1-1-1998

Do high school English teachers' and their students' perceptions about writing become more closely aligned after a semester of interaction?

Adnan Mohammad Salhi

DO HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH TEACHERS' AND THEIR STUDENTS'
PERCEPTIONS ABOUT WRITING BECOME MORE CLOSELY ALIGNED AFTER
A SEMESTER OF INTERACTION?

by

ADNAN MOHAMMAD SALHI

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

1998

MAJOR: CURRICULUM AND
INSTRUCTION

Approved by:

Karen M. Feathers 10/28/98
Advisor   Date

Dedication

To my mother and my children, for their love, patience and support, I dedicate this work.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter I

The Problem and Its Setting

Introduction

In the field of education, writing was and continues to be a major force which

affects the progress and learning of millions of students. In America, according to

Lunsford (1986), efforts to pass judgment on students based on writing

> stem most directly from Harvard University's decision, in 1873-74, to
> institute a written examination in English composition. Harvard's catalog
> for that year informs students that 'each candidate will be required to write a
> short English composition, correct in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and
> expression.' (p.1)

The last few years brought about a change of emphasis in the theory and research

on writing. Increasing emphasis has been given to the social context in which all learning,

writing included, occurs (Flower, 1989; Freedman, Dyson, Flower, and Chafe, 1987).

The social constructivist theory has been behind this shift of emphasis (Cole, 1985;

Rogoff, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978; 1986). Social constructivism is a sociological movement

which looks into the social formation of knowledge and assumptions upon which human

understanding and actions rest. A landmark book in this movement is Berger and

Luckmann's (1966) The Social Construction of Reality The authors of this book argue

that our every day sense of reality is the product of an ongoing social negotiation over the

meaning of objects, events, and actions. Such negotiation achieves familiarity and stability

through habit formation and institutionalization that narrow our choices, especially when

we move out of the relations of two or three individuals in order to find our place in the

wider worlds of education, government, or religion. In order to understand our

construction of the sense of reality, according to this theory, we should not concern

ourselves with the specific contents of any "reality system" so much as with the processes

by which that "reality system" is produced. Since language, writing being part of it, is one

of the chief mechanisms by which our sense of reality is negotiated, the way language

opens up or turns off various reality-productions deserves close attention.

One of the most important aspects of the social constructivist theory is the idea that

1

learning proceeds from the interpsychological level (between individuals) to the intrapsychological (within an individual) with the help of a more knowledgeable member(s) of the group (Bruner, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978; Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976). Sommers (1982) believes that writers need and want thoughtful commentary to show them when they have communicated their ideas and when they have not. She also contends that writers want to know if their writing communicates their ideas and, if not, what questions or discrepancies their reader sees that the writers are blind to.

In the case of the high school context in general, and English writing in particular, the teacher is usually the more knowledgeable individual. The role of this more knowledgeable individual (teacher) is important in the writing class because about 95% of high school writing is directed to the teacher as audience (Britton et al., 1975), or when we know, as Murray (1990) contends, that the teacher is "the students' most frequent if not only reader. . . [and] more specifically, the classroom composition instructor" (p. 76). With this knowledge in hand, the need for studying teachers' beliefs and perceptions about writing and the role these beliefs and perceptions play in students' writing becomes a pressing need which has not been given its due emphasis in the research on writing. The 1992 CCCC Bibliography of Composition and Rhetoric contains one hundred and fifty three items under "Evaluation of Students", but these sources do not deal with concerns addressed in this work and considered by some to be much more important than the teacher's pedagogical orientation (Davis, 1987). If this is true, why then have researchers been refraining from giving writing perceptions the emphasis they deserve? The reason may be because perceptions change at a much faster pace than behaviors (Davis, 1987).

In a case study of teacher-student attitude interaction, Gay (1983) found that students' attitudes toward writing and their beliefs about it are shaped by their teachers' attitudes and beliefs toward writing. Even though this study was considered by Davis (1987) as notable, and it tried to make a connection between students' and their teachers' perceptions about writing, Gay's study (1983) had serious flaws which necessitate a research study like the present one. Gay studied the subjects' beliefs out of the context of

teacher-student interaction, she related students' beliefs to an unspecified array of high school teachers, and she based her research findings on one major data source (one interview which was conducted while the students were in the researcher's class). The subjects for Gay's study were three unskilled freshman students in her basic writing class. Data sources were surveys, interviews with students and their former high school writing teachers, and students' writing samples. After responding to the Daly-Miller Apprehension Measure (1975) to determine their level of apprehension, "students were interviewed only once" (p. 28). Though she did not mention the number of the high school teachers who were interviewed or at what grade level they taught the student subjects, Gay said that "teachers were interviewed once" (p. 38). The present study used multiple interviews of both students and teachers.

Regardless of what the reason(s) behind the lack of emphasis on teachers' perceptions about writing may be, and in the light of what we know about the social constructivist theory and other theories of learning (to be discussed in the review of the literature), the fact remains that more effort needs to be directed toward the understanding of teachers' perceptions and beliefs about writing, because such understanding will facilitate the understanding of the complexity of the writer-reader-text relationship. That is why research on this problematic issue is gathering momentum and researchers in the field of education are paying more attention to it.

<div align="center">The Problem</div>

The purpose of this research is to study whether or not high school English teachers' perceptions of writing impact high school students' perceptions of writing.

<u>Background</u>

How do humans influence one another in small and large groups? How do humans interact in different situations? What are the dynamics of social entities and institutions created by humans? These continue to be questions of interest to scholars in different areas of study. Social psychologists studied persuasion and perception change (Moscovici, Lage, & Naffrechoux, 1969; Nemeth & Wachtler, 1983; Tanford & Penrod, 1984). Their

studies (discussed in some detail in Chapter II) indicated that the minority (one or a few individuals) influences the majority (large group).

After defining the social psychology of language as "the study of the use of language in social situations," Argyle (1980), from the Department of Experimental Psychology at the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom, says that this subject

> falls into the fields of linguistics and language study, which are Arts subjects; they look for grammatical and other rules, study how people have used language in the past . . . and do not predict or explain things. Most social psychologists are on the scientific side of this fence, most ethnomethodologists are on the arts side in my opinion. Instead of finding empirical generalizations, they offer interpretations of particular instances. This can be regarded as the early natural history stage of a scientific endeavor, but I do not see much sign of movement in that direction. (p. 397).

Argyle also claims that, in teaching as elsewhere, the sequence of language acquisition is directed towards situational goals. He says

> Take buying and selling: it seems obvious that certain moves will occur in a certain order: 1. Salesperson (S) asks customer (C) what she wants, or is asked by C; 2. S asks for further details of C's needs, or C asks what is available; 3. S produces objects or information; 4. C asks question, tries goods out, etc.; 5. C decides to buy, pays; 6. S wraps up object and hands it over (pp. 401 - 402).

The goal of social competence in language, Argyle says, "is to obtain knowledge or understanding which would enable us to instruct someone in how to perform effectively in various situations . . ." (p. 403). How firm do the claims of Argyle and other social psychologists hold in writing instruction? Does the acquisition of perceptions about writing happen in schemes as neat and simple as the one offered by Argyle? Does all educational research offer only interpretations of particular instances?

Some of the educational research that had been conducted in this field was trustworthy, yet other research was not. Examples of trustworthy efforts devoted to this aspect of writing are found in Hilgers's (1984) "Toward a Taxonomy of Beginning Writers' Evaluative Statements on Written Composition", Newkirk's (1984) "How Students Read Student Papers: An Exploratory Study", Anson's (1989) Writing and response, and most recently Lawson et al's (1990 Encountering Student Texts The

present work is a contribution directed toward the understanding of a crucial aspect of high school students' writing: high school teachers' perceptions of writing and how they impact their students' perceptions of writing.

Hilgers' (1984) study included "six second-graders [who] . . . were interviewed four times over a period of six months. . . [also, among the subjects were] six third-graders and eight fifth and sixth-graders who were interviewed one time," (pp. 367-368). Subjects in this study were provided with three pieces of children's writing and were asked to evaluate the pieces. This study attempted to taxonomize students' perceptions and beliefs about writing without attempting to look for where those beliefs and perceptions came from or what were the teachers' roles in formulating them.

Similar to Hilgers', Newkirk's (1984) study compared students' and teachers' beliefs and perceptions about writing without attempting to study how such beliefs and perceptions interact. The subjects for this study "were 302 students in Freshman English at the University of New Hampshire . . . . The sample of instructors included 17 graduate teaching assistants, part-time lecturers, and full-time lecturers . . .The subjects were given copies of two papers and a response sheet" (p. 285), and they were directed to give a grade to each paper and explain why they gave that grade.

Anson's (1989) book is a collection of articles by contributors sharing "an underlying belief in the importance of response . . . to the development of writing abilities"(p. 11). Two contributors to this book, Glynda Hull and Susan Wall, examined the implications of new theories of interpretation for responding to error. Without studying whether or not teachers' beliefs interact with students' beliefs, Hull and Wall studied elementary, secondary, and college teachers' responses to an editing task, and suggested that the interpretation of the error was often the result of the ideological beliefs of the teacher. The participants in Hull and Wall's study were "Twenty English teachers in elementary school (grades 1-5), twenty five English teachers in the secondary school (grades 6-12), and ten college professors in disciplines other than English" (pp. 265-266). For the purpose of knowing what beliefs teachers held about students' writings, an actual

college student's essay was used in this study and the participating teachers were asked to respond to it.

Other notable studies which shed light on the importance of beliefs and perceptions about writing are Britton's (1970), Britton, et al. (1975) and Applebee's (1981). Because of their importance, a detailed description of these studies is introduced in the next chapter. These studies emphasized the important roles teachers play in shaping students beliefs and perceptions about writing. For example, Applebee assumed that teachers sometimes "undercut" the development of students' writing skills without realizing it and that they did that in different ways.

Other researchers have studied this issue. Davis surveyed 121 college students and their six "professors" at the beginning and at the end of a semester. His study had weaknesses. The survey instruments he used for students and for professors were unrelated and had no identical questions. For students he used Reigstad and McAndrew's (1984) "Writing Attitude Survey" and for "professors" he used Gere, Schuessler, and Abbott's (1981) "Composition Opinionnaire". His student subjects were "enrollees in first-year writing courses-- two sections of basic writing and six sections of English composition, one an honors section . . . one section of English composition was not included in the exit scores when the instructor withdrew her cooperation" (pp. 6-7). From comparing pre and post means of whole group responses to survey questions, Davis drew conclusions which he presented with caution. In his discussion of his research findings, Davis wrote

> First, . . . students' writing attitudes are manifest in their written products and in the writing process. Second, I think some relationship clearly exists between the attitudes a particular teacher brings to her classrooms and the attitude adjustments students in that classroom make. Third, I have strong reason to suspect that certain teacher attitudes . . . facilitate better student attitudes. (p. 14)

Williams (1997) studied how students interpreted teachers' written remarks on students' writings without studying how such interpretations affected students' beliefs about writing. In her study, Williams examined how four successful and four less

successful students enrolled in the first semester writing course at Olivet Nazarene University constructed their interpretations of teachers' written comments. One of Williams' findings was that different ideologies between teachers and students influenced the way students responded to teachers' comments and that when students wrote they were concerned about meeting the teachers' agenda. There was no mention of the methodology Williams used in her research. Without explaining how the research was conducted or the time span of the research, Williams (1997) mentioned that she collected her data by interviewing students. The number and nature of the interviews were not explained in Williams' work.

These and other studies, detailed in the review of the literature which follows this chapter, brought attention to the importance of examining teachers' and students' beliefs and perceptions about writing and how, according to Anson (1989) "teachers themselves either encourage or inhibit intellectual growth, in terms of their attitudes toward writing as manifested in their responses" (p. 11). The review of the literature did not show any research studying the interaction between teachers' and students' perceptions about writing. Most of the serious published research dealt separately with teachers' or students' perceptions and beliefs about writing or how such perceptions and beliefs affected student writing. Studying students' and teachers' beliefs or perceptions about writing, important as it ought to be, is far from being complete. A lot of effort needs to be devoted to where students' beliefs or perceptions about writing come from. What roles, if any, do teachers' beliefs or perceptions about writing play in shaping students' beliefs and perceptions? Such important questions inspired the interest in the present study.

The Research Question

Did high school English teachers' and their students' perceptions about writing become more closely aligned after a semester of interaction?

Subquestions Related to The Research Question

Subquestion One

How did teachers' and students' perceptions about defining writing compare?

Subquestion Two

How did teachers' and students' perceptions about the importance of grammar and mechanics in writing compare?

Subquestion Three

How did teachers' and students' attitudes toward writing and self-efficacy as writers compare?

Definition of the Terms

Davis, et al (1987) define attitude and belief as follows:

Attitude: "predisposition to respond in a consistent manner with respect to a given object or experience; attitudes often link mental states (beliefs) with behaviors" (p. 213).

Belief: "Information that one holds to be true about an object, and that links the object to some attribute" (p. 214). In this study belief and perception are used interchangeably.

