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The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

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The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

by

Shannon Moser

May 2014
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

A culminating project submitted to the Department of Education and Human Development of The College at Brockport, State University of New York in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Education
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction ......................................................................................................... 7

Chapter Two: Literature Review................................................................................................17

Chapter Three: Methods and Procedures....................................................................................35
  Participants......................................................................................................................35
  Context of Study.............................................................................................................38
  Researcher Positionality.................................................................................................39
  Data Collections and Tools.............................................................................................42
  Data Analysis..................................................................................................................46
  Procedures.......................................................................................................................49

Chapter Four: Interpretation of Data.......................................................................................... 54
  Findings that Answered Questions One and Two..............................................................55
  Observations of Bryan’s Writing Practices.................................................................56
  Observations of Nathan’s Writing Practices...............................................................59
  Observations of Mom’s Writing Practices.................................................................60
  Observations of Dad’s Writing Practices.................................................................62
  Bryan’s Writing Interview.........................................................................................64
  Nathan’s Writing Interview......................................................................................69
  Mom’s Writing Interview..........................................................................................72
  Dad’s Writing Interview............................................................................................73
  Various Writing Modalities Used in the Home and at School.................................79
  Findings that Answered Question Three........................................................................87
  Theme 1: Bryan’s Focus on the Mechanics of Writing Shapes is Self-Perception.......87
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Theme 2: Bryan’s knowledge, values, and beliefs of writing derive from school........87
Theme 3: Self-assessment significantly impacts Bryan’s self-perception as a writer....99
Writing Sample 1: Writing piece about going to Grandma’s for breakfast.............100
Writing Sample 2: Writing piece about Minecraft.............................................100
Writing Sample 3: Writing piece about Bryan riding his bike..........................100
Writing Sample 4: Writing piece about playing piano.....................................101
Writing Sample 5: Writing piece about listening to Diary of a Wimpy Kid book with Nathan........................................................................................................101
Bryan’s Rating of his Own Personal Writing..................................................110

Chapter Five.....................................................................................................124
Introduction........................................................................................................124
Conclusions........................................................................................................124

The Powerful Influence of Teaching Practices on Children’s Beliefs about Writing and Themselves as Writers.................................................................124
Authentic and Meaningful Writing Shifts to Fulfilling Quota............................126
The Value of Conversation about Writing........................................................127
The Value of Self-Assessment in Writing..........................................................129

Implications for Student Learning.................................................................131

Over Focus on Mechanics of Writing..............................................................131
Various Writing Modalities and Purposes.......................................................133

Similarities and differences of writing at home and at school....................135

Implications for My Teaching..........................................................................138
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Home environment and beliefs are the foundation of student’s knowledge of writing. .................................................................138

Teaching more about the process of writing rather than the mechanics of writing ........................................................................140

Self-assessment for students ..........................................................................................................................................................141

Recommendation for Further Research .................................................................................................................................142

Finals Thoughts .................................................................................................................................................................................143

References .......................................................................................................................................................................................144

Appendix A: Observation Protocol for Focal Child ........................................................................................................................151

Appendix B: Observation Protocol for Parents Research Journal ..............................................................................................153

Appendix C: Writing Interview Protocol for Focal Child ..............................................................................................................155

Appendix D: Writing Interview Protocol for Older Brother .......................................................................................................160

Appendix E: Writing Interview Protocol for Dad ........................................................................................................................165

Appendix F: Writing Interview Protocol for Mom ........................................................................................................................169

Appendix G: Writing Attitude Survey .........................................................................................................................................172

Appendix H: Student Attitude Writing Survey ..........................................................................................................................175

Appendix I: Writer’s Profile ..............................................................................................................................................................179

Appendix J: Writers Profile Administer for a Second Time ...........................................................................................................182

Appendix K: Writer’s Profile ..............................................................................................................................................................185

Appendix L: Story and Writing Grade 1 Survey ............................................................................................................................187

Appendix M: Writing Interest Survey ............................................................................................................................................190

Appendix N: Student Writing Attitude Survey ................................................................................................................................192

Appendix O: You are an Author .......................................................................................................................................................195
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Appendix P: Writing Sample 1.................................................................197

Appendix Q: Bryan’s Ranking of Writing Sample 1 with Writing Inventory for Primary

   Grades..............................................................................................................200

Appendix R: Writing Sample 2.................................................................202

Appendix S: Bryan’s Ranking of Writing Sample 2 with Writing Inventory for Primary

   Grades..............................................................................................................204

Appendix T: Writing Sample 3.................................................................206

Appendix U: Bryan’s Ranking of Writing Sample 3 with Writing Inventory for Primary

   Grades..............................................................................................................208

Appendix V: Writing Sample 4.................................................................210

Appendix W: Bryan’s Ranking of Writing Sample 4 with Writing Inventory for Primary

   Grades..............................................................................................................213

Appendix X: Writing Sample 5.................................................................215

Appendix Y: Bryan’s Ranking of Writing Sample 1 with Writing Inventory for Primary

   Grades..............................................................................................................217
Chapter One

Introduction/Statement of the Problem

“Bryan (all names are pseudonyms) you need to start working on your “All About Me” story,” Bryan’s mom reminded him.

“Ah mom, I hate writing!” complained Bryan.

“I know, but you have to get it done because you are going to have to share it with your teacher and friends on Monday. Remember the letter Ms. Appleton sent home asking you to try your best and get creative!” replied Bryan’s mom.

“But I don’t know what to write!” Bryan cried while stomping his left foot.

“Get started and when Jason (Bryan’s little brother) falls asleep for his nap, I will come and help you,” Bryan’s mom responded.

“I’ll just wait until later when you can help me,” Bryan slyly replied with a giant smile on his face.

Bryan’s mom responded without a word, rather just a look, and Bryan knew immediately what the look meant. Pouting and annoyed, Bryan grabbed a pencil out of his blue Spacemaker box, sat down at the dining room table, and began to write, erase, and write some more. As I observed the situation from the living room (directly connected to the dining room), I saw the frustration building in Bryan’s face.

Writing can be a challenging task for many children (King, 2013). Writing requires writers to gather their thoughts and then transfer them into prose (Dunn & Finley, 2010). Besides the difficulty of generating one’s thoughts and transmitting those thoughts into text, writing can pose a bigger challenge when one does not see him/herself as a writer (Calkins, 1994). One’s self-perception is a major component leading to this feeling of not being a good writer. A
positive self-perception as a writer is an essential foundation for children to become successful writers (Calkins, 1994; Dunn & Finley, 2010).

Two major components attribute to one’s self-perception as a writer and overall learner: the home environment and the school environment. Writing occurs daily in each setting, although each child’s experience with writing will be unique. The home environment influences a child’s performance in school and the school environment influences a child’s academic efforts at home (Beatty, 2013). Therefore, promoting writing in a positive manner at home and at school is crucial. As teachers, we have little to no control over what happens in the home environment. We do not have complete control over what happens in the school environment, but we have more control in the classroom than we do in the home. Therefore, it is essential we help all students feel and experience writing success in the classroom in order for them to transfer the positive feeling and attitudes when writing at home.

**Significance of Problem**

Self-perception influences one’s performance or outcomes in all situations. A positive self-perception shapes one’s self-efficacy, therefore making self-perception a major influence on self-efficacy (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003). According to Sarkhoush (2013), Bandura defines self-efficacy as “the belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required producing given attainments” (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). Many aspects attribute to one’s self-perception. For example, one’s funds of knowledge heavily impacts one’s values and therefore attributes to how one sees oneself in all situations (Comber, 2000; Heath, 1982; Moll, Amanti, Neffe, & Gonzalez, 1992; Zipin, 2009). According to Moll et al., (1992), funds of knowledge are defined as “historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills” drawn upon by individuals, families, and communities (p. 133). One’s funds of knowledge
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

directly influences one’s self-perception and impacts the views of one as a learner (Comber, 2000; Heath, 1982; Genishi & Dyson, 2009; Zipin, 2009). Due to the major influence self-perception has on self-efficacy, it is essential for educators to share aspects of every child’s funds of knowledge into the classroom (Heath, 1982; Zipin, 2009). By implementing funds of knowledge into one’s instruction and classroom, students learn diverse practices ultimately increasing their chance of achieving success (Zipin, 2009). This success can create a positive self-image which is very important in today’s society where self-awareness is an essential component in many careers and trades.

All children come from diverse home and school environments that have similar and different practices and beliefs of literacy. Some of these practices and beliefs children have will overlap where others will never cross paths. Yet the idea of what is valued in the home will influence what a child values at school and vise versa is the same for all children. This reciprocal relationship of learning between home and school needs to be a strong partnership in order to provide the best learning possible for children (Beatty, 2013; Comber, 2000; Compton-Lilly, 2006; Gardner, 2013; Genishi, & Dyson, 2009; Moll et al., 1992). For example, if a child grows up going to the library checking out books, listening to read alouds, and using computers, that experience will influence the child’s feelings when he/she attends the school library. She/he will bring her/his background knowledge of the various opportunities libraries have when visiting the school library. This scenario can be reversed as well. If a child has an enriched experience in the school library, he/she can implement that experience at a public library with his/her family. Unfortunately, not all children have the opportunity to visit public libraries as often as one would want, but that does not mean they do not value literacy (Brice-Heath, 1983). There are many opportunities for children of all cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds to have enriched
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

literacy experiences. Enriched literacy home and school environments are major influences on children’s overall literacy success.

Many students lose their notion of being a writer when writing loses its “fun” aspect. Writing is not enjoyable for students when it becomes a tedious task that needs to be done in a certain way and has certain requirements (McBride, 2000). As a teacher, I believe it is important to make time for free writing and quick writes (Graves, 1994). Quick writes are “jump-right-in pieces on anything that strikes you related to suggested prompts,” (Graves & Kittle, 2005, p.2). According to Elbow (2007), free writing is a short period of time (5-10 minutes) of writing nonstop about whatever comes to mind. Spelling and grammar are not assessed during free writes; rather the content within the free writes is what is assessed. Implementing opportunities such as quick writes and free writes may help students revalue writing and begin to think of themselves as writers (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994).

School environments play a key role in students’ overall self-perception, but especially as readers and writers (Beatty, 2013; Brice-Heath, 1983; Comber, 2000). The most structured literacy instruction and activities take place in school (Comber, 2000). Children attend various schools which may or may not have the resources to provide students with an enriched literacy curriculum. For example, students may have the opportunity to attend field trips, listen to historical guest speakers, or use technology in their classroom. Often, these enriched, supplemental learning opportunities meet the needs of multiple intelligences, build upon students’ initial understanding, provide the “aha moment”, and potentially captivate students’ full understanding of the concept (Rinis & Vlachos, 2013). This full understanding is what leads students to success on homework, quizzes, and projects and even more importantly, overall success in learning.
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Unfortunately not all schools have the means or funds to provide students with these additional learning opportunities. Often students of low socioeconomic status attend schools of a similar status (Brice-Heath, 1983; Comber, 2000). With the lack of resources, students have a greater chance of not experiencing the same success as other students with the resources. Regardless of the access and opportunity to utilize these resources, all students find success or disappointment in school because everything they do is judged and/or graded in some fashion. This success or failure greatly contributes to one’s self-perception (Brice-Heath, 1983).

Not only does the success or failure in school impact students’ self-perception, but so does what counts as literacy at home and in the classroom. Reading and writing are often the most known forms of literacy at home and at school. Often writing is seen through a traditional lens. In today’s digital age, writing is no longer only using a pen or pencil on paper and reading is no longer only from a paperback book (Mills, 2011). Writing is drawing, typing, scribbling, and texting on computers, cell phones, and i devices. Reading happens on multiple devices such as Kindles, iPads, computers, cell phones, and Nooks. Knowing how reading and writing has transformed into today’s age is essential for teachers because they are working with children who may not realize the actual amount of reading and writing they do at home or in school. As this information is shared with children, they will have a better understanding of whom and what makes up a reader and writer.

**Purpose of Study**

Throughout this study, I investigated questions about self-perception, the influence home learning environments have on a child’s self-perception as a writer, and the impact school experiences have on child’s self-perception as a writer. This study allowed me to gain deeper insight to what factors attribute to Bryan’s self-perception as a writer. Although this is a case
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

study on one child, this study allowed me to become a better teacher and parent because I learned the factors and can recognize the best possible strategies to use when working with a child who feels he/she is internally struggling with the writing process and identifying themselves as a writer. Even more importantly, this study provided me with the knowledge of strategies and ideas to use as a teacher and parent for helping children understand the importance of having a positive self-perception as a writer.

Writing is challenging subject that many students struggle with and find difficult. This difficulty can lead to the hindrance of one’s self-perception (Bayraktar, 2013). In order to ease the challenge and attempt to help students find themselves as writers, parents and teachers must work together to find topics of interest for students and bring in the child’s funds of knowledge (Beatty, 2013; Compton-Lilly, 2006). As educators and parents we want our students and children to be positive about everything they do. The foundation for one to feel optimistic and believe in one’s self derives from intrinsic motivation (Mata, 2011). Throughout my study, I found ways to help Bryan build his own intrinsic motivation for writing which enhanced his feelings of himself as a writer.

Identifying the components that attribute to intrinsic motivation can be challenging. In today’s society where self-perception influences one’s every choice and decision, knowing what causes one to view his/herself in a certain way or feel a certain way is crucial. In order to improve our education system and provide students with a means of a safe learning environment where one should not be afraid to take risks, educators must share and discuss their own feelings of themselves as writers with their students. Students need to see that writers come in all shapes and sizes. Educators must also share their beliefs in their students as writers because those beliefs will transfer over to the students to help them see themselves as writers. When teachers tell and
show their students they believe they are writers, it builds students’ self-confidence as writers which directly enhances their self-perception as writers. Therefore my research questions are the following:

1. How does Bryan’s home learning environment influence his self-perception as a writer?

2. How does Bryan’s school environment influence his self-perception as a writer?

3. How does Bryan’s self-perception as a writer impact his writing?

**Study Approach**

This qualitative case study has a primary focus on Bryan, a first grade student, and his self-perception as a writer. The case study examined Bryan’s reasons for disliking writing. Although I did not go to Bryan’s school, I interviewed Bryan about his experience with writing in school. School is a major contributing factor to Bryan’s self-perception as a writer (Calkins, 1994; Comber, 2000). Bryan’s mother, father, and older brother, Nathan, were also a focus of this study. Their thoughts, beliefs, and actions impact Bryan’s self-perception as a writer.

Interviews, questionnaires, surveys, observations, and work samples were the tools I used to collect data. Questions on Bryan’s interview asked his thoughts of writing, interest in writing, and views of himself as a writer. Bryan’s questionnaire involved him ranking five of his own writing pieces, with open ended questions after to attempt to find reasons for his ranking. This questionnaire allowed me to see and begin to understand why he views himself as a writer in a negative way.

Several informal interviews with Bryan’s parents were carried out throughout this case study. Many of these interviews involved asking their thoughts about Bryan’s answers in his
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

interviews and questionnaires. Their thoughts were essential for unpacking their literacy practices and beliefs they implement with Bryan. Formal interviews with Bryan’s parents about their daily writing practices in their home and interviewing Nathan, Bryan’s older brother, about his interest in writing were also conducted. Bryan’s parent’s interview also had open ended questions which were given to provide a deeper insight to their value of daily writing practices and beliefs that perhaps influence Bryan’s view of himself as a writer. The interview also included a question about their opinion of Bryan as a writer. Bryan’s older brother Nathan was interviewed on his own opinion of what makes a good writer. This was very important because Bryan looks up to his brother with great admiration. His brother’s thoughts and opinions of writing definitely influence Bryan self-perception as a writer.

Surveys were given to Bryan throughout the study. Some questions on the survey are open ended while others ask Bryan to circle the best answer that fits the question. Regardless, the survey questions gave insight to Bryan’s opinion of himself as a writer and what he thinks a good writer is made up of. By administering some of the same surveys throughout the study, I was able to analyze Bryan’s perception of himself as a writer and see if it changed throughout the course of this case study.

Observations of Bryan and his family in their home environment occurred regularly throughout the study. I documented some of these observations using digital recording and field notes. Work samples sent home from school, work samples done at home, and activities involving writing at home were collected and analyzed as well. Once Bryan’s self-perception of himself as a writer and why he feels this way about himself was established, I shared these findings with Bryan and Bryan’s parents which was essential for Bryan to grow as a writer.
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Rationale

There were numerous goals of this study. Two major goals of this study include identifying the factors which influence Bryan’s self-perception as a writer and to be able to understand and recognize those influences in future students in my classroom. By learning the importance of self-perception, helping others recognize the importance, and determining the contributing factors of one’s own self-perception, I will become a better teacher and parent.

Throughout my education career, I struggled with writing. My internal conflict included determining a topic, starting my paper, and sharing my thoughts in front of my peers. From being told I needed a writing tutor to being forced to share my writing in front of peers, writing easily became a subject I greatly disliked. Unfortunately, I believe many students endure the same feelings I did with writing. Therefore, perhaps the most important goal of my study was to obtain a stronger understanding of the factors that contribute to one’s self-perception as a writer. By having more knowledge on what the contributing factors are, I obtained a better understanding of why Bryan has these feelings. I shared my findings with Bryan’s parents with the intention of both them and myself determining ways to help Bryan learn to revalue writing, understand the multiple ways one can write, and most importantly begin to see himself as a writer.

Working with Bryan to help him find himself as a writer is very rewarding. I would love to implement the factors I find throughout my study in my own classroom one day. Unfortunately, I am not currently in my own classroom and therefore I did not have the luxury of conducting my study in a school setting, working with the same students on a daily basis, and then implementing my findings. Writing is a subject many find stressful and challenging (King, 2013). It requires one to transfer their inner thoughts into words that can be viewed by the world (Dunn & Finley, 2010). By working with Bryan and determining the reasons for why he feels the
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

way he does about himself as a writer, I can learn from him and the experience, but also apply my new found knowledge to the diverse students I work with now as a substitute teacher and eventually my own students when I obtain my own classroom.

Summary

This study offers insight for all to learn about Bryan’s self-perception as a writer and the contributing factors which influence Bryan’s writing experiences at home and at school. By utilizing the tools to obtain data, analyzing the data, and then conferring with the sources of my study, I hope to be able to determine the underlying factors that influence Bryan’s view of himself as a writer. The importance of learning about self-perception and the influences which contribute to one’s self-perception as a writer is essential for my personal growth as a parent and teacher. This learning will help me become a better teacher, parent, and person because I will understand why someone feels and thinks about oneself in a particular way. This study provided me with new found knowledge on the impact of how home environments and school environments influence Bryan’s thoughts about himself as a writer.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

Self-perception and self-efficacy are thoughts and feelings which impact everyone regardless of age, gender, or race. In order to better understand the influence self-perception has on writers, I have read numerous scholarly articles which all inform my literature review. In this chapter, I discuss self-perception and self-efficacy while sharing the impact these have on people. I explore the importance of self-perception in the subject of literacy. Within literacy, writing plays a major and critical role. I describe the subject of writing and reasons why students enjoy and dislike writing. Then, I explore the various modes of writing in the home environment, with a focus on funds of knowledge. Also, I explore writing within the public school system. I focus in on the different styles of writing in school and opportunities for writing in school. Finally, I uncover the ways writing in the home environment and writing opportunities in school share a reciprocal relationship which heavily influence one’s self-perception of writing.

Self-Perception and Self-Efficacy

Self-perception derives from within oneself and influences everything one does. Knowing what influences and makes up self-perception is important because it provides reasons for why one thinks and feels a certain way about oneself. If one struggles to believe in oneself, one will struggle to succeed in what one sets out to achieve. The way one feels, thinks, and behaves greatly influences one’s performance (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy develops from self-perception (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003; Corkett, Hatt, & Benevides, 2011). Self-efficacy is the beliefs in one’s abilities (Bandura, 1977). Our beliefs and thoughts of our own abilities have a direct impact on our actual abilities (Bandura, 1977; Maguire, Reynolds, & Delahunt, 2013).
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Due to this direct influence, having a high self-efficacy is very important. People with high self-efficacy levels work hard, persevere, and seek help when needed (Bayrakatar, 2013; Bandura, 2011). With the essential role self-perception plays in shaping one’s self-efficacy, helping students find ways to support and build upon their current realistic self-perception levels is fundamental.

Teachers and parents can help build their students’ and children’s self-perception by knowing which components make up self-perception. Teachers and parents can pass that knowledge onto their students and children. This transfer of knowledge will allow students and children to identify their own self-perceptions. When one recognizes the factors which build or hinder one’s self-perception, one will become a stronger individual because one will have the knowledge needed to maintain a positive self-perception (Sarkhoush, 2013). With a strong self-perception, one will be more confident and successful in all one is trying to achieve (Bandura, 1977).

A positive self-perception will increase one’s confidence which subsequently builds one’s self-efficacy (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003; Corkett et. al, 2011). According to Corkett et al. (2011), four different constructs influence, impact, and make up one’s self-efficacy: personal accomplishments, vicarious experiences, social messages, and physiological and emotional states (as cited in Fall & McLeod, 2001; Hoy & Spero, 2005; Schunk, 2003). All four constructs are not hierarchal, rather, often more than one construct will simultaneously influence one’s self-efficacy (Corkett et al., 2011).

Personal experiences are crucial factors which influence students’ self-efficacy. Students always bring their background knowledge and previous personal experiences into their learning
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

(Brice-Heath, 1983; Comber, 2000; Corkett et al., 2011). Personal experiences have a strong influence on students’ confidence levels when completing an assigned task. If a student feels confident in his/her task, due to his/her background knowledge and/or previous experience, he/she will be more likely to succeed in accomplishing the task, which will enhance his/her level of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977).

Vicarious experiences of one’s peers also influence one’s self-efficacy. According to Corkett et al., (2011), a vicarious experience is defined as “a student’s ability to succeed or fail at a task influenced by observing a peer whom he/she believes to possess similar ability when confronted with similar tasks” (p. 68). Learning from one another is very important for students in today’s learning environments. If a student examines what another student with similar abilities is doing, the chance of the student being able to replicate what the other student’s actions successfully increases (Corkett et al., 2011). Gee (1998), argues “Learning is a process that involves conscious knowledge gained through teaching, though not necessarily from someone officially designated a teacher” (p. 54). Due to the major role vicarious experiences play in shaping and constructing one’s self-efficacy, teachers need to shift from teacher centered instruction to student centered instruction (Comber, 2000; Corkett et al., 2011). Besides implementing student centered instruction, teachers need to be aware that students will become role models for other students and have a strong possibility of impacting other students’ self-efficacy in a positive or negative way (Corkett et al., 2011).

In addition to personal and vicarious experiences, social messages also have a direct impact on one’s self-efficacy (Corkett et al., 2011). Social messages from teachers and parents are big contributing factors that can increase or decrease children’s self-efficacy levels (Corkett et al., 2011). This is especially true for students’ self-efficacy in reading and writing. Parents and
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

teachers can strongly influence the beliefs students have of themselves as readers and writers (Corkett et al., 2011; Gardner, 2013). With this strong influence teachers and parents have on children, teaching them that mistakes are okay, strategies for becoming better readers and writers, and most importantly never giving up is essential.

Finally, physiological and emotional states also impact students’ self-efficacy directly. If a student does not believe that he/she can accomplish a given task, there is a strong possibility the student will struggle to complete the task. Students who do not understand a task or directions may have sweaty palms, his/her heart racing very quickly, all of which are signs of anxiety (Corkett et al., 2011). Anxiety will not help students increase their self-efficacy levels; rather it will help decrease their self-efficacy levels. Therefore, parents and teachers must help students work through any anxieties and fears, know what works for which student, and remember the huge influence they have on children whom they encounter (Corkett et al., 2011; Gardner, 2013).

All four components impact one’s self-efficacy in different ways. For example, previous experiences will not have the same impact on one’s self-efficacy as vicarious experiences. Although different, all four components build one’s self confidence, which enhances one’s performance (Corkett et al., 2011). When one feels he/she is successful in his/her performance, it can greatly increase one’s self-efficacy. The greater one’s self-efficacy is, the greater one’s self-perception will be due to the way self-perception influences self-efficacy (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003; Corkett et al., 2011). Therefore, by determining what one’s self-efficacy is composed of and knowing how each component impacts one’s beliefs in one’s abilities, one can infer how one thinks and views oneself.
Self-Perception and Self-Efficacy in Literacy

Literacy is infused in every subject from Kindergarten to college. Students intertwine reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing throughout their school experiences and then transfer that knowledge into their careers and throughout their daily lives. Students’ literacy knowledge is based on their values, beliefs, attitudes, and motivations (Bottomley, Henk, & Melnick, 1997; Brice-Heath, 1983; Gee, 1998). Literacy knowledge is essential for all students. As literacy knowledge and experience develops, self-efficacy in literacy develops as well. As one’s beliefs in one’s literacy abilities increases, one’s self-perception of literacy also increases. Believing in oneself and one’s literacy abilities has a direct influence on the performance one experiences in literacy (Maguire, Reynolds, & Delahunt, 2013). Therefore, it is essential to help all students find success in literacy. Student’s literacy success begins with students’ self-efficacy and self-perception in literacy (Corkett et al., 2011).

Self-efficacy derives from self-perception (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003; Corkett et al., 2011). Children’s self-efficacy of literacy derives from various experiences they endure inside and outside of their home environments. Trips to the library, in depth conversations with family members, listening to music, and more all influence one’s perception of what literacy is and the value one has for literacy. By the time children are school age, they come to school with various literacy ideas, knowledge, and experiences (Brice-Heath, 1983; Gee, 1998; Moll, Amanti, Neffe, & Gonzalez, 1992; Zipin, 2009). These ideas develop from children’s fund of knowledge which are based on their family’s beliefs and values as well as their culture and socioeconomic aspects (Moll et al., 1992; Zipin, 2009). One’s funds of knowledge has a tremendous influence on one’s thoughts and feelings about literacy practices. Zipin (2009), argues the more educators incorporate students’ funds of knowledge into the classroom, the stronger students will be.
engaged with the material and concepts presented to them. By implementing students’ funds of knowledge into the classroom, teachers are helping students strengthen their self-perception.

