know I will be sharing it with the class.
   Not at all     Some            A lot

5. I feel better about writing when I get to write on different types of paper.
   Not at all     Some            A lot

6. When I listen to music it makes writing more enjoyable.
   Not at all     Some            A lot

7. When I listen to music I get too distracted to write.
   Not at all     Some            A lot

8. I enjoy writing now more than I did at the beginning of the year.
   Not at all     Some            A lot

9. When I think of writing I feel:

   Nervous         Excited      Unhappy         Scared

   Other:__________________________

10. Anything else you would like to share about writing so far this year?
   __________________________________________________________________________

11. My favorite writing activity we have done this year is:__________________________
    __________________________________________________________________________
    __________________________________________________________________________
Name: ________________________________  

The following questions relate to playing music while writing:

Playing music distracts me when I write.
   Yes    No

Playing music makes me feel calm.
   Yes    No

Playing music makes me concentrate less on my writing.
   Yes    No

Playing music helps me concentrate on my writing.
   Yes    No

Playing music relaxes me.
   Yes    No

The following questions relate to sharing our writing in our class:

I like hearing my classmates share their writing.
   Yes    No

I like sharing my writing with my classmates.
   Yes    No

I like giving feedback to my classmates.
   Yes    No

I like receiving feedback from my classmates.
   Yes    No

The feedback I receive helps me when I write.
   Yes    No

The following questions relate to our Zine projects:

I like typing my Zine up into Google Docs and Pages.
   Yes    No

I like the Zine project because I was able to choose my own topic.
   Yes    No
Appendix C - Results of Post-Intervention Surveys

Survey Analysis - Post Intervention - Third Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>not at all</th>
<th>some</th>
<th>a lot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>like to write</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's boring</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Choice</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort/Sharing</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Different Mediums</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music/Enjoyable</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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Survey Analysis - Post-Intervention - Fifth Grade

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*1 in between

*2 in between
Appendix C5 - Student Survey

Samples
Circle the answer you agree with most.

1. I like to write.  
   - Not at all  
   - Some  
   - A lot

2. Writing is boring.  
   - Not at all  
   - Some  
   - A lot

3. I enjoy writing notes and letters to people.  
   - Not at all  
   - Some  
   - A lot

4. I like writing at school.  
   - Not at all  
   - Some  
   - A lot

5. I have trouble thinking about what to write.  
   - Not at all  
   - Some  
   - A lot

6. It's fun to write at home.  
   - Not at all  
   - Some  
   - A lot

7. I like to share my writing with others.  
   - Not at all  
   - Some  
   - A lot

8. Writing is fun.  
   - Not at all  
   - Some  
   - A lot

9. I wish I had more time to write at school.  
   - Not at all  
   - Some  
   - A lot

10. I think I am a good writer.  
    - Not at all  
    - Some  
    - A lot

11. How often do you write at home?  
    - Not at all  
    - Some  
    - A lot

12. I would enjoy doing writing projects.  
    - Not at all  
    - Some  
    - A lot
13. I like to listen to music when I write.
   Not at all  Some  A lot

14. I like to write when I get to pick my topic.
   Not at all  Some  A lot

15. I think I am a good reader.
   Not at all  Some  A lot

16. I like to read.
   Not at all  Some  A lot

17. When I think of writing I feel:
   Nervous  Excited  Unhappy  Scared

18. Where is your favorite place to write?
   Somewhere comfortable  At my desk  Outside  Other

Use the following types of writing to answer questions 19 and 20:

Writing Letters
Writing Narratives
Writing Persuasive Pieces
Writing Informational Pieces

19. Which type of writing is your favorite? Persuasive

20. Which type of writing is your least favorite? Narratives

20. What writing activity have you enjoyed most this year?
   Persuasive Writing

21. What do you think would make you like writing more?
   Tell us to write about cool stuff like animals.
Writing Survey

Circle the answer you agree with most.