Writing: the process of creating text on paper in order to convey a message to a reader (Anson, 1989).

Teaching practices: what a teacher does to instruct students in the classroom. This definition is given by the raters in this study.

Functions of writing: any use of writing for the purpose of accomplishing an end. This definition is also used by Britton (1970) and Applebee (1981).

Writing as communication: when the major concerns of writing are focused on the idea(s) of the writer and getting them through as clearly as possible and as objectively as possible; heavy emphasis is given to the reader as interpreter of the text (Applebee, 1981; Britton, 1975). According to Applebee's definition, all "informational" writings "Share an emphasis on the use of writing to record or share information . . . they all require the writer to shape the text, as well as to select and organize information" (p. 28).

Writing as self-expression: when the major concerns of writing are focused on the feeling(s) of the writer and how they are expressed; little emphasis is given to the outside reader as interpreter of the text and the writer is the only reader that counts (Britton, 1975). This is similar to Applebee's (1981) "personal" and "imaginative" categories combined.

Applebee defines "personal" writing as writing in which "The focus is on the interests and activities of the writer. Most typically, such writing takes the form of journal or diary, or of letters or notes to close friends in which the main purpose is simply 'keeping in touch'. Some forms of note-taking can fall into this category" (p. 28). Applebee defines "imaginative" writing as writing in which "The focus is on the nature of the particular experience rather than on the 'information' conveyed" (p. 30).

Writing as self-expression and communication: when the ideas and feelings are equally important in writing; the reader and the writer are parallel in the importance of interpreting the text.

Besides the above terms which will be accepted throughout this study, there are terms that appear in other chapters. Such terms are subsequently defined as they appear.

Limitations of the Study

Due to financial, temporal, and logistical restraints, this study was limited to high school English teachers at a high school in one of the suburbs of a large Metropolitan area. Therefore, generalizing these findings to other districts may not be appropriate. Because of the special structure of the teacher and student populations in this study (described later in Chapter III), caution should be taken in generalizing this study to teachers and students of other groups. This study was also limited to four classes and their teachers and the period of the study was limited to one semester.

Importance and Significance of the Study

Because students are taught by teachers who have attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of writing that may or may not influence students' writing, it is important to study these attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions. Davis et al (1987) say that data on teachers' attitudes and beliefs can serve several purposes. First, they can provide a more comprehensive description of the functioning of the writing instruction. Second, they can be used as indicators for future improvement. Third, they can show how or why one teacher's behavior differs from another and lead us to find ways to modify behaviors that are less useful. Also, as Anson (1989) says, because some "methods of instruction appear to be

more successful than others . . ., we need to know much more about how those methods are understood and acted upon by teachers who interpret them through their own beliefs and attitudes" (p.358). This study utilized different data gathering instruments which asked questions related to the topic of the study. This study also examined the correlation between teachers' and students' beliefs and perceptions about writing over a period of time, that is, one semester. For all these reasons, this study is useful for teachers, administrators, and staff developers because it offers an analysis of teachers' and students' perceptions of writing, what causes them, how they interact, and how all that impacts students' writing.

The review of the literature in Chapter II details research and theoretical works on perceptual change in social psychology and in the teaching of writing. Chapter II presents research on perceptual change in the teaching of writing from different perspectives. Among these perspectives are modern criticism, readers response, social constructivist, poststructuralist and other theories of learning.

Chapter II

Review of Related Literature

Social psychologists have researched perceptual change extensively. Research findings of social psychologists on the issue of perceptual change have been conflicting and problematic even to some of the well established researchers in the field of social psychology. In a theoretical paper based on the review of research literature in social psychology, Abelson (1986) proposes a "theoretical perspective on the nature of beliefs, a perspective with novel features," and he adds that he wants "to argue that for most people, in many important cases, beliefs are like possessions" (p. 223). Because "beliefs are like posessions," Abelson suggests that people resist letting go of their beliefs. The reason Abelson gives for proposing his theoretical perspective is his puzzlement over the rather mysterious results in the literature on persuasion, or changing the beliefs of others.

Abelson's doubt of belief change is not shared by many scholars in the field of social psychology. These scholars believe that perceptions and beliefs do change and they emphasize two modes of belief change -- central route and peripheral route. The central route to belief change happens when individuals are highly motivated and are willing to put time and effort into weighing the different facets of an issue, and when such individuals are intellectually capable of weighing both sides of the issue (Chaiken, 1987; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986, 1981). The peripheral route to changing beliefs takes place when individuals have little knowledge about an issue, have little interest in it, or they are not capable of thinking deeply about it. Peripheral belief changes are caused by peripheral factors such as an expert, a pleasant situation, or an attractive source (Chaiken, 1987; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986, 1981).

One peripheral factor which influences belief change and has been extensively studied by social psychologists is the communicator -- the teacher in the case of this study. The characteristics of the communicator that have been shown to bear influence on individuals' willingness to change their attitudes and beliefs are: physical attractiveness, similarity to audience, credibility, likeability, and trustworthiness (Eagly and Chaiken,

11

1975; Fisk and Taylor, 1991). In the last few years there has been a rising interest in beliefs in educational research. This rising interest in beliefs is due to the fact that beliefs influence knowledge acquisition and knowledge restructuring (Dole and Sinatra, 1994). If this is the case, then it becomes important to understand whether or not students' beliefs and perceptions about writing become more closely aligned with their teachers' after a semester of interaction.

In order to answer this question, it is important to know what attitudes and beliefs teachers and students have about writing. The following pages review what research and theory in education say about the importance of teachers in shaping students' perceptions about writing, what beliefs and attitudes are generally traced among teachers with regard to students' writings, and what informs such teachers' attitudes and beliefs about writing. The examples of gender influence and traditional beliefs about the importance of grammar are detailed to demonstrate social and academic influences on writing perceptions.

The Role of Teachers in Students' Writing

If one accepts Lindemann's (1987) definition of writing as "a process of communication which uses a conventional graphic system to convey a message to a reader" (p.11), it becomes clear that teachers have the potential to significantly impact the writing process, the writer, and the text. The aforementioned definition identifies three components of writing: a conventional graphic system, a message, and a reader who in most classrooms and in this research is the teacher. Many researchers and theorists have emphasized that the teacher is the most important reader, if not the only reader, for high school students (Murray, 1990; Lindemann, 1987; Sommers, 1982; Britton et al., 1975).

In the past, research on writing focused on the first two components of writing: the graphic system and the message. In other words, the center of attention was the process of writing manifested in the student writer and the text. The teachers' roles in this process and their impact on it did not receive equal attention (Lawson, 1990; Beach and Bridwell, 1984). Staying away from studying the roles of teachers in students' writing is attributed to factors such as the lack of validity of existing instruments that measure teachers'

perceptions and beliefs about writing, or to questions raised about theoretical underpinnings of research on teachers' roles in students' writings (Beach and Bridwell, 1986; Davis et al., 1987). But, as Phelps (1989) argues, research on this new problematic practice is gathering momentum (Brannon and Knoblauch, 1982; Griffin, 1982; Purves, 1984; Sommers, 1982).

The new emphasis on teachers' attitudes and beliefs is in agreement with the changes that have been taking place recently in departments of English – the changes that have to do with the nature of reading and literature. In contrast with past practices early in this century, modern critics are taking an interest in the role of context on interpreting the text rather than seeing the text as autonomous and having one meaning which is the assumed intention of the author. Because teachers' perceptions about writing are reflected in how they respond to, evaluate, and read students' writings (Lawson and Ryan, 1990), it is helpful to declare from the very outset that focusing on reading in this section is necessary because reading and writing are very much intertwined. How readers (teachers) read texts reflects to a great extent the readers' perceptions about writing itself according to modern criticism theory, reader response theory, and social constructivist theory. Bazerman (1990) claims that "How the student perceives the teacher as audience will influence what the student will write, with what attitude and with what level of intensity. Many of these perceptions will depend on the student's past history, but some, we hope, can be influenced by what the teacher communicates in the classroom" (p. 82).

Advocates of modern criticism theory see the text as fluid and changing. Such fluidity and change are the result of the different experiences different readers bring with them to the text. These differences in the readers' backgrounds, or views of the world, make the readers interpret the same text in different ways (Wall and Hull, 1989; Smith, 1988). In a study involving twenty English teachers in elementary school, twenty-five English teachers in secondary school, and ten college professors in disciplines other than English, Wall and Hull presented their subjects with the task of editing an actual college student's essay. The editing task was clearly defined to the subjects and asked them :

1. to read a student essay in order to mark and label all of its errors in punctuation, grammar, syntax, and spelling;
2. to pick out the most serious errors from those they labeled, and to explain their significance; and
3. to comment on the overall strengths and weaknesses of the student writer (p. 265).

Even though data for this research were collected in unnatural settings, the researchers reported that there were differences among teachers' attitudes based on the grade level they taught. The marking of mechanical errors decreased as grade level increased, also the marking of logical errors increased as grade level increased. They also reported that teachers' training in teaching the composing process seemed to make no difference in the range of errors marked. A major concern the researchers presented was the "need for teachers and students to have a shared language. . . they need a commonly understood set of procedures that will signal more than the jargon alone can express" (p. 285). In other words, Wall and Hull emphasize the need for teachers and students to have a shared belief about writing in order to accomplish a targeted goal of student writing.

With research interests similar to our present study, Ziv (1984) used the case study method to find how four of her college freshmen perceived the specific comments she made on their papers. Ziv "met individually with the participants in [her] office, returned the second drafts of their papers to them, [she] then asked the participants to read their papers aloud and when they came to a comment [she] had made to record their reaction to it . . . . This process was repeated five times during the semester. However, for the remaining five papers, the participants reacted to [her] comments at home, and after revising their papers turned in their drafts to [her]" (p. 367). In reporting her results, Ziv (1984) says that "while the participants readily accepted my corrections, they did not always understand why I had made such changes" (p. 374).

The way teachers think of reading has a deep effect on how they understand and respond to students' writings. If teachers believe that meaning resides in the text, then their job will turn to gaining access to that meaning. The teachers' reactions to the students' texts will be based on whether they find the meaning they are looking for or not. This

theory of reading, usually called neo-traditional, developed in the 1930s and 1940s and, according to White (1994), "seems to be the dominant theory of reading followed in the high schools. . . [and has] profound and far-reaching effects on the teaching and measurement of writing" (p. 90). Though dominant among high school teachers, this is not the only theory that deals with how teachers deal with students' writings.

As opposed to the neo-traditionalists, the poststructuralists argue that writing is a process, not a product. A convenient and inclusive summary of many of the attitudes expressed in these poststructural theories was published in the fall 1982 issue of Critical Texts. In his article "Two Poststructuralist Modes of (Inter)textuality", Vincent Leitch captures the destabilization of the text, the peculiar language of the writers, and the relocation of the reader from the outside of the reading process (where the job was to discern the meaning in the text) to the center of the process (where we join with or even replace the author as creator of meaning).

Some people believe that writing teachers seem to have a coherent set of powerful assumptions and strategies for approaching student texts. We not only get what we look for, according to this theory [writing as a process], but we actually create what we look for when we read student papers. Research done on teacher response to writing by Sommers (1982), Freedman (1987), Elbow and Belanoff (1989) is in agreement with this opinion. Sommers (1982) says that "There seems to be among teachers an accepted, albeit unwritten canon for commenting on student texts. This uniform code of commands, requests, and pleadings demonstrates that the teacher holds a license for vagueness while the student is commanded to be specific" (pp. 152-153).

Conclusion

The review of literature in this section shows that teachers are students' most important audience when students write. Because teachers are of such importance to students, teachers' perceptions about writing have the potential to play an important role in shaping students' perceptions about writing and how they grade students' papers. This review of the literature also shows that perceptions and beliefs are attracting more attention

in the research on writing.

What Teachers' Beleifs Are There?

Since teachers and their beliefs about writing are of such importance in the writing contexts, it becomes important to know the beliefs teachers have about writing. Phelps (1989) uses students' texts to identify teachers' beliefs about writing. In her study, Phelps collected thirty-five-plus written accounts by teachers. Data collection started in 1981 and extended over several years. The accounts represent a range of teaching experiences and theoretical expertise, "from first year teaching assistants (novices) to a very few professional colleagues. The majority had substantial experiences in teaching writing, but little theoretical background when they wrote the initial accounts, which were annotated in many cases a semester later, and some cases followed up with taped interviews" (pp. 64-65). From examining the interpretive frameworks that underlie and organize teacher readings of student texts, Phelps identifies four teacher attitudes, or perceptions of student writing. The four perceptions she describes are: the evaluative, the formative, the developmental, and the contextual.

The first perception is the evaluative perception in which teachers treat the inscribed text as self-contained and complete in itself. The emphasis of teachers who hold this belief and perceive of writing as such leads readers to project the writer's competence from the text. The notion of competence here is relatively fixed, either as a kind of talent or ability, or as a level of knowledge and skill.

The second perception is the formative perception in which the object acquires "historicality" as an evolving text. Teachers who have this belief locate learning largely in the actual composing process. However, this belief logically implies extending that process into an oral and written dialogue, not only with the primary teacher-reader but also with other readers, usually peers.