Various factors influence one’s self-perception of literacy. Both external and internal components impact one’s self-perception in literacy. Motivation and attitude play a key role in shaping one’s self-perception in literacy (Corkett et al., 2011; Kim & Lorsbach, 2005; Siegle, 2012). Corkett et al. (2011), suggests that positive attitudes from oneself and others as well as high levels of motivation from oneself and others, increase one’s self-perception in literacy. Low motivation and a negative attitude toward literacy can greatly impacts one’s internal drive to succeed in literacy (Corkett et al., 2011). These negative feelings are very hard for anyone to overcome. Therefore, sharing motivating thoughts and encouraging positive attitudes for children’s self-perception in literacy is essential while helping to shape their success as literacy students.

Literacy is made up of five different domains: reading, writing, listening, viewing, and speaking. All five different aspects within literacy intertwine with one another throughout daily activities at home and at school. Because literacy is infused within everything one does, one needs to feel confident and successful when using the five domains. Perhaps the two biggest domains of literacy, reading and writing, need the greatest amount of self-perception from learners because then the learning opportunities for reading and writing are endless. Many students struggle with reading and writing, especially due to the reciprocal relationship reading and writing share (Corkett et al., 2011; Gee, 1998). Finding success in literacy can be challenging especially if one does not have the knowledge, skills, and credence to find that success. Believing in oneself and one’s abilities in all domains of literacy, especially reading and writing, is the first step toward experiencing success in literacy.
Self-Perception as a Writer

Writing is a metacognitive process which requires constant and continuous practice (Tillema, Bergh, Rijlaarsdam, & Sanders, 2011). Students’ beliefs in themselves as writers have a direct influence on how they approach and engage in their writing (Kim & Lorsbach, 2005; Maguire et al., 2013). Students who do not see themselves as writers will not enjoy writing, spend time on their writing, or gravitate toward writing opportunities. Students who have a positive self-perception of themselves as writers will be stronger writers because they will engage in various writing opportunities, spend quality time on their writing, and display persistence when writing (Bottomley et al., 1997). Therefore acknowledging students’ self-perception and self-efficacy as writers is an essential part in the writing process and in writing instruction.

According to Calkins (1994), “Authorship does not begin in the struggle to get something big into print; rather, it begins with living in a self-awareness” (p. 3). Authorship is not simply transferring one’s first thoughts onto paper in order to meet task requirements or fulfill an assignment. Authorship requires self-awareness. Writers must know who they are as writers, what they believe as writers, and how their writing will impact others. The self-awareness a writer has influences the writing quality the writer does (Kim & Lorsbach, 2005; Maguire et al., 2013). The quality of writing one displays often depends on the writer’s purpose for writing. Writers need to have a purpose (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994). Without a purpose, writing becomes a dreadful task for the writer and the reader because the writer’s words are simply symbols transferred onto paper; a lack of meaning, emotions, and feelings easily emerge from a writer who writes without a purpose (Dunn & Finley, 2010; McBride, 2000). When something matters to the writer, the writer will put his/her emotions and feelings into the work. In order for
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

a writer to make progress and produce writing that readers will want to read, writers need to write about issues that have meaning to them (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994; McBride, 2000). Writing with feeling, emotion, and interest will not only make the writer a better writer, but it will make the writer want to continue writing and the readers want to go back and read more of the writing (Calkins, 1994; Dunn & Finley, 2010; Graves, 1994; McBride, 2000). The more a reader goes back to reread and the more the writer revises his/her work, the better reader and writer he/she will become (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994; McBride, 2000). As one gets stronger when writing, one’s self-confidence will increase. The increase of one’s self-confidence increases one’s self-perception. When one has a positive self-perception as a writer, writing becomes a powerful tool to express oneself, share thoughts and ideas, and inform others.

Writing occurs in two major locations for children: writing in the home and writing at school (Gardner, 2013). Both places are crucial toward the literacy development of children (Gardner, 2013; Lanter, Watson, Erickson, Freeman, Nippold, & Troia, 2012). Although both the home and school are crucial for literacy development, especially for writing, often children need to separate the two areas because tasks and requirements are not always the same. Writing is “socioculturally complex” and is not always presented the same at home and/or at school (Gardner, 2013, p. 72). This can pose a problem for children as they develop their self-perception of themselves as writers. Teachers and parents need to make sure they work together to create a reciprocal relationship of learning between school and home environments (Beatty, 2013; Comber, 2000; Compton-Lilly, 2006; Gardner, 2013; Genishi & Dyson, 2009; Moll et al., 1992; Valerie & Foss-Swanson, 2012). This shared relationship creates a strong partnership between educators and parents which in return will create a consistent learning environment for their

**Writing at Home**

The home environment has a tremendous impact on children’s literacy development because it is the first place children are exposed to literacy (Lanter et al., 2012; Marvin & Wright, 1997). The amount and kind of literacy exposure parents share with their children will influence and shape children’s views of literacy and themselves as literate people. The more literacy experiences children are exposed to, the more knowledge of literacy children will have, which will result in a higher value of literacy (Lanter et al., 2012).

In today’s technological and digital age, recognizing the various modes of literacy is crucial. This is especially true for writing. No longer is writing only produced through the use of a writing utensil and paper (Graves, 1994; McDermott, 2010; Mills, 2011; Sullivan, 2013; Writing Study Group of NCTE Executive Committee, 2004). Although daily writing utensils are used in the home frequently, people now also have access to many other writing modalities (Sullivan, 2013). For example, daily writing in many homes occurs on computers, cell phones, and/or i devices (Kennedy, 2013). Not all children will have direct access to the various forms of writing for a variety of reasons (socioeconomic status, parental discretion, etc.), yet most children will be familiar with an assortment of writing modalities. These writing experiences influence one’s knowledge of writing in the classroom (Kennedy, 2013). Therefore all writing experiences in the home should be shared, celebrated, and identified as writing experiences because it will help children grow and view themselves as successful writers.
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Writing knowledge, experiences, and values in the home will be different for each child (Brice-Heath, 1983; Comber, 2000; Marvin & Wright, 1997). Different knowledge and experiences of writing one obtains in the home does not make one child a better writer than another child; rather how one implements and applies one’s knowledge is what is most important and makes the biggest difference in one’s self-perception as a writer (Brice-Heath, 1983). Regardless of the types of writing that occur in the home, all writing experiences and knowledge from the home shape one’s writing values (Brice-Heath, 1983). Therefore, utilizing various forms of writing in the home environment is essential for children to become multifaceted writers.

All writers have different writing experiences while writing at home (Marvin & Wright, 1997). Some children will have experience writing letters to their family members and typing on a computer where as other children will have writing experience with writing recipes and drawing. According to Morrow and Rand (1991), writing is more than writing letters to form words which form sentences; writing is tracing, copying, drawing, and more. Home environments allow for a less structured writing experience because there is a lack of judgment and grading of one’s writing in the home environment. The purpose of writing is to convey a message to the reader (McBride, 2000). Regardless of how the message is conveyed, if the reader can decipher the writer’s thoughts, the purpose of writing is fulfilled.

The various forms of writing used in the home influence the styles and various forms of writing known by children when in school. A strong partnership needs to exist between home environments and school environments (Brice-Heath, 1983; Valerie & Foss-Swanson, 2012). According to Valerie & Foss-Swanson (2012), one of the best ways to build this partnership is by using Family Message Journals (FMJ). FMJ’s connect home and school through written
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

communication. FMJ’s provide students with an opportunity to write on a daily basis and have a purpose for writing (Valerie & Foss-Swanson, 2012). Daily opportunities and a purpose for writing are crucial aspects for motivating and increasing children’s passion for writing, which enhances children’s views of themselves as writers.

Another way to increase children’s motivation for writing is to share the different modalities of writing. As the digital age grows, the social aspects of writing have increased as well. According to Mizza (2008), “with recent technological changes, we experience an increasingly social and socializing aspect of written communication in our daily lives” (p. 1). The various ways to communicate in a written form have also flourished as society continues to become more technological (Kennedy, 2013). This is especially true in the home environment. When writing in the home environment is celebrated, regardless of the form, children will value and share those celebrations in their future writing pieces. Typing and texting are new ways technology is shaping the actual act of writing (Kennedy, 2013). Typing and texting occur on computers, cell phones, and i devices. Children see parents using some form of technological writing in their early and impressionable years. When children have the opportunity to use different writing modalities, their interest levels increase because their passion to write has been stimulated (Siegle, 2012). Children who have access to various writing modalities in their home should share their experiences with their classmates and teachers. Their knowledge of writing could potentially influence teachers to bring the same writing modalities into the classroom. By bringing children’s thoughts and prior knowledge of writing from the home into the classroom, teachers and students have endless opportunities for learning infused with writing (Genishi & Dyson, 2009).
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

**Writing at School**

Teachers greatly influence students and students’ self-perceptions. Even more importantly, teachers’ beliefs in themselves as teachers impact students’ self-perception (Corkett et al., 2011). Teachers need to believe in themselves as educators if they are going to make a difference in the lives of children. According to Corkett et al. (2011), “teacher efficacy is a teacher’s belief that she/he can influence desired student outcomes even when teaching the most difficult students” (p. 72). Teacher efficacy is essential for teachers when teaching writing. Especially with resistant writers, teachers need to have multiple ways to help students who struggle learn how to write and the writing process. Writing can be a challenging subject for teachers to teach and for students to learn. Regardless, teachers need to believe that all of their students can and will succeed as writers. If teacher efficacy is not present in the classroom, student efficacy will not be either (Corkett et al., 2011).

According to Morrow and Rand (1991), “writing is drawing, scribbling, tracing, copying, dictating, writing on a computer or typewriter, writing related to thematic play, story writing, and writing using invented writing forms” (p. 399). Although there are various forms of writing, there is only one writing process students are immersed in throughout school. The writing process remains very similar for students across schools in America, yet it is still quite a messy process (McBride, 2000). All forms of writing occur throughout every stage of the writing process. Students pre-write, draft, revise, edit, and then publish their work all throughout their school career (McBride, 2000). As students work through the vacillating writing process, frustration can easily build.

Unfortunately, due to the rigorous demands of the Common Core Standards and state and district curricula which teachers need to meet on a daily basis, limited time for writing
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

instruction is often the end result (Valerie & Swanson, 2012). Strong and consistent writing instruction is essential for helping our students believe in themselves as writers. Teachers’ instruction makes the biggest difference in writing because teachers are a major influence on students’ writing development (Corkett et al., 2011). The way teachers implement writing instruction for their students, can make or break students’ views of writing and more importantly, students’ views of themselves as a writer (Gardner, 2013).

Writing instruction should not be the same for all students. Rather, writing instruction in school should bring in students’ cultures, beliefs, and values in order to bring out the writer within (Gardner, 2013). According to Newkirk and Kittle (2013), Donald Graves suggests the best way to teach writing is to the intention of the writer. When one teaches to the intentions of the writer one, writing shifts from “a process of recording details to making a significance of them.” (Calkins, 1994, p. 5). By teaching to the intention of the writer, the writer will develop an identity as a writer and want to continue writing (Graves, 1994; Calkins, 1994).

“Writing is not a clean and neat process” (McBride, 2000, p. 50). Rather, Tillema et al. (2011) states, writing is a recursive process which requires the application and reapplication of drafting, revising, editing regardless of where one is in the writing process (as cited in Hayes, 1996). Everyone has different writing strengths, as well as difficulties and areas of struggle. For example, some people struggle with writer’s block and making sense of their thoughts, while others struggle with repetitive errors and finding the meaning of why they are asked to write about certain subjects (McBride, 2000). Writing is something many people struggle with because writing requires writers to gather their thoughts and then transfer them into prose (Dunn & Finley, 2010). According to McBride (2000), one of the most important ways to help a frustrated writer is to call attention to what he/she believes his/her writing weakness is and why
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

he/she is struggling in this area. By taking this first step, writers are headed in the right direction for improving their writing (McBride, 2000).

Another way to help struggling writers is by implementing multiple modes of writing in the classroom. One of the best ways to provide different modalities of writing is by learning about the prior knowledge children have with writing knowledge and experiences. Writing is not always a pen marking symbols on paper (Graves, 1994; McDermott, 2010; Mills, 2011; Writing Study Group of NCTE Executive Committee, 2004). Typing, drawing, and scribbling are all forms of writing (McDermott, 2010). If one teaches to the intentions of the writer and allows the writer to use diverse tools for writing, the writer’s interest and motivation will increase (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994; Mills, 2011). Having an increased interest and motivation in writing is very beneficial for all writers because the writer can bring his/her identity into the piece which will enhance their passion for writing.

A writer’s passion for writing typically begins in the early years of schooling. Writing becomes dull and boring when students are constantly told to write about given subjects, write a specific amount, and turn in their work only to correct their thoughts when marked “wrong”. According Calkins (1994), writing must be taught as an art. More strategies and techniques are not needed to teach writing; rather one must envision the essentials for writing (Calkins, 1994). Teachers need to share their views of the essentials of writing while simultaneously inspiring their students to visualize their own thoughts of writing essentials. When students believe in themselves as writers, their writing has endless possibilities.

Writing is an essential way to express oneself and communicate with others. Writing requires one to transfer their thoughts into prose which can be challenging (Dunn & Finley, 2010). Even more challenging for some is viewing themselves as writers and believing in their
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

writing abilities. Self-perception and self-efficacy play a key role in shaping one’s writing (Corkett et al., 2011; Kim & Lorsbach, 2005; Maguire et al., 2013). In order for one to experience success in writing, one must experience writing consistency at home and at school (Beatty, 2013; Comber, 2000; Compton-Lilly, 2006; Gardner, 2013; Genishi & Dyson, 2009; Heath, 1983; Moll et al., 1992). The more writing consistency children are exposed to in home and at school, will help children find their self-perception as writers and develop their self-efficacy of writing (Beatty, 2013; Gardner, 2013; Genishi & Dyson, 2009).

The Reciprocal Relationship Home and School have on Writing

Before entering school, the writing which occurs in the home and in the community is the writing knowledge one will bring with him/her to school. Due to the influential aspect the community and home have on shaping one’s writing knowledge, it is important to have strong, diverse, and positive writing experiences. Some extracurricular activities which occur in the home and in the community may include making shopping lists, creating drawings, and using technology such as computers, iPads, and cell phones (Gardner, 2013; Siegle, 2012; Sullivan, 2013). Although these writing experiences are essential for the development of one’s self-perception and self-efficacy as a writer, one’s perception and efficacy of writing will be greater if there is consistency with writing in the home and at school (Beatty, 2013).

Once children enter school, their experiences and ideas of writing greatly expand (Beatty, 2013). Due to the significant role home and school environments play on children’s beliefs and attitudes about writing, it is essential home and school share a strong partnership of consistency to help their children achieve the best learning possible (Beatty, 2013; Comber, 2000; Compton-Lilly, 2006; Gardner, 2013; Genishi & Dyson, 2009; Heath, 1983; Moll et al.,
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

The home and school environments are essential aspects in helping children find themselves as writers (Gardner, 2013).

The reciprocal relationship between home and school needs effective communication and collaboration in order to strengthen children’s learning and knowledge of writing (Beatty, 2013; Gardner, 2013). If the home or school are not meeting the expectations needed to help one become a successful writer, one will not be able to reach his/her fullest potential. According to Gardner (2013), “children who experienced the most difficulty developing literacy in school came from the group where literacy development in the home and community differed significantly from that of the school” (as cited in Brice-Heath, 1983, p.2). Some of these expectations at school include, student centered learning, challenging students to push themselves a little further beyond their instructional levels, and learning the interests of the students (Brice-Heath, 1983; Comber, 2000; Hockings, 2009). Some home expectations include ensuring adequate nourishment and supporting children’s learning (Beatty, 2013). When any of these single expectations are not met, children’s literacy development is at risk.

Both home and schools need to work together effectively to provide positive learning environments for children. Homes and schools need to work together to support authentic writing experiences (Beatty, 2013). When worksheets and decontextualized prompts are given to students as a means to teach writing, authentic writing instruction is not being supported by teachers. If these decontextualized prompts and worksheets are sent home for homework, then home environment is also contributing to the unauthentic teaching of writing. Worksheets and decontextualized prompts do not require students to think critically. Rather, students read a prompt and give answers by remembering (Jacobson & Lapp, 2010). Students should be creating their own understanding of a contextualized prompt. Through the use of creating, analyzing, and
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

evaluating writing prompts, students are engaged and are more motivated to write because they take ownership over their learning (Jacobson & Lapp, 2010). As students create, analyze, and evaluate their writing, they write with feeling and emotion which enriches their overall writing pieces. The writing which takes place in school and at home needs to be contextualized, have a purpose, and have choice, in order to help children believe in themselves as writers and take risks with their writing.

When writing at home is contextualized and has a purpose, children will bring these feelings and thoughts of writing, as a part of their funds of knowledge, into the classroom (Zipin, 2009). If their opinions and ideas of writing are not valued, it can easily make one feel inferior (Brice-Heath, 1983; Michaels, 1981). By not accepting or recognizing one’s views of what writing entails and how writing is valued, it can cause substantial damage to one’s perception of oneself as a writer (Brice-Heath, 1983; Michaels, 1981). Teachers and parents need to be aware of the multiple forms and ways writing will be introduced in the home and school environment (Brice-Heath, 1983; Michaels, 1981). If parents and teachers show their appreciation for different ways writing is utilized and completed, many of which are personal experiences for students, chances that one’s self-perception and self-efficacy as a writer will greatly increase. If these differences are not valued and made out to make one feel alienated, one’s perception and efficacy of writing will be greatly damaged (Brice-Heath, 1983; Michaels, 1981). Teachers and parents must work together to ensure this feeling of alienation does not occur in either environment. If it does, society will lose many great and talented writers (Brice-Heath, 1983; Michaels, 1981).

Home and school writing experiences influence one’s thoughts and views of oneself as a writer (Beatty, 2013; Comber, 2000; Compton-Lilly, 2006; Gardner, 2013; Genishi & Dyson,
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

2009; Moll et al. 1992). Parents and educators need to be aware of their writing actions and views of themselves as writers because their actions and beliefs impact children’s actions and beliefs (Brice-Heath, 1983). If children see their parents and teachers use writing frequently, interact with their children while they write, and parents and teachers view themselves as affirmative writers, then children’s first encounters with their own writing should be positive (Kennedy, 2013; Lanter et.al, 2012). Acting in an assenting manner, thinking positive, and believing in oneself as a writer greatly impacts the writing one produces (Bandura, 1977; Maguire, Reynolds, & Delahun, 2013). Therefore, starting and continuing one’s writing journey at home or at school with a positive attitude is essential for a child to believe in his/herself as a writer, more importantly a successful writer.
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Chapter 3: Methods and Procedures

As a parent and teacher, it is important to me to recognize the impact self-perception has on a child. The influencing factors, such as environment, which heavily impacts the child, must also be distinguished. One’s self-perception as a writer impacts the writing quality and the writing experience the writer has. The home environment and school environment greatly influence a child’s self-perception as a writer. Throughout this six week study, I explored and examined the following questions:

1. How does Bryan’s self-perception as a writer impact his writing?

2. How does Bryan’s experience with writing in the home influence his self-perception as a writer?

3. How does Bryan’s experience with writing in school influence his self-perception as a writer?

Participants

My case study was conducted on one focal child named Bryan. His mother, father, and older brother, Nathan, also played a crucial role in my study. Below is detailed information about each participant’s life, including their writing likes and dislikes, their writing values, and their daily use of writing.

Bryan

The case study was conducted on one male first grade student, Bryan. Bryan is a white, six year old boy who attends a suburban public school in Western New York. Bryan lives in his
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

home with his mom, dad, older brother (age 8), younger brother (age 2), and younger sister (age 9 months). He is the second oldest of the four children in the household. Bryan is very active in sports and recently started taking piano lessons. Bryan enjoys baking with his mother and playing games on the Wii or on his iPad. Bryan is an active reader at home. He reads or is read to every night before going to bed. His favorite book is “Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Greg Heffley’s Journal”.

Bryan is a good student and enjoys learning. His favorite subject in school is math and his least favorite subject is writing. According to Bryan, math is easy and writing is very hard. During a previous conversation I had with Bryan, I asked him what makes math easy and writing hard. He replied without hesitation “math is easy because I am good at it and writing is hard because I have bad handwriting and never know what to write about.” This former conversation is what elevated my interest in potentially completing my thesis project on Bryan. Before conducting my study, Bryan’s daily writing practices included writing required assignments in school, drawing, writing is own music to play on his piano, and typing on the iPad while using specific apps.

Mom

Bryan’s mom is the mother of four children. She is a 34 year old, middle class, married, white woman whom does not have a typical 9-5 job. Mom has a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice, yet is currently a stay at home mom. She has been a stay at home mom for the past eight years. Mom believes in taking her children to the library weekly. While at the library, mom and her children pick out books on their interests and attend story time. At night, she reads aloud the chosen books to the two youngest children.
Mom has a high value for education. She is very proactive in her two eldest son’s schooling and homework. She volunteers in both sons’ classrooms on a monthly basis and always develops a strong relationship with her son’s teachers. Mom’s major rule at home is homework first. Homework must be done before playing video games, watching television, playing outside, or going to sporting events can occur. Mom acts as a guide while her sons are working on their homework. She does not help them instantly when they are confused, rather she asks them questions to guide them and because she is typically making dinner and taking care of her two younger children. Mom’s daily writing practices includes texting, emailing, writing grocery lists, and leaving notes for her husband.

**Dad**

Dad is a 38 year old, middle class, married, white male. His job is the only means of income for his family. He is the head of Human Resources at a local retail company. Although he is very successful in his career, Dad did not go to college. He has a high school diploma and has worked his way up through the company. His job requires him to travel throughout the week; therefore he is not home some nights throughout the week. When Dad is home, he enjoys playing with his kids, helping coach his son, Nathan’s, football team, and reading. He really finds happiness in reading chapter books aloud to Nathan and Bryan at night right before bedtime. The three of them rotate reading turns each night. For example, Dad will read one night, Nathan will read the next night, and Bryan will read the following night. When Dad cannot be home at night due to his work commitment, the boys read different books either from the library or from school. When Dad arrives home from his business trips, the three of them pick up reading from
right where they left off in the chapter book. Dad’s daily writing practices include writing professional letters at work, texting, and emailing employees and family members.

Nathan

Nathan is the oldest out of the four children. He is an eight year old boy in the third grade. He attends the same suburban public school as Bryan. Nathan loves sports, especially baseball and football. Nathan enjoys playing video games and watching movies. Academically, Nathan excels greatly. His favorite subjects are math and science and his least favorite subject is word study. Nathan is an avid reader. His favorite books, like Bryan, are any of the books from *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series. Nathan’s daily writing includes required assignments from school, typing on the computer, drawing football plays in his football notebook.

Nathan plays a major role in Bryan’s life. Bryan really admires Nathan and strives to be just like him. Bryan mimics all of Nathan’s actions. He looks up to him with a great amount of respect and thrives off of Nathan’s approval of his decisions. Therefore, Nathan plays an essential role in shaping Bryan’s view of himself as a writer throughout this study.

Context of the Study

I conducted my study in Bryan’s home environment. Bryan lives in a house located in a middle-upper class suburban region of upstate New York. The study primarily took place in Bryan’s “office” which is located in the right corner of the living room. Bryan’s office is made up of a Fisher Price desk, chair, and lamp. On his desk is an unlabeled soup can filled with two
sharpened pencils and five unsharpened pencils. There is computer paper and lined paper laying on top of the desk. On the floor next to his desk is a shoe box full of markers, crayons, and colored pencils. The walls which surround the office are tan with a number poster and ABC poster.

Another place this study took place is the dining room. The dining room is conjoined with the living room. The medium sized dining room is surrounded by plain tan walls and a chandelier hanging from the ceiling which shines down on the center of the table. An eight person table is positioned in the middle of the room. Bryan utilizes the dining room table for homework sometimes because he is able to spread his materials out and Nathan uses the dining room table as well.

**My Positionality as the Researcher**

As a graduate student in the literacy B-12 program at The College at Brockport, I wholeheartedly believe in the importance of children’s early exposure to all types of literacy. I value diverse modes one can read, write, speak, listen, and view different literacy components. Regardless if the writing requires a pen and paper or a keyboard, writing occurs daily for everyone. By utilizing various writing modes, one’s interest increases therefore enhancing one’s writing motivation (Siegle, 2012). Diverse writing sources include computers, cell phones, and iPads. People can use these various writing sources to text and type to communicate and/or convey their messages. Computers, cell phones, and iPads are high levels of interest for children due to the various opportunities these technical devices offer (Newkirt & Kittle, 2013; Siegle, 2012; Sullivan, 2013). When one’s interest level is high, one’s motivation level is also high. By increasing motivation to write, children become better and more frequent writers (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994). The more children write the better readers they become due to the reciprocal
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

relationship between reading and writing (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994). Therefore, writing is an essential component of the literacy process.

One of the biggest reasons children struggle to write is because they do not know how to get their thoughts onto the paper or know what to write about when given choices and options (Dunn & Finley, 2010; McBride, 2000). One of the best strategies I have learned throughout my schooling and have implemented into a classroom of sixth graders is the use of Quick Writes (Graves, 1994). Quick writes are “jump-right-in pieces on anything that strikes you related to suggested prompts,” (Graves & Kittle, 2005, p.2). After a given prompt, students have 3 to 5 minutes to write about any ideas they have related to or in response to the prompt. Having students keep a journal of all their quick writes becomes a great reference tool for students. Students can expand upon their ideas from their quick writes during free writing time, which eliminates the problem of the tedious response to free write time, “I don’t know what to write about.”

As a teacher, I know how essential early exposure to writing is for children. In order for children to develop a passion for writing, I believe students need to know the reasons for why writing is important, such as writing acts as a means of expressing oneself and communication (Morrow & Rand, 1991). Students need to recognize how they use writing in their daily lives because that will provide a purpose for writing (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994; Morrow & Rand, 1991). Writing without a purpose can be very deterring for students (McBride, 2000). I believe all writing has a purpose, whether the purpose is conveyed for students to understand is a different issue. One must reflect on his/her instruction when his/her students ask, “Why do we have to write this?” I have heard this question several times as an ELA tutor and daily substitute teacher. In order to avoid this question, I believe teachers should share the purpose of writing
initially in their writing instruction and give students constant reminders throughout the writing process.