1. I like to write.
   Not at all
   Some
   A lot

2. Writing is boring.
   Not at all
   Some
   A lot

3. I have enjoyed writing when I have been given a choice of what I want to write about.
   Not at all
   Some
   A lot

4. I put more effort into my work when I know I will be sharing it with the class.
   Not at all
   Some
   A lot

5. I feel better about writing when I get to write on different types of paper.
   Not at all
   Some
   A lot

6. When I listen to music it makes writing more enjoyable.
   Not at all
   Some
   A lot

7. When I listen to music I get too distracted to write.
   Not at all
   Some
   A lot

8. I enjoy writing now more than I did at the beginning of the year.
   Not at all
   Some
   A lot

9. When I think of writing I feel:
   Nervous
   Excited
   Unhappy
   Scared
   Other:

11: My favorite writing activity we have done this year is: Deferent

10. Anything else you would like to share about writing so far this year?
   It's been fun a lot because we get to put deferent pramps know.
The following questions relate to playing music while writing:

Playing music distracts me when I write.  
Yes  [ ]  No  [ √ ]

Playing music makes me feel calm.  
Yes  [ ]  No  [ √ ]

Playing music makes me concentrate less on my writing.  
Yes  [ ]  No  [ √ ]

Playing music helps me concentrate on my writing.  
Yes  [ ]  No  [ √ ]

Playing music relaxes me.  
Yes  [ ]  No  [ √ ]

The following questions relate to sharing our writing in our class:

I like hearing my classmates share their writing.  
Yes  [ ]  No  [ √ ]

I like sharing my writing with my classmates.  
Yes  [ ]  No  [ √ ]

I like giving feedback to my classmates.  
Yes  [ ]  No  [ √ ]

I like receiving feedback from my classmates.  
Yes  [ ]  No  [ √ ]

The feedback I receive helps me when I write.  
Yes  [ ]  No  [ √ ]

The following questions relate to our Zine projects:

I like typing my Zine up into Google Docs and Pages.  
Yes  [ ]  No  [ √ ]

I like the Zine project because I was able to choose my own topic.  
Yes  [ ]  No  [ √ ]
Sharing Interview Questions

1. What piece of writing did you share?
2. Why did you choose this piece of writing?
3. What did you like about this piece of writing that made you want to share it?
4. Do you like receiving feedback?
5. How do you feel about the feedback?
6. Did you find any feedback helpful?
7. Do you like giving feedback?
8. Do you like hearing other people share their work?
9. Would you share again?
Appendix D2 - Third Grade Interview

Questions

Student Interviews:

1. Do you enjoy writing?
2. What types of things do you like to write about?
3. When we read aloud before a writing lesson do you enjoy writing more?
4. When we have given you a choice of prompts how did you feel about writing? Did you feel more willing to write?
5. How did your writing change or your feeling about writing change when you knew you would be sharing your writing with the other students in class?
6. When you got to write on different types of paper or styles of paper, such as the magic fans, or the kimonos, how did that change your feelings about the writing assignment?
7. Do you enjoy writing more now then you did in the beginning of the year? If so, why?
8. How does listening to music while you write affect your writing?
9. Have we done anything during writing that has made it more fun to write?
10. (W.L.) When you got to write on your Smart3000 how did it help your writing? How did you feel about writing then?
Appendix D3 - Interview Analyses

Third Grade Interviews

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Sharing Writing in the Fifth Grade Classroom - Student Interview Analysis

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- 3/4/10: 2.27
- 3/15/10: 2.21
- 3/18/10: 2.09
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**SC** = Student Choice  
**DM** = Different Mediums
Appendix E2 - Engagement Scale

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Appendix F - Student Quotes

“Can I stay in for recess to finish my fan?”
“Can I take this home and work on it?”
“Can I combine all four prompts to create a series?”
“When do we get to share?”
“Can I share mine first?”
“Is it okay if I share?”
“Miss Rasmussen, I want to know if I can stay inside to write. I like writing.”
“I can’t write anything; the music inspires me.”
“The music makes me calm. It makes me want to write.”
“The music makes me concentrate.”
“It inspires me and makes it easier to think of something to write about.”
Appendix G - Student Artifacts

Sample Reading Journal Entry:

I think they might try to scar her. They might read her. It might be a surprise party. I might be angry.
Sample Magic Fan Entry:

The Tsunami said to Yoshi:
"That is my fan." Oh said Yoshi do you want to be friends?
"I will make you muffens, cookies, and cakes." OK said Yoshi.
"OK" said the Giant Fish. "OK" said Yoshi.

I will bring them muffens, cookies and cakes to the bridge said the Giant Fish. "OK" said Yoshi.
Then the Giant Fish and Yoshi lived happily ever after.