In the third perception, the developmental attitude, teachers extend the text in a different direction. Whereas the first group of teachers read a "stack" of papers and the second read collected bits and drafts of the composing process, the third reads a "portfolio"

of work by one student. In this perception, the text itself blurs as an individual entity; unless it takes on special value because of a writer's commitment, it is treated simply as a sample excerpted from a stream of writing stimulated by the writing class, part of the 'life text' each literate person continually produces.

The fourth perception is the contextual perception in which the text becomes interfolded with context until it has no determinate edges. In this belief teachers raise questions such as: How much is the student's writing self-authored? How much is it co-authored (quite literally) with the teacher or other readers who influence choices during the composing process? To what degree does the student-writer actually incorporate the language, and thus meanings, of others into his writing, be it in the form of quotations, clichés, or even remembered phrases? These questions reflect perceptions about writing which suggest that the teacher must "read" a text as embedded in and interpenetrating many other discourses.

What teachers perceive of writing is largely reflected in the way teachers respond to students' writing. After claiming that the connections between writing and intellectual development, cognitive style, or systems of personal beliefs are still weak, Anson (1989) tries to make such a connection by exploring the interaction between teachers' and students' perceptions about writing. In her study, Anson asked high-risk students in a summer program to respond to a writing task. Eight teachers administered this writing task in their classes of between ten and fifteen students, yielding a sample of ninety-one essays from which six essays were selected for analysis. The classes were part of a precollege introduction to composition course, where students learn about the writing process by drafting and revising several freshman-level assignments. The conclusions, as Anson says, "albeit descriptive and based on a small sample, suggest some ways in which teachers' own beliefs about writing inform their responses, which in turn may encourage or inhibit the growth of students' perceptions of writing and, ultimately, their views of knowledge" (p. 333). Also, based on their responses, Anson (1989) classifies teachers' assumptions about writing into three categories: dualistic, relativistic, and reflective. The

first category is that of the dualistic teachers who, comprising a majority, use response styles that focus almost entirely on the surface features of the students' texts, and do so consistently, in spite of the differences in the essays' contents. The second category is that of the relativistic teachers who write little or nothing in the margins of the student's paper— no correction symbols, no circled spelling, no comments about paragraph structure or apostrophes. Addressing students in a much more casual and unplanned style than the dualistic responders, their comments resembled letters or short comments that have nothing more than a casual reaction. The third category is that of the reflective teachers who emphasize a range of concerns for each student— ideas, textual decisions, personal reactions, which wave in and out of their commentary.

Other teachers' perceptions about writing are manifested in how teachers treat "errors" in students' writing. Hunt (1989) depicts two teacher perceptions when dealing with students' writing: teachers who treat errors either as sins to be corrected or as something cute to be chuckled over, and teachers who treat errors as evidence of principled, strategic thinking and as promise that students could continue their constructive, rational, active learning of the principles of written communication.

Conclusion

The review of the literature in this section shows that teachers have different and differing perceptions about writing. The differences in teachers' perceptions about writing influence how teachers approach students' texts and what they value in them. Teachers' perceptions of writing could be predicted from the ways teachers read students' texts, respond to them, or evaluate them.

What Informs Teachers' and Students' Beliefs and Attitudes Toward Writing?

The literature on writing instruction traces different factors that influence and inform teachers' attitudes toward writing and their perceptions about it. Some of these factors come to teachers through formal training, yet others come through other means.

The instruction that the teachers receive has an effect on their perceptions of writing and on they way they instruct their own students. In her research, Carroll (1984) studied

writing samples of 225 students taught by 15 different teachers. Of these students, 120 were taught by eight teachers who were trained in the writing process. These eight teachers and their 120 students were used as the experimental group. Teachers in this group were required to use the writing process in their teaching. The other 105 students were taught by seven teachers who were not trained in the writing process. These 105 students and their seven teachers were used as the control group. By comparing the writing performances of students who had "process"-oriented teachers with those of students whose teachers had not been trained in it, Carroll argues that teachers' awareness of the writing process affects their students' written product. She says that the experimental group teachers shifted from "this *what* of composing (product) to the *how* (process) affected their perceptions of themselves, of their students, and of composition in general" (p. 330). While students' performances differed, this still does not answer the question of whether or not students' and teachers' perceptions about writing become more closely aligned.

When studying teachers' response styles, detailed earlier, Anson (1989) noticed that teachers' responses to students' writings appeared to fall into patterns and characteristics. These characteristics, like those of students' writing, would appear to reflect different assumptions about the world of knowledge and about learning to write.

In a theoretical paper presented at the 93rd Annual Meeting of the Modern Language Association of America, Ellen W. Nold (1978) mentions two theories of reading that affect teachers' perceptions about writing and their attitudes toward students' writing. To her, these two theories are the text-centered theory of reading and the interactive theory of reading. According to the text-centered theory, the reader is the passive recipient of the text: he gets meaning from the text. Everything in the text is available to every reader(s), who respond(s) to it and (if the reader is also an evaluator) assign(s) value to it. Since all the evaluators perceive the same text, errors arise not in their perception and comprehension of it, but in their evaluation of what they have perceived and comprehended. This means that one would expect writing teachers who belong to this category to be more formulaic in their teaching. One would also expect students who belong to this category to believe that

following certain rules and structures results in desired results. According to the interactive theory, the reader makes meaning from the text; the reader has an active role in the process. Because of the reader's different experiences, expectations, and immediate situation, a certain reader may perceive a text differently than another reader. One would expect writing teachers and students who belong to this category to value rules and structures less than teachers and students in the first category.

Some researchers have demonstrated that handwriting features may bias raters (Markman, 1976). Other researchers have found that syntactic style and black English vernacular may be sources of bias (Hake and Williams, 1981) . A number of studies indicate that a student's sex, level of apprehension, race, and learning style influence writing evaluation. In one study, Hake and Williams (1981) rewrote passages, deliberately making them more wordy and abstract than the originals. They then asked high school and college composition teachers to rate the passages. They found that the high school teachers rated the more verbose versions higher than the original versions. The college teachers were more inclined to judge the passages according to logical organization rather than language. One explanation for the high school teachers' predilection toward the more verbose passages is that they assumed that more formal writing was more acceptable. This suggests that these teachers had definite assumptions about "appropriate" school writing that guided their assessment of students' writing.

Conclusion

The review of the literature in this section shows that several factors affect and shape teachers' perceptions about writing. Some of these factors are: first, the grade level(s) teachers teach; second, academic orientation of the teacher; third, views of the world teachers may or may not have. The review of the literature in this section also showed that research findings about whether or not teachers' and students' perceptions become more closely aligned after a period of interaction are still contradictory and inconclusive and more authentic research needs to be conducted in this critical issue of education.

Gender Influences on Teachers' Perceptions of Writing

The questions that underpins this section are: what are the effects of gender on teachers' attitudes toward writing and how they perceive of it? Are students' perceptions influenced by the same factors influencing the teachers? Do teachers perceptions aboout gender transfer to their students? Do gender factors have any effect on the interaction between teachers and their students? The works of scholars explored here suggest that teachers' perceptions of writing are affected by gender-- whether the person is male or female. Many theorists have argued that when females read literature written by males, these females take an antagonistic or resistant stance favoring only feminine concerns (Schweikart, 1986; Fetterley, 1978). Also, Holland (1980) and Kolodny (1985) suggest that male teachers devalue women's texts. Gender issues and how they impact teachers' attitudes toward writing will be dealt with here from different theoretical perspectives: reader response perspective, cognitive psychology perspective, and feminist critics' perspective.

Reader Response Theory

Among the important theorists in this field, Jonathan Culler, David Bleich, and Norman Holland consider gender as a major factor in deciding the way teachers perceive of texts. Like other reader-response theorists, these critics look at the text as changeable and that change comes from without (readers) rather than from within (the text itself).

Theorizing about gender differences in reading literature, Culler (1982) argues that "if the experience of literature depends upon the qualities of a reading self, one can ask what difference it would make to the experience of literature and thus to the meaning of literature if this self were, for example, female rather than male. If the meaning of a work is the experience of a reader, what difference does it make if the reader is a woman?" (p. 42). This is an excellent question because it addresses concretely and politically the problem of the relation of the experience of the reader, English teacher in the case of this study, to other sorts of experiences such as gender. Culler also says that "women's experience. . .will lead them to value works differently from their male counterparts, who

may regard the problems women characteristically encounter as of limited interest" (p. 45). This presents us with serious considerations when we try to understand what shapes teachers' attitudes and perceptions of writing and whether or not gender is one of the important factors that shape teachers' perceptions of writing as many researchers claim.

Gender influence is one of several subjective factors which, according to some research conducted on this issue, shape teachers' and students' perceptions about writing. Men read prose in a way quite different from women's. In his study of the comparative response styles of men and women, Bleich (1986) asked four men, himself included, and four women to read works by Emily Bronte, Emily Dickenson, Herman Melville, and William Wordsworth. He collected response statements from each of the participants to each literary work they read. Bleich investigated "if perception varies according to the gender of the author as well as of the reader, and if perception varies as a function of literary genre, in this case fiction and lyric poetry " (p. 239). After collecting five response samples from each of the four men and four women, Bleich says that he found a significant gender-related difference in response only in relation to literary genre. He saw that response did not vary significantly with the gender of the author, and there was not "any obvious differences in the respondents' sheer use of language" (p. 239). Bleich says that

> Men and women both perceived a strong lyric voice in the poetry, usually
> seeing it as the author's voice, while in the narrative, men perceived a
> strong narrative voice, but women experienced the narrative as a "world,"
> without a particularly strong sense that this world was narrated into
> existence. (p. 239)

One major problem with Bleich's study is the limited number of subjects involved in it. Another notable study which investigated gender differences in student response to literature was Flynn's (1986). In this study, twenty-six women and twenty-six men enrolled in one of seven sections of freshman composition taught by Flynn and two of her male colleagues. Subjects wrote responses to three stories during the first twenty minutes of the first class period in which the story was to be discussed. That was to ensure that responses would be relatively free of the influence of the instructor or other classmates. In this study, Flynn found that

male students sometimes react to disturbing stories by rejecting them or dominating them, a strategy, it seems, that women do not often employ. The study also suggests that women more often arrive at meaningful interpretations of stories because they more frequently break free of the submissive entanglement in a text and evaluate characters and events with critical detachment (p. 285).

The differences between males and females make men and women have interests that are permanently tied to the biological fact that they are of different genders. This means that teachers have male-female differences that affect the way they perceive writing because text and self are very close to experience and the interpretation of the text is a function of identity (Bleich, 1986; Holland, 1980). How teachers read students' writing can never be impersonal or objective. Critical skills that teachers have serve a total conception that is deeply rooted in the reader's character, drawing on all kinds of values, experiences, and world views which grow from the same roots deep in the reader (Smith, 1988; Holland, 1980). It is therefore imperative for teachers to recognize that a teacher's gender identity largely determines the teacher's perceptions of that teacher's students and their writing. This fact in itself poses important questions like: How much of what teachers bring to writing transfers to their students? Or, do teachers' perceptions of the written text affect their students' perceptions of it? This study attempts to answer such questions.

Cognitive Psychology

Cognitive psychology provides us with a different way of looking at gender issues and their effects on teachers' attitudes toward writing. One explanation of how gender affects behavior is given in the muted group theory first introduced by Edwin Ardener and Shirley Ardener (1975). Among the theorists who elaborate on this theory are Mary Crawford and Roger Chaffin (1986) who base their theory on experiments done in their laboratory. Crawford and English (1984) report that in one experiment 50 female and 28 male college students who were enrolled in introductory courses in history and political science volunteered as subjects. One half of the students read a brief factual essay titled "The Psychologist and His Work," which was written in "generic" style (the psychologist.

. . he"). The other half received an essay titled "Psychologists and Their Work," which used language that either avoided masculine pronouns ("psychologists . . . they") or specifically referred to both sexes ("the psychologist . . . he or she"). Other than in the use of language, the essays were identical. Forty-eight hours later, subjects were tested for memory of the factual content of the essay. A "cued recall and a multiple choice recognition test, consisting of 11 and 10 items, respectively, were administered" (p. 375). Results indicated that men who had read the "generic" essay recalled more than those who had read the specific version. Exactly the opposite occurred for women, who recalled better the essay form that specifically included them. Theorizing on the basis of this and other similar experiments, Crawford and Chaffin (1986) later claim that this effect does not occur at the conscious level. They claim that their

> Subjects rarely could remember which essay form they had read, and not one student was aware that pronoun type was the focus of the study. If we had asked them, both the male and female students would probably have replied that psychologists are sometimes female, and, reflecting their schooling in grammar, that 'The Psychologist and His Work" can refer to both female and male psychologists. Yet their recall of the essay's content was powerfully affected by an aspect of language of which they were unaware. And, most importantly in the present context, the effects were opposite for men and women readers (pp. 16 - 17).