I am a middle class, white female. I have a Bachelor’s Degree in History and am currently working on transferring my four initial teaching certifications into professional certifications. I have professional experience as a long-term substitute kindergarten teacher, an academic literacy tutor (Grades K-6), and a daily substitute teacher. Presently, I am a daily substitute teacher while simultaneously being a stay at home mom. As a mother and a teacher, writing and reading are very important to me. I strive to share my love for reading and writing with every child who enters my life. Although my daughter is an infant, I read to her daily and as soon as she has a handle on her fine motor skills, she will begin practicing writing through scribbling and drawing (Morrow & Rand, 1991).

My participants and I share many similarities. Characteristics such as race, socioeconomic background, and class are components shared amongst myself and my participants. Strong beliefs and values in family and education are also aspects my participants and I have in common. Although we have different professions, both Bryan’s parents and I share the belief that regardless of what you choose to do, it needs to be something you love, otherwise you are wasting your own time. Bryan and Nathan also share the belief in doing something you love. Both implement this belief via sports. This belief will be essential throughout this study for myself and for my participants.

This case study was very important to me. Not only did I learn more about how one’s self-perception impacts writing for my future students, but I really wanted to uncover how Bryan’s self-perception as a writer impacts his writing because Bryan holds a dear place in my
heart. As Bryan’s aunt, I want him to find success in everything he does. I want him to know the sky is the limit for him. As a teacher and as his aunt, I yearn for him to find his purpose for writing, the different ways he can utilize writing, and most importantly, I wanted him to find the author inside of him. I know once he does all of the above, his thoughts of writing and his actual writing should greatly improve.

**Data Collection**

**Interview:** The interview I conducted with Bryan is The Writing Interview (Felknor, 1993) (see Appendix C). I also conducted this interview with Bryan’s parents and older brother, Nathan during the study. This interview has nine questions all which uncover the interviewee’s perception of himself as a writer, thoughts about the writing process, and his history of the learn-to-write process (Felknor, 1993). If the interviewee is confused or gets stuck on a question, the Writing Interview has additional pointers to help reword the question, help the interviewee find the focus of what is being asked, and/or obtain a more specific and clear answer. Felknor’s Writing Interview has a system in place for coding the answers given by the participants in order to reveal one of the three areas the participant is struggling in: mechanics, the writing process, or the written product. After scoring the interview, I obtained deeper insight to how Bryan’s self-perception impacts him as a writer.

**Observation:** Another form of data collection I implemented throughout this study is observation. I used field notes forms (see Appendix A) to record all observations of Bryan’s interactions with writing. I used the same, but separate field note form (see Appendix B) for Bryan’s family members to record all of their interactions with writing. Both sets of field notes
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

were contained within my research journal. All observations provided me with insight on how Bryan uses writing at home, the writing used by Bryan’s family members, the different modalities of writing available in Bryan’s home, and the different writing homework assignments sent home from school.

Audio Recording: Audio recording is a form of data collection I used in my case study. I audio recorded the discussions of the interviews and survey questions given in this study. I transcribed the dialogue later into my research journal. The audio recording ensures that I do not miss anything and have the ability to replay conversations and discussions which increases the reliability and validity of my findings in the study.

Videotaping: Videotaping is another form of data collection I used while conducting my case study. I videotaped Bryan’s scaling of his writing samples. I want to make sure I can view and review his facial expressions, gestures, and voice when making these decisions. Videotaping ensures that I can obtain his vocal thoughts and his body language, which shows his mental thought process.

Writing Samples: Writing samples provided me with a deeper understanding of Bryan’s view of himself as a writer. I used five writing samples from Bryan’s schoolwork in my study. Bryan chose the five writing samples. He ranked them according to what he thinks is his best piece to his worst piece. Afterwards, Bryan used a survey to score his writing. We then discussed his
reasoning behind his ranking. This conversation provided insight to Bryan’s beliefs about writing and what makes up a good writer. This information was essential when determining how Bryan’s self-perception as a writer influences his writing as the influence of school writing has on Bryan’s self-perception.

**Research Journal:** One form of data collection I utilized throughout my case study was my research journal. My research journal is perhaps the most important form of data collection for my study due to the information it holds. My research journal serves as a communication tool where I can express my questions, feelings, field notes, and reflections about each case study meeting took place within my journal. According to Borg (2001), my research journal is a place where events are recorded, but more importantly my research journal is a “forum for reflection where ideas were generated and discoveries made in and through writing” (as cited in Maxwell, 1996, 160). My research journal shaped and reformed my thinking, allowed me to explore new ideas and possibilities, and uncover innovative discoveries of myself as a teacher researcher and the participants in my study (Borg, 2001). This crucial form of data collection is essential for me to grow as a teacher researcher, teacher, and parent. My research journal is kept in a locked filing cabinet and shredded when my data analysis is complete.

**Surveys:** A variety of surveys were administered throughout my case study. I read the directions of the surveys aloud. I then asked for Bryan to share any questions or confusions he might have about the directions with me. Afterwards, Bryan and I read the survey questions together. The surveys were essential to my understanding of my study because the questions vary and touch...
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

upon different components of writing and views of oneself as a writer. The first two surveys were the Writer’s Attitude Survey (see Appendix G and see Appendix H) (Adapted from Pomperaug High School. Writing attitude survey. www.region15.org/file/3465/download). Both surveys were given because one is an extended response survey and the other is a multiple choice survey. The third survey given was the Writer’s Profile (see Appendix I) (Adapted from Pomperaug High School. Writing attitude survey. www.region15.org/file/3465/download). I chose both of these surveys first because it provided me with an initial insight to Bryan’s beliefs of himself as a writer. Up until this point in my study, I can only infer Bryan’s beliefs. Therefore both surveys were essential for my study.

Both surveys were re-administered in week 6. I chose to implement these surveys again for Bryan’s benefits. By comparing and contrasting the results, Bryan saw the potential growth he made in his beliefs and views of writing within such a short period of time. By acknowledging his changing views, Bryan became more confident, which enhances improve his overall writing abilities while simultaneously continuing to mold his beliefs in writing.

The third survey administered in my case study was the Story Telling Survey and Writing Inventory Grade 1 (see Appendix L) (Adapted from Pomperaug High School. Writing attitude survey. www.region15.org/file/3465/download). I chose to administer the Story Telling Survey and Writing Inventory Grade 1 because all of the questions were opened ended and require more than a never, always, or sometimes answer. These questions invited me to dig deeper into Bryan’s thoughts, feelings, and beliefs of writing and himself as a writer. The deeper I dig into Bryan’s thoughts and feelings, the better I can understand how those thoughts and feelings impact his writing. I also shared those findings with Bryan’s parents, which was a crucial component for helping Bryan grow as a writer.
The fourth survey given was the Writing Interest Survey (see Appendix M) (Adapted from Pomperaug High School. Writing attitude survey. www.region15.org/file/3465/download). This survey is very important because showed me what Bryan likes about writing and what he dislikes about writing. Interest plays a key role in writing. Interest can determine how successful a writer has with writing pieces (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994). By learning what interest Bryan has when it comes to writing, I was able to obtain a better understanding of his scaling of his writing pieces and his overall views of writing.

The last survey administered in my case study is the You Are an Author Survey (see Appendix O) (Adapted from Pomperaug High School. Writing attitude survey. www.region15.org/file/3465/download). This survey allowed the focal child to have a conversation with himself about himself as a writer. This conversation is very important for shaping and altering my focal child’s beliefs about writing. When a child feels and believes he/she is an author, the possibilities for his/her writing is endless (Graves, 1994; Heath, 1982; McDermott, 2010). Having my case study end on a very positive note is very important to me. Therefore, I am very glad to have the You Are an Author Survey as the final survey given in my case study.

Data Analysis

Videotaping: I watched and re-watched the taping of Bryan’s scaling of his writing pieces several times in order to answer my research questions: How does Bryan’s self-perception as a writer impact his writing? How does Bryan’s experience with writing in school influence his self-perception as a writer? I analyzed his body language, gestures, and facial expressions while I watched. I took note of his interactions with his writing in my research journal, next to where I took the original notes during our session. By watching the videotape numerous times, I was able
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

to write down important aspects on the side margins (Hubbard & Power, 1999). Having the opportunity to relive this session is important because it allows me to uncover details I may have missed during the session or the first time I watched the video.

After watching the video tape and reviewing my additional written notes, I coded my data. Coding data requires one to divide data into themes. Themes should be reoccurring across the data. From these themes, one can draw inferences about the data. I used the constant comparison method for each analysis of the collected data. I anticipate drew a minimum of three themes from the videotape for each research question (Hubbard & Power, 1999).

**Observations:** Observations were recorded in my research journal through the use of field notes. After observations were completed, I looked over my notes and implemented any needed additional side notes in the margins. Observations were also color coded through the use of highlighters and similar themes arose as the themes which occurred in videotaping, audio recording and interviewing. All found themes from observations were compared to the found themes found in the videotape, recorded audio, and interview.

**Audio Recoding:** I listened closely to the recorded audio during the interviews given to Bryan, Nathan, his mom, and his dad. By listening several times, I did not miss anything being discussed and investigate further understandings of potential new findings. Also, I clarified any misconceptions with the participants in my study by using recorded audio because I had the option to re-listen to the response or ask the participant to clarify. I took note of any new findings or misconceptions on interviews or in my research journal.
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

**Interview:** Analyzing Felknor’s (1993) Writing Interview was crucial to the study. The Writing Interview provided insight to the family’s writing values and their perception of writing. The same interview was given to Bryan and Nathan whereas a modified version of the same interview was given to Mom and Dad. The same routine of color coding was done to analyze the data, answers from all participants varied. As the answers varied, the coding varied. I added side notes about questions and comments the participants inquired as they worked through the interview. Therefore, ensuring a very close analysis on each participant’s view of writing was essential.

In addition to the themes found throughout the interview, I also coded the interviews through categories based on the scoring of the interviews. I was able to draw conclusions based on mechanical/technical focus, process focus, and product focus (Felknor, 1993). I anticipated all four participants’ answers related to one another. The answers from the interviewees related to one another, therefore the coding of the interview related as well. If the interviewee’s answers were different, then I should have found many differences in the uncovered themes. By having these three codes already in place, I was able to analyze the answers with a clearer focus.

**Surveys:** Multiple surveys were given throughout the case study. These surveys included: Writer’s Attitude Survey, Writer’s Profile, Storytelling, Writing Interview Grade 1, Writing Interest, and You are An Author. Analyzing the surveys after they were completed was very important. I took all the answers from the surveys, categorized all the given answers based on themes, and drew conclusions from those categories. The surveys provided deep insight to my research questions because the survey questions discussed writer’s interest, thoughts about writing, and opinions of the interviewee’s personal writing. I then compared and contrast the data from observations, video tapes, recorded audio, and the interviews.
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

**Procedures**

**Week 1, Days 1 and 2:** Observed focal child’s use of writing and interactions of different modalities of writing in his home environment.

**Week 1, Day 3:** Observed focal child’s use of writing and verbally administered Catherine Felknor’s *Writing Interview* with focal child. When focal child had difficulties, given prompts from *Writing Interview* were provided.

**Week 2, Days 1 and 2:** Observed focal child’s mother, father, and older brother use writing within the home.

**Week 2, Day 3:** Administered Felknor’s *Writing Interview* to focal child’s parents and older brother. Discussed with parents and older brother their thoughts about the writing which takes place in the home environment, their beliefs about writing, and their thoughts of the focal child as a writer. Transcribed conversation into research journal.

**Week 3, Days 1 and 2:** Administered *Writing Attitude Survey* and *Writer’s Profile* with focal child. Discussed answers after *Writing Attitude Survey* and *Writer’s Profile* to gain deeper insight on focal child’s thoughts. Observed focal child as he completed both surveys. Transcribed conversation and observations into research journal.

**Week 4, Day 1:** Administered *Story Telling and Writing Inventory Grade 1*. Discussed answers after survey to gain deeper insight on focal child’s thoughts. Observed focal child as he completed the surveys. Transcribed conversation and observations into research journal.
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

**Week 4, Days 2:** Administered *Writing Interest Survey*. Discussed answers after survey was completed to gain deeper insight on focal child’s thoughts. Observed focal child as he completed the surveys. Transcribed conversation and observations into research journal.

**Week 4, Day 3:** Discussed with focal child and then followed by his parents, the various modes of writing used within the home and at school. Engaged in a conversation about the writing done at home and the writing done at school. How were they similar and how were they different? Observed body language of focal child and parents throughout the conversation. Transcribed observations and conversations into research journal.

**Week 5, Day 1:** Layed out five different writing samples written by the focal child. Asked focal child to rate the writing pieces in order from one to five, five being the best and one being the worst. Observed focal child’s body language, emotions, and facial expressions. Had a conversation about his reasoning for ranking his pieces. Transcribed conversation and observations into research journal.

**Week 5, Day 2:** With the same five writing pieces, the focal child scored all of the writing samples with the *Writing Inventory for Primary Grades Survey*. He put pieces in order from highest ranking to lowest ranking. Observed focal child’s body language, emotions, and facial expressions. Transcribed observations and any comments focal child made while ranking his writing pieces into research journal.

**Week 5, Day 3:** Invited focal child to draw comparisons and find differences in the way he ranked his own writing and the way he ranked the same writing pieces with the *Writing Inventory for Primary Grades Survey*. Recorded and transcribed discussion into research journal.
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

**Week 6, Day 1:** Re-administered *Writer’s Profile* and *Writing Attitude Survey*. Discussed changes made in Bryan’s answers. Shared insight with the focal child and the focal child’s parents. Transcribed conversations and observations in research journal.

**Week 6, Day 2:** Administered *You Are An Author* survey to focal child. Discussed with focal child the importance of viewing oneself as an author and having an overall positive view of oneself as a writer. Transcribed conversation and observations in research journal.

**Week 6, Day 3:** Invited focal child to share his thoughts about his progression as a writer throughout the past six weeks. Observed Bryan’s body language while he shared his thoughts about himself as a writer and throughout the meeting. Together, discussed changes he made in his writing and changes he made in his views of writing. Asked focal child what he learned and what he plans on carrying with him throughout his education career. Asked focal child if he found this study to be useful for him. Why or why not? Finally, engaged in a conversation about why writing is such an important component in school and throughout life. Transcribed conversation and recorded observations into research journal.

**Criteria for Trustworthiness**

My six week long case study was primarily focused on one male first grade student. His mother, father, and older brother also took part within this case study to provide additional information about the focal child and to gather their insight about the writing process. Throughout the six weeks, I met with my focal child two to three times per week for 30-60 minutes each day.
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

The findings in my case study were found in a reliable and credible manner. In order to make my findings reliable and credible, I utilized various ways to collect data throughout my study. My data collection included interviews, observation, audio recording, videotaping, and diverse writing samples. By gathering data from a variety of sources, the credibility of my findings increased due to triangulation. My data analysis was grounded in observations, conversations with participants, and personal reflection. Themes were uncovered from the analyzed data, which then was shared with the participants. To further enhance the reliability and credibility of this study, I utilized peer review. I had my research partner go over my findings with a critical lens, ensuring my results and analyses were credible.

**Limitations of the Study**

There were a few limitations of this study. This is a case study and my findings were based on one child and his family. Therefore, my findings were useful for my focal child, but not every child because each child is different. The focal child is my nephew which could cause for some potential biases, although I tried to be as unbiased as possible. As the researcher, my personal beliefs and interpretations of the data were present throughout the study, but I tried my best to leave out any prejudices that may potentially arise.

**Summary**

Exploring how Bryan’s self-perception as a writer impacts his daily writing at home and at school will make me a stronger, more knowledgeable teacher. Understanding what my focal child thinks makes up a good writer, what he defines as writing, and why he likes and dislikes writing is very important. By learning these factors, I was able to share this information with his parents which lead to Bryan learning he is an author and why writing is important. These
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

positive components of writing were essential to have in one’s view of oneself as a writer. Obtaining both components were the first step in Bryan’s process of revaluing writing. Observations, surveys, and interviews were the tools to help me gain insight to a young child’s thoughts and views of himself as a writer.
Chapter Four: Interpretation of Data

Introduction

This study was completed for a number of reasons. First, I wanted to learn the role self-perception has on a first grade writer. Secondly, I wanted to learn the influence the home and school environment have on the self-perception of first grade writer. This study took place in a quiet setting within a suburban home. Each session lasted twenty to forty minutes, two to three times per week, over the course of six weeks.

Research Questions

This was a qualitative study. The research questions I sought to answer through this study were:

1. How does Bryan’s experience with writing in the home influence his self-perception as a writer?

2. How does Bryan’s experience with writing in school influence his self-perception as a writer?

3. How does Bryan’s self-perception as a writer impact his writing?

Data were collected through observational field notes, surveys, interviews, a research journal, and Bryan’s writing samples from previous writing experiences. I used observational field notes while Bryan interacted with his own personal writing from previous experiences and while Bryan utilized different forms of writing while in the home. I also used observational field notes and videotaping simultaneously while Bryan interacted with his own pieces of writing. In addition, observational field notes were used when I observed Bryan’s older brother, Nathan, and his parents interact with their own personal writing. I used audio recording while conducting
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

writing interviews with Bryan, Nathan, and Bryan’s parents in order to capture their thoughts, beliefs, and feelings about writing. Bryan’s writing samples were analyzed by Bryan to see how self-perception impacts his feelings about his writing. I used audio recording and observational field notes to record Bryan’s thoughts and beliefs as he analyzed his own writing. To record observations and reflections throughout the study, I used a research journal.

This chapter will present an in depth analysis of the data that I collected. I will begin by describing the different writing opportunities Bryan frequently experiences within his home. I will also explain the various types of writing opportunities Bryan’s parents and Nathan have within the home. Then, I will examine how Bryan’s parents and Nathan think, believe, and feel about writing. This will help shape my understanding for my third question of how Bryan’s self-perception as a writer impacts his writing.

Findings Related to Questions 1 and 2

Question 1: How does Bryan’s experience with writing in the home influence his self-perception as a writer?

Question 2: How does Bryan’s experience with writing in school influence his self-perception as a writer?

Throughout the study, I observed Bryan and his family members’ use of writing within their home environment. I observed a wide variety of different forms of writing, used by each family member within the household. Bryan, Nathan, Mom, and Dad all used writing in their own ways and for their own reasons. As I observed each writing experience, I noticed not all experiences were labeled as “writing” by the family. In order to answer these questions, I will
describe each participant’s writing and the impact it has on Bryan’s view of himself as a writer. I also interviewed each participant about writing and their responses helped me gain a better understanding of how Bryan’s home experiences influence his thoughts and beliefs of himself as a writer.

Observation of Bryan’s Writing Practices at Home

Writing at home is something that can easily be overlooked because many people believe writing is concrete. Yet, writing takes on many forms and has a deeper meaning than writing just using a pen/pencil to represent letters on a piece of paper (Morrow & Rand, 1991). I found this to be very true as I observed Bryan’s interaction with writing. The various writing modalities Bryan used for writing were more than I expected. Within my first week of the study, after two thirty minute sessions of observing his interactions with writing, I knew Bryan had more experience with writing than he believed or led others to believe.

On my first day, 12/4/13, of examining Bryan’s interaction with writing at home, I observed Bryan utilize various modalities of writing. For the first ten minutes of my observation, I observed Bryan watching YouTube clips, on his iPad, about different strategies to use while playing Minecraft. Bryan was very concentrated as he watched these clips. I took note of him typing in the search bar of YouTube, in order to find the video clip he was looking for. Bryan then attempted to play Minecraft, but before he could begin his game, his mom asked him to put the iPad away and get out his homework. For the next twenty minutes, I observed Bryan demonstrate writing with a pencil and on the computer. Bryan wrote various numbers as he worked on two digit addition. After he completed his math homework, Bryan then logged into
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

the computer to record the amount of minutes he read from earlier in the day. Although I did not observe much conventional writing on my first day of the study, I did observe Bryan using writing as a means to access information he needed, share his thought process in math, and input his reading at home data on his classroom’s homepage. Not only did Bryan use writing in diverse ways, but he also used writing for various purposes. Although he did not seem to see the purpose behind his writing, I definitely did and I knew it was something that Bryan needed to see and understand as well.

My experience the second day of observing Bryan, 12/5/13, was quite different than the previous day. Within this short thirty minute time period, Bryan and his older brother, Nathan, created a map for each other to find one another’s hidden treasure. Both worked in separate locations so they would not see each other’s maps. Bryan worked in his office in the right corner of the living room. The first thing he did was use Google on his iPad to search “How to draw a map?” As he worked toward creating the map, he frequently referenced other maps he found on his iPad. Bryan used crayons, his iPad, and a pencil to create his map. He first mapped out the inside of his house, drew in big obstacles on his map, which served as landmarks, such as couches, tables, and his Christmas tree. He then drew a path for his brother to follow as he followed his map. Bryan then wrote under each landmark the name of the landmark, drew a compass, drew an X where the treasure was located, and lastly titled his map, “My Treasure Map”. After titling his map, Bryan used his crayons to color his map. He then exchanged maps with his brother and went on a treasure hunt.

Although both days I observed Bryan interact with writing, there was not much conventional and traditional writing which took place. Yet, Bryan still exposed himself to a variety of modalities of writing. He used different tools such as his iPad and a computer to
transcribe his inner thoughts into a concrete form to share with others. Bryan used drawing with crayons, writing words with pencils, and typing on a computer and iPad as a means of communicating and/or conveying his thoughts to others. All modalities enhanced his overall understanding of communicating and sharing his inner thoughts with others.

More important than the various writing modalities Bryan used, were the diverse purposes for why Bryan engaged in writing. Bryan needed to show his work for math which is why he wrote numbers, he needed to lead his brother to the hidden treasure which is why he drew a map, he needed to record his daily reading minutes on his reading log for his teacher to see, and he needed to get better at Minecraft, which is why he watched YouTube clips to further enhance his understanding. Bryan did not recognize many of the things he was doing as writing, but without knowing he was engaging in the writing process. He wrote because he is a good student, because he engaged in a game with his brother, and because he wanted to learn new strategies and skills to use while playing Minecraft. Although Bryan’s methods and purposes for writing varied, his determination for reaching these purposes stayed consistent.

I observed Bryan’s use of writing three more times throughout the duration of the study. In order to obtain a better understanding of the writing Bryan uses in his home, I observed Bryan’s older brother, Nathan, and his parents’ use of writing. After my observations, I interviewed Bryan and his family members about writing. By interviewing Bryan and his family members, I was able to combine my observations and their thoughts and feelings of writing in order to gain deeper insight to their writing values. Many of my observations led me to believe Bryan and his family members did not view most of their daily activities as a means of writing. The Writing Interview (Felknor, 1993) further enhanced my beliefs. Below are my recorded observations, followed by the interviews with Nathan and Bryan’s parents.
Observation of Nathan’s Writing Practices at Home

I observed Nathan’s writing practices for a full hour on 12/11/13. I observed Nathan in almost every room of the house during this hour. Although Nathan had signed his assent form, I still observed Nathan discreetly because I wanted the writing practices in which he immersed himself to be genuine. Observing Nathan inconspicuously was very important to me because Nathan was very excited to be part of my study. I knew if I told him I was going to observe his writing practices, he would have tried to show me all the different way he utilizes writing at home. As great as that would be, I knew that all of the writing practices Nathan would show me would not be something he would do on a regular basis. Observing Nathan’s typical and natural modes of writing, while at home, was an essential part of my study. By observing Nathan’s normal writing practices, I was able to infer his purposes for using writing. Below is a replicated chart from my research journal in which I wrote down my observations of Nathan’s writing practices.

Nathan’s Writing Practices (12/11/13)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Room</th>
<th>Living Room</th>
<th>Kitchen</th>
<th>Nathan and Bryan’s Room</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Played “Words with Friends” on his iPad.</td>
<td>Added two items (Tom Brady Jersey and a science experiment kit) to his Christmas wish list</td>
<td>Did homework at the kitchen table (Read, Highlighted, and Answered questions out of an article)</td>
<td>Wrote a “Keep Out” sign with markers and taped it to the door. (I knocked on the door and asked Nathan what he was doing in the room and he said he was reading but did not want his younger brothers and sister to bother him).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped his younger brother, Jason (pseudonym) draw a picture of a dinosaur.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wrote a checkmark next to his completed chores on the chore list located on the refrigerator).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logged into the computer to do Reflex for math homework.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nathan used a variety of tools to implement his writing. He used an iPad, crayons, computer, markers, paper, and a pencil. His various modes allowed me to learn all the diverse options Nathan has to convey his writing while at home. Although he used different methods for his writing, every time he engaged with writing it was for a purpose. Nathan played “Words with Friends” as a means of communication in a game with his friends. His typing of each letter allowed his friends to read the words he developed in his mind. He helped his brother draw a dinosaur because his mom asked him to help him. Nathan wrote a checkmark next to his required chores to show his parents that his chores were completed. His purpose was to help his mom and do what she asked him to do. Nathan cares about his schooling and therefore logged into the computer to complete his math homework as well as finish his ELA homework. Nathan loves Christmas time and enjoys writing a wish list for Santa every year. During my observation, I observed Nathan add to his existing Christmas List. When he added two items to the list, his purpose was for Santa to see all the things he asked for. Nathan’s purpose for writing a “KEEP OUT” sign was to share with his family members that he wanted privacy. All of Nathan’s reasons for writing varied, but he relied on writing to convey each of these messages.

Observations of Mom’s Writing Practices at Home

Bryan’s mom used a variety of writing practices within the thirty minutes of me observing her. I wanted her to not feel pressured as I observed her so I did this inconspicuously from the living room. Within those thirty minutes, I observed Bryan’s mom from the living room as she went about her routine in the kitchen. Many of my observations of Bryan’s mom’s writing
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

practices in the home were consistent with the types of writing a stay at home parent would have on a daily basis. Below is a list, which I recorded on 12/12/13 in my research journal, of writing practices Bryan’s mom used.

• Grocery list

• Text messaging

• Helping Nathan proofread his journal entry writing assignment. (She circled misspelled words and wrote “why is this important” in the areas she felt Nathan needed to elaborate on).

• Typing on phone to switch Pandora stations

Mom used different modes of writing throughout the observation. All forms of writing were done for different purposes and with various modalities. She used a pen when helping Nathan revise his writing, she used her finger on her phone to text and access Pandora, and she used a pen and paper to write a grocery list. Her reasoning for helping Nathan revise his writing was because she wants Nathan to become more fluent in the process of proofreading. By watching and observing his mom go over his writing, Nathan will have a better understanding of the revision process. Mom’s purpose for writing a grocery list was to help her remember everything she needed at the store. By writing down the needed items, Mom will be able to prepare every planned meal throughout the week. Mom’s reason for texting was to communicate with another person. By sending a text back to the sender of the text message, she does not need to call them and have an extended conversation. Rather, she is able to say what she needs to in a quick and concise manner. Regardless of the way Mom implemented writing or the modes she
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

used to share her writing, all of her writing was done to serve a purpose of sharing her thoughts and ideas with others.

Observation of Dad’s Writing Practices at Home

I observed Bryan’s father on the same day which I observed his mother. Unlike Bryan’s mom who works as a stay at home mom, Bryan’s dad works as the head of Human Resources at a local company. Similar to Bryan’s mom, I also observed Dad discreetly. My goal in doing so was to observe Dad’s realistic daily writing practices as possible. Bryan’s dad was observed in the kitchen and in the family room. Below I have listed the writing practices I saw Dad utilize while I observed him. This bulleted list of writing practices was documented in my research journal on 12/12/13.

- Sending an email
- Crossword puzzle from newspaper
- Text messaging

Dad used different modes of writing throughout the observation. All forms of writing were done for different purposes. He used his phone to text and send an email, whereas he used a pencil to complete the crossword puzzle in the newspaper. Dad sent a text message and an email in order to communicate with another person. Sending a text message is a quick and concise way to convey one’s thoughts. Sending an email is typically more of a professional way to convey a message. Although I did not read the email or see to whom it was being sent, I can infer it was work related. Most of my background knowledge of Dad and emails revolves around work.
Dad completed the crossword puzzle while sitting on the couch. Although not directly stated during this study, through previous discussions with Dad about completing crosswords puzzles, I know Dad completes crosswords puzzles as a means of relaxation and a way to exercise his brain. He likes the mental challenge crosswords bring him, but he also likes the quiet, independent time he has while completing the puzzle. Although his modes of writing were different and served different purposes, writing played a major role in his daily activities.

Bryan, Nathan, Mom, and Dad all utilized different writing practices for different purposes as I observed them. Although each person had different purposes for writing, they all used similar writing modalities to complete these writing practices. For example, Bryan and Nathan both used iPads and pencils to share their inner thoughts in a concrete manner. Bryan’s mom and dad used their cell phones to convey messages and communicate with other people. Bryan, Nathan, Mom, and Dad all used pencil/pen and paper during their writing practices. Even though Bryan and his family members all used writing utensils as I observed their writing practices, they each used a writing utensil for a different reason. Bryan used a pencil to complete his homework, Nathan used a pencil to help his little brother, Mom used a pen to write a grocery list to ensure the family had food throughout the week, and Dad used a pencil to complete his crossword puzzle for relaxation.

All of these purposes were different, yet the inner conversation each of them had while implementing the process of writing was similar. I did not ask any of the participants to share their inner conversation with me, but I was able to infer what they were thinking through their body language. While working on his crossword, Dad stuck a small portion of his tongue out to the side showing his concentrated thinking. He also put his thumb and pointer finger to his chin to visually display his thinking. Mom kept her head down as she wrote out her grocery list,
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

showing her concentration. Nathan underlined the words “KEEP OUT” three times with black marker, showing his inner conversation with himself (which I inferred to be “how will people really get my point of keep out?”). Bryan watched the YouTube clip and did not lose focus at all, showing the inner conversation he had with himself to be something very similar to, “I need to get better at Minecraft so I need to pay close attention to these videos. I will learn new strategies and skills to use throughout the game if I pay attention.” Various modes of writing were used for different purposes, yet not all of the forms of writing were recognized by Bryan, Nathan, Mom, and Dad as modes of writing. This became more apparent when I interviewed each of them to gain insight into their views of what they believed constituted as writing.

Bryan’s Writing Interview

There was minimal distraction while the interview took place due to the movie playing in the family room which held the attention of Bryan’s older and younger brother. Bryan’s baby sister was taking a nap at the time of the interview, his dad was still at work, and his mom was in the process of making dinner. On 12/7/13, I verbally administered Felknor’s Writing Interview to Bryan (Felknor, 1993). The purpose of this interview is to establish one’s thoughts and beliefs about writing (Felknor, 1993). This interview took place in Bryan’s office. The following are some of the questions and responses transcribed during Bryan’s interview. I chose to focus on these questions and responses because I believed they showed the most insight of Bryan as a writer.

**Question 1:** What is writing?

**Answer:** letters
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

**Question 2.1:** Among the students you know, who do you think is a good writer? What makes him or her a good writer?

**Answer:** Jayden he has spaces.

**Question 5:** When you are writing and you have a problem (or get stuck) what do you do?

**Answer:** Stretch the word out

**Question 6.1:** What do you really like about your writing?

**Answer:** I like when I write long stories with lots of words

**Question 6.2:** What would you like to improve about your writing?

**Answer:** know more words.

**Question 7.2:** How has your writing changed from last year to this year?

**Answer:** My letters got better

**Question 8:** Are you a good writer? Why?

**Answer:** Yes. I leave spaces.

**Question 9:** Do you like writing? (no, mixed/not sure, yes)

**Answer:** Yes so I remember things.

After completing the interview with Bryan, I scored the interview in a private area of Bryan’s house. I did not want Bryan watching me score his interview and have the feeling that his answers were incorrect. Bryan’s score was based on his answers to the questions during the
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

interview. A number score is given based on three aspects: the mechanical or technical aspects of writing (MT), the characteristics of the written product (PDT), and the process of writing (PCS) (Felknor, 1993). Every question is scored from a 0-2 based on the interviewee’s answer. A score of zero means there was no indication of this specific area in the answer, one means there was a general reference to this specific area in the answer, and a score of two means there was a quality reference to this specific area in the answer (Felknor, 1993).

The mechanics or technical aspects of writing enhance the reader’s understanding of what the writer is saying, but does not always need to be perfect for the reader to understand what the writer’s message. When one focuses on the mechanics of writing, one concentrates on spelling words correctly, the physical formation of words, and works on legible handwriting (Meier, 2013). Bryan’s response, “Yes. I leave spaces.” to question 8, “Are you a good writer? Why?” as well as Bryan’s response, “my letters got better” to question 7.2, “How has your writing changed from last year to this year?”, shows his knowledge about the importance of using proper mechanics while writing, as well as his attentiveness to ensuring the proper use of mechanics in his writing. Due to his intense focus on the mechanics of writing, Bryan’s self-perception of himself as a writer is dependent on his use of mechanics in his writing. By practicing his writing and making it more legible, people will be more apt to read his writing, which will only increase Bryan’s self-perception as a writer.

When people (whom Bryan feels comfortable with) read Bryan’s writing, Bryan’s self-perception and self-efficacy as a writer are reinforced. From this empowerment, Bryan will likely continue to share his writing with others. Those who read his writing will potentially provide constructive feedback, which Bryan will disregard or internalize. If Bryan chooses to internalize the feedback given, he will increase the amount of knowledge and strategies he has to
utilize when writing. As his knowledge about writing proliferates, his awareness of himself as a writer will also increase. His knowledge about writing will become dispersed throughout all three areas (mechanics, the process, and the final product), rather than the large emphasis he places on the mechanics of writing.

The final written product is an important component of the writing process. It is the piece that all readers see. The final product is one’s best work as well as all the result of one’s sweat, blood, and tears. Most readers only see the final product. Not many people have the time or desire to analyze one’s process of getting to the final product. Therefore, many people place a huge emphasis on the final product because often it is the only thing people see. None of Bryan’s answers in his writing interview related to the final written product.

Rather, Bryan’s knowledge about writing is age appropriate and superficial. Bryan’s response, “letters” to question 1, “What is writing?” showed me that Bryan has limited knowledge on what writing really is. His definition of writing was only surface level. This was a red flag to me. Letters are the physical aspect of writing. Writing is a way for one to communicate and express ideas through various symbols (Herrera, 2013). I felt compelled to make sure Bryan’s knowledge about writing expanded.

Perhaps the most important part of writing is the writing process. Many people find writing to be difficult (Herrera, 2013). Brainstorming, planning, transferring the knowledge into a concrete state, and reviewing make up the writing process (Herrera, 2013). The writing process is simultaneously used with mechanics in order to obtain the final product. One cannot use the proper mechanics and have a final product without committing to the writing process. Bryan response of “stretch the word out” to Question 5, “When you are writing and you have a
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

“problem (or get stuck) what do you do?” shows that Bryan does have some knowledge about what to do when he is stuck on a word. Knowing these strategies and knowing how to use these strategies is part of the process of writing. By acknowledging this strategy, Bryan showed me he does value the writing process and has understanding that words can be revised if not spelled correctly the first time.

Bryan’s answer to this question also affirmed my thoughts that Bryan is focused in on writing at the word level (Herrera, 2013). Bryan’s purpose for revising is to make his writing “correct”. Bryan does not understand that revising serves a greater purpose (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994). Rather than revising for clarity or adding in more specific details, Bryan revises to fix what he sees as errors. Therefore, Bryan’s understanding of the purpose of making revisions is not completely whole. Once Bryan understands the true purpose of revising, his value of the writing process as a whole will increase. His writing knowledge will move past focusing solely on mechanics of writing. Rather his writing knowledge will move fluently throughout the mechanics and the writing process in order to obtain a stronger final written product.

Out of the fifteen questions asked, Bryan scored a fifteen in the area of MT, a seven in the area of PDT, and a nine in the area of PCS. Above is only a portion of some questions asked during the interview, yet these were chosen to highlight Bryan’s score. Bryan’s view of writing is largely based on the mechanics of technical aspects of writing. There is much more to writing than just the mechanics. I was very intrigued by this and thought that this was something I definitely needed to share with Bryan’s parents because this study took place in the home. My hopes were for Bryan’s parents to pass this information onto Bryan’s teacher.
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Nathan’s Writing Interview

Nathan’s writing interview took place on 12/13/13. Just as Bryan’s interview, Nathan’s interview also took place in the living room. Rather than in Bryan’s office, Nathan completed his interview on the couch. He used a clipboard and a green pen to answer the interview questions. Nathan read and answered the interview questions by himself, without my assistance. It took Nathan about ten minutes to complete the interview.

After completing his interview, Nathan personally handed it over to me. I flipped through his interview and realized Nathan did not provide a detailed answer for three out of the fifteen questions. He wrote “I don’t know” or “not sure” on the lines below the questions. I followed up with Nathan about these answers, and his responses were not much more. These responses were not typical of Nathan. I decided to ask his mother and she informed me he was not feeling too well and was over tired from the night before. Somewhat frustrated, I took the answers for what they were worth. Although he did not provide explicit answers verbal or written, his given responses were better than him leaving the answers to the questions blank because at least I knew he read the questions and thought about how he wanted to answer the questions.

Out of the fifteen questions asked, Nathan scored a nine in the area of MT, a five in the area of PDT, and an eleven in the area of PCS. His score implied that he has a stronger focus on the writing process rather than the mechanics and product of writing. I believe this is due to the writing instruction which Nathan receives in school. Although I am not his classroom teacher, I am very familiar with the type of writing instruction delivered in the primary grades within his school district. Kindergarten through Grade 3 has a primary focus on the process of writing and the mechanics rather than the product of writing. Learning strategies to use while working
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

through the writing process is essential for students (Calkins, 1994; Meier, 2013). Nathan answered various questions in the interview with an emphasis of strategies to use during the writing process. Below are some examples of Nathan’s responses during the interview.

**Question 2.1:** Among the students you know, who do you think is a good writer? What makes him or her a good writer?

**Answer:** Riley, he is neat and he goes over what he writes.

**Question 2.2:** What problems does he or she have when writing?

**Answer:** I don’t know

**Question 2.3:** What do you think he or she does to solve the problem?

**Answer:** Riley goes over his writing or check the spelling in a dictionary.

**Question 5:** When you are writing and you have a problem (or get stuck) what do you do?

**Answer:** I go to a dictionary or ask a friend.

Nathan’s has great insight to the writing process. I was very happy to see Nathan has a higher degree of emphasis on the writing process rather than the technical aspects of writing and the final product of writing. His response, “I go to a dictionary or ask a friend” to question 5, shows his knowledge of strategies to use while writing. Nathan’s knowledge and understanding of the various writing strategies he has to use while writing and knowing the various options he has when he encounters a writing problem will help Nathan become a stronger writer, which will continue to increase his desire and passion for writing.
Although Nathan has an in depth understanding of the writing process, Nathan still builds this understanding on the mechanics of writing. For example, his response, “Riley, he is neat and he goes over what he writes” to Question 2.1, “Among the students you know, who do you think is a good writer? What makes him or her a good writer?” shows that he believes a good writer writes neatly. Even though Nathan mentions Riley’s ability to write neatly, he also shares the importance of him going over what he writes which is another strategy to use while writing. By including the strategy to use during his writing, Nathan highlights the importance and his knowledge about the writing process in conjunction with the mechanics of writing.

Nathan does not provide much insight about the final written product during his interview. This was the area in which Nathan’s interview scored the least amount of points. This shows me that his emphasis while writing is not on the final written product, but rather on the process and mechanics one endures to get to the final written product. This emphasis on the writing process and the mechanics of writing is age appropriate and is building Nathan’s self-perception and knowledge on how the writing process and mechanics of writing significantly impact the final written product.

Mom and Dad’s Writing Interview

Both Mom and Dad’s writing interviews took place at the island in the kitchen on 12/13/13. I interviewed Mom and then interviewed Dad. I purposely interviewed them separately to ensure one did not influence the other’s answers. I read aloud the questions and then had Mom and Dad write their responses down on the paper. I did this because I wanted to make sure all of the thoughts that circulated in their minds were put on the paper, which I thought would be most
effective by having Mom and Dad write their own responses. Mom and Dad talked to me and/or to themselves about the interview as they completed the interview. I chose to audio record the interviews just to make certain nothing was missed throughout this process. In each writing interview I sat across from Mom and Dad. The three boys were downstairs in the playroom and their daughter was sleeping in her room upstairs, allowing for minimal distractions.

Mom and Dad had very similar scores on their writing interviews. Out of the eight questions asked, Mom scored a two in the area of MT, a seven in the area of PDT, and fourteen in the area of PCS. Dad scored a zero in the area of MT, a six in the area of PDT, and fourteen in the area of PCS. These results show that Mom and Dad think of the process of writing before the written product and the mechanics of writing. The results also show us that Mom and Dad think of the mechanics last while writing. Perhaps this is due to the knowledge and vast experience with writing on a daily basis. Below is part of Mom’s interview, part of Dad’s interview, followed by a deep synopsis of both interviews.

**Mom’s Writing Interview**

1. What is writing?

   **Mom’s Answer:** A way to communicate your thoughts

5. When you are writing and encounter a problem, what do you do? Why do you do it?

   **Mom’s Answer:** Google it, because someone has probably asked and answered the question already.

6. What do you really like about your writing?

   **Mom’s Answer:** I don’t really like writing/never even kept a journal.
9. Do you like writing? (no/mixed/not sure, yes) Why?

**Mom’s Answer:** No, I feel embarrassed when people read my writing and it takes too long.

Mom’s writing interview allowed me to gain deep insight to her thoughts about writing. Although she does not enjoy writing, her answers placed a large emphasis on the writing process. Mom has and uses several strategies when she encounters a writing problem. Her lowest area of focus was the mechanics or technical aspects of writing. Perhaps part of this is due to the amount of technology that Mom uses for writing. Mom’s answer to question 5, “Google it, because someone has probably asked and answered the question already” shows her strategic knowledge of the writing process and frequent use of technology while writing, as well as her limited need for detailed attention to the mechanics of writing.

Mom’s other answer that really stood out to me was Mom’s response to question 9. Her fear of embarrassment of reading her writing aloud or others reading her writing aloud may infer that she has not had many successful experiences with final written products. Although I only inferred this reasoning, I did not press the issue because I did not want to make Mom feel uncomfortable when talking to me about her writing. Her response did leave me connecting her uncertainty with sharing writing with Bryan’s uncertainty with sharing his writing.

**Dad’s Writing Interview**

1. What is writing?

**Dad’s Answer:** The act of placing thoughts and ideas onto a medium for others and self to view.
5. When you are writing and encounter a problem, what do you do? Why do you do it?

**Dad’s Answer:** I pause and think. Possibly ask a question to myself or someone else.

6. What would you want to improve about your writing?

**Dad’s Answer:** expansion of vocabulary

8. Are you a good writer? (no/ mixed/not sure, yes) Why?

**Dad’s Answer:** Mixed- Sometimes I don’t give it the time needed to properly formulate my thoughts.

Dad’s writing interview greatly displayed his value of the writing process. His definition of writing shows he has knowledge about writing and the writing process. His response to question 5, “I pause and think. Possibly ask a question to myself or someone else” as well as his response to question 8, “Sometimes I don’t give it the time needed to properly formulate my thoughts” shows his knowledge of strategies to use throughout the writing process. Although Dad has great insight to the process of writing, Dad’s thoughts of his areas of improvement for writing focused on the mechanics of learning more words and having a stronger final piece. By expanding his vocabulary, Dad will not only improve his writing, but also his reading and speaking. Reading and speaking are important for writing because reading and speaking greatly influence one’s writing (Dunn & Finley, 2010). From Dad’s answers, I feel Dad has a fair balance of all three writing aspects needed to be a successful writer.
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Synopsis of Mom and Dad’s Interview

Mom and Dad answered the same exact questions on their interviews, although the samples above share various questions of those interviews. Even though Mom and Dad answered all of the same questions, they had very different responses to most of the questions asked. One of the greatest findings from the data were seeing the similarities and differences between both parents’ answers and their children’s answers. Even more importantly, although Mom and Dad’s answers were different (some drastically different), I truly believe their thoughts and ways of thinking about writing both profoundly impact Bryan’s self-perception as a writer and influence his thoughts, views, and beliefs of writing.

Mom’s writing interview was very insightful. Her honesty about her own writing as well as her strategies she uses when she encounters a problem reflects someone who may have had difficulties with writing, but is not afraid to ask questions and find ways to improve her writing. Mom’s answers on her writing interview were a mix of Nathan’s answers and Bryan’s feelings about writing expressed in their writing interviews. For example, both Mom and Nathan answered similarly when defining writing. Mom wrote, “A way to communicate your thoughts” and Nathan wrote “when you write down what you think.” Both responses involve expressing one’s beliefs as an answer to what writing is.

During the writing interview, Mom discussed how she goes about solving her problems when she encounters a writing problem. Mom responded to the question by saying “I Google it”. Although Bryan did not respond with that strategy while answering that question on the interview, he did use the same strategies earlier in the study (during my observation of him interacting with writing in his home). Seeing both Mom and Bryan mention and use the same
strategy, provided me with concrete evidence that Mom’s writing beliefs and practices influence Bryan’s.

Mom’s answers and emotions displayed in her writing interview reflect the feelings Bryan has about writing as well. The feeling of hesitation and uncertainty when it comes to others reading their writing was clear in Mom’s interview and although, not as transparent on Bryan’s writing interview, this feeling of uncertainty was clear in other surveys Bryan completed throughout this study. Recognizing the reluctance in Mom and Bryan to share their own writing with others was something I shared with Bryan’s mom. Allowing Mom to see how similar she, Nathan, and Bryan are as writers was an essential component and finding of this study.

Dad’s writing interview shared his compelling beliefs in writing. Bryan’s dad strongly believes in the endless possibilities writing has, as well as the power of words. He is confident in his writing and has strategies to use when he encounters a problem while writing. One of the most ironic aspects of this survey was when his answer to question 6.2 mirrored Bryan’s answer. Dad answered the question “What would you want to improve about your writing” and he responded “expand his vocabulary”. Bryan answered this same question with “know more words.” This was a great tangible moment for me to share with Dad. These concrete responses allowed me to show Dad how he and Bryan share similar beliefs about writing. Even though Bryan and Dad are in two different places with their writing, some of their beliefs coincide with one another. More importantly, Dad can see how his beliefs can influence and impact Bryan’s self-perception as a writer.

Both Mom and Dad have different styles and beliefs about writing. This information was very important for them to recognize. Most of what Mom and Dad used as writing in the home,
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Bryan and the other children used for writing as well. Therefore, once the interviews were finished, sharing the different writing modalities available with Mom, Dad, and Bryan was crucial. This conversation allowed them to identify diverse modes of writing and had the possibility to expand their knowledge on different ways to engage with the writing modalities in the home.

Summary

One theme that emerged from my observations and from Felknor’s (1993), Writing Interview was how family influences one another’s writing and self-perception of oneself as a writer. Parents play a crucial role in influencing the writing of their children in their home. If children see their parents writing, they will be more apt to write. If children are exposed to various modalities of writing, they will be more likely to engage in writing because writing will become of high interest due to the various opportunities for writing. Whether family or the various writing modalities are influencing one to write, the writing experience from family and diverse writing modalities will impact one’s self-perception as a writer.

Another theme which emerged from the Writing Interview’s was the way one’s knowledge about writing directly impacts one’s thoughts and views of oneself as a writer. Bryan’s definition of writing is “letters”, whereas Dad’s definition of writing is, “The act of placing thoughts and ideas onto a medium for others and self to view.” Both have very different beliefs of what writing is, but both have knowledge that writing is something tangible. Bryan’s belief that writing is only letters is proven when he answered question 7.2, “How has your writing changed from last year to this year?” Bryan’s response of “My letters got better” shows
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

his belief of writing to be composed of letters. Dad’s belief of writing to be transferring “thoughts and ideas onto a medium” shows his belief of writing as a process. His answer to question 8, “Are you a good writer? (no/ mixed/not sure, yes) Why?” describes his belief of writing as a process. Dad’s answer, “Mixed- Sometimes I don’t give it the time needed to properly formulate my thoughts” demonstrates his knowledge about writing, emphasizing how writing starts with one’s thoughts. If he is not allotted the amount of time he needs to formulate his thoughts, his writing will be impacted.

Although differences in beliefs and knowledge about writing emerged throughout the interviews, one major similarity displayed itself across Bryan’s, Nathan’s, Mom’s, and Dad’s writing interview: the need and use of strategies when writing. All had different methods to use when encountering a writing problem, (Bryan stretches words out, Nathan looks words up in the dictionary, Mom Googles her questions, and Dad asks another person when he has a question). The most important finding from this emerging theme was each writer had perseverance and does not give up when he/she encounters a writing problem. This perseverance definitely has an impact on one’s self-perception as a writer. Even more importantly, each of the strategies can be implemented in the home or at school/work. Mom, Dad, and Nathan were all able to take their knowledge about these strategies and apply them in the home environment as well.

Discussion of Writing Modalities in the Home Environment

The following day (12/14/13), after completing the Writing Interviews, I had a discussion with Bryan, followed by a separate discussion with his parents about the different writing modalities accessible in the home. I decided to expand the conversation with Bryan and talk
about the different modes of writing available in the school as well. This information allowed me to determine if Bryan and his family had knowledge about the various writing modalities available to them. Both conversations took place in the kitchen. Bryan and his parents sat in the same spot at the island and I sat adjacent to them. I audio recorded both conversations and then transcribed them into my research journal. Below is a sample of my discussion with Bryan followed by a sample of my discussion with Mom and Dad.

**Discussion with Bryan about the Various Modes of Writing within the Home and School**

**Me:** Bryan, I learned a lot about you as a writer from your writing interview. There are a few things I still want to learn more about you as a writer. One of the biggest things I want to know is what kinds of things do you do to write at home or when you are at school?

**Bryan:** (puzzled look on his face) Um…what do you mean?

**Me:** Like, when you do writing at home, how do you do it?

**Bryan:** I write with lots of stuff.

**Me:** What kind of stuff?

**Bryan:** Pencil, pens, and crayons.

**Me:** Oh, I see. Anything else you can think of?

**Bryan:** Hm… Nope! (with a smile)

**Me:** (small laugh) Okay. What about at school? What do you use to do writing at school?
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

**Bryan:** Pencils. We don’t use pens because they don’t erase and we use crayons, but not for writing, unless we’re doing rainbow writing, then we use crayons.

**Me:** What is rainbow writing?

**Bryan:** It’s when you write a sight word with a crayon and then trace it over with different crayons.

Various themes emerged throughout the writing modality conversations with Bryan and his parents. The first discovered theme was that Bryan’s knowledge about the writing modalities he uses at school coincides with the writing modalities he uses at home. He uses pencils and crayons as writing tools in the home as well as at school. One theme which emerged from the conversation with Mom and Dad was their understanding of technology as a writing modality. This theme was an essential component for Mom and Dad to understand because Bryan has access to the same technological writing modalities (computers and iPads) in the home that he does in school. Having the support in both the home and in school to utilize and recognize technology as a form of writing will enhance Bryan’s understanding of writing and the ways writing can be implemented.

**Summary**

Our conversation went on for a few more minutes and then quickly ended, but not before Bryan shouted, “Mom, Aunt Shannon has to talk to you and Dad.” The information I obtained from the conversation was insightful and informative. I learned Bryan has limited knowledge
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

about different modes of writing. His knowledge about using pens, pencils, and crayons for writing is appropriate for his age. From this conversation, not only did I discover the different methods Bryan thought he used while writing in home and at school, I also discovered my starting place for helping Bryan’s knowledge increase on various writing modalities he has but is not yet aware of.