According to the muted group theory, in a society where power is distributed unequally the hegemonic group controls language and the ways it is used. The muted group members can't express their experiences because there are no terms for it in the language of the hegemonic group, and when they try to express themselves in the dominant language, parts of the meaning will be lost. Crawford and Chaffin write that "the primacy and centrality of the gender schema should ensure differential encoding of experiences, by women and men" (pp. 23-4).

Based on this theory, when teachers try to read student papers objectively, female teachers have an extra element to the task because they are expected to suppress their neutral tendency to perceive the world differently as females and to evaluate student papers according to the dominant male language in which they have been trained for long periods of time (Rubin, 1993).

Feminist Criticism

Feminist criticism theory is very close to the reader-response theory because it says that how readers perceive of texts is gender-based. Feminist criticism, like reader-response theory, emphasizes two main concepts: (1) Does the text manipulate the reader, or does the reader manipulate the text? and (2) What is 'in' the text? (Schweikart, 1982). These gender differences in perceiving writing must not prevent us from seeing that there are differences between women as there are differences between women and men. Because it is hard to find one feminist view on how to interpret texts, the following feminist critics offer a good understanding of how women's perceptions of texts differs from men's. In a theoretical article, Gardiner (1981) explores how women approach texts. She emphasizes that women "instead of guessing at and corroborating a stable identity pattern in a text or author, ...approach text with the hypothesis that its female author is engaged in a process of testing and defining various aspects of identity chosen from many imaginative possibilities" (p. 187). Kolodny (1985) has a similar stance and points out that when gender-related issues are concerned in interpreting texts "male readers who find themselves outside of and unfamiliar with the symbolic systems that constitute female experience in women's writings, will necessarily dismiss those systems as indecipherable, meaningless, or trivial" (p. 148).

Conclusion

When perceptions involve writing in general, and students' writing in particular, the literature says that gender is an issue that heavily affects teachers' perceptions and beliefs about writing. These teachers' perceptions and beliefs about writing are influenced by the teacher's gender as well as the student's gender. Differences between genders do not mean that differences within the same gender are few or do not exist.

On the Question of Grammar and Correctness in Writing

Teaching grammar and emphasizing grammatical correctness in writing is a deeply rooted practice in American schools and universities. Researchers divide into two groups. Those who are in favor of teaching grammar and those who see no value in teaching it.

Only a few studies defend teaching formal grammar and emphasize the need for grammatical correctness in the process of learning how to write (Bateman and Zidonis, 1964; Davis, 1987; Holt, 1982; Kolln, 1981; Neuleib, 1977; Neuleib and Brosnahan, 1987). For example, Bateman and Zidonis (1964) studied a grammar that was based on the generative approach and was developed by the investigators in order to teach the process of sentence formation in relation to composition writing. The experimental class received instruction in this special grammatical material during their ninth and tenth grades. The control group studied no formal grammar. Research results indicated that the improvement in writing of the experimental group was statistically significant at the .01 level of confidence in the quality of the sentences written, in the complexity of the sentences written, and in the decrease in errors. These findings should not be surprising because one would expect individuals trained in a certain skill to fare better than individuals who never received training in that skill when mastering that skill is tested. It would have been interesting to know if training in that grammar had made the same difference in all the aspects of students' writings.

Those who oppose the teaching of grammar outnumber those who are in favor of it. Braddock et al. (1963) summarize and assess such studies from 1957 to 1963; Hillocks (1986) does the same from 1967 to 1986. Both are highly critical of formal grammar instruction. They find that it has a negligible or even a harmful effect on the improvement of writing because it takes away from instruction and practice in actual writing. Hillocks (1986) was very critical of grammar instruction when he wrote that

> The study of traditional school grammar (i.e., the definition of parts of speech, the parsing of sentences, etc.) has no effect on raising the quality of student writing. Every other focus of instruction examined in this review is stronger. Taught in certain ways, grammar and mechanics instruction has a deleterious effect on student writing. In some studies a heavy emphasis on mechanics and usage (e.g., marking every error) resulted in significant losses in overall quality. School boards, administrators, and teachers who impose the systematic study of traditional school grammar on their students over lengthy periods of time in the name of teaching writing do them a gross disservice which should not be tolerated by anyone concerned with the effective teaching of good writing. We need to learn how to teach standard usage and mechanics after careful task analysis and with minimal grammar. (pp. 248-49)

As a result of this deep division between those who emphasize grammatical correctness in students' writing and those who see it as a waste of time and effort, some suggest that what is needed are not extreme positions but rather a middle ground where students can learn about the detection, consequences, and elimination of unconventional features without diminishing the desire to write and improve (Noguchi, 1991).

This obvious majority position against grammar instruction is in direct contradiction with the great emphasis grammatical and mechanical errors receive when teachers respond to and evaluate students' papers. In their study, Connors and Lunsford (1988) report that in college writing, teachers mostly corrected mechanical errors among which spelling ranked first. In response to a direct appeal from Connors and Lunsford, 1, 500 teachers mailed samples of graded student papers. From these samples, the researchers randomly selected 300 papers for the study. It is interesting to see that, according to Connors' and Lunsford's data, certain errors are corrected less frequently than others (29 percent of the dangling or misplaced modifiers were corrected while 62 percent of apostrophe errors were corrected). According to Connors and Lunsford, college teachers mark, on average, only 43 percent of the most serious errors when they occur, and only two-thirds of the errors that occur are marked.

The question of correctness in language is a political one. It reflects power positions among societal groups. The group(s) that have more power try to emphasize their hegemony by imposing their language conventions on others and by treating language conventions of other groups as erroneous (Hairston, 1981; Heath, 1983; Williams, 1981). For example, Maxine Hairston wanted to know "what kinds of grammatical errors mattered most in the world of real working writing, " (p. 795). She constructed a questionnaire of sixty-five sentences. She included one error in standard English usage in each sentence, and after each she listed three choices, "Does not bother me; Bothers me a little; Bothers me a lot, " and at the end she added an open ended question, "What is the most annoying feature of the writing that comes across your mind?" (p. 795). Hairston mailed the questionnaire to 101 professionals, but included no English teachers. She received eighty-

four responses. In this study of the attitudes of professionals toward what they consider "serious" errors in writing, Hairston found that respondents reacted most strongly to "status marking" errors (errors indicating the writer's social status). These status marking errors tend to occur among speakers of nonstandard varieties of English. After the status marking errors, respondents reacted most strongly to mechanical errors.

With regard to classroom teachers and how they deal with grammar and correctness in writing there are different categories. In their research on how writing teachers react to what they perceive as grammar problems in students' writing, Donald Bushman and Elizabeth Ervin (1995) see five profiles of teachers: First, the advocates who apply an uncritical pedagogy ending on such a positive note when, as comments throughout the text suggest, the essay has many problems. Second, the confirmed non-experts among whom we find two frustrated attitudes represented by the term ('I don't know how to deal with these problems') and the indignation ('I shouldn't have to deal with these problems') in the face of students' grammar problems. Third, the editors who are characterized by their practice of rewriting passages of students' essays to model clearer-sounding prose. Fourth, the general rhetoricians who assume that universal standards of 'good writing' and useful comments transcend disciplinary boundaries. The general rhetorician advocates providing models of effective papers to students. Fifth, the contextual rhetoricians who respond to grammar problems by falling back on familiar forms that may have worked for them in the past assuming that they are universal for all writing tasks. To the contextual rhetoricians grammar is just one of the many mechanical approaches to writing that presents a major barrier to those students' writing.

Chapter Coda

The review of the literature in this chapter indicates that:

1- Beliefs are hard to change.

2- When beliefs change, the change takes a central or peripheral route.

3- Because writing teachers are the most important audience for student-writers, teachers' perceptions about writing are getting more attention in writing research.

4- Teachers' beliefs and perceptions about writing have been neglected because of the lack of research validity in this area.

5- Individuals' beliefs about writing differ. Differences about writing are due to several factors. Gender, academic orientation, and social background are among the factors which influence teachers' perceptions about writing.

It was the intention of this research project to discover whether or not high school teachers' perceptions about writing and high school students' perceptions about writing become more closely aligned after a period of interaction. In the review of the literature it might appear that students' perceptions and attitudes about writing were not emphasized. This happened because hardly any studies that specifically focused on students' perceptions and attitudes toward writing appeared in the literature. The three studies (Davis, 1987; Fang, 1996; Gay, 1983) that compared students' and teachers' beliefs about writing were discussed. This lack of emphasis on students' perceptions and attitudes toward writing makes studies like this one of greater importance.

Chapter III

Methodology

The task of finding an appropriate research design is not easy especially if one tries
to choose between a host of approaches that have their well known strengths and their
weaknesses, too. After reviewing several research methods, it was deemed best for this
study to use the qualitative research methods which are becoming widely used in all
disciplines. In their monograph, The Emergent Paradigm: Changing Patterns of Thought
and Belief, Lincoln & Guba (1985) quote Peter Schwartz and James Ogilvy (1979), two
scholars with Swedish Research Institute International. They describe Schwartz and
Ogilvy's work as a "most remarkable analysis" of research concepts that are currently
emerging in a variety of disciplines "including physics, chemistry, brain theory, ecology,
evolution, mathematics, philosophy..." (p. 51). Lincoln and Guba have been asserting that
the Schwarz & Ogilvy 'new' paradigm, drawn from an analysis of a wide variety of
substantive fields, "supports the naturalistic [qualitative] paradigm" (p. 57).

What made the qualitative research method most appropriate for this study was the
nature of the collected data which were largely verbal in nature and were collected through
observation, description, and tape recording (Charles, 1995). What also necessitated the
use of the qualitative research method in this study was the aim of understanding the
experiences of high school English teachers and students as nearly as possible and as its
participants felt it and lived it (Ely et al., 1995; Sherman and Webb, 1988).

Sample of the Population of the Study and its Rationale

After choosing the appropriate research method to find what perceptions about
writing high school language arts teachers and high school students had and whether these
perceptions became more closely aligned after a period of interaction, the first problem
faced was what population should be sampled. Perhaps an ideal sample would have been
based upon the population of all high school language arts teachers and students in
Michigan. There were substantial technical difficulties in drawing a sample from this
population. Another excellent sample would have been based upon high school teachers

30

and students in an entire metropolitan area. The fact that there are about 45 school districts in this geographical area made it practically impossible to administer the study in the entire metropolitan area.

For these reasons, a population of one school district is chosen. This school district is a suburban district in a metropolitan area. The school in which the research was conducted had more than 1, 600 students, most of whom were of Middle Eastern origins. The faculty of the district is representative of suburban school districts in metropolitan areas. Therefore, the findings in this study will be of use not only to the disrict where the study was conducted, but to other metropolitan districts as well.

The sample of the population consisted of language arts teachers and students from one high school. All language arts teachers (their total number was sixteen) in the target school were surveyed; of the teachers who agreed to participate in the study, four were randomly selected to be interviewed and observed. These four teachers were balanced based on gender, education, and years of teaching experience. Within this group of four teachers, one focus class per teacher was selected to include students in grades nine through twelve.

Students who were surveyed, totaling seventy-six, were students in classes which were taught by the participating teachers described above and observed by the researcher. From each of these classes, four students were selected to be interviewed. A stratified random selection method was used to select students for the interviews. Students selected for interviews were balanced based on gender and letter grade in English in the previous year.

<div align="center">Data Collection</div>

Data in this study were collected through the use of surveys, interviews, and observations.

<u>Surveys</u>

After reviewing Emig's 1979 Attitude Scales, NCTE's Composition Opinionnaire (1972), and other professionally developed measures of attitudes and perceptions about

remarks or explanations they deemed necessary about the activity in which they participated.

The surveys provided data that were quantitative in nature. Interviews and observations provided qualitative data. The efficiency and effectiveness of the interviews and observations over a period of time had several advantages for this study. These advantages were: providing one hundred percent return, allowing for follow up to obtain clearer responses in greater depth, eliciting more meaningful and comprehensive data, and allowing the researcher to show the interpretations to the participants to elicit their perspectives on the researcher's interpretations. Given these advantages, the interviews and observations were an appropriate technique to use when collecting data.

Procedures

Initial interviews with the teachers were conducted in the spring term, all other data were collected in the fall term. The language arts teachers and students who participated in this study had already been consulted, and they had given their verbal agreement for participation to the researcher.

The identities of the participating students and teachers were not revealed and strict measures were followed to ensure participants' anonymity. To ensure the highest possible secrecy of any participant's identity, the surveys had no names on them. Though the surveys were coded to enable the researcher to observe and interview students who had perceptions about writing different from their teachers' perceptions, these codes were known only to the researcher and were used by the researcher for the purpose of choosing individuals for interviews. The survey responses were destroyed by the researcher after extracting the needed data from them.

Because the interviews were audiotaped, each interviewee was clearly informed by the researcher that s/he could stop the tape recorder at any point s/he wished to do so during the interview. The tape recorder was placed within reach of the interviewee and absolutely no names were mentioned on any of the interview tapes. The source of the information given on any of the interview tapes was known only to the researcher. The

interview tapes were destroyed by the researcher after extracting the research data from them.

To ensure anonymity of all who were observed, no names or information of any kind was used to indicate the identity of the observed. A code, known only by the researcher, was used to identify data for the purpose of data analysis. The observation instruments were also destroyed by the researcher as soon as the needed research data were collected from them.

Surveys

At the beginning of the fall term, a Likert-type survey was given to all fifteen English teachers in the target school. Another Likert-type survey was given to all students in the classes which were observed for this study. The surveys given to the students were administered at the beginning and at the end of the fall semester. The survey given to the teachers was Emig-King's (1979) Attitude Scale For Teachers (Appendix A) and the survey given to the students was Emig-King's (1979) Attitude Scale For Students (Appendix B). The questions which were used for this study were questions dealing only with perceptions (Appendix C). The questions were determined by giving the scales to three English teachers (two males and one female) and a female university language arts professor. Each of these raters was asked separately to identify the perception questions as explained by Emig-King's introduction to the 1979 scales. Identifications of the questions were compared. The questions agreed upon by three or more raters as perception questions were chosen for the present study. The raters were also asked to categorize these questions.

Analysis of Survey Data

After establishing categories among raters, survey items were classified under categories. The categories that pertain to this research and which were agreed upon by the three raters were defining writing, importance of grammar in writing, and attitude toward writing/self-efficacy as writer. These categories emerged and were agreed upon by raters during the categorization processes of interview data and observational data. From the

Emig-King Writing Attitude Scale For Teachers (Appendix A), the raters classified items number 7, 21, 23, 26, 37, and 44 as defining writing, and items number 3,10, 11, 27, 32, 41, and 50 as showing perceptions about the importance of grammar and mechanics in writing. From the same scale, raters also classified items number 4, 5, 12, 15, 19, 22, 31, 40, 45, and 49 as related to attitude toward writing and self-efficacy as writer.

For the category defining writing, a teacher's responses of "almost always" and "often" on items number 7, 26, 37, and 44 were considered a preference to seeing writing as a means of self-expression. Responses of "seldom" or "almost never" on these items were considered a preference for seeing writing as a means of communication. Responses of "sometimes" were considered neutral or seeing it as both self-expression and communication. Responses of "almost always" and "often" on items number 21 and 23 were considered a preference for seeing writing as a means of communication. Responses of "seldom" or "almost never" on these items were considered a preference for seeing writing as a means of self-expression. A response of "sometimes" was considered seeing it as both self-expression and communication.

On perceptions regarding grammar and mechanics, a teacher's responses of "almost always" and "often" on items number 3, 10, 11, 27, 32, 41, and 50 were considered as showing preference for considering grammar and mechanics important in students' writing. Responses of "sometimes" were considered neutral or seeing their importance as dependent on the situation. Responses of "seldom" or "almost never" on these items were considered a preference for seeing grammar and mechanics as not important in students' writing.

With respect to attitude and self-efficacy as writer, responses of "almost always" and "often" were considered indicative of a positive attitude. Responses of "seldom" and "almost never" were considered indicative of a negative attitude, and responses of "sometimes" were considered indicative of a "neutral" attitude.

Teachers' responses to each question in each category were tallied. Teachers were classified based on their responses to all the items in the category. If the majority of the teacher's responses showed a preference for seeing writing as self-expression, for

example, the teacher was classified as seeing writing as such. If a teacher's responses to all the items in a category were equally distributed between the categories, the teacher was classified as perceiving writing as "both communication and self-expression". The same method was followed in classifying teachers based on their responses to survey items on the importance of grammar and attitude toward writing and self-efficacy as writer.

From Emig-King Writing Attitude Scale for Students, Appendix B, the raters classified items number 1, 2, 7, 10, 36, and 39 as defining writing. Items number 11, 28, 35, and 38 were classified as showing perceptions about the importance of grammar and mechanics in writing. From the same scale, raters classified items number 4, 9, 13, 18, 22, 25, 34, and 40 as related to a student's attitude toward writing and self-efficacy as a writer. The method of classifying students' responses for items in these categories was the same used to classify teachers' responses in the same categories.

With regards to defining writing, students' responses of "almost always" and "often" on items number 1, 2, 10, and 39 were considered a preference for seeing writing as a means of self-expression. Responses of "seldom" or "almost never" on these items were considered indicative of perceiving writing as a means of communication. A response of "sometimes" was considered neutral or indicative of perceiving writing as "both self-expression and communication". Responses of "almost always" and "often" on items number 7 and 36 were considered indicative of perceiving writing as a means of "communication". Responses of "seldom" or "almost never" on these items were considered indicative of percieving writing as a means of "self-expression". A response of "sometimes" was considered indicative of perceiving writing as "both self-expression and communication".

As for the importance of grammar and mechanics in writing, students' responses of "almost always" or "often" to any of the items in this category were considered indicative of perceiving grammar and mechanics "important". Responses of "seldom" or "almost never" were considered indicative of perceiving them "not important", and responses of "sometimes" were considered indicative of perceiving the importance of grammar and ·

mechanics "depending on the situation".

For items indicating attitudes and self-efficacy, students' responses of "almost always" or "often" to any of the items in this category were considered indicating "positive" attitudes. Responses of "seldom" or "almost never" were considered indicating "negative" attitudes, and responses of "sometimes" were considered indicating "neutral" attitudes.

In looking for patterns, the responses of each student were tallied. Responses of individual students were classified at the beginning and at the end of the semester. For example, if at the beginning of the semester the majority of a student's responses on the survey items defining writing fell within any of its three categories (self-expression, communication, or both) the student was classified as such. If the student's responses were equally distributed between the items, the student was classified as seeing writing under both the self-expression and communication categories. Responses at the beginning of the semester were compared with responses at the end of the semester and figures were developed to indicate what a student's perception was at the beginning and at the end of the semester. Each time they were surveyed, students' responses were compared with their teacher's responses to see whether or not they became more closely aligned after a semester of interaction.

Interviews With Teachers

The first interview with teachers took place at the beginning of the fall semester and focused on the interview questions included in Appendix B. The purpose of these interviews was to discover each teacher's general beliefs and perceptions about writing in order to compare them with those of the students'.

The second interview with teachers was conducted after they had graded the students' first papers and before the papers were returned to the students. The interview concentrated on the four selected students' pieces of writing and what the teacher thought of their strengths and weaknesses and how the teacher perceived them as pieces of writing.

The third interview took place after the teacher graded the participating students' second writing assignment and before giving it back to the students. The second and third

interviews concentrated on what the teachers thought of these writings and how they applied their beliefs and perceptions to actual students' writings.

When the students turned in their last writing assignment for the semester, the fourth interview with the teachers took place. In this interview the researcher asked the same questions asked in the third interview for the purpose of discovering what perceptions about writing recurred and what perceptions changed. These interviews also focused on how the participants explained or interpreted certain views and behaviors noticed by the researcher during classroom observations and previous interviews, such as the presence of certain beliefs or behaviors that were not mentioned in former interviews and classroom observations had there been any, or the absence of certain beliefs or behaviors that were mentioned in the first and second interviews and in classroom observations had there been any. One of the teachers, Sam, gave the first and second interviews only. The second iterview with him took place near the end of the semester. This happened because Sam gave only one writing assignment to the class and kept the papers until near the end of the semester.

Interviews With Students

The first interview with students took place at the beginning of the semester and focused on the interview questions included in Appendix B. The purpose of this interview was to discover each student's general beliefs and perceptions about writing in order to compare them with those of their teacher's at the beginning of the semester.

The second interview with students was conducted before the students turned in their first writing assignment to the teacher. The interview concentrated on this piece of writing, what the student thought of his/her own writing, and why it was classified as such from the interviewee's point of view. The purpose of this interview was to find how the student's views and beliefs were similar to, or different from, those of the teacher's applied to actual writing when the semester started.

The third interview with the students was conducted after they received their writings back from the teacher. This interview concentrated on the teacher's response to,

or evaluation of, the student's writing. The intent of these interviews was to see what teacher's beliefs were accepted, not understood, or rejected by the students as the semester ended.

When the students turned in their last writing assignment for the semester, the fourth and fifth interviews with the students took place. The fourth interview took place before turning in the writing assignment, and the fifth interview was conducted after getting it back from the teacher. In these interviews the researcher repeated the same questions asked in the second and third set of interviews and revisited topics and questions raised in the first interviews. The purpose of these interviews was to collect data about students' perceptions about writing after a period of interaction with their teacher and to identify what changes, if any, took place in the students' perceptions and beliefs after this period of interaction. These interviews also focused on how the participants explained or interpreted certain views and behaviors noticed by the researcher during classroom observations and previous interviews such as the presence of certain beliefs or behaviors that were not mentioned in former interviews and classroom observations had there been any, or the absence of certain beliefs or behaviors that were mentioned in the first and second interviews and in classroom observations had there been any. Students in Sam's class went through the first, second, and third interviews only. This happened because the class had only one writing assignment in the semester.

Analysis of the Data Collected from Interviews and Classroom Observations

The reason for describing the analysis of interview data and classroom observation data in one section is that the method used in analyzing both was the same. When the collection of qualitative data started, and as it continued during the research period, data were analyzed and processed using the constant comparative method. Three copies were made of every transcribed interview or classroom observation. The copies were distributed among three raters to identify the categories in them. The raters were: one high school librarian with an English endorsement on her teaching certificate, one language arts assistant professor at a local university, and the researcher himself. In the categorization

process, a discourse analysis was conducted to develop a coding scheme. The scheme was developed recursively when raters read randomly selected transcripts of four teacher interviews, four student interviews, and four classroom observations. Raters wrote a phrase that best described each idea/response/behavior they came across in the script (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). These ideas/responses/behaviors were recoded and sorted to form categories based on similar focus. Similar ideas/responses/behaviors were clustered in each category and were given headings that best described the characteristics in each cluster. Three from the categories identified were used to be presented in this report.

Agreement was ninety per cent or higher on categorization of these interviews and classroom observations. Any time there was disagreement between the raters, the point of disagreement was discussed until agreement was reached. Of all the items discussed, consensus was not reached on three items only. Those three items were not used in the data analysis. Data were coded, unitized, categorized, and arranged for exploring relationships between patterns across categories (Ely et al., 1995; Maykut and Morehouse, 1994; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

Research Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that there are three activities which increase the probability that credible findings will be produced, these activities are "prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation" (p. 301). The research designed for this study fulfilled these three activities. Prolonged engagement was achieved by extending the research over the entire semester. Persistent observation was achieved by talking with (interviewing) teachers and students about the same issues, but in different formats (open ended interview questions, sharing classroom observations for comments and explanations). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the purpose of persistent observation "is to identify those characteristics and elements in the situation that are most relevant to the problem or issue being pursued and focsing on them in detail . . .persistent observation provides depth" (p. 304).

Triangulation, as defined by many experts, is watching for convergence of at least

two pieces of data gathered by different methods, such as observation and interview. Ely et al. (1994) state "We have found that triangulation can occur with data gathered by the same method but gathered over time" (p. 97). The research designed for this study fulfilled the requirements for triangulation described by Ely et al. as well as other experts (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Lincoln and Guba, 1994; Maykut and Morehouse, 1985).

Summary

This chapter described the conditions of the study. It included information on the design of the study, the instruments designed for the collection of data, the criteria, the sample of the population, the rationale for its selection, the procedures for conducting the study, and the method for analysis of the data. This chapter should facilitate the understanding of the interpretation of data presented in Chapter IV, and the conclusions and recommendations that will follow in Chapter V. Finally, this chapter provided guidelines for those who wish to replicate this study.

Unlike the surveys, initial interviews showed that the teachers thought of writing mostly as "communication". In the initial interviews, Mary, Sam, and Mark defined writing as "communication" and Shannon defined it as both "communication and self expression." An example of how the three teachers defined writing was Sam's comment that writing was "A form of communication, but one that has a definite record that you can look back on as opposed to conversation with somebody where it's gone. Say, like what we're doing here." Shannon, the only one who had a different response, said "I think it is the means of communication, but then it's also a way of expressing oneself, and it's also a mode of learning."

Data from classroom observations and from interviews on students' papers also contradicted the survey data and showed that teachers valued and emphasized communication over self-expression. Classroom observations and teachers' records showed that all four teachers emphasized the persuasive mode of writing with heavy emphasis on the traditional five paragraph persuasive essay or the research paper. This was clear from the distribution of the writing assignments in each class. As shown in Table 2, Mary and Shannon gave only one major expressive writing assignment. None of the teachers emphasized or highlighted the expressive mode of writing.

Table 2

Distribution of Writing Assignments in Each Class by Type

	Research or Persuasive	Expressive
Mary	4	1
Shannon	3	1
Sam	1	
Mark	6	

Field notes, tapes from classroom observations, and short conversations with the teachers after each observation showed that journal writing was the main type of expressive writing teachers assigned. While students were given time for silent journal writing in all four classes, Mary was the only teacher who asked students to voluntarily read their .

journals in class without comments on or discussion of these journals by either the teacher or the students.