From our conversation, I was able to determine Bryan’s limited knowledge of the various tools which produce writing at home or in school. I am more knowledgeable about the various writing modalities he has available in the home. Although I have inadequate knowledge about the options Bryan has to implement writing in the classroom because I am not Bryan’s teacher or in Bryan’s classroom, I do have knowledge about the school environment in which Bryan currently attends. I have gone with Bryan to school family functions and have seen various technology implemented throughout the school. I have also had prior discussions with Bryan about his activities in school. He has mentioned how much he enjoys using the computers at school when they cannot go outside for recess. He has also informed me that he really like Physical Education, Music, and Computer Lab for specials. Therefore I know Bryan has access to some areas of technology when writing.

Although I do not know much about his classroom environment, I am very knowledgeable about the various writing modes Bryan has at home. Bryan knew about writing with a pen or pencil, but did not realize that he has a computer and iPad he also uses for writing. He may not use these tools for writing the same way adults do, but he does use them for similar purposes: to communicate with others, for entertainment, or to complete tasks/assignments for work or school. This was an important finding for my study and I knew I needed to dig deeper to obtain Bryan’s understanding of the purpose behind these writing tools. Yet, despite our
conversation, Bryan was not drawing the connection of the various writing modalities he had available to him at home and at school and I did not want to pry deeper into his thoughts evoking frustration. Rather, I decided to have a discussion with Mom and Dad to see if they were aware of the diverse options Bryan has available to implement writing.

**Discussion with Mom and Dad about the Various Modes of Writing within the Home and School**

In order to learn more about the various writing modes Bryan has access to at school and at home, I had a discussion with Mom and Dad to see if they knew the available writing modalities they had at home and the available writing modalities Bryan had at school. Below is a sample of the conversation Mom, Dad, and I had on 12/19/13. I audio recorded our conversation and then transcribed it into my research journal.

**Me:** I just spoke with Bryan about the writing modalities he has available here at home and in the classroom. He seemed to think most of the modalities were the same. Do you think that is true?

**Mom:** Yes, I can see how Bryan would think that. When you say modalities you mean ways to write?

**Me:** Yes, but I also mean different ways to produce writing. Bryan said that he uses pens, pencils, and crayons to produce writing.

**Mom:** Oh, okay.
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

**Dad:** Yeah, those are some ways but doesn’t the computer count as another way to produce writing?

**Me:** Yup, it definitely does. The iPad counts as well. Anything that someone can take their inner thoughts and transfer them into prose counts. Do you think Bryan has the same experience with similar writing modalities at home and in school?

**Dad:** I think they are similar, but I also think they are different. I think the biggest difference is what they are used for. Often, the writing modalities are used for different purposes.

**Mom:** Yes, I agree. Bryan can use the iPad at school and at home. But at school, he usually uses the iPads for centers. He usually does RazKids or goes on PBS kids if it’s his turn to use them during recess. When he is home, he usually plays games or listens to music on his iPad.

**Me:** Great! Thanks for sharing with me the difference. Dad, you said earlier that, although different, you think the modalities are still similar. Can you elaborate on that thought?

**Dad:** Yes, I do think that. They are similar in the sense that Bryan’s use of the computer does change regardless if he is at home or at school. He uses the computer at school for Reflex Math and then uses it at home for Reflex Math. There really isn’t any other reason why he needs to use the computer, especially when he has his iPad.

I learned many things from this conversation. First, Bryan has access to iPads in school. Before this point in my study, I was unaware he had iPads in his classroom. This was a great find and something I definitely wanted Bryan to recognize and use as a means of writing, especially because he already had so much prior experience with using the iPad at home. He would most
likely find success with the iPad at school and that success would increase his feelings and beliefs in himself as a writer.

I also discovered that Mom and Dad have a deeper insight to the various writing modalities Bryan has available than I had anticipated. This was a great find because they can help recommend these tools to use for Bryan when he occasionally gets frustrated with writing. I was also able to see how Mom and Dad implement aspects of the instruction and programs Bryan receives in school in the home. Bryan has access to various programs such as RazKids at school as well as at home. Seeing Mom and Dad acknowledge the reciprocal relationship school and home have on a child was very refreshing.

Throughout both sets of conversations, Bryan and his parents really did not express very much through their body language. There were plenty of hand gestures made while talking, especially from Bryan’s dad, but talking with one’s hands is very common in Bryan’s household. The information shared with me was a very good start to learning about Bryan’s thoughts and views of himself as a writer. After the conversations ended, I constantly found myself pondering the question, “Is it fair for Bryan to not think of himself as a good writer if he isn’t aware of all the writing modalities he has available to him?” I needed to dig deeper into Bryan’s relationship with writing and the writing process.

Summary

From my observations and the completed writing interviews, I was able to answer my first two research questions:

1. How does Bryan’s experience with writing in the home influence his self-perception as a writer?
2. How does Bryan’s experience with writing in school influence his self-perception as a writer?

Bryan’s experience with writing in the home definitely influences his self-perception as a writer. He may not recognize all of the various writing he uses and implements in the home, but he does have some knowledge. Bryan’s use of writing in the home extends from conventional writing with pens and pencils to writing on a computer and/or iPad. The various modalities he has available to him in the home, help make up his view of himself as a writer.

Bryan’s writing experiences in the home greatly influence who he is as a writer. The writing Bryan does at home is half mandated and half choice. His homework he completes because he is told to. His writing of maps and writing to view YouTube clips is voluntary. He engaged in these writing activities for his own purposes of wanting to become better at a game or take part in an activity with his older brother. Regardless of why Bryan implemented writing in the home, he wrote for a purpose: to convey a message and achieve a purpose which is what all good writers do.

Writing experiences in school have a distinct impact on writers and the writers they become (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994). Although Bryan does not quite recognize that he is learning the process of writing or developing the skills needed (such as mechanics) to improve his overall experience with the writing process through his teacher’s writing instruction and writing opportunities she allows her students to have, Bryan is still growing as a writer. Primary school teachers teach the basics of writing, the mechanics, before or simultaneously as they teach the writing process (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994). Therefore, my findings from my observations and
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Interview with Bryan directly links to the writing instruction Bryan receives in school shape his self-perception as a writer.

Bryan’s focus on the mechanics of writing and the physical words he writes affirm this direct link. Although I am not present in his classroom, I have immersed myself within writing samples from Bryan’s school. His understanding of what makes a writing piece good is based on the mechanics of writing. His revisions involve erasing/changing spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. Writing is not revised to increase the clarity or imagery for the readers. Writing is revised for the purpose of spelling a word correctly or for learning when to apply the rules of conventions. Bryan’s schooling has a direct and distinct impact on Bryan’s understanding of writing. This understanding about writing greatly influences Bryan’s self-perception as a writer. The more he has to revise, the more he believes his writing is poor. What Bryan fails to realize is the authentic purpose of revising (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994). He will begin to understand and develop a deeper meaning for writing as the writing instruction he receives in school shifts to focusing on the writing process rather than the mechanics of writing.

Writing instruction and writing experiences in school have a profound influence on shaping future writers (Calkins, 1994; Dunn & Finley, 2010; Graves, 1994). Bryan is no exception to that rule. Bryan view about writing and definition of writing partially comes from home, but much of his understanding derives from school. Bryan’s understanding will further develop and expand as he learns more about writing in school. His knowledge and ideas of writing grow allowing him to grow as a writer as well. As Bryan learns more about writing and experiences more writing, his self-perception as a writer will grow. The type of writer Bryan becomes and the way he views himself as a writer, will ultimately be based on the writing experiences and knowledge he gained while in school and from his home.
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

All of the conversations and the writing interviews provided great insight to Bryan and his family’s thoughts and opinions of writing. Although the writing interviews were very useful and I was able to obtain a clearer understanding of Bryan and his family’s beliefs about writing, the observations and writing interviews were not enough to complete a full picture of Bryan as a writer. Self-perception as a writer greatly impacts writing. Yet, I still needed to learn more about Bryan’s self-perception as a writer to see how his self-perception impacts his writing. In order to do this, I administered several writing attitude surveys to Bryan. These surveys helped me answer my next research question:

**Question 3: How does Bryan’s self-perception as a writer impact his writing?**

In order to unpack Bryan’s self-perception as a writer, I surveyed him multiple times about many different aspects of writing, the writing process, and his own personal beliefs and opinions of himself as a writer. All of these surveys were administered in Bryan’s office, on different days, throughout the course of two weeks. Bryan read the questions to himself and rarely asked for help or clarification on any of the questions. Each writing attitude survey took Bryan anywhere from five to fifteen minutes to complete and each survey was followed by a discussion with Bryan about his answers. From my observations, Bryan’s answers on the surveys, and our discussions about his writing, I was able to uncover three significant themes that impact Bryan’s self-perception as a writer:

**Theme 1:** Bryan’s focus on the mechanics of writing shapes his self-perception.

**Theme 2:** Bryan’s knowledge, values, and beliefs of writing derive from school.
Theme 3: Self-assessment significantly impacts Bryan’s self-perception as a writer.

Below is an analysis of the data, which answers themes one and two of my third research question.

Mechanics are a huge component of writing. Mechanics help make writers’ writing more fluent. Handwriting and spelling are the two biggest components of the mechanics of writing (Graham, Berninger, Abbott, Abbott, & Whitaker, 1997). Many primary students have an intense focus on the mechanics of writing because the mechanics are what students are constantly exposed to due to the writing instruction they receive in school. Handwriting is something that one can see and is easily judged. According to Feder & Mainemer (2007), “Failure to attain handwriting competency during the school-age years often has far-reaching negative effects on both academic success and self-esteem.” (p. 312). Much of Bryan’s view of himself as a writer comes from his handwriting and spelling. His thoughts of what writing is and reasons for why he is a good writer all rely on the mechanics of writing. For example, Bryan’s Writing Attitude Survey, administered on 12/18/13, began to provide insight to my hypothesis of Bryan’s focus on the mechanics of writing. Our discussion was audio recorded and then transcribed into my research journal.

**Question:** How do you feel about yourself as a writer?

**Answer:** Okay

**My response:** Why just okay?
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

**Bryan’s response:** I don’t know. I write ok but I don’t like to write because my writing doesn’t look good.

**My response:** What do you mean it doesn’t look good?

**Bryan’s response:** I have to redo my letters a lot because they are messy.

Bryan’s response of “my writing doesn’t look good” to the question, “How do you feel about yourself as a writer?” reiterates his understanding of the mechanics of writing as the determining factor of how he views himself as a writer. Having to rewrite his letters because they are considered messy is something he was taught in school. As a teacher, I am also guilty of asking students to rewrite letters or words because they are illegible to read. I now understand the impact this can have on one’s self-perception as a writer. From my observations of watching Bryan complete homework that involves writing, this notion of rewriting letters and words because they are sloppy, has also been communicated with parents and now is implemented in the home environment by Bryan’s mother.

The reciprocal relationship home and school share is very clear and consistent in both of Bryan’s learning environments. The influence writing instruction in the school has on Bryan’s writing at home is profound. Mom has taken on the “teacher” role and clearly expects Bryan to meet all the writing expectations Bryan’s teacher has in school. From my observations, I observed Bryan’s mom look over his homework and if his writing was not neat enough, she asked him to erase the letter or word and then rewrite it. Although I cannot say the same happens in Bryan’s classroom, I can infer that something similar has occurred because of the major factor it plays in the home environment. Rewriting words over and over for the purpose of making the
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

word neater is likely detrimental to Bryan’s self-perception of himself as a writer. It devalues the writing process and negatively impacts Bryan’s self-perception and self-efficacy as a writer. The goal of revision is to make better writers, not to instill an abhorrence of writing (Calkins, 1994). Educators must be cautious of their writing instruction and be aware of the direct impact it has on all students, regardless if they are proficient or developing writers.

Although spelling and handwriting are major characteristics of the mechanics of writing, so is sentence structure and length. Bryan showed his knowledge and understanding of the important role sentence structure and length have in writing when he responded to the Writer’s Profile Survey. The Writer’s Profile is designed to help one discover the type of writer one is. It also shares the importance of remembering everyone writes differently as well as the importance of setting goals while writing. Both aspects help one make improvements with one’s writing. This survey was administered on 12/31/13 and the follow up conversation was audio recorded and transcribed into my research journal. Below are three specific goals Bryan identified for himself as a writer.

List THREE specific goals that you will work toward in writing.

1. To always fill in my pictures

2. To do at least 4 sentences (Bryan asked how to spell the word sentences)

3. To use specific words.

These goals illuminate Bryan’s beliefs on the role the mechanics of writing. All three goals are specific instructions given by Bryan’s teacher when working on writing. Although I cannot prove this because I have not been in Bryan’s classroom, I can infer it. I have taught in
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

primary grade levels where students needed to meet these requirements to earn full credit on their writing responses.

Bryan’s first goal of “always filling in his picture” is a good writing strategy because it helps the reader visualize what the writer is saying. But this goal also has the potential to hinder Bryan’s learning of becoming a stronger writer. He may be able to share his vision with others from his picture, but if he spends too much time on his picture, his writing will suffer. Bryan needs to be able to balance both filling in his picture and his writing. This goal also sheds light on Bryan’s beliefs of what good writers do. His knowledge about filling in his picture originated from school and possibly from home. Paying attention to what our students’ writing goals are can be the single most important factor in understanding our students’ beliefs of writing.

Bryan’s second goal of composing “at least 4 sentences” also has the potential to limit Bryan’s self-perception as a writer. Although this is a good strategy for primary grade level students to use because it provides a starting place for students’ writing, it can do more damage than good as primary students become intermediate, middle, high school, and even college level students. If Bryan writes only four sentences then he has technically met his goal, but it may not be enough to fully answer the question or it may have provided extra information not pertinent to the question or response given (Gardner, 2013). Bryan’s wording of “at least” allows me to infer that he understands he can write more than four sentences, but needs to write a minimum of four sentences when responding to any given question or prompt. Although having a mandatory sentence length requirement can provide an outline for student writing, teachers must be careful when they place a minimum or maximum length on student’s writing. One needs to carefully analyze the benefits and consequences of doing so if one plans to implement this belief in one’s instruction. Bryan’s beliefs of writing are wrapped around this specific criteria. The number of
sentences should not be a writing goal. Bryan’s focus has shifted to writing a specific number of sentences rather than on the content he is writing within those sentences.

Bryan’s third goal of “using specific words” also originated from school. Students are always being told they need to be specific or use descriptive words in their writing. I find this goal to be very beneficial for Bryan as a writer. The more specific and descriptive Bryan becomes as a writer, the bigger repertoire of vocabulary words he will have. Vocabulary has a direct relationship on writing (McCarry & Greenwood, 2009). The more one sees, uses, and authentically applies vocabulary words, the more likely one will transfer the vocabulary knowledge into one’s writing (McCarry & Greenwood, 2009). Although one will produce better writing if one applies vocabulary words into one’s writing, this skill still needs to be explicitly taught to ensure students understand the purpose of using descriptive words. This is essential for one’s self-perception of writing. Although the use of specific words can be argued to be part of the writing process, I still find it to overlap into the mechanical process of writing. Often students avoid using specific/descriptive words because they struggle to spell the words. Teachers need to teach their students to go back and find these words, (word walls, in a given text, or in a previous assignment) to eliminate the anxiety of misspelling the words, therefore increasing the use of specific/descriptive words, rather than reducing the use of vocabulary words.

Bryan’s question asking me how to spell the word sentences also portrays his knowledge about wanting to be successful when using the mechanics of writing. I also noticed this throughout my various observations of him interacting with writing. Bryan monitors his spelling carefully and when he does not know how to spell something, he sometimes stretches out his words or just simply asks someone. He needs the reassurance that his spelling is correct in order to feel successful when writing. If he does not feel he has achieved perfection with his
handwriting and spelling, he loses faith in the writing he produces, ultimately impacting his self-perception as a writer.

My hypothesis of the majority of Bryan’s writing beliefs deriving from school were confirmed though a discussion which immediately followed Bryan’s answering of the Writer’s Profile Survey. Our conversation was audio recorded and transcribed into my research journal on 12/31/13:

I asked Bryan why he thought these specific goals were important and he replied, “That’s what we do in school.”

“What do you mean?” I asked in return to Bryan’s comment.

“We have to fill our pictures in, write at least four sentences, and use specific words and stuff from the stories we listen to,” Bryan explained. “Otherwise our stories aren’t finished,” he added.

Bryan’s statement about the stories not being finished shows his knowledge about writing as a process. One could argue one’s writing is never complete (Dunn & Finley, 2010). A great teachable moment for Bryan’s teacher would be building her writing instruction based on this notion of what makes a story unfinished. In my opinion, Bryan’s goals constitute more of a checklist for writing, rather than a list of writing goals. He believes his writing is only complete, when he can check off each of those requirements. From my observations, I saw Bryan counting his sentences and rechecking his picture. It seemed as if his writing was not complete until he could say he successfully implemented both components into his writing. Bryan needs to be explicitly taught how to know when his writing is complete; it is not by the number of sentences or
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

if his picture is filled in completely, rather the completion of writing is based on if the question is answered in its entirety or fulfills the purpose for writing.

Bryan needs a deeper understanding of the purpose behind the meaning of writing goals. Writing goals should have a stronger focus on the process of writing rather than on the mechanics of writing. Bryan will only recognize this when he has explicit writing instruction, based on writing as a process rather than the mechanics of writing, from his teacher. By providing the purpose and reasoning behind the writing process, Bryan’s self-perception as a writer will further develop. He will have the evidence to support his values and beliefs about writing which he feels necessary. He will be able to move his focus past the mechanics of writing and his self-perception as a writer will flourish. He will see how writing is more of a process and the mechanical components of writing are just a small part of that process.

One final example of Bryan’s beliefs and focus surrounding the mechanics of writing arose in the survey Story Telling and Writing Inventory Grade 1. Bryan’s response to question two solidified my hypothesis of Bryan’s focus on the mechanics of writing. Although a very short survey (only 5 questions), Story Telling and Writing Inventory Grade 1 still provides insight to how reading influences one’s writing. Reading and writing share a reciprocal relationship, therefore one influences the other (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994). There was a follow up discussion which was audio recorded and transcribed into my research journal on 12/31/13. Bryan’s answer below includes his invented spelling (dettalls) for the word “details”.

2. What makes a story good?

Bryan’s answer: dettalls and lots of words
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Bryan’s response reiterates his goals for writing. “Details” reflect his goal of using specific words in his writing and “lots of words” reflect his goal of writing at least four sentences for each piece of writing. Although not directly stated, one can infer that Bryan’s response was initiated from his writing beliefs from school because his response in this survey is a replica of his goals stated in his Writer’s Profile. My hypothesis was confirmed once again when Bryan and I discussed his response to question two of Story Telling and Writing Inventory Grade 1. Below is a portion of our conversation, which was purposefully selected because it highlighted the evidence for my hypothesis:

**Me:** Bryan, you said details and lots of words makes a story good.

**Bryan:** (With a smile) Yup.

**Me:** Why do you think lots of words and details make a story good?

**Bryan:** (Looking at me smugly like I should know the answer) Because lots of words make a story long and when a story is long it’s usually good.

**Me:** Oh, I see. What about the details? Why is it important for a story to have details?

**Bryan:** Because if a story doesn’t have details, it won’t be a good story and people won’t read it.

Bryan’s understanding of a story having lots of details or being lengthy once again depicts his writing knowledge and focus on the mechanics of writing. Knowing the mechanics of writing is important, but understanding how the mechanics fit into the writing process is even more essential. Bryan needs explicit instruction to further expand his knowledge about the mechanics of writing, which will then modify his writing goals and understanding of the purpose
of the mechanics of writing. The more knowledge Bryan has as a writer, the more he will understand the various purposes for writing. When he understands the purposes of writing, he will utilize writing more often, therefore increasing the stronger of a writer he will become. If others believe he is a strong writer, it will allow Bryan to believe in himself as a writer which in time will increase his self-perception of himself as a writer.

Often teachers identify strong writers through a means of formal and informal assessments. Informal assessments can be as simple as listening or observing. Assessment plays a major factor in shaping one’s self-perception as a writer. When working with a child on writing, one must be careful of how one assesses the child’s writing (Vogt & Shearer, 2010). If we do not show support and give praise for abilities and areas of strength, it can really damage a child’s self-perception as a writer. Teachers usually find themselves falling into this situation when their instruction focuses on the mechanics of writing. If someone, especially someone that students see as a role model, critically picks out all errors in one’s writing, it can really do some damage to one’s self-perception as a writer.

At the end of the study, I decided to administer one final survey to Bryan. The “You are an Author Survey” was one of the most important surveys I could have given Bryan during my study. I purposely gave this survey to him at the end of our study so he could see that many of us are authors. My hope was for Bryan to realize at this point that an author is more than just an adult who writes words in a book. An author is anyone who takes the growing ideas in his/her mind and creates a written piece of work from those ideas. It was really important for me to make it known what an author is and what it takes to be an author. My hopes were to add to Bryan’s knowledge about what constitutes a good writer and hopefully impact his beliefs about writing. Another hope was for Bryan to recognize that he has all the traits writers have, which
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

makes him an author. Having this positive feeling about himself would greatly increase his self-perception as a writer. Below is a portion of our discussion after Bryan completed the survey. This selection of the conversation is being emphasized because it infers Bryan’s beliefs about himself as a writer. This survey was administered and followed by the conversation on 1/16/14. The conversation about his survey was audio recorded and then transcribed in to my research journal.

**Me:** (small giggle back) Do you know why I gave you this survey?

**Bryan:** Because you want to know more about my writing.

**Me:** Yes I do, but I gave you this survey for another reason. What does the title say?

**Bryan:** You Are an Author

**Me:** Who is an author?

**Bryan:** Someone who writes stories and books and stuff.

**Me:** Are you an author?

**Bryan:** I guess so (with a soft smile).

**Me:** Yes! You Are an Author! Be proud of that!

**Bryan:** (grinning from ear to ear)
Bryan’s understanding and viewing himself as a writer was essential because it will shape Bryan’s writing beliefs, which in return will shape Bryan’s self-perception as a writer. Bryan should realize the writing he does in school is writing done by a credible author. Bryan’s teacher implements author’s chair (noted by Bryan’s Mom in a prior conversation), but should also find other ways to help students recognize themselves as authors. School is a major influence on Bryan’s self-perception as a writer and therefore his writing should be frequently read by himself and/or his peers as well as shared within his classroom. Bryan’s self-perception as a writer cannot flourish unless he believes in himself and sees himself as a credible author. Bryan’s ongoing positive belief of himself as a writer will be a major factor that increases his ability and confidence in writing.

Summary for Themes 1 and 2

All of the above surveys provided me insight to where Bryan’s beliefs of writing have derived from, as well as Bryan’s beliefs of what constitute a strong writer. Bryan’s responses on the surveys about of his writing allowed me to know that the mechanics of writing make up a huge portion of Bryan’s beliefs of what constitutes as a good writer. His knowledge and values about the mechanics of writing correlates with writing knowledge many primary grade students have due to writing instruction implemented throughout Kindergarten through Grade 2 (Graham, et al., 1997). His belief that his handwriting and spelling are poor, which in my opinion is inaccurate, were the consistent focus areas while he assessed his writing. Many of his writing beliefs derive from the school environment where writing is constantly assessed. These
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

concurring beliefs were not only reinforced in school but also get transferred into the home environment through homework.

The two major places where Bryan’s beliefs derive from are school and home. If both places say the same thing and place a large emphasis on the mechanics of writing, Bryan will also obtain a strong belief of the importance about the mechanics of writing. This belief will impact his knowledge and understanding about the qualities of a strong writer. The belief will also transcend into his own personal writing. All of the surveys provided awareness of what and where Bryan’s writing beliefs are and where the beliefs are coming from.

Although a good and solid start toward my study, I still needed more information to help me learn more about how Bryan’s knowledge and understanding of how writing impacts his self-perception as a writer. There are so many contributing factors which shape Bryan’s self-perception as a writer. The best way to determine how his self-perception impacts his writing was to invite Bryan to examine, rank, and assess his own writing. Bryan was instructed to justify his ranking by providing an explanation of his ranking. In order to fully answer my third research question, I needed to unpack the third and final theme of my study:

**Theme 3: Self-assessment significantly impacts Bryan’s self-perception as a writer**

Throughout this study, especially toward the end, Bryan had several realizations and identified himself as a writer. Most of these realizations happened through a means of self-assessment. From my data, the biggest “ah-ha” moment came from his analysis of his own personal ranking of his writing. As Bryan worked through this process, I developed an understanding that Bryan’s relationship with writing was more complex than I had thought.
Although his main focus on writing is largely mechanics, he also showed his awareness of writing as a process. This awareness solidifies Bryan’s responses during the Writing Interview. His personal reflections and assessments proved to greatly shape Bryan’s self-perception as a writer.

Bryan’s Rating of his Own Personal Writing

In order to gain a deeper look into Bryan’s self-perception as a writer, I needed to see what Bryan thought of his own writing. To complete this task, I asked Bryan to choose five writing samples that he previously created and rank them on a scale from 1 to 5 based on what he thought was his poorest work (score of 1) and what he thought was his best work (score of 5). All of the writing pieces Bryan selected were writing pieces he created in school. I made sure to never to say throughout our conversations, especially as we got closer to the writing samples which Bryan ranked as 4th and 5th, which writing piece he thought was the worst. The negative connotation the word “worst” has can hinder one’s image of oneself as a writer (Kim & Lorsbach, 2005). Rather, I made a valid effort to put a positive spin on all of my word choices throughout our conversation.

This activity took place on January 9th in Bryan’s office and in the living room. I made sure to study his body language and the personal conversation he had with himself as he completed this activity. I transcribed Bryan’s conversation with himself and recorded his body language into my research journal. Below is a brief overview of each of Bryan’s choices of writing samples:

- **Writing Sample 1:** Writing piece about going to Grandma’s for breakfast (see Appendix P)
- **Writing Sample 2:** Writing piece about Minecraft (see Appendix R)
Writing Sample 3: Writing piece about Bryan riding his bike (see Appendix T)
Writing Sample 4: Writing piece about playing piano (see Appendix V)
Writing Sample 5: Writing piece about listening to Diary of a Wimpy Kid book with Nathan (see Appendix X)

Favorite Writing Sample
Writing Sample 2: Minecraft

Bryan held his writing samples in a pile and one by one placed all of them face up on the floor of his office. The line of writing samples went from the chair behind his desk to in front of the couch sitting next to his desk. Bryan stood for several minutes looking over his writing pieces, almost as if he was reliving the moment in which he wrote them. He sometimes had his arms folded and other times he had his thumb under his chin and his fingers covering his mouth. Bryan walked back and forth up and down the row in which the papers laid. Finally he said,

Bryan: This one is my favorite story (as he pointed down to the writing sample 2.) This is the best writing I did.