When they talked about students' papers, all four teachers considered students' use of the expressive mode as a weakness in students' writing. They focused on form, correctness, and fulfilling the assignment as described by the teacher. For example, when he talked about Drew's paper, Mark said that Drew's paper was written "In almost a poetic fashion, but it didn't fulfill the assignment. He doesn't [sic] follow the thesis that I wanted him to write. While what he writes is unique and poetic, it doesn't fulfill the assignment and he got a low score because of that." Also, when he was interviewed about Nahed's paper, Mark said that she wrote "In almost a conversational tone 'now, anyway' and that sort of thing. I want them to be more formal than that."

Data from initial interviews, classroom observations, and interviews about students' papers showed that teachers emphasized writing as "communication". Even though the teacher might have responded otherwise on the survey, the message which one would expect students to get from the teachers would be to see writing as "communication". In the following discussion, students' definitions of writing are compared with teachers' definitions as defined in the teachers' behaviors, i. e. communication.

Students' Perceptions About Defining Writing

On the Emig-King Writing Attitude Scale For Students, items numbered 1, 2, 7, 10, 36, and 39 were identified by raters as items defining writing. A change from "self-expression" to "both" or to "communication" on these items was considered closer alignment with the teacher's perception. A change from "both" to "communication" was considered also closer alignment with the teacher's perception. A change from "communication" to "both" or to "expression", or a change from "both" to "expression", was considered becoming less closely aligned with the teacher's perception.

Sam's Class

In the ninth grade, students' definitions of writing became more closely aligned

with their teacher's. As shown in Figure 1, of the seventeen students in the class, one became less closely aligned with the teacher and defined writing as self-expression, six became more closely aligned with the teacher, and ten did not change. Four of those who did not change maintained a definition similar to the teacher's and six maintained the definition of both. The increase in perceptual alignment with the teacher came from among the students who defined writing as both "communication and self-expression". This increase was true across gender and across letter grades received in the class. It is worth mentioning here that at the beginning of the semester none of the students in this class perceived writing to be "self-expression".

Analysis by gender showed similarities and differences (Figure 2). Four of the seven males who started the semester by defining writing as "both" became more closely aligned with the teacher and defined it as "communication" at the end of semester, two maintained their original definition, and one became less closely aligned. The two males who started the semester with "communication" did not change at the end of the semester. Of the six females who started with a definition different from the teacher's, two changed to "communication" and four maintained their starting definition. This indicated that after a semester of interaction both males' and females' perceptions became more closely aligned with their teacher's perception. It also indicated that ninth grade males increased their perceptual alignment with their teacher more than ninth grade females did.

Analysis by letter grade showed similarities and differences (Figure 3). Students' perceptions in both letter grade categories, B or above and less than B, were similar in two ways. First, perceptions of students in both grade categories became more closely aligned with the teacher's perception. Second, students in both grade categories who started the semester defining writing as communication maintained this definition throughout the semester. Differences based on letter grade appeared when the only student who became less closely aligned with the teacher was a student with a grade less than B and when 50% (two students) of students with grades less than B became more closely aligned with the teacher, compared to 44% (four students) of those with grades B or higher. This indicated

Figure 1. Distribution of students' responses on defining writing in each class.

Beginning of semester   End of semester

Sam's Class

4 com. ———————▶ 4 com.
13 both ———————▶ 6 com.
         ———————▶ 6 both
         ———————▶ 1 exp.

Mark's Class

8 com. ———————▶ 6 com.
         ———————▶ 2 both
9 both ———————▶ 7 com.
         ———————▶ 1 both
         ———————▶ 1 exp.
7 exp. ———————▶ 2 com.
         ———————▶ 4 both
         ———————▶ 1 exp.

Mary's Class

3 com. ———————▶ 3 com.
5 both ———————▶ 3 com.
         ———————▶ 1 both
         ———————▶ 1 exp.
4 exp. ———————▶ 1 com.
         ———————▶ 3 both

Shannon's Class

12 com. ———————▶ 10 com.
          ———————▶ 1 both
          ———————▶ 1 exp
7 both ———————▶ 2 com.
          ———————▶ 2 both
          ———————▶ 3 exp.
4 exp. ———————▶ 1 com
          ———————▶ 1 both
          ———————▶ 2 exp.

com.= communication   exp. = self-expression
both = both communication and self-expression

Figure 2. Distribution of students' responses on defining writing based on gender.

	Males			Females	
Beginning of semester		End of semester	Beginning of semester		End of semester
# category		# category	# category		# category

Sam's Class

2 com. ⟶ 2 com   2 com. ⟶ 2 com.

7 both ⟶ 4 com.   6 both ⟶ 2 com.

⟶ 2 both   ⟶ 4 both

⟶ 1 exp.

Mark's Class

5 com. ⟶ 4 com.   3 com. ⟶ 1 both

⟶ 1 both   ⟶ 2 com.

4 both ⟶ 3 com.   5 both ⟶ 4 com.

⟶ 1 both   ⟶ 1 exp

3 exp. ⟶ 2 both   4 exp. ⟶ 2 com.

⟶ 1 exp.   ⟶ 2 both

Mary's Class

2 com. ⟶ 2 com.   1 com. ⟶ 1 com.

1 both ⟶ 1 com.   4 both ⟶ 2 com

⟶ 1 both

⟶ 1 exp.

4 exp. ⟶ 1 com.

⟶ 3 both

Shannon's Class

6 com. ⟶ 6 com.   6 com ⟶ 4 com.

⟶ 1 both

⟶ 1 exp.

1 both ⟶ 1 exp.   6 both ⟶ 2 com.

⟶ 2 both

⟶ 2 exp.

1 exp. ⟶ 1 com.   3 exp. ⟶ 1 both

⟶ 2 exp.

com. = communication   exp. = self-expression
both = both communication and self-expression   # = number of students

Figure 3. Distrubution of students' definitions of writing based on letter grades in the English class.

	Grade B and above		Below grade B	
	Beginning of semester	End of semester	Beginning of semester	End of semester

Sam's Class

# category	# category	# category	# category
2 com. →	2 com	2 com. →	2 com.
9 both →	4 com.	4 both →	2 com.
	5 both		1 both
			1 exp.

Mark's Class

7 com. →	5 com.	1 com. →	1 com.
	2 both		
8 both →	6 com.	1 both →	1 com.
	1 both		
	1 exp.		
5 exp. →	2 com.	2 exp. →	2 both
	3 exp.		

Mary's Class

2 com. →	2 com.	1 com. →	1 com.
1 both →	1 exp.	4 both →	1 both
3 exp. →	1 com.	1 exp. →	4 com.
	2 both		

Shannon's Class

8 com. →	7 com.	4 com →	3 com.
	1 both		1 exp.
3 both →	1 both	4 both →	2 com.
	2 exp.		1 both
			1 exp.
2 exp. →	1 com.	2 exp. →	1 exp.
	1 exp.		1 both

com. = communication
both = both communication and self-expression

exp. = self-expression
# = number of students

that students with grades less than B showed a slightly higher perceptual alignment with the teacher than students with grades B and above.

Interviews also revealed the same trends. At the beginning of the semester, two of the four students who were interviewed from this class defined writing as "communication". The two students were Brian and Christina who were given grades C and B for this class. The third student, Nader, defined it as both. Nader's grade in the class was A-. The fourth student, Karolina, defined writing as "self-expression". Karolina's grade was B- in the class. At the end of the semester, all four students perceived of writing as "communication". This showed that students of all categories increased their perceptual alignment with their teacher. In her initial interview, for example, Karolina perceived writing as "self-expression". To her, writing was "writing stories and things about you . . . [good writing] can picture what's happening." When she talked about her paper before turning it in to the teacher, Karolina said that she liked her paper and she decided to report the biography of the character she chose because she "always liked him and he was different from every one else and he overcame his differences." When she talked about her paper after the teacher graded it, Karolina said "[Mr. Sam] told us what he wants and what he expects . . . [what made a paper good] was good sentences, good paragraphs, and you don't have little kid words." This demonstrated that Karolina changed her perception of writing. At the beginning of the semester she thought of writing as pictures, stories, and things about oneself which are mainly expressive in nature, but at the end of the semester she thought of writing as good sentences and good paragraphs which are mainly academic and communicative in nature.

Mark's Class

In the tenth grade, as in the ninth grade, students' perceptions of writing became more closely aligned with their teacher's perception (Figure 1). Of the sixteen students who started the semester by defining writing differently from the teacher, thirteen ended the semester more closely aligned, two did not change, and one became more closely aligned with the teacher's perception. Also two of the students who first defined writing as

"communication" became less closely aligned. This increase in perceptual alignment with the teacher was true across gender and across letter grades in the class.

Analysis by gender (Figure 2) showed that both females and males increased their perceptual alignment with their teacher. Of the twelve males in the class, one became less closely aligned, five became more closely aligned, and six did not change. Of the six who did not change, four started the semester and ended it by defining writing as their teacher did. Of the twelve females in the class, two became less closely aligned, eight became more closely aligned, and two did not change and maintained a starting definition similar to the teacher's. This indicated that after a semester of interaction the increase in perceptual alignment with the teacher was higher among tenth grade females than it was among males.

Analysis by letter grade (Figure 3) indicated that there were similarities and differences. Students in both letter grade categories increased their perceptual alignment with the teacher. All the students with grades less than B who started with a definition different from the teacher's ended becoming more closely aligned. This was not the case among students with grades of B or higher. Three of these students became less closely aligned and four maintained a definition different from the teacher's. This indicated that students with grades less than B in the class increased their perceptual alignment with the teacher more than students with grades of B or above.

Analysis of interview data also showed the same trends shown in the surveys. In the initial interviews, two of the four students interviewed, Bilal and Nahed whose grades were A and A-, defined writing as "communication". Writing meant "assignments and stuff like that. Assignments given by the teacher. Assignments that I have to write about and think about," Bilal said. Drew, whose grade was B-, defined writing as "self-expression". To Drew, writing was "Expression. You get to write about what you feel. Express your feelings." The fourth student, Zima, whose grade was A, defined it as "both self-expression and communication". Zima said, "When I write, it's a way of expressing myself. It's a way of communicating with other people your ideas, your words, your thoughts."

At the end of the semester, three of the four students defined writing as "communication" and the fourth one, Nahed, defined it as "self-expression". This indicated that after a semester of interaction, students' definitions of writing became more closely aligned with the teacher's definition. This closeness was reflected in what Drew had to say in his initial interview at the beginning and in his last interview at the end of semester. In his initial interview Drew said that writing was "Expression. You get to write about what you feel. Express your feelings." When he compared his last paper which he wrote near the end of the semester with the paper that he wrote at the beginning of the semester, Drew said "Technically this (latest paper) is probably a better paper . . . this is more dry." In her last interview Zima also showed a similar trend when she said that her last paper was "fine. For the most part it is just facts based on recalling what we read. The teacher will like it based on the fact that I recalled stuff from the story and said stuff about it."

Mary's Class

In the eleventh grade, as in the ninth and tenth grades, students' definitions of writing became more closely aligned with their teacher's definition. As in Figure 1, students who defined writing as "communication" increased from 25% (three students) at the beginning of the semester to 58% (seven students) at the end of the semester. Three of the seven students who ended the semester defining writing as "communication" maintained this stance throughout the semester, three started as "both", and one started as "self-expression". Three of the four students who started by defining writing as "self-expression" became more closely aligned with the teacher and ended by defining it as "both". Only one student in the class maintained a definition different from the teacher's while another student became less closely aligned with the teacher and ended the semester defining writing as "self-expression" instead of "both". This increase in perceptual alignment with the teacher was true across gender and across letter grades in the English class.

Analysis by gender showed that both males' and females' perceptions became more

closely aligned with the teacher's (Figure 2). Because there were only three male students in this class, gender differences should be taken with caution. The only male who started the semester defining writing as "both" ended the semester defining it as the teacher did, that is, "communication". The other two males maintained a definition of writing similar to the teacher's. Among the females, one maintained her definition which was "both" and another became less closely aligned with the teacher. All the other females either maintained a definition similar to the teacher's, "communication", or became more closely aligned with the teacher. All four females who started by defining writing as "self-expression" became more closely aligned with the teacher. Three of them ended the semester by defining it as "both" and the fourth ended defining it as "communication".

Analysis by grade showed similarities and differences (Figure 3). Students in both letter grade categories increased their perceptual alignment with their teacher. Of the six students with grades B or higher, one student became less closely aligned with the teacher. This student started by defining writing as "both" and ended by defining it as "self-expression". Three of the remaining five students became more closely aligned with the teacher and two maintained a starting definition similar to the teacher's, that is, communication. Of the six students with grades less than B, one maintained a definition of writing similar to the teacher's, that is, "communication". The other five became more closely aligned with the teacher's definition. Four changed from "both" to "communication" and one changed from "self-expression" to "both". This demonstrated that the perceptions of students with grades less than a B became more closely aligned with the teacher's perception than the perceptions of students with grades B or higher did.

Analysis of the interview data also indicated that, after a semester of interaction, students' perceptions became more closely aligned with their teacher's perception regarding defining writing. At the beginning of the semester, three of the four students who were interviewed from this class (Ben, Farid, and Denissa) defined writing as communication. This was similar to the teacher's definition. To these students, writing was "a form of communication," as Ben said in his initial interview. In contrast, the fourth student, Carrie,

said "Writing to me means self-expression on paper. I think that some people are afraid to talk out loud, so they express their feeling on paper."

At the end of the semester all four students perceived of writing as "communication". This showed that students' perceptions regarding writing became more closely aligned with their teacher's perception. For example, Carrie who perceived writing as "self-expression" at the beginning of the semester, defined it in terms of what the teacher liked and what facts were in her writing at the end of the semester. When she talked about her paper before turning it in to the teacher, Carrie said "Truthfully, it was the only thing I had [to write about]. The teacher gave me until Friday to finish and this is what I wrote. I think she'll like it. She'll look at the subject and then she'll look at the introduction. She'll get to the body of the paper and look for facts. [My paper is good because] I put the facts together." In terms of defining writing, Carrie's example showed a closeness of perceptual alignment with the teacher's perception.

Shannon's Class

As in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh grades, twelfth grade students' perceptions about writing became more closely aligned with their teacher's perception (Figure 1). Of the eleven students who started the semester defining writing differently from the teacher's definition, four became more closely aligned, four did not change, and three became less closely aligned. Two of the twelve students who started the semester with definitions similar to the teacher's became less closely aligned with the teacher. It is worth mentioning that this class had the highest number/percent of students who started by defining writing as "communication" and ended with the highest number/percent of those who defined it as "self-expression".

Analysis by gender showed gender similarities and differences (Figure 2). In this class, like the other three classes, both males and females increased their perceptual alignment with their teacher. Of the eight males in the class, six did not change and maintained a definition similar to the teacher's, one became more closely aligned, and one became less closely aligned with the teacher. Of the fifteen females in the class, eight did

not change, three became more closely aligned with the teacher's definition, and four became less closely aligned. Among the eight students who did not change, four maintained a definition similar to the teacher's. This indicated that after a semester of interaction, perceptual alignment with the teacher was higher among twelfth grade males than it was among twelfth grade females.

Analysis by letter grade showed differences (Figure 3). In this class, as in the tenth and eleventh grades, students with grades less than B showed a higher perceptual alignment with their teacher than the students with grades B or higher. From the thirteen students with grades B or more, three became less closely aligned and one became more closely aligned with the teacher; nine did not change. Seven among those who did not change maintained a definition similar to the teacher's. From the ten students with grades less than B, two became less closely aligned, three became more closely aligned, and five did not change. Three among those who did not change maintained a definition similar to the teacher's.

Analysis of interview data showed that students' perceptions regarding writing became more closely aligned with their teacher's definition. In the initial interviews, the two males (Paul and Shadi) defined writing as "communication", one of the two females (Helena) defined it as "self-expression" and the other female (Margaret) defined it as "both". In the initial interview, for example, Helena said that writing to her was "expressing how you feel about something. Writing it down makes me feel better."

At the end of the semester all four students thought of writing as "communication". For example, when she talked about her last paper for the class Helena said, "I just write what she asks us. . . just put all the information that I know in different paragraphs and put a good opening sentence." This indicated that writing for Helena changed from "expressing how you feel about something" to just putting "all the information" in different paragraphs. This probably happened because the teacher, as Margaret said, "wants everything her way. Even if we are doing a little essay and we are thinking about ideas, she'll come over and correct us and tell us what's wrong. We are just thinking of ideas,

but she is already correcting us."

Summary

Concerning defining writing, data analysis demonstrated three trends. First, students of grades less than B increased their perceptual alignment with the teacher more than students with grades of B or above. Second, with the exception of Mark' class, males increased their perceptual alignment with the teacher more than females did. Third, data analysis for all four classes demonstrated that students' perceptions became more closely aligned with their teacher's perceptions as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Students' Perceptual Alignment with Teachers' Definition of Writing

Class	Ending definition	No change	More closely aligned	Less closely aligned
Sam	Communication	4	0	0
	Both	6	6	1
	Expression	0	0	0
Mark	Communication	6	2	0
	Both	1	7	1
	Expression	1	6	0
Mary	Communication	3	0	0
	Both	1	3	1
	Expression	0	4	0
Shannon	Communication	10	0	2
	Both	2	2	3
	Expression	2	2	0
Totals		36	32	8

The Importance of Grammar and Mechanics

Teachers' Perceptions

Items numbered 3, 10, 11, 27, 32, 41, and 50 in Emig-King Writing Attitude Scale For Teachers were classified as showing perceptions about the importance of grammar and mechanics. As explained in the methodology section of Chapter III, teachers' responses to

survey items were classified under three categories: perceiving grammar and mechanics as important, perceiving them as not important, or perceiving their importance depending on the situation (Table 4).

Table 4

Teachers' Responses to Survey Items on the Importance of Grammar and Mechanics in Students' Writing

	Important	Depends On Situation	Not Important
Sam	3, 10, 11, 27, 32	50	41
Mark	3,10, 11, 27, 32, 41		50
Mary	11		3, 10, 27, 32, 41, 50
Shannon	11	41	3, 10, 27, 32, 50

Similar to defining writing, there was a discrepancy between how some teachers responded to survey items and initial interview questions and what they did in class. This discrepancy was clear among female teachers. As shown in the Table 3, teachers' responses to survey items on the importance of grammar and mechanics in students' writing showed that the two female teachers perceived them as "not important" while the two male teachers perceived that they were.

In the initial interviews the two female teachers said that grammar and mechanics were not that important and the two male teachers said they were. For example, Mary said that she "used to consider grammar and mechanics very important" but she "had changed lately", and Shannon said that she considered "grammar and mechanics to be at the bottom of the list" in terms of the qualities of good student writing. This was not the same for the male teachers. Both Sam and Mark considered grammar and mechanics very important in students' writing. Sam, for example, said that "In the past, mechanics were very important and that's the way I was trained to grade papers, but lately they've been showing us this holistic scoring and when I do it, I feel guilty. It sure helps in terms of getting the papers done fast, and you'd get the same grade, but the kid doesn't know why necessarily. To me, it's important, but the jury is still there."

During classroom instruction, all four teachers talked about the importance of

grammar and mechanics in writing, but Mary was the only one who spent time teaching grammar and mechanics to her class. This was different from the surveys and initial interviews. In three observations, Mary spent some time teaching grammar and punctuation. During two class periods, before the first assignment was due, she spent the whole hour on sentence combining and punctuation. This showed that, in her instruction, Mary considered grammar and mechanics important. Shannon did not teach grammar because, as she mentioned in the initial interview, she assumed that her students "should already know these things."

Sam concentrated on grammar, spelling, and punctuation even though he gave only one major writing assignment over the semester. In addition to the final exam which included no essay writing component, Sam's grade records showed that he had twenty tests or quizzes. Fifteen grades were for spelling, one for handwriting, one for unit test, usually multiple choice and short answer, and one grammar test. He gave students the same handout twice prior to the due date of the writing assignment. The handout was about organization, correctness, and elements of the five paragraph essay.

Even though Mark and Shannon were not observed teaching grammar or mechanics, Mark mentioned to students that they were part of his criteria for evaluating writing assignments every time he was observed assigning writing. While students were writing during class, Shannon walked around correcting their grammatical and mechanical errors. Also, when students "conferenced" with her about their assignments, she emphasized grammar and mechanics strongly. In three conferences with three different students, she made comments only about grammar and mechanics. This showed that all four teachers emphasized grammar and mechanics in their instruction, but they did that in different ways.

In correcting students' papers, all four teachers emphasized grammatical and mechanical errors in students' papers. The number of grammatical and mechanical corrections made by the teachers on students' papers was disproportionately higher than the number of rhetorical marks. For example, on a two page paper randomly selected from

each class (Table 5), Sam made 47 written remarks, Mark made 51, Mary made 27, and Shannon made 24. Of Sam's remarks, 41 (87%) were grammatical and mechanical, 39 (77%) were of Mark's, 21 (78%) were of Mary's, and 18 (75%) were of Shannon's. This showed that all four teachers emphasized grammar and mechanics, but Sam did that more than the other three teachers.

Table 5

Distribution of the Numbers of Written Remarks on a Randomly Selected Two Page Paper From Each Class

	Grammatical	Rhetorical
Sam	42	5
Mark	39	12
Mary	21	6
Shannon	18	6

In interviews about students' papers, Sam, Mark and Shannon mentioned grammatical and mechanical errors as weaknesses of students' papers every time they talked about weaknesses. Mary did not mention them at all. The following is an excerpt from an interview with Shannon, when the focus was on Shadi's paper. It demonstrates how important this issue was to her:

The interviewer. Can you talk to me about Shadi's paper?

Shannon. He was going in circles and that's what he needed to spend more time on, revision and organization. It lacks narrative quality. Then just basic sentence structure. Problems with grammar as far as being able to express what he wanted to say.

The interviewer. Can you show me an example of this?

Shannon. Well, O. K. I would say this is a pretty basic sentence here [reads from Shadi's paper] 'This person that I interviewed has had a lot of experience in [name of a job].'

The interviewer: So you expect a good kind of sentence to be a more complex one?

Shannon. That's not exactly a bad one...O. K., this is probably where grammar gets a little awkward [reads from paper] 'The world needs more of these people out in the technical world because of the work they do provides us with what we need.' He should

have known to revise this sentence on his own.

Even though two of the four teachers indicated in both surveys and initial interviews that they did not consider grammar and mechanics to be important in students' writing, classroom practices indicated that all four teachers perceived grammatical and mechanical correctness to be important . That was the message which one would expect students to learn in each class. Therefore, students' perceptions were compared with the teachers' perception of grammar and mechanics in their teaching practices. Students' perceptions were considered to be closely aligned to the teacher's in three cases: first, if they changed their responses on the survey items indicating the importance of grammar and mechanics from "not important" to "depends" or "important"; second, if they changed from "depends" to "important"; third, if they kept perceiving them as "important" throughout the semester. Students were considered to be less closely aligned with the teacher in two cases: first, if they changed from "important" to "depends" or "not important"; second, if they changed from "depends" to "not important".

Students' Perceptions

Change in students' perceptions for each of the four classes studied is shown in Figures 4, 5, and 6. Figure 4 shows change in the entire class, Figure 5 shows change by gender, and Figure 6 shows change by letter grade in the English class.

Sam's Class

An analysis of responses to survey items on the importance of grammar and mechanics in the ninth grade showed that students' perceptions became more closely aligned with their teacher's perception (Figure 4). Of the nine students who started the semester seeing their importance as dependent on the situation, four ended more closely aligned with the teacher, i. e. seeing them as important. Four did not change and one became less closely aligned with the teacher. Of the students who started by seeing grammar and mechanics as important, two became less closely aligned and six did not change. This alignment was true for females and across grades .

Similarities and differences were apparent when data were analyzed by gender

Figure 4. Distribution of students' responses to survey items on the importance of grammar and mechanics in writing in each class.

Beginning of semester   End of semester

Sam's Class

8 imp.   →   6 imp.

     2 not imp.

9 dep.   →   4 imp.

     4 dep.

     1 not imp.

Mark's Class

9 imp.   →   2 imp.

     6 dep.

     1 not imp.

10 dep.   →   4 imp.

     4 dep.

     2 not imp.

5 not imp.   →   1 imp.

     3 dep.

     1 not imp.

Mary's Class

5 imp.   →   2 imp.

     3 not imp.

7 dep.   →   4 imp.

     3 dep.

Shannon's Class

6 imp   →   4 imp.

     2 dep.

9 dep.   →   4 imp.

     4 dep.

     1 not imp.

8 not imp.   →   2 imp.

     2 dep.