Me: Why is your story about Minecraft your favorite? What makes it your best writing?

Bryan: Because Minecraft is my favorite game! And look, (pointing at the picture he created above his writing) this is my best picture because I put labels on everything. I’m here sitting on the couch and there’s the other couch and lamp.

Me: Yeah, the labels really help the reader understand what is happening in your picture. What else do you like about this story? What makes it your best writing?
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

**Bryan:** (thinking and concentrating on writing sample 2) Um…well I used periods and question marks for all my sentences.

Again, Bryan’s knowledge about the mechanics of writing shine through here. His picture is very clear and labeled which aligns with his writing goals. Yet, more importantly, Bryan felt confident and proud about this piece of writing because he felt confident about sharing his knowledge about Minecraft. During our discussion Bryan shared more insight to what was happening in his favorite writing sample:

**Bryan:** Well when I played this in the morning, I was stuck. See? (pointing at the last words in his story). Then I beat the level and wasn’t stuck anymore.

Bryan was able to share a deeper meaning behind his writing piece as well as his success in the game with me. Feeling successful in a game of his interest and then feeling successful again with the writing convention in this piece, increased Bryan’s confidence about this writing piece. His facial expression, engagement in the activity, body language, and voice all reiterated his success with this writing piece. Building on this positive experience, I asked Bryan to continue ranking his writing pieces in order of his favorite.

**Second Favorite Writing Sample**

**Writing Sample 1: Grandma’s for breakfast**

Bryan’s writing sample one is a story about Bryan’s experience at his grandmother’s house. While at his grandmother’s house, Bryan ate breakfast with his family and went on a four wheeler with his Uncle Brobie. Below is his analysis of the writing piece and why he chose it as
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

his second favorite writing piece. This conversation was audio recorded and then transcribed into my research journal.

**Bryan:** (Looked back and forth at both pieces laying on the ground with excitement, holding writing sample 1, and bringing it over to me) This one!!

**Me:** Why is this your second favorite piece of writing?

**Bryan:** Well because Brobie (my husband/Bryan’s uncle) took me and Nathan on the four-wheeler. We went really far and in the woods!

**Me:** Haha, I don’t know if Brobie was supposed to take you in the woods. (Bryan grins). But were getting off track (I said with a giggle). What about this story (pointing at the writing piece) makes it your second best piece of writing?

**Bryan:** I drew a picture on both sides (flipping writing sample over) and my pictures match my words. See? (pointing at each person) I drew grandma, me, and Nathan at breakfast. There’s my pancakes (pointing to picture) and the table.

**Me:** I see.

**Bryan:** (flipping paper over) and on this side (pointing to picture), there’s me and Brobie on the four wheeler in the woods. There’s the stream in the woods!

In his response to this piece, with the exception of the mentioning of pictures, Bryan does not reference the mechanics of writing. Rather he focuses on the experience, which was of importance to him. This important event and limited focus on the writing mechanics really
allowed Bryan’s inner voice as a writer to come through as he shared this writing sample with me. Writing about his experience on the four-wheeler really impacted him. His vivid experience allowed him to experience success with this writing piece as well. His body language and facial expressions showed his genuine enjoyment of sharing his writing. Although Bryan’s reasoning for why he chose the piece as his favorite often falls back on the mechanics of his writing, he does show his pride in the final piece of his work. The final product is one area all readers see. Not all readers see the process which the writers go through when creating the piece. By allowing Bryan to verbally discuss into further details what was happening in his writing, he was able to better provide a deeper understanding of the overall final writing piece.

**Third Favorite Writing Sample**

**Writing Sample 4: Piano**

After our conversation about his second favorite writing piece, the focus turned to his next preferred writing sample. Bryan chose writing sample 4, the sample about playing the piano. Bryan takes a lot of pride in playing the piano. He practices all the time and looks forward to his monthly recitals. I was not surprised that Bryan chose this piece to rank. What surprised me during our discussion were the reasons why Bryan thought this writing piece ranked third. This conversation was audio recorded and then transcribed in to my research journal.

**Me:** Okay, tell me about this one (I pointed at writing sample 1). What makes this your third best writing?

**Bryan:** Well I stretched out my words.
Me: What do you mean? (attempting to get Bryan to expand his response)

Bryan: When I don’t know a word, I asked my teacher. She said stretch it out so I did. Then I knew what to write.

Me: Oh! I like that idea. I think it’s a great way to learn how to spell words you don’t know.

Bryan: Yeah! Like I didn’t know how to spell piano so I asked Miss Fisher (pseudonym) and she told me stretch it out (pulled arms apart to show actual stretching). Now I know how to spell piano.

Bryan’s reasoning behind his ranking of this justified his knowledge that writing is a process. Although he used invented spelling to create the word peeano (piano), Bryan also used knowledge about letter/sound correspondence to spell the word piano. His use of invented spelling did not alter the meaning of his writing. This was crucial and imperative to share with Bryan at some point in the future. Although I did not have a conversation about this misspelling and how the meaning of the story was not altered by the misspelling. Rather than interject, I only listened and commented when needed. Bryan’s ranking had nothing to do with my thoughts and opinions of writing. This was Bryan’s time to share with me his own insight of his writing. Although I kept my mouth closed, I do feel compelled to have a future conversation with Bryan about invented spelling. I believe the conversation will provide a more actual understanding of the reasons why writing mechanics only make up a part of writing.
Bryan also shared his knowledge about strategies to use when he encounters a problem during writing. First he asked his teacher, and then his teacher prompted him with a different strategy: stretching out a word. Stretching a word out helps students hear each syllable in the word, which increases their awareness of spelling. Although Bryan needed a reminder of the strategy, his body language with his arms growing and stretching out show Bryan’s understanding of what to do with the word. Bryan’s confidence level increased when he knew he could share his knowledge about spelling the word piano. He was able to solve a conventional error through the use of a strategy, which impacted his feelings toward this writing piece. His familiarity with the piano and having the confidence of using a strategy, recommended by his teacher, really elevated Bryan’s passion and assurance in this writing sample.

Fourth Favorite Writing Sample

Writing Sample 5: Listening to Diary of a Wimpy Kid book with Nathan

Bryan’s ranking continued with writing sample five. As he looked over his remaining two pieces, Bryan’s focus intensified. Writing sample 5 ranked fourth in Bryan’s hierarchy. This writing sample consists of Nathan and Bryan listening to “A Diary of a Wimpy Kid” book being read to them. Below are Bryan’s reasons behind his ranking. This conversation was audio recorded and then transcribed in to my research journal.

Bryan: Um…I think I would choose this one (picked up writing sample 5) because it’s good, but not really good.

Me: What do you mean?
Bryan: I messed up on my picture. See, right there (pointing at the speech bubble he made).

Me: What do you mean you messed up? I don’t see anything wrong with it.

Bryan: See I had to make more room on the bubble (pointing to the extended part of the speech bubble) I think I could have erased harder because it’s messy.

Bryan’s reasoning behind why he felt Writing Sample 4 was not as strong as his other writing pieces is largely based on his handwriting and tools used when writing with a pencil. Handwriting can greatly impact one’s self-perception of oneself as a writer (Feder & Mainemer, 2007). This mechanical and technical aspect of writing will serve Bryan a great disadvantage for the process of writing. If Bryan feels his handwriting is poor, he is not going to want others to read his writing, especially those he is uncomfortable with. If his writing is not shared, he will not receive the constructive feedback for his writing needed to grow as a writer. Feedback is a major component of the writing process (Calkins, 1994; Donnelly & Linn, 2014). Bryan’s teachers should have a conversation or conference with him to discuss the areas Bryan feels he needs help with (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994). If he mentions his handwriting, the teacher can help him identify various ways to improve his handwriting. The teacher should also remind Bryan that handwriting is not everything that makes up a strong writing piece (Meier, 2013). From this conference, Bryan can internalize new ways to help him grow as a writer. His growth as a writer will lead to the increase of his self-perception as a writer.
Fifth Favorite Writing Sample

Writing Sample 3: Riding his bike

Bryan’s fifth favorite writing piece was writing sample 3, the story about his bike. Bryan had a lot more to share about his bike, but his writing did not reflect his thoughts. Below is our conversation about the story of his bike. This conversation was audio recorded and then transcribed into my research journal.

**Me:** Okay! Great. (Picking up writing sample 3 as I spoke) So that leaves us with this story you wrote.

**Bryan:** Yeah.

**Me:** (Pointing to all the pieces of writing) So you would say this is your 5th best writing out of the 5 pieces of writing you chose?

**Bryan:** Yeah because I only wrote two sentences. And it’s a bad picture of my bike.

**Me:** I think your picture of your bike is really impressive. Do you remember why you only wrote two sentences?

**Bryan:** I think it’s because I ran out of time.

**Me:** How long do you have for writing time in school?

**Bryan:** I don’t know. Probably fifteen minutes or something like that.

**Me:** Oh. Do you normally get a lot of writing done in those fifteen minutes?

**Bryan:** Yeah I can write lots of things in fifteen minutes. But this one I didn’t know what to write.
Me: Oh. That happens to me to sometimes. I have to think and think about a lot of different things before I can start writing. Writing a list of ideas helps me brainstorm. Is there anything else you wanted to say about your story about you riding your bike?

Bryan: Well I rode my bike around the block. Dad went with me but we had to go slow because Jason (pseudonym) (Bryan’s little brother) came too…

The conversation between Bryan and me went on for a few more minutes. I was able to get so much more out of our conversation than what was on the paper. He also felt more satisfied with his writing piece after his explanation. Bryan’s struggle to get started writing is something many students struggle with (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994). Because of this initial set back, Bryan was not able to get all of his thoughts onto the paper. Without all of his thoughts on the paper, Bryan believed his work was unfinished and therefore not worthy of being his favorite. Bryan had a lot to say about this piece. He had an assortment of knowledge about his bike riding experience that he anticipated sharing with his readers, but due to the time restraint, he was unable to do so.

Summary

Bryan’s reflection and self-assessment of his own writing provided a distinct insight into Bryan’s thoughts and feelings about writing. Bryan’s reasoning behind his ranking heavily relied on the mechanics of writing. The areas of improvement in his writing were spelling, handwriting, or sentence length. All of these areas are assessed in the primary grades for writing.
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

More importantly, Bryan needs to know all of these areas can improve with gained knowledge and/or repetitive practice. Although he based much of his ranking on the mechanics of writing, Bryan did express knowledge about the process of writing. His knowledge about using strategies while writing is a great area of focus to build on to help increase Bryan’s self-perception as a writer.

Bryan felt comfortable sharing all of his personally selected writing pieces because he knew the content of what he was writing about. He even felt confident in sharing his areas of focus because he had knowledge about the things he wrote about. Through this confidence, I was able to clearly hear Bryan’s inner voice as a writer. The pride Bryan took in his writing really emphasized that Bryan recognizes himself as a writer when he writes about aspects he feels knowledgeable about. With this newfound confidence and pride, Bryan’s feelings and connections to his writing really began to shine through, allowing the reader/listener to identify who Bryan is as a writer/author. This information is significant to the study, especially research question three.

To solidify my findings even more, I decided to have Bryan rerank his writing with the Writing Inventory for Primary Grades Survey (see Appendix Q). This would provide Bryan another opportunity to assess his work, but this time using a different form of assessment. The following day, 1/10/14, I asked Bryan to look over all five writing samples again. I asked him to fill out a survey for each writing piece. Bryan was asked to assess each of his pieces of work through a means of three sections: structure, elaboration, and mechanics. Each section has a checklist to complete. If the statement on the survey was completed in the writing sample, Bryan would place a check mark next to the statement within the checklist. In addition to completing the checklist, Bryan had to choose if he did well, did okay, or could have made improvement. If
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

he did well, Bryan would shade a happy smiley face. If he did okay, Bryan would shade a slanted face. If Bryan could have done better, he would shade a straight face.

As Bryan completed this activity, he did so silently without much facial and/or emotional expression. He seemed to be very focused, with a straight face throughout and took the task of grading his writing very seriously. In my opinion, Bryan was very hard on himself as he “graded” his writing with the given survey. After Bryan evaluated his work, I yearned to know more about his evaluation. Bryan would check off areas that he completed in his writing, but then not rate his writing with the corresponding smiley face. This greatly intrigued me. I knew Bryan critically analyzed his writing and I wanted to learn more about his analysis. The best way for me to acquire a true understanding of his thoughts was through a discussion. Below is selected portion of our conversation which highlights his thoughts and reasoning behind his evaluation. I audio recorded our conversation and then transcribed it into my research journal on 1/10/2014.

**Me:** How about we start with this one (pointing at writing sample 1). You gave yourself a check for your writing having a beginning, middle, and an end, but you only gave yourself the okay smiley face. Why?

**Bryan:** because I could have wrote neater and wrote more.

Bryan’s statement justifies his reasoning for why he gave himself the okay smiley face. Although Bryan feels he has a valid reason, Bryan’s reason does not match the question being asked. Rather, Bryan’s reasoning focuses on the mechanics of writing rather than if he had a beginning, middle, and end in his story. In writing sample 1, Bryan included a beginning,
middle, and end to his writing piece. The statement did not focus on his handwriting or the length of his story. This was a crucial conversation that I needed to have with Bryan. During our conversation, I reminded Bryan that he needed to remember answer the question based on what the question asked, not his personal thoughts of his writing. Below is selected portion of our conversation which highlights his understanding. I audio recorded our conversation and then transcribed it into my research journal on 1/10/14.

Me: Ahh, now I understand why you shaded the okay smiley face. But does this (pointing to the statement) ask you about your handwriting? Does it mention anything about how long your story needs to be?

Bryan: No.

Me: Exactly! Just read the question as it is.

Bryan: “Does the story have a beginning, middle, end?”

Me: Does your story?

Bryan: (looks over his story) Yes, it does.

Me: So does your story successfully answer what the statement is asking you?

Bryan: Yes

Me: Which smiley face should you shade?

Bryan: The happy face!
This conversation was imperative to have with Bryan. Bryan should understand that mechanics make up part of writing, but are not all parts of writing. Bryan’s knowledge and understanding of writing play a key role in how he assesses his own writing. This is essential to Bryan’s understanding of himself as a writer. The more we broaden his definition of writing, the more he can accurately assess and understand his own writing.

Another example of conversing with Bryan to explain criteria in this assessment was during the mechanics portion of the assessment. As much as Bryan focuses in on the mechanics of writing, he still has much more to learn about mechanics and the writing process. From our conversation, I was able to see that Bryan did not understand the definition of a noun. Because he did not have the knowledge about nouns, verbs, and pronouns, Bryan left the statement blank without a checkmark. We proceeded to have a conversation about this. Below is selected portion of our continued conversation. I audio recorded our conversation and then transcribed it into my research journal on 1/10/14.

Me: Why did you not check this, “my writing uses nouns, verbs, and pronouns correctly?”

Bryan: Because I don’t know what all of those are.

Me: Oh, okay. That makes more sense. Let’s look at your writing. Nouns are a person, place, or thing. Do you have any of those in your writing?

Bryan: Um….yeah! The woods.

Me: Good! Verbs are action words, like when you are doing something. Like running, jumping, or writing (with a smile). Do you have any of those?
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Bryan: (searching through his paper) Um….like played?

Me: Yes! Can you play?

Bryan: Yup.

Me: Then yes, play is a verb.

Me: Now pronouns are specific nouns, like people’s names or names of places. Did you use any of those?

Bryan: Hm…. Yup! Brobie!

Me: Good! So now that you know nouns, verbs, and pronouns are, let’s look back at the scoring sheet. What do you think? Do you think you should check that line or not?

Bryan: (with a smile) Yup!

Me: (as Bryan is checking the line and crossing off the middle smile face and shading in the happy smile face). I think you should too! And remember, if you don’t know what something means….ASK someone!!!!

Not only did Bryan feel confident as we concluded this conversation, but he also felt successful. He realized he implemented many of the aspects of the questions asked without knowing he was doing it. He also recognized the importance of asking someone what a word means if he does not understand. Changing the smiley face was an “ah-ha” moment for Bryan. He learned the importance of knowing what to look for when assessing writing. If he did not know what he was looking for in his writing or had a misconception of what he was looking for
in his writing, his self-assessment would be inaccurate. Going through this process with Bryan about his personal assessment of himself as a writer, I believe helped Bryan grow as a writer. He knows what to look for when writing, when revising his work, and when assessing his work. He can apply this knowledge to future writing pieces.

**Summary of Theme 3**

Assessment is a major component of the learning process. This includes the process of learning how to write. When assessments are used properly, we learn what is known rather than what is unknown (Bottomley, Henk, & Melnick, 1997; Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2013). Knowing what is unknown is imperative for teachers because teachers need to adjust their instruction based on what students need to still learn or relearn (Donnelly & Linn, 2014). Even more crucial for students is understanding the purpose of assessment, especially when students assess their own work. Students need to know what they are looking for and why they are looking for it while self-assessing. If students have a misconception or do not understand what they are assessing, the purpose self-assessing loses its value (Bottomley, Henk, & Melnick, 1997; Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2013).

Bryan obtained more knowledge about himself as a writer through analyzing his own writing. The survey provided a clear purpose and understanding of what he was looking for while assessing. Through our discussions, Bryan and I were able to clear up the few misconceptions he encountered while self-assessing. Although misunderstandings occurred, I was able to make teachable moments from those misconceptions. Teachers should do the same when providing students the opportunity to self-assess their own work. Monitoring behavior and
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

conversations should occur throughout the process of self-evaluation. Bryan was able to have a better understanding of the various components which make up his writing because I monitored his behavior and had conversations with him about his self-assessment while he self-assessed. More importantly, Bryan was able to identify the purpose of self-assessing his writing, therefore broadening his awareness of himself as a writer.

Summary of third research question

This study answered my third research question: How does Bryan’s self-perception as a writer impact his writing? Before starting this study, I knew self-perception as a writer influenced one’s writing. What I did not know was how self-perception influenced one’s writing. From my study, I was able to answer this question.

Bryan’s knowledge about writing impacts his self-perception as a writer. He has a lot of knowledge about the mechanics of writing and unfortunately, sometimes that negatively interferes with his self-perception as a writer. Bryan’s intense focus on spelling and handwriting can negate the things he feels he does well in writing. Many students place a heavy focus on the areas of focus in which they can improve. Bryan is no exception to this rule. He feels strongly about the mechanics of writing because that is where he feel the most confident when writing due to the instruction emphasized in his schooling. Yet when Bryan gets stuck on his spelling or writing, he can get lost in it. If handwriting and spelling consume all of his writing time, he will not have the opportunity to further develop his writing and enhance his self-perception of himself as a writer. Bryan needs to build on his areas of strengths and continue to strive for improving
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

his areas of focus little by little, rather than letting it consume his beliefs and attitude toward writing. When this is achieved, Bryan’s self-perception as a writer will grow.

By expanding his knowledge about the writing process, Bryan will grow into a more balanced writer. Bryan needs to have more exposure to the writing process as well as more interactions with his finished pieces of writing in order to become a balanced writer. Just because he finishes a writing piece, does not mean there is not anything left to learn from that writing piece (Dunn & Finley, 2010). By analyzing writing as a process, Bryan will see deeper issues/areas of strengths within his writing rather than just the mechanics. Most importantly, Bryan will learn and develop an understanding that the mechanics are just part of the writing process, not the entire writing process.

How and where Bryan obtains his knowledge about writing influences his self-perception of writing. Much of his knowledge about the mechanics of writing derives from his learning in school. Many children begin to learn writing at home, but a more in depth understanding of writing comes from writing instruction in school. In the primary grades, a heavy focus on the mechanics of writing is emphasized. Although there is a great purpose for accentuating the mechanics of writing in the primary grades, teachers also need to ensure they reiterate that the mechanics of writing only make up part of writing. We do not want students to get so caught up on their handwriting and spelling that that’s all they focus on while writing. Although both spelling and handwriting are important characteristics which helps the reader make meaning from writing, understanding that one endures a process while writing and the characteristics that make up a final piece of writing piece can also enhances one’s self- perception as a writer. Bryan’s teacher needs to ensure Bryan has a balance of writing mechanics, the process in which writers go through when transferring their thoughts to into writing, and the characteristics of a
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

final written product to ensure he feels successful as a writer (Felknor, 1993). In doing so, teachers will promote and help students achieve a balanced sense of writing, therefore increasing students’ knowledge and self-perception of writing.

Learning is a recursive process (Donnelly & Linn, 2014). One continuously learns through a means of assessment (Donnelly & Linn, 2014). The process of self-assessments is designed to show one what is known. Self-assessments also helps one gain insight to the misunderstandings one has. We learn from our mistakes (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994). Bryan learned various aspects about himself as a writer through a means of self-assessment. He gave himself harsher grades because he was unfamiliar with what the survey was asking him (nouns, verbs, and pronouns section). From our discussion, Bryan was able to obtain a better understanding as well as new knowledge about the types of words which exist in daily writing. Most importantly, Bryan recognized that he was including these types of words already in his writing. His expression and body language during our discussion did not show him feeling as if he had failed because he did not know what nouns, verbs, and pronouns were. Rather, his body language and expression showed success. Bryan was determined to find the various types of words within his writing. Upon looking and finding, Bryan would show excitement and feel proud. He made the connection that the words were already there, he just did not know the words had a classifications within parts of speech. Bryan was satisfied that he already knew how to incorporate and use the different parts of speech and now he knew the name to go with those words.

Bryan’s understanding of writing has broadened because of his knowledge gained from the self-reflection and assessment of his own work. In the beginning, much of his thoughts about his writing reflected his beliefs of the importance of mechanics in writing. Although many of his
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

beliefs may not have altered within this six week study, Bryan has increased his awareness of the role mechanics has in writing (nouns, verbs, pronouns). He still places a heavy emphasis on the mechanics of writing, but he has more of an idea about how mechanics are intertwined with the writing process Bryan gained this knowledge from his self-assessments. He was able to critically reflect and analyze his writing. Because of this reflection, he was able to assess his writing justly and see his writing through a different lens. Seeing through this different lens definitely impacted Bryan’s self-perception as a writer. He was able to think about the larger picture rather than just focusing in on the mechanics. Bryan’s writing has grown, but even more importantly his view of himself as a writer has grown as well.

Summary of Chapter 4

This qualitative study answered my first research question: How does Bryan’s experience with writing in the home influence his self-perception as a writer? Bryan’s writing experience in the home significantly shapes who he is as a writer. He does a lot of writing at home, whether it is done for choice or done because he has been mandated to do so (typically homework). Even with the vast amount of writing he does at home, Bryan lacks the knowledge about the various writing modalities he has available to him within the home. Although he uses his iPad and computer almost on a daily basis, he does not see the iPad or computer as a tool for writing. The more Bryan becomes aware of the writing he does at home and the tools he uses to implement that writing, the more knowledgeable, well-rounded, and balanced of a writer he will become.

Bryan also looks to his family as influences regarding writing. Even though his knowledge about writing is not nearly as developed as his parents’ knowledge, Bryan has many
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

of his mom and dad’s beliefs and values surrounding writing. He also looks to his older brother, Nathan, as a role model for writing and aspires to be just like him in everything he does. Although all of Bryan’s family members engage in the writing process in their own way, all of their writing experiences shape the knowledge and values Bryan has about writing.

This study also helped me answer my second research question: How does Bryan’s experience with writing in school influence his self-perception as a writer? Many of Bryan’s beliefs about writing derive directly from school. One writing value and belief Bryan has instilled within him is the importance and role which mechanics serve in writing. Bryan’s values and beliefs about the importance of mechanics in writing greatly impacts his overall writing. He has a lot of knowledge about the mechanics of writing, which is a direct result of the writing instruction he receives in school. Bryan’s knowledge sometimes interferes with his understanding of writing and can negatively affect his belief in his ability to write. When Bryan gets caught up on something, he will direct his focus to that problem. For example, when his writing is not neat enough he will make it a priority to fix his penmanship before moving on with the task. He also becomes very passionate about fixing it and will fixate on it until he alters it to his satisfaction. Much of Bryan’s current understandings, beliefs, and values about the writing process were obtained via the writing instruction he receives in school and reinforced within his home environment.

Writing instruction significantly shapes Bryan’s writing experiences in school as well as his writing experiences in his home. The reciprocal relationship between home and school greatly impacts Bryan’s self-perception as a writer. Bryan’s teacher and parents have communicated their writing strategies and beliefs with one another because what is practiced in school is also implemented in home. Just as Bryan’s mom will remind Bryan to rewrite his
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

letters or words if they are not up to standards, Bryan’s teacher will also ask him to go back and rewrite for well-ordered letters and words. With such a heavy focus on the mechanics of writing, Bryan’s self-perception as a writer is greatly impacted by his beliefs about writing mechanics. If Bryan does not feel confident in implementing proper use of mechanics in his writing, he will not feel successful as a writer. This feeling of defeat will shape the negative image he has of himself as a writer, until he becomes more familiar with the writing process and the small piece mechanics play throughout the writing process.

This study also helped me answer my third and final research question: How does Bryan’s self-perception as a writer impact his writing? Bryan’s beliefs and values significantly shape his self-perception as a writer. When Bryan feels successful, his belief in himself as a writer greatly increases. This feeling of success allows Bryan to take risks within his writing. Most of these risks involve sharing his writing with others. Inviting others to read his writing, allows his readers to view Bryan as a writer. This is tremendous for increasing his self-perception as a writer. Bryan’s readers of his writing will pave a path for Bryan to grow as a writer through a means of appreciation and feedback for Bryan’s work.

Yet, when Bryan feels he has been unsuccessful with a task, he does one of two things: Bryan will pursue the task with vengeance and will not rest until he fixes the problem or he will simply give up and shut down. If Bryan chooses to go after the problem, he will work and work on the problem until he gets it right. Although this type of perseverance can be a good thing, it can also be very harmful to one’s self-perception if it totally consumes one’s thoughts and understanding. Bryan’s fixation on one thing (typically dealing with the mechanics of writing), allows him to miss the bigger picture of entire piece of writing. This fixation focuses in on only his view of the negative in his writing, which ultimately leads to Bryan giving up on his writing.
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

When Bryan gives up on his writing, he shuts down and it takes a lot of time to help him realize the great writer that lies inside of him. Bryan’s family and teacher must work together to ensure Bryan’s level of frustration with writing does not get to the point of him shutting down. The frustration does nothing but negatively impact his self-perception as a writer, which directly impacts his writing.

Bryan’s writing will be significantly impacted based on how he feels about himself as a writer. Bryan should realize that mistakes in writing are a good thing. Mistakes can always be revised and most importantly, we learn from our mistakes (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994). Bryan needs the positive and constructive support from school and home to make this realization about himself as a writer a reality. His self-perception will never completely flourish if he does not have the backing from home and school. Both greatly impact his life experiences involving writing and therefore are major contributing factors to his overall self-perception as a writer.
Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to answer three research questions regarding how a first grader’s self-perception of himself as a writer impacts his writing. My research questions were:

1. How does Bryan’s experience with writing in the home influence his self-perception as a writer?
2. How does Bryan’s experience with writing in school influence his self-perception as a writer?
3. How does Bryan’s self-perception as a writer impact his writing?

In this chapter, I will draw conclusions I have made based on my findings from the study. I will discuss where Bryan’s view of himself as a writer derives from and how those views influence his self-perception as a writer. I will also discuss how Bryan’s self-perception of himself as a writer impacts his overall writing. I will then discuss the ways I have benefitted from my research and the findings of my research. Finally, I will share recommendations for further research as well as share my final thoughts on the study.

Conclusions

The Powerful Influence of Teaching Practices on Children’s Beliefs about Writing and Themselves as Writers.

Writing beliefs and values derive from home and school (Beatty, 2013; Brice-Heath, 1983; Comber, 2000). Many young children’s writing beliefs and values originate from their
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

homes and experiences. As children grow and begin to attend school, many of their writing beliefs begin to shift from not only the home environment, but also from the writing instruction they receive in the classroom (Beatty, 2013; Brice-Heath, 1983; Comber, 2000). Bryan’s focus on the mechanics of writing is heavily based on the writing instruction provided by his teacher (Comber, 2000). In primary grades, especially in Bryan’s school district, the mechanics are a major part of the writing instruction. Making sure students’ handwriting is legible, including spaces in between words, and spelling are all huge components of the district’s curriculum. These beliefs greatly impact Bryan’s self-perception of himself as a writer. Therefore, the more teachers stress the importance of mechanics of writing at the expense of the writing process, the more students will internalize the writing mechanics instruction and implement it with a strong focus in their writing.

Students’ perceptions of themselves as writers greatly derives from the teaching practices which surround their lives (Comber, 2000). When students use their learned writing skills and strategies successfully, their self-efficacy and self-perception as writers increase (Kim & Lorsbach, 2005). When students are not as successful with implementing the skills and strategies they have learned, their self-efficacy and self-perception as writers are more apt to decrease (Kim & Lorsbach, 2005). This was especially true for Bryan. When he was successful with using the mechanics of writing appropriately, Bryan’s belief in himself as a writer was unstoppable. When his writing was not as successful as he wanted it to be, typically because there was an issue with the mechanics within his writing, he felt the writing piece was not worth sharing or reading. This feeling significantly impacted his self-perception of himself as a writer because he did not feel confident and/or successful as a writer.
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Teachers need to ensure their writing instruction and practices have a balance of the mechanics of writing as well as the process of writing and the final product of writing (Felknor, 1993). By implementing a balanced approach, students will not focus in on only one aspect of writing. Rather they will simultaneously focus on the mechanics, the writing process, and their final written product (Felknor, 1993). From this focus, students’ knowledge about their writing pieces will expand and therefore their self-perceptions as writers will also expand (Kim & Lorsbach, 2005). Students will be able to easily identify strengths and areas of focus within their writing. Having a balanced understanding of all that goes into writing will increase one’s knowledge about writing, ultimately increasing one’s self-perception of oneself as a writer (Kim & Lorsbach, 2005).

Authentic and Meaningful Writing Shifting to Fulfilling a Quota

Bryan’s school’s writing instruction is shifting away from communicating one’s own thoughts effectively. Writing instruction with an emphasis on meaning is challenging to implement in the primary grade levels due to the rigorous demands of teaching the mechanics of writing (Graves, 1994). Teaching the mechanics of writing in the primary grades is essential and does have significant influence on writing performance, but should not be the only component of writing taught in the classroom (Graham & MacArthur, 2007). Yet, most writing instruction in primary grades continue to highlight the technical aspects of writing, including Bryan’s classroom.

Bryan’s knowledge about writing relates back to the mechanics of writing, rather than the writing process. This is a direct reflection of the writing instruction he receives in school.
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

(Comber, 2000; Graham & MacArthur, 2007). Although the mechanics of writing are important, the focus of the mechanics relates back to fulfilling quotas, not for meaningful and authentic writing (Felknor, 1993). Bryan’s self-perception as a writer is greatly impacted by his knowledge and beliefs about writing (Kim & Lorsbach, 2005). Many of these writing practices derive from the writing instruction he receives in school (Comber, 2000).

The shift from authentic and meaningful writing to writing to satisfy a quota significantly impacts students’ self-perception as writers. When the number of sentences in writing becomes more important than the content in writing, students receive a misinterpretation of the writing process. As teachers, we need to be aware that the writing instruction being delivered to our students greatly impacts them (Comber, 2000). If teaching about the mechanics of writing takes over most of the writing instruction, students will have a narrowed focus on the mechanics while writing. Students will lose insight to the meaning behind writing (Kim & Lorsbach, 2005).

Writing becomes a tedious task, rather than a means of effectively communicating one’s thoughts, feelings, and interpretation about what they have read (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994). Writing should be meaningful (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994). A balance of the writing process infused with instruction of the mechanics of writing should be implemented if we want our students to identify themselves as successful writers.

The Value of Conversation about One’s Writing

Throughout this study, conversations and discussions were key components to understanding Bryan’s self-perception and self-efficacy as a writer. By talking with one another, Bryan and I were able to uncover more about his writing than the words he had written on the
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

paper. We were able to discover a deeper meaning behind his writing and reasoning behind his thoughts about writing.

Many of the conversations provided both of us with “aha” moments. This was especially true for me when it came to Bryan completing the surveys with one word answers. Bryan read a question and circled one word to answer that question. The one word answer did not provide me with much insight to his inner thinking. Yet, by talking about his answer, I was able to learn more about Bryan’s reasons for responding the way he did. For example, in Writing Survey 1, Bryan responded to the statement, “I think I’m a good writer” two separate times during the study. Both times he answered the questions differently. The first time he circled the answer “some” and the second time he circled the answer “a lot”. In order for me to understand what caused Bryan to answer differently, I had to engage in a conversation with Bryan. It was through our discussion that I could understand Bryan’s reasoning behind his answers.

Discussion and collaboration are crucial components that need to be infused throughout the writing process (McBride, 2000; Wigglesworth & Storch, 2012). Discussion and collaboration ensure students converse. Students can discuss and collaborate with other students, while simultaneously teachers and students discuss and collaborate. Students learn just as much from their peers as they do from their teachers (Wigglesworth & Storch, 2012). By discussing writing with students, teachers are able to help them stay on task, provide them with other potential areas they could take their writing, and provide feedback (Bayraktar, 2013). Discussion and collaboration are also important for students because it allows students to convey their thoughts with more detail and depth (Wigglesworth & Storch, 2012). Discussion and collaboration allow one to get deeper into the mind of the writer, which permits the reader to learn more, on a deeper level, about the writing and the writer.
The Value of Self-Assessment in Writing

Writing takes on various purposes. Some people write for personal reasons, others write for informative reasons, and others write to communicate with others (McDermott, 2010). Sometimes people write for multiple purposes. The more one engages in writing, the more one will learn about oneself as a writer (Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2013). As we learn more about ourselves as writers, we learn more about how we grow as writers. One of the biggest ways to grow as writers is through the assessment process (Bottomley, Henk, & Melnick, 1997). As beneficial as it is by having other’s assess personal writing, the boundaries are pushed even further when one reflects on his/her own writing while assessing it personally (Bottomley, Henk, & Melnick, 1997). Assessment helps one identify what one is doing well and the other areas one can improve (Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2013). From this knowledge, one can internalize one’s areas of strengths and areas of focus and apply one’s understanding to future endeavors.

Throughout this study, one of the biggest reasons Bryan was able to recognize and understand his self-perception as a writer was due to his self-assessment and analysis of his own personal writing. He was able to use a critical eye and look at what he was doing well and identify the areas he could make improvements. By having a rubric/checklist to use as a guide as he went through the process of assessing his own work, Bryan was able to reason through his writing and ask himself questions about his writing. Questioning is a great strategy to use when reading and writing (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007). It requires the reader to think about what he/she read and then reflect on the reading (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007). Although the focus of this study was on writing, reading and writing share a reciprocal relationship which enhances one’s overall comprehension and understanding of the task (Corkett et al., 2011; Gee, 1998). Bryan’s understanding of his writing was amplified through the process of self-assessment.
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

The self-assessment process, especially during writing, is essential for all students. Writing is constantly assessed in schools (Vogt, 2010). Making students part of the assessment process is essential to students’ self-perception and efficacy as writers (Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2013). Students will learn more about themselves as writers and the characteristics which make up strong, quality writing if they are immersed in the assessment process. Students cannot just be thrown into the process however. Students need to be explicitly taught how to self-assess as well as the reasons why they are self-assessing to ensure they understand the purpose of self-assessment (Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2013). When students understand the purpose of self-assessment, students become aware of what they are writing, why they are writing, and to whom they are writing (Bottomley et al., 1997; Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2013). Many students write an assignment, turn in the assignment, and never look at the assignment again. When students take the time to truly look over their work, they develop a meaningful understanding of their writing (Bottomley et al., 1997; Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2013). When students reread their writing, check to ensure the goals of the writing assignment have been met, and reflect on their writing, students are immersing themselves in a deeper understanding of their writing. Their self-perception and self-efficacy as writers grow through self-assessing because students are reflecting on what they know and do successfully in their writing and are not as focused in on what they do not know (Bottomley et al., 1997; Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2013). Teachers should clearly state to their students what we learn from one self-assessment should be implemented into the next writing assignment. In doing so, we will all grow as writers and so will our self-perceptions.

The more opportunities students have to engage in the self-assessment process, the more fluent the process will become (Bottomley et al., 1997; Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2013). As
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

students become more familiar with the process they will learn the full benefits from self-assessing. Understanding the assessment process is crucial for all students to know and utilize. The students’ focus while self-assessing will shift from “what I did not do well?” to “what am I doing well and what is one area I can improve upon for the next upcoming writing assignment?” ((Bottomley et al., 1997). This positive outlook on the process of self-assessing will shine through in students writing, which should enhance student writing (Bottomley et al., 1997; Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2013). Keeping this positive outlook on students’ personal writing is imperative. From this outlook, students’ self-perception as writers will grow and flourish due to the writing success students will feel.

Implications for Students’ Learning

Bryan overly focuses on the mechanics of writing rather than the process of writing

Bryan’s understanding of his writing was heavily based on the mechanics of writing. Regardless if he was answering questions in a survey or interview or addressing his own assessment of his personal work, Bryan chose to focus on the mechanics within the writing to determine what made his writing successful or unsuccessful. Bryan’s focus on his handwriting, spelling, and spacing were all major contributing factors which narrowed his focus on the mechanics of writing rather than the process of writing. This confined view on the mechanics of writing allowed Bryan to lose insight to the writing process.

Bryan’s limited understanding of the writing process directly impacts his self-perception as a writer. His overly focused understanding of the technical aspects of writing significantly influences his self-perception as a writer. When Bryan feels success on a piece of writing, most
often it is not because he communicated his thoughts effectively, rather the success derives from his beliefs about the writing mechanics he implemented into his writing. This feeling of triumph is a good place to start increasing Bryan’s self-perception, but eventually the learning of the mechanics of writing will be the remaining factor to help increase Bryan’s self-perception as a writer. Therefore, if Bryan’s knowledge about the writing process does not increase, his self-perception as a writer will not increase. For the upcoming school years, Bryan needs to continuously be immersed within the entire writing process, not just the mechanics of writing in order to grow and feel confident as a writer.

When students only focus on the mechanics of writing, their understanding of what writing truly is becomes distorted. Although understanding the mechanics of writing is important, it also should not be the sole focus of one’s writing knowledge (Felknor, 1993; Meier, 2013). Students need to understand the purpose of writing, various ways to implement writing, and recognize that writing is recursive process (Tillema et al., 2011). When students understand how all three important aspects infuse into one writing piece and then apply that understanding, students will only then truly comprehend the writing process (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007).

In order for our students to grow as writers and feel confident as writers, students need to have constant exposure to the writing process (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994). The writing process encourages students to take their writing step by step but to remember that writing is recursive (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994). When students brainstorm, write a rough draft, edit and revise (revise throughout each stage), and produce a final copy, students truly engage in the writing process (Calkins, 1994). Writing should not be a monotonous task which disempowers students from communicating their thoughts and sharing their ideas. Rather, writing should empower students to explore various concepts and develop a more meaningful and deeper understanding
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

of those explored concepts (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994). Students should be able to express themselves freely through a means of transferring their inner most thoughts via any given writing modality (Dunn & Finley, 2010). Only then, will students truly identify themselves as writers. This recognition will directly influence students’ self-perceptions as writers.

Students immersed with various writing modalities for multiple purposes

Regardless of using iPads, computers, and/or pencil and paper to write, Bryan’s writing was written for a purpose. Bryan learned about various modalities of writing throughout the study. By learning about these modalities, Bryan recognized he took part in more writing than he gave himself credit for. Drawing and typing were all forms of writing Bryan utilized throughout the study (Graves, 1994; McDermott, 2010; Mills, 2011; Writing Study Group of NCTE Executive Committee, 2004). Due to Bryan’s limited knowledge about what writing is, Bryan dismissed drawing and typing as actual writing. Both of the writing modes above were essential for Bryan to recognize as writing. Once he recognized both typing and drawing were modes of writing, Bryan then transferred that knowledge to his treasure map and his typing on the computer and iPad, whether for games or for school work. All of Bryan’s pieces of writing he created, regardless if they consisted of what a “normal” writing piece look liked, were all still authentic writing pieces. They were to be taken seriously and held to the same standard as the daily “norm” of writing is held to. This understanding made writing seem not so distant for Bryan.

Despite how Bryan communicated his thoughts and ideas via writing, all of Bryan’s writing was written for a purpose. According to Literacy Leaders (2008), all writers write for a
purpose, whether it is to entertain, persuade, or inform. Most of the daily school writing Bryan shared with me was done for the purpose of informing. The map drawing was an activity Bryan and his brother took part in for entertainment. When Bryan used his iPad, it was for informing and entertainment purposes. Whether Bryan was looking up information about how to beat a level in Minecraft or using the iPad for entertainment, Bryan still had a purpose for using the iPad. Bryan’s understanding of his purpose for writing was essential for his self-perception as a writer.

A crucial component of the writing process is identifying the purpose when writing (Literacy Leaders, 2008). Students need a purpose when writing (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994). The purpose provides students with authenticity of the writing assignment (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994; Literacy Leaders, 2008). Students should always be aware of their audience of readers and the rationale for their writing. This understanding will increase students’ awareness of themselves as writers and the writing process as well as increase other’s recognition of themselves as writers (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994).

When engaging in the writing process, students should have various options to display their writing (Mills, 2011). Students should not be limited to pencil/pen and paper. Various options such as computers, iPads, and paper and pencil should be available for students to use while writing (Mills, 2011; Kennedy, 2013; Siegle, 2012). Choice in the different modalities of writing allows students to represent their writing in the best way they see fit (Kennedy, 2013). Education professionals want to make sure they do not eliminate choice when instructing their students in the writing process (Mills, 2011). The more options students have, the more students will be motivated and engaged in the writing process, directly resulting in the growth of students recognition of themselves as writers (Corkett et al., 1997). When students identify themselves as
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

writers, students’ self-perceptions as writers also increase (Corkett et al., 1997). With an increased self-perception as writers, students’ writing will amplify across all areas of writing.

**Similarities and differences of writing at home and at school**

Before this study began, Bryan was aware that he utilized writing in school. He has writer’s workshop on a daily basis, where he writes for an extended period of time, and he also writes daily in his math journal. What seemed to take more time for Bryan to realize was how he utilizes writing in his home. The reasons why it took Bryan longer to realize how he implements writing at home rather than writing in school was due to the routine of writing in school and purpose of writing (*Literacy Leaders*, 2008). Bryan has been immersed in his classroom for several months. A routine and schedule have been established and are implemented on a daily basis. Bryan has a deep understanding of his daily schedule and knows when to expect writing time. This internalized knowledge has made it easier for Bryan to identify how he utilizes writing in school (*Literacy Leaders*, 2008).

There are three reasons why authors write: to entertain, to persuade, or to inform (*Literacy Leaders*, 2008). With the exception of completing homework, most of the writing Bryan immerses himself in at home is done is for entertainment. Identifying the purpose of Bryan’s writing is harder for him when he has to think about why he is writing (*Literacy Leaders*, 2008). In school, Bryan writes for all three purposes. Regardless that some purposes are implemented more than others, the purposes are still clear and explicit. Therefore, Bryan finds it easier to recall how he utilizes writing in school.
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

All of the writing Bryan does at home still counts as writing and more importantly, adds to his personal view of himself as a writer (Corkett et al., 2011). In the beginning of the study, Bryan did not recognize the tools he used to deliver his writing at home. He could easily identify what tools he used in school to write, but his understanding of what tools he had available to him in the home were not as obvious. Furthermore, Bryan found it very easy to distinguish the differences between writing at home and writing at school, yet he did not have an easy time distinguishing the similarities of both places. During one conversation, I asked Bryan to think about some similarities and differences of writing at home and at school. Most of the time, his response was that he used pencil and paper when writing at school and sometimes he used pencil and paper at home. Bryan also shared that he did not really know how the writing he did at home was different from the writing he did at school. This was distressing to me and instantly awoke my awareness of the importance of explicitly sharing how writing in the home and in school are similar and different (Michaels, 1981).

All students need to be aware of the types of writing and the various writing modalities they have available to them in the home and at school (Mills, 2011; Kennedy, 2013). The more aware they are of the types of writing and how writing is implemented in both the home and at school, the more balanced and well-rounded writers’ students will become (Calkins, 1994). Knowing the opportunities, modes, and tools one has to implement writing, regardless of where one is, is very important (Mills, 2011; Kennedy, 2013). This knowledge shows what is needed when balancing one’s writing. Becoming a balanced writer allows one to obtain an enhanced understanding of oneself as a writer. This understanding is very applicable for the home and school environments (Comber, 2000).
Home and school share many reciprocal relationships with one another, especially in writing (Beatty, 2013; Comber, 2000; Compton-Lilly, 2006; Gardner, 2013; Genishi, & Dyson, 2009; Moll et al., 1992). This reciprocal writing relationship between home and school provides students with a stronger understanding of why writers write, how writers write, and the types of audiences writers write too (Comer, 2000; Compton-Lilly, 2006; Genishi, & Dyson, 2009). Understanding these reasons are essential for beginning writers. In addition to understanding the reasons, one needs to constantly write regardless of the purpose attached to the writing (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994). This will ensure writing is being practiced on a daily basis which in turn will create stronger writers. Teachers and parents need to work together to provide all children with enriched and authentic writing experiences (Beatty, 2013; Comber, 2000). From authentic and enriched experiences, students will internalize their writing experiences and apply those experiences to future writing endeavors.

Implications for My Teaching

Home environment and beliefs are the foundation of students’ knowledge about writing

Students’ knowledge, values, and experiences with writing derive from their home and school experiences (Moll et al., 1992; Zipin, 2009). Students will have various funds of knowledge about writing depending on the writing knowledge and experiences they have been immersed in (Moll et al., 1992; Zipin, 2009). Teachers need to take what students bring to school and find ways to build on their students’ knowledge and experiences (Comber, 2013; Moll et al., 1992). Incorporating students’ funds of knowledge into instruction is imperative. If teachers shut
out what students know, believe, and have learned, students may begin to develop a negative connotation with learning (Zipin, 2009). This is especially true for writing instruction (Corkett et al., 1997). Teachers should encourage students to apply these values into their daily writing in school. By recognizing the reciprocal relationship of home and school, teachers create a strong partnership of learning (Comber, 2013; Genishi, & Dyson, 2009; Moll et al., 1992). Teachers should build on students’ prior knowledge and continue to create endless possibilities for the writing process. Student collaboration, writing conferences between teacher and student or student and student, and the value of sharing writing experiences becomes authentic and fluent within the classroom when teachers implement students’ funds of knowledge into the writing process (Calkins, 1994; Zipin, 2009).

When teachers reject students’ values, beliefs, knowledge, and experiences of writing, then they hinder students’ efficacy as writers (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003; Zipin, 2009). When students’ efficacy as writers is thwarted, their self-perception as writers is also greatly affected (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003). If students begin to have low self-efficacy and perceptions as writers, it becomes harder for teachers to help build the efficacy and perception back to where it should be in order for students to be successful writers. Rather, teachers need to bring students’ funds of knowledge into the classroom to create a more diverse, positive, and risk-taking learning environment (Moll et al., 1992; Zipin, 2009). When students are immersed in such an environment, students are able to take ownership over their own learning, including their personal writing (Zipin, 2009). Taking ownership of one’s writing is essential for one’s self-perception and self-efficacy as writers because it empowers the writer to deeply internalize and understand one’s writing.
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Bryan was able to share his writing experiences from school and while at home with me. I wanted him to expand upon his writing experiences and dig deeper into his own thoughts about himself as a writer. As we began this study, Bryan did not see himself as a writer and did not value the writing he created. Bryan and I shared many discussions and took part in many new writing experiences in order for him to begin to see himself as a writer. This was not a one-time event. Bryan needed to see himself as a writer week after week in order for him to start believing in himself as a writer. Once we were able to repair many of the cracks in Bryan’s perception of himself as a writer, we were able to rebuild Bryan’s confidence as a writer. From this confidence, Bryan was able to see an increasing change in his self-perception as a writer.

One goal I have for myself as a teacher is to ensure all my students see themselves as writers. Celebrating success within writing, regardless of how big or small the success is, implementing all students’ funds of knowledge into my writing instruction, and allowing students to collaborate and share their ideas with one another will allow me to meet this goal (Corkett et al., 2011; Moll et al., 1992). Differentiation and choice will also be essential toward meeting this goal (Donnelly & Linn, 2014; Dunn & Finley, 2010). I will need to ensure all students are immersed in a safe learning environment where all have the opportunity to succeed at their fullest potential. Therefore, I need to constantly self-reflect, self-assess, and monitor my writing instruction to ensure I meet this goal for all of my students (Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2013).
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

**Teaching more about the process of writing rather than the mechanics of writing**

Throughout most of the study, Bryan placed a huge emphasis on the mechanics of writing (spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, etc.) (Meier, 2013). From discussions, I was able to infer that most of Bryan’s knowledge about writing was about the mechanics of writing. During numerous conversations with him about his writing, Bryan would often reference his writing was not “good enough” because it was not long enough or the spelling was not perfect. Although the mechanics of writing are important, understanding the writing process is of much more value (Felknor, 1993; Meier, 2013).

As I begin my teaching career, I need to make sure my students have a stronger focus on the process of writing rather than the mechanics of writing. Both areas are important, but if students get too caught up on the mechanics of writing, it can really hinder their overall written product (Felknor, 1993; McBride, 2000; Meier, 2013). Rather, my goal for students is to recognize how the mechanics of writing works within the writing process. I need to explicitly inform my students that the mechanics of writing occur within the writing process. The more students engage with the writing process, the more students will develop understanding of the writing process (Tillema et al., 2011). Mechanics are always present throughout the writing process. Therefore, by having a stronger focus on the writing process, students will also be more exposed to the mechanics of writing as well.

Students need to recognize the writing is a recursive process which has endless possibilities (McBride, 2000; Tillema et al., 2011). Implementing higher level thinking questions to jumpstart student thinking and writing, rather than asking questions or providing writing prompts with an emphasis on yes or no answers, will help students develop a strong focus on the
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

process of writing rather than on the mechanics (Jacobson & Lapp, 2010). From this initial thinking, teachers can build their instruction on the understanding provided within the jumpstart. Students need to have full understanding of what writing is before they can successfully implement the writing process on their own. In addition and perhaps most importantly, students will begin to take ownership over their writing when they have a balanced understanding of what makes up writing.

Self-assessment for students

One of the biggest “aha” moments from the study came when Bryan assessed his own personal writing. Bryan tore his writing pieces apart looking for what he did “wrong” and what he could have done “better”. Not only did Bryan learn a lot about himself as a writer from assessing his own work, but I also learned a lot about self-assessments for students. Although self-assessments are great for determining personal areas of growth and areas of focus, one must also be cautious not to critique every single thing (Vogt & Shearer, 2010). Students are sometimes their own worst critics (Bottomley, Henk, & Melnick, 1997; Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2013; Vogt & Shearer, 2010). Teachers need to teach their students how to evaluate themselves effectively (Vogt & Shearer, 2010). By completing self-assessments, students are taking ownership of their own learning (Bottomley et al., 1997). This is essential for helping students grow as writers.

Often, I overlook young elementary students when it comes to self-assessment. Meaningful assessments do not tell teachers what our students do not know, rather meaningful assessments tells us what our students know (Bottomley, Henk, & Melnick, 1997; Panadero &
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Alonso-Tapia, 2013). Self-assessments further develop our students’ metacognition, which overall enhances student performance inside and outside the classroom (Bottomley, Henk, & Melnick, 1997; Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2013; Vogt & Shearer, 2010). I could not be doing my students more of a disservice by not implementing self-assessments into my practice. After completing this study, I now know I need to consistently incorporate self-assessment into my practice for all students, regardless of grade level, if I want to help all students grow as lifelong learners.

Recommendation for Further Research

More participants for future studies

This study primarily focused on one first grade student’s writing. His older brother and parents were also participants in the study but this study did not go into depth regarding their writing processes or beliefs about writing or themselves as writers. I recommend future studies provide more than one writing interview with each participant as well as more recorded observations. Repeating this study with a stronger focus on the entire family’s perception of themselves as writers could alter or change the results.

A more diverse population of learners

This study was conducted in an upper-middle socioeconomic class family’s home. Bryan has been immersed with language and literacy since he has been alive. The family values all aspects of literacy, especially the areas of reading and writing. Repeating this study with a different socioeconomic class family with different values could affect the results.
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

**More focus areas within the study**

This study was limited to the home environment. Although Bryan’s writing pieces from school were involved within the study, this study never actually occurred while Bryan was writing or initially interacting with those writing pieces. Future studies could conduct the same study at home and at school which could alter the results.

**Final Thoughts**

As I reflect back on when I first began this study, I now realize the importance of one’s funds of knowledge about writing, especially in primary grade students. I always knew that the home environment played a key role in shaping one’s self perception of oneself as a writer, but I never knew how much it truly influenced our students as writers. After infusing students’ funds of knowledge into one’s instruction, one must self-reflect on the influence instruction has on students. Bryan’s beliefs about writing derived from his family’s and school’s beliefs and values about writing. Therefore, his knowledge and beliefs about writing originate from school and home, shaping his perception of himself as a writer.

Bryan’s self-perception of himself as a writer is greatly defined by the writing experiences he has been exposed to and has internalized. Therefore, Bryan should continuously be exposed to various forms of writing modalities and diverse writing experiences. These writing experiences should focus on the writing process as a whole, with a minor emphasis on the mechanics of writing and the final written product. Once Bryan understands and is further exposed to the writing process, he will need to redefine himself as a writer and reevaluate his self-perception of himself as a writer. Writers never stop learning or growing from their
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

experiences (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994). Regardless of the amount experiences, Bryan will continue to grow as a writer due to the writing experiences Bryan has been immersed within. The more writing he executes, the more feedback and knowledge he will gain from his writing. Once the knowledge, feedback, and experiences are internalized, Bryan’s recognition of himself as a writer will become stronger, directly influencing his self-perception and self-efficacy as a writer toward becoming resilient.
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

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The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer


The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer


The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer


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The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer
Observation Protocol for Research Journal

Observation Date and Time: __________ Length of Observation: __________

Observation of Focal Child

| Context: |
|------------------|------------------|
| Description of Activities (teacher and student) | Reflective Field notes |

Why is this important?

**Closing:** I truly appreciate your participation and willingness to participate in this study. As indicated in your consent letter, your identity will be kept confidential.
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Appendix B
Observation Protocol

Observation Date and Time: _______ Length of Observation: __________

Observation of Focal Child

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<th>Context of Observation:</th>
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<th>Description of Activities (Focal Child)</th>
<th>Reflective Field notes</th>
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Closing: I truly appreciate your participation and willingness to participate in this study. As indicated in your consent letter, your identity will be kept confidential.
Appendix C
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Focal Child and Older Brother Interview Protocol

Participant: (pseudonym)  
Date of Interview and Time:  

Purpose Statement: **Start audio recording-Identify participant by pseudonym, the date, and time**

The reason I want to interview you is because I want to find out your thoughts and beliefs about writing and your opinion of yourself as a writer. I am going to ask you some questions and I want you to answer them the best that you can. Please be honest; don’t be afraid to share your thoughts. There are no right or wrong answers and you will not be graded for how you answer. Your answers are helping me learn about your thoughts and beliefs about writing. If at any time you feel uncomfortable with a question I ask, please know that you have the choice not to respond. You may stop doing the interview at any time. Our interview will last about 15 minutes. I will be recording our conversation, if you have given assent.

Writing Interview:

Name:  
Date:  
Grade:  
Interview Setting:  

1. What is writing?

- Letters

2. Among the students you know, who do you think is a good writer? (How easy for child to be one: difficult, mixed, easy.) What makes him or her a good writer?

- Jayden he has Spaces

What problems does he or she have when writing?

- Non
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

What do you think he or she does to solve the problem?

- Stretch the word out

3. Among the published authors you know about (books you have read or that teacher/parent has read to you), who do you think is a good writer?

- Many

What makes him or her a good writer? (Why do you like his or her writing/books?)

- They are magic

4. Think about when you first learned to write stories. Who helped you learn to write them?

- My teacher

How did he or she help you?

- She helped me with my writing

5. When you are writing and you have a problem (or get stuck) what do you do?

- I can't write
6. What do you really like about your writing?

What would you like to improve about your writing?

7. Tell me about some writing you did last year. What did you really like about it?

How has your writing changed from last year to this year?

8. Are you a good writer? (no, mixed/not sure, yes) Why?
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

9. Do you like writing? (no, mixed/not sure, yes) Why?


Closing:
I truly appreciate your participation and willingness to share your thoughts with me. Your participation and insights will help me understand your thoughts and beliefs about writing as well as your view of yourself as a writer. As noted in your consent letter, I will keep your identity confidential.

In the event that I need clarification after transcribing this interview, may I request a follow-up discussion?
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Appendix D
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Focal Child and Older Brother Interview Protocol

Participant: (pseudonym) Nathan
Date of Interview and Time: 

Purpose Statement: **Start audio recording-Identify participant by pseudonym, the date, and time**
The reason I want to interview you is because I want to find out your thoughts and beliefs about writing and your opinion of yourself as a writer. I am going to ask you some questions and I want you to answer them the best that you can. Please be honest; don’t be afraid to share your thoughts. There are no right or wrong answers and you will not be graded for how you answer. Your answers are helping me learn about your thoughts and beliefs about writing. If at any time you feel uncomfortable with a question I ask, please know that you have the choice not to respond. You may stop doing the interview at any time. Our interview will last about 15 minutes. I will be recording our conversation, if you have given assent.

Writing Interview:
Name: 
Date: 
Grade: 
Interview Setting:

1. What is writing?

2. Among the students you know, who do you think is a good writer? (How easy for child to one: difficult, mixed, easy.) What makes him or her a good writer?

What problems does he or she have when writing?

I don’t know

161
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

What do you think he or she does to solve the problem?

Riley goes over his writing or checks the spelling in a dictionary.

3. Among the published authors you know about (books you have read or that teacher/parent has read to you), who do you think is a good writer?

J.K. Rowling

What makes him or her a good writer? (Why do you like his or her writing/books?)

The book has chapters

4. Think about when you first learned to write stories. Who helped you learn to write them?

My teacher and my parents

How did he or she help you?

She is pushing me to write better

5. When you are writing and you have a problem (or get stuck) what do you do?

I ask a friend or go to a dictionary.
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

6. What do you really like about your writing?
   I don't know

What would you like to improve about your writing?
   Write neater

7. Tell me about some writing you did last year. What did you really like about it?
   I wrote the short story called

How has your writing changed from last year to this year?
   I spell better

8. Are you a good writer? (no, mixed/not sure, yes) Why?
   not sure
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

9. Do you like writing? (no, mixed/not sure, yes) Why?

MT 9.1  
Yes because I like

PDT 9.1  
To read it

PCS 9.1  


Closing:
I truly appreciate your participation and willingness to share your thoughts with me. Your participation and insights will help me understand your thoughts and beliefs about writing as well as your view of yourself as a writer. As noted in your consent letter, I will keep your identity confidential.

In the event that I need clarification after transcribing this interview, may I request a follow-up discussion?
Appendix E
Parent Interview Protocol

Participant: (pseudonym) Dad
Date of Interview and Time:

Purpose Statement: **Start audio recording-Identify participant by pseudonym, the date, and time**
The reason I want to interview you is because I want to find out your thoughts and beliefs about writing and your opinion of yourself as a writer. I am going to ask you some questions and I want you to answer them the best that you can. Please be honest; don’t be afraid to share your thoughts. There are no right or wrong answers and you will not be graded for how you answer. Your answers are helping me learn about your thoughts and beliefs about writing. If at any time you feel uncomfortable with a question I ask, please know that you have the choice not to respond. You may stop doing the interview at any time. Our interview will last about 15 minutes. I will be recording our conversation, if you have given assent.

Writing Interview:

Name:
Date:
Interview Setting:

1. What is writing?

The act of placing thoughts and ideas onto a medium for others and self to view.

Among the published authors you know about or books you have read, who do you think is a good writer?

Malcolm Gladwell, Hemingway

What makes him or her a good writer? (Why do you like his or her writing/books?)

Gladwell - he takes seemingly small daily items and makes them interesting and informative

5. When you are writing and you encounter a problem, what do you do? Why do you do it?

Sit down and think, possibly ask a question to myself or someone else
6. What do you really like about your writing?

MT 6.1
PDT 6.1
PCS 6.1

all is succinct and when read
information

What would you like to improve about your writing?

MT 6.2
PDT 6.2
PCS 6.2

vocabulary

8. Are you a good writer? (no, mixed/not sure, yes) Why?

MT 8.1
PDT 8.1
PCS 8.1

mixed - sometimes I do not give it
the time needed to properly consider
my thoughts

9. Do you like writing? (no, mixed/not sure, yes) Why?

MT 9.1
PDT 9.1
PCS 9.1

yes - it provides a way to put
thoughts and ideas out of my head

and onto a more permanent medium


Closing:
I truly appreciate your participation and willingness to share your thoughts with me. Your participation and insights will help me understand your thoughts and beliefs about writing as well as your view of yourself as a writer. As noted in your consent letter, I will keep your identity confidential.

In the event that I need clarification after transcribing this interview, may I request a follow-up discussion?
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Parent Interview Protocol

Participant: (pseudonym) **Mom**
Date of Interview and Time: 

Purpose Statement: **Start audio recording—Identify participant by pseudonym, the date, and time.**
The reason I want to interview you is because I want to find out your thoughts and beliefs about writing and your opinion of yourself as a writer. I am going to ask you some questions and I want you to answer them the best that you can. Please be honest; don’t be afraid to share your thoughts. There are no right or wrong answers and you will not be graded for how you answer. Your answers are helping me learn about your thoughts and beliefs about writing. If at any time you feel uncomfortable with a question I ask, please know that you have the choice not to respond. You may stop doing the interview at any time. Our interview will last about 15 minutes. I will be recording our conversation, if you have given assent.

**Writing Interview:**
Name: 
Date: 
Interview Setting: 

1. What is writing?

MT 1.1 
PDT 1.1 
PCS 1.1 

a way to communicate your thoughts

Among the published authors you know about or books you have read, who do you think is a good writer?

MT 3.1 
PDT 3.1 
PCS 3.1 

JK Rowling

What makes him or her a good writer? (Why do you like his or her writing/books?)

MT 3.2 
PDT 3.2 
PCS 3.2 

Excellent story with complex details

5. When you are writing and you encounter a problem, what do you do? Why do you do it?

MT 5.1 
PDT 5.1 
PCS 5.1 

go google it, because someone has probably asked and answered the question already
6. What do you really like about your writing?

I don't really like writing. I've never even kept a journal.

What would you like to improve about your writing?

My patience to actually start and finish a piece.

8. Are you a good writer? (no, mixed/not sure, yes) Why?

I think so.

9. Do you like writing? (no, mixed/not sure, yes) Why?

No, I feel embarrassed when people read my writing and it takes too long.


Closing:
I truly appreciate your participation and willingness to share your thoughts with me. Your participation and insights will help me understand your thoughts and beliefs about writing as well as your view of yourself as a writer. As noted in your consent letter, I will keep your identity confidential.

In the event that I need clarification after transcribing this interview, may I request a follow-up discussion?
The Impact of Self- Perception on a First Grade Writer

Appendix G
Survey Protocol

Participant: (pseudonym) Date of Survey: 
Time: 

Purpose Statement: Pass out survey to participants.
The reason I want you to participate in this survey is because I want to learn what your thoughts and beliefs about writing and yourself as a writer. I am going to read you some sentences about writing. You will write your answer on the lines below the questions. Please be honest; don’t be afraid to share your thoughts. There are no right or wrong answers and you will not be judged for how you answer. Your answers are helping me learn about your thoughts and beliefs of writing. If at any time you feel uncomfortable with a question I ask, please know that you have the choice not to respond. You may stop doing the survey any time. If you don’t understand a question, please ask me to explain.

WRITING ATTITUDE SURVEY

Adapted from Pomperaug High School. Writing attitude survey. www.region15.org/file/3465/download

Focal Child’s Name: Date: 

Interviewer: 

Directions: Ask the focal child the questions and give him time to think. Prompt the child to give more detailed answers. Ask the child to explain why or give an example.

How do you feel about writing?  

When and how did you learn to write?  

What kinds of things do you write at school? 

[Additional questions filled in]
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

What kinds of writing do you do at home?

I write.

Why do you think it’s important to be a good writer?

So people can read.

How do you feel when you are asked to share your writing with others?

I am happy.

How do you feel when others share their writing with you?

I feel good.

How do you feel about yourself as a writer?

I’m good.

Closing:
I truly appreciate your participation and willingness to share your thoughts with me. Your participation and insights will help me understand whether or not a rubric was helpful to you as a writer. As noted, I will keep your identity confidential.

In the event that I need clarification after transcribing this survey, may I request a
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Appendix H
Survey Protocol

Participant: (pseudonym) __________________ Date of Survey: ______________
Time: __________________

Purpose Statement: Pass out survey to participants.
The reason I want you to participate in this survey is because I want to learn about your interests and thoughts of writing. I am going to read you some sentences about writing. You will choose: not at all, a little, some, a lot, or a whole lot. Please pick the one that best describes how your opinion of the question about writing. Circle your answer. There are no right or wrong answers and you will not be judged for how you answer. Your answers are helping me learn about your thoughts and beliefs of writing. If at any time you feel uncomfortable with a question I ask, please know that you have the choice not to respond. You may stop doing the survey any time. If you don’t understand a question, please ask me to explain.

STUDENT WRITING ATTITUDE SURVEY
Adapted from Pomperaug High School. Writing attitude survey. www.region15.org/file/3465/download

Name:

Age:

Date:

1. I like to draw (circle one)
not at all  a little  some  a lot  a whole lot

2. I like writing stories.
not at all  a little  some  a lot  a whole lot

3. Writing is boring.
not at all  a little  some  a lot  a whole lot

4. I like to write in my spare time.
not at all  a little  some  a lot  a whole lot

5. I enjoy writing notes and letters to people.
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer
6. I like writing at school.
not at all a little some a lot a whole lot

7. I have trouble thinking about what to write.
not at all a little some a lot a whole lot

8. It's fun to write things at home.
not at all a little some a lot a whole lot

9. I like to share my writing with others.
not at all a little some a lot a whole lot

10. Writing is fun.
not at all a little some a lot a whole lot

11. I wish I had more time to write at school.
not at all a little some a lot a whole lot

12. I like to read.
not at all a little some a lot a whole lot

13. I think I'm a good writer.
not at all a little some a lot a whole lot

14. I like to write.
not at all a little some a lot a whole lot

15. How often do you write at home?
not at all a little some a lot a whole lot

16. What kinds of things do you write? (types, topics or titles)

_____________________

_____________________

_____________________

_____________________

_____________________

_____________________

_____________________
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Appendix I
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

### WRITER’S PROFILE

FOR  
Name___________________________ Date___________________________

This writer’s profile will help you discover what kind of writer you are. After you complete it, keep it in your writing book. Remember that you will look at it from time to time. Remember everyone writes differently. You must write the way that works best for you and set goals that will improve the writer in you.

Put a check in the box that best describes you and your writing style.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I like to make a list of ideas before I write.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I like to talk about my ideas with a friend before I write.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Drawing a picture helps me get ideas for writing.</td>
<td>v</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I like to write about things I have learned.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I like to write about things that have happened to me.</td>
<td></td>
<td>v</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I write out my piece quickly from start to finish, then make changes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. It helps to have someone read what I wrote before I make changes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. My final version might be very different from my first version.</td>
<td>v</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I like others to see or hear what I wrote.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I like to know what others think about my writing.</td>
<td></td>
<td>v</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GO.36.5.a
anytime or at a special time
anyplace or in a special place
with a pencil or pen or on a computer.

Write a paragraph about the following:
What I like about my writing
I always fill in my pictures

List THREE specific goals that you will work toward in writing.
1. to always fill in my pictures
2. to do at least 4 sentences
3. to use specific words

Write a plan for reaching your goals and improving your writing.
by taking a lot of time
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Appendix J
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

**WRITER’S PROFILE FOR**

**Name** ________________________ **Date** 1/5/14

This writer’s profile will help you discover what kind of writer you are. After you complete it, keep it in your writing book. Remember that you will look at it from time to time. Remember everyone writes differently. You must write the way that works best for you and set goals that will improve the writer in you.

Put a check in the box that best describes you and your writing style.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I like to make a list of ideas before I write.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I like to talk about my ideas with a friend before I write.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Drawing a picture helps me get ideas for writing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I like to write about things I have learned.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I like to write about things that have happened to me.</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I write out my piece quickly from start to finish, then make changes.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. It helps to have someone read what I wrote before I make changes.</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. My final version might be very different from my first version.</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I like others to see or hear what I wrote.</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I like to know what others think about my writing.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GO.36.5.a
Put a check next to the statements that describe you.

I like to write

- quickly.
- with noise around.
- anytime.
- anyplace.
- with a pencil or pen.

- slowly.
- in a quiet place.
- at a special time.
- in a special place.
- on a computer.

Write a paragraph about the following:

What I like about my writing.

List THREE specific goals that you will work toward in writing.

1. 

2. 

3. 

GO.36.5.b
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Appendix K
WRITER’S PROFILE

Name:

Date:

This writer’s profile will help you discover what kind of writer you are. Remember everyone writes differently. You must write the way that works best for you and set goals that will improve the writer in you. Write sometimes, always, or never that best describes you and your writing style.

1. I like to make a list of ideas before I write. NO
2. I like to talk about my ideas with a friend before I write. NO
3. Drawing a picture helps me get ideas for writing. YES
4. I like to write about things I have learned. NO
5. I like to write about things that have happened to me. YES
6. I write out my piece quickly from start to finish, then make changes. NO
7. It helps to have someone read what I wrote before I make changes. NO
8. My final version might be very different from my first version. YES
9. I like others to see or hear what I wrote. NO
10. I like to know what others think about my writing. YES

Circle the statements that describe you.
I like to write...

quickly or slowly

with noise around or in a quiet place
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Appendix L
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Story and Writing Survey Protocol

Participant: (pseudonym) ______________ Date of Survey: ______________
Time: ______________

Purpose Statement: Pass out survey to participants.
The reason I want you to participate in this survey is because I want to learn what you like
about writing. I am going to read you some sentences about listening and writing stories. You
will write your answer in the blank space below the questions. Please be honest; don’t be
afraid to share your thoughts. There are no right or wrong answers and you will not be judged
for how you answer. Your answers are helping me learn about your thoughts and beliefs about
writing. If at any time you feel uncomfortable with a question I ask, please know that you
have the choice not to respond. You may stop doing the survey any time. If you don’t
understand a question, please ask me to explain.

STORY AND WRITING SURVEY: GRADE 1
Adapted from Pomperaug High School. Writing attitude survey. www.region15.org/file/3465/download

Name:

Date:

1. What kind of stories do you like to listen to? Why do you like these
   stories? High and mighty

2. What makes a story good?
   All and lots of words

3. Who is your favorite author? Why is (name of author) your favorite?
   High pope
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

4. If you became an author what kind of stories would you write?
   

5. Do you like to write stories? Why or Why not?
   
   Yes because fun

Closing:
I truly appreciate your participation and willingness to share your thoughts with me. Your participation and insights will help me understand whether or not a rubric was helpful to you as a writer. As noted, I will keep your identity confidential.

In the event that I need clarification after transcribing this survey, may I request a follow-up discussion?
Appendix M
Writing Interest Survey

1. Do you like to write stories? **No**

2. I like to write stories (real) (make-believe). Why?  
   - I like to write. Learn about real stuff

3. It is hard for me to think of things to write about. Why or Why not? **Yes because I forget things I did**

4. It is easier for me to write in (the morning) (the afternoon). Why do you think this?  
   - at lunch I forget everything

5. Story maps and other helper charts make it easier for me to write. Why? **Yes I get**

6. It is easier for me to write if I tell my story to someone and they write it down. Why do you think this?  
   - I have to lookther and back **No because**
Appendix N
STUDENT WRITING ATTITUDE SURVEY

Name_____________ Age _____ Date_____ Teacher____________________

A. I like to draw (circle one)
   not at all  a little  some  a lot  a whole lot

1. I like writing stories.
   not at all  a little  some  a lot  a whole lot

2. Writing is boring.
   not at all  a little  some  a lot  a whole lot

3. I like to write in my spare time.
   not at all  a little  some  a lot  a whole lot

4. I enjoy writing notes and letters to people.
   not at all  a little  some  a lot  a whole lot

5. I like writing at school.
   not at all  a little  some  a lot  a whole lot

6. I have trouble thinking about what to write.
   not at all  a little  some  a lot  a whole lot

7. It’s fun to write things at home.
   not at all  a little  some  a lot  a whole lot

8. I like to share my writing with others.
   not at all  a little  some  a lot  a whole lot

9. Writing is fun.
   not at all  a little  some  a lot  a whole lot

10. I wish I had more time to write at school.
    not at all  a little  some  a lot  a whole lot
11. I like to read.
not at all  a little  some  a lot  a whole lot

12. I think I'm a good writer.
not at all  a little  some  a lot  a whole lot

13. I like to write.
not at all  a little  some  a lot  a whole lot

14. How often do you write at home?
not at all  a little  some  a lot  a whole lot

15. What kinds of things do you write? (types, topics or titles)

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Appendix O
YOU ARE AN AUTHOR
I’d like to know about your life as a writer.

Name: ___________________________ Age: ______________

Where do you live? Rochester Ny

How many years have you been writing? 2

Where is your favorite place to write? my Office

What kinds of things do you enjoy writing about? places that I went

What piece of writing are you most proud of? going to grand have
and riding the four wheel

Where do you get your ideas from? going to places

What makes you different from all other writers? write what move
then them

What else would you like to tell me about you as a writer, or what else would you like to tell me about your writing? nothing

GO.36.6
Appendix P
Do you know where we went over the weekend?

We went to Grandma's house.

We went to Grandma's for breakfast. We played.
I went to it was fun. I went to my grandma's house. Outside I rode the four-wheeler with Brodie. We rode the four-wheeler in the woods!
Appendix Q
WRITING INVENTORY FOR PRIMARY GRADERS

Na

Date

Check = What I will work on in Grade 2

Structure

✓ My writing has a beginning.
✓ My writing has a middle.
✓ My writing has an end.

Elaboration

✓ My writing has details that tell about the main ideas.
✓ My writing uses interesting, descriptive words.
✓ My writing has different sentence patterns.

Mechanics

✓ My writing uses nouns, verbs, and pronouns correctly.
✓ My writing has grade-level words spelled correctly.
✓ My writing uses capital letters and punctuation as needed.

Student’s signature

Comments:

Teacher’s Signature

GO.36.3
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Appendix R
Do you know what I played this morning?

I played on the iPad. I played Minecraft. I was stuck.
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Appendix S
WRITING BETTER Y FOR PRIMARY GRADES

Structure

☐ My writing has a beginning.
☐ My writing has a middle.
☐ My writing has an end.

Elaboration

☐ My writing has details that tell about the main ideas.
☐ My writing uses interesting, descriptive words.
☐ My writing has different sentence patterns.

Mechanics

☐ My writing uses nouns, verbs, and pronouns correctly.
☐ My writing has grade-level words spelled correctly.
☐ My writing uses capital letters and punctuation as needed.

Student’s signature
Comments:

Teacher’s Signature

GO.36.3
Appendix T
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Name
Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm
Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

Do you know where we went on Monday? I went for a bike ride. We went around the block.
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Appendix U
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

WRITING Rubric FOR PRIMARY GRADES

Date

Check = What I will work on in Grade 2

Structure

- My writing has a beginning.
- My writing has a middle.
- My writing has an end.

Elaboration

- My writing has details that tell about the main ideas.
- My writing uses interesting, descriptive words.
- My writing has different sentence patterns.

Mechanics

- My writing uses nouns, verbs, and pronouns correctly.
- My writing has grade-level words spelled correctly.
- My writing uses capital letters and punctuation as needed.

Student’s signature

Comments:

Teacher’s Signature

GO.36.3
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Appendix V
On Thursday we went to
see the peacock

I do not want to
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

do peea ho. I go 1 to

play the peea ho.
The Impact of Self-Perception on a First Grade Writer

Appendix W
OR PRIMARY GRADES

N: ___________________________ - Date ___________________________

Check = What I will work on in Grade 2

Structure

_ My writing has a beginning.
_ My writing has a middle.
_ My writing has an end.

Elaboration

_ My writing has details that tell about the main ideas.
_ My writing uses interesting, descriptive words.
_ My writing has different sentence patterns.

Mechanics

_ My writing uses nouns, verbs, and pronouns correctly.
_ My writing has grade-level words spelled correctly.
_ My writing uses capital letters and punctuation as needed.

Student's signature ___________________________ Teacher's Signature ___________________________

Comments: ____________________________________________________________

GO.36.3
Appendix X
I'm a kid. I'm listening to it in my bedroom. It was my own listening toy. My name is Nicholas.
Appendix Y
OR PRIMARY GRADES

Na

Date

Check = What I will work on in Grade 2

Structure

✓ My writing has a beginning.
- My writing has a middle.
- My writing has an end.

Elaboration

- My writing has details that tell about the main ideas.
- My writing uses interesting, descriptive words.
✓ My writing has different sentence patterns.

Mechanics

✓ My writing uses nouns, verbs, and pronouns correctly.
- My writing has grade-level words spelled correctly.
- My writing uses capital letters and punctuation as needed.

Student’s signature
Comments:

Teacher’s Signature

GO.36.3