     4 not imp.

imp. = important   dep. = depends on situation
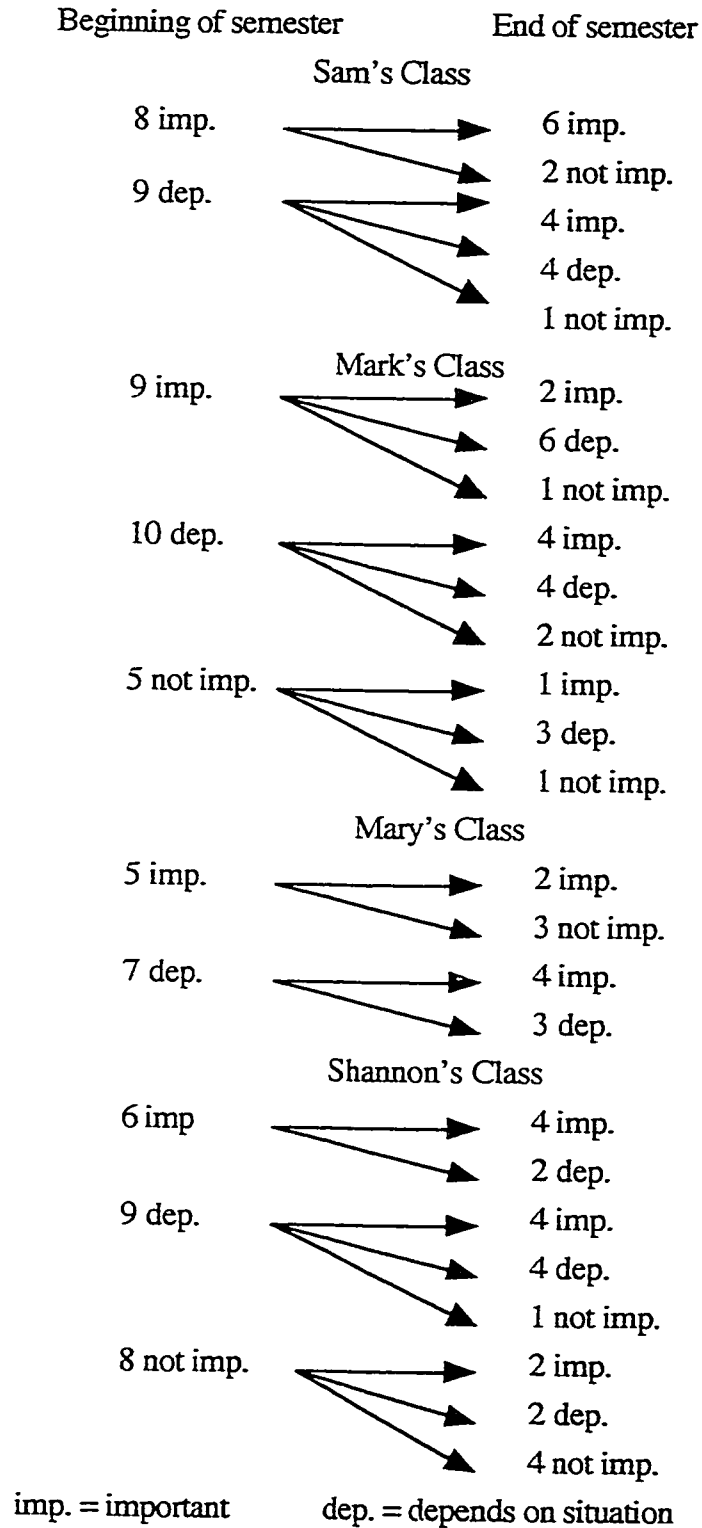
Figure 5. Distribution of students' perception on the importance of grammar based on gender.

Beginning of semester Males	End of semester	Beginning of semester Females	End of semester
# category	# category	# category	# category

Sam's Class

5 imp. → 4 imp. / 1 not imp.

3 imp. → 2 imp. / 1 not imp.

4 dep. → 2 imp. / 2 dep.

5 dep. → 3 imp. / 1 dep. / 1 not imp.

Mark's Class

7 imp. → 1 imp. / 6 dep.

2 imp. → 1 imp. / 1 not imp.

3 dep. → 2 imp. / 1 dep.

7 dep. → 2 imp. / 3 dep. / 2 not imp.

2 not imp. → 1 dep. / 1 not imp.

3 not imp. → 2 imp. / 1 dep.

Mary's Class

1 imp. → 1 not imp.

4 imp. → 2 imp. / 2 not imp.

2 dep. → 1 imp. / 1 dep.

5 dep. → 3 imp. / 2 dep.

Shannon's Class

3 imp. → 2 imp. / 1 dep.

3 imp. → 2 imp. / 1 dep.

2 dep. → 1 imp. / 1 dep.

7 dep. → 3 imp. / 3 dep. / 1 not imp.

3 not imp. → 1 dep. / 2 not imp.

5 not imp. → 2 imp. / 1 dep. / 2 not imp.

imp. = important   dep. = depending on the situation   not imp. = not important
#   = number of students

Figure 6. Distribution of students' perception on the importance of grammar based on grade in class.

Beginning of semester	End of semester	Beginning of semester	End of semester
Grade B and above		Below grade B	
# category	# category	# category	# category

Sam's Class

5 imp. → 4 imp. / 1 not imp. / 1 not imp.

3 imp. → 2 imp. / 1 not imp.

6 dep. → 3 imp. / 2 dep.

3 dep. → 1 imp. / 2 dep.

Mark's Class

8 imp. → 2 imp. / 5 dep. / 1 not imp.

1 imp. → 1 dep.

9 dep. → 3 imp. / 4 dep. / 2 not imp.

1 dep. → 1 imp.

4 not imp. → 1 imp. / 3 dep.

1 not imp. → 1 not imp.

Mary's Class

2 imp. → 1 imp. / 1 not imp.

3 imp. → 1 imp. / 2 not imp.

4 dep. → 2 imp. / 2 dep.

3 dep. → 2 imp. / 1 dep.

Shannon's Class

4 imp. → 2 imp. / 2 dep.

2 imp. → 2 imp.

5 dep. → 2 imp. / 3 dep.

4 dep. → 2 imp. / 1 dep. / 1 not imp.

4 not imp. → 1 imp. / 1 dep. / 2 not imp.

4 not imp. → 1 imp. / 1 dep. / 2 not imp.

imp. = important
dep. = depends on the situation
not imp. = not important
= number of students

(Figure 5). Both males and females became more closely aligned with the teacher. However, more females than males became less closely aligned with the teacher. Of the five males who started the semester by considering grammar and mechanics "important", four did not change and one became less closely aligned. Of the four males who started the semester with "depends", two became less closely aligned with the teacher at the end of the semester and two did not change. Therefore, among the nine males, six became more closely aligned while one became less closely aligned with the teacher's perception.

Of the three females who started with "important", two did not change and one became less closely aligned. Of the five females who started with "depends", three ended more closely aligned, one did not change, and one became less closely aligned with the teacher. Therefore, among the eight females, five became more closely aligned while two became less closely aligned with the teacher's perception. Comparison between males and females indicated that both genders increased their perceptual alignment with the teacher equally, but more females than males became less closely aligned with the teacher.

Similarities and differences evident when data were analyzed by grades earned in the class (Figure 6). Students with grades of B or above tended to become less closely aligned with the teacher more than students with grades less than B. Also, students with grades of B or above tended to become more closely aligned with the teacher compared with students with grades less than B. Of the eleven students with grades of B or above, six did not change, three became more closely aligned, and two became less closely aligned and ended perceiving grammar and mechanics as "not important". Of the six students with grades less than B, four did not change, one became less closely aligned and one became more closely aligned with the teacher.

When students from this class were asked in their initial interviews about the qualities of good writing, only Brian mentioned grammar and mechanics as qualities of good writing. To Brian, what made students' writing good was "how much effort they put into it and if they went through the spell check, the grammar, and the question marks." When they were specifically asked about the importance of grammar and mechanics, both

Christina and Karolina said that they considered them important, but Nader said that their importance depended on the situation and the purpose of writing.

Before turning in their papers to their teacher, Brian and Christina talked about grammar and mechanics as strengths of their papers. Brian said that his paper was good because, among other things, "The spelling and grammar [in the paper] is pretty good." Christina thought that her paper was good because it had "complete thoughts. There is [sic] no spelling errors. It tells what you need to know." Nader and Karolina talked only about their styles of writing as strengths of their papers. For example, on two different occasions during the interview, Karolina said that her paper was good because of "the way I use the words . . . I like how my words go together . . . the way it sounds."

After seeing the teacher's marks and grades on their papers, all four students then mentioned form, grammar, and mechanics as important qualities of good writing. They also mentioned grammatical and mechanical errors as weaknesses of their papers, and they agreed with the teacher on grammatical and mechanical marks. Nader was the only one who disagreed with the teacher's marks on form even though he agreed with the grammatical and mechanical marks. For example, in his interview on his graded paper, Nader said, "I agree with him on all the punctuation things, those are solid, you can't argue with those." Nader added, "He says that my paragraphs need development. If you read the whole thing you'll understand what's going on and you'll be intrigued by it. I don't think that my paragraphs need development. He's confused. I am not saying he's stupid. I'll never say that. . . . He says that paragraphs should have five to eight sentences. Not every paragraph should have five to eight sentences."

Like survey data on items dealing with grammar and mechanics, analysis of interview data showed that: First, ninth graders' perceptions about the importance of grammar and mechanics became more closely aligned with their teachers' perceptions. Second, males and females increased their perceptual alignment with the teacher equally, but more females than males became less closely aligned with the teacher. Third, students with grades B or above became more closely aligned with the teacher than students with

grades less than B. Fourth, more students with grades B or above became less closely aligned with the teacher than students with grades less than B did. Although the third and fourth points might appear contradictory, they are not; they show that students with grades B or above showed more active movement both closer to and away from the teacher than students with grades less than B.

Mark's Class

In the tenth grade, as in the ninth grade, some students' perceptions about the importance of grammar and mechanics became more closely aligned with their teacher's perception. However, more students in this tenth grade class tended to become less closely aligned with the teacher's perception than those in the ninth grade (Figure 4). The semester started with nine students' perceptions of grammar and mechanics similar to their teacher's, that is, "important". When the semester ended, two of these nine students maintained their perception and eight became more closely aligned with the teacher. Of the eight who became more closely aligned, four started with "depends" and four started with "not important".

In this class, the number of students who changed their initial perceptions was greater than the number of those who did not change. Of the nine who started perceiving grammar and mechanics as "important", seven changed. Of these seven, six changed to "depends" and one changed to "not important". Of those who started with "depends", six changed; four became more closely aligned and two became less closely aligned with the teacher. Of the five who started with "not important" one changed to "important", three changed to "depends", and one did not change. This showed that while the over all perceptual alignment with the teacher was neutral, the number of students who became more closely aligned with the teacher was equal to the number of students who became less closely aligned with him (9 students in each case).

Analysis by gender showed differences (Figure 5). While females showed closer perceptual alignment, males became less closely aligned with the teacher. The semester started with two females perceiving grammar and mechanics as "important". When the

semester ended, five females were closely aligned with the teacher and perceived them as "important", the same as the teacher did. Two of these five started with "not important", two started with "depends", and one with "important". Another female ended more closely aligned with the teacher when she changed from "not important" to "depends". At the end of the semester, three females became less aligned with the teacher. One of these three started with "important" and changed to "not important", two started with "depends" and changed to "not important". Four of the twelve females in the class maintained their original perceptions.

When the semester started, the perceptions of seven males were closely aligned with their teacher's perception. When the semester ended, the perceptions of four were closely aligned or became more closely aligned, the perceptions of six became less aligned when they shifted from "important" to "depends", and the perceptions of two remained different from the teacher's. Of the four who showed close alignment, one started with "important" and maintained it, two started with "depends" and changed to "important", and one changed from "not important" to "depends". This showed that males' perceptions in the tenth grade tended to become less closely aligned with the teacher's perception. This was contrary to what males in the ninth grade demonstrated, as it was contrary to what the females in both the ninth and tenth grades demonstrated when their perceptions became more closely aligned with their teacher's perception.

Analysis by letter grades in the English class showed similarities and differences but, because only three students in the class had grades less than B, comparisons based on grades should be taken with caution (Figure 6). There was movement both away from and closer to the teacher's perception among students in both grade categories. Among the three students with grades less than B, one maintained a perception different from the teacher's, one became more closely aligned, and one became less closely aligned. Among the 21 students with grades of B or above, six maintained their perceptions. Two of these six maintained a perception similar to the teacher's. Of the nineteen who changed, seven became more closely aligned and eight became less closely aligned. Compared to eight-

who became less closely aligned, nine of the students with grades of B or above either maintained a perception similar to the teacher's or became more closely aligned with the teacher's perception. Contrary to what appeared in Sam's class, among Mark's students with grades of B or above, more became less closely aligned with the teacher's perception than aligned with it. Among students with grades less than B, similar to the Sam's class, those becoming more closely aligned with the teacher's perception were equal to those becoming less closely aligned with it.

Analysis of the initial interviews showed that none of the four students interviewed mentioned grammar and mechanics as qualities of good writing until they were specifically asked about them. Of these students, Nahed was described by her teacher as "the poorest writer in the bunch." Bilal and Nahed emphasized form as one of the important qualities of good writing while Drew and Zima emphasized style and content. The following excerpt from the initial interview with Bilal is an example of what he emphasized:

The Interviewer. O. K. What do you see in any student's writing to make you say it is a good piece of writing? What are the qualities. . .?

Bilal. A good introduction, a thesis statement, a good conclusion, supporting details. That's a good piece of writing.

Like the other tenth graders, Bilal did not mention grammar and mechanics. When he was asked about their importance in writing, Bilal's answer was that "Grammar and mechanics show how sophisticated you are. Like, if you don't use good grammar and mechanics in writing, people won't think you know as much."

According to the initial interviews, the qualities of good writing were different to Drew than Bilal. The following excerpt from Drew's interview showed that difference:

The Interviewer. Suppose that I give you a piece of writing written by a student and you say "Oh, this is really a good piece of writing!" What do you look for in any student's piece of writing to say it is good?

Drew. I look for feelings. You know, it's not just writing down what the teacher wants to hear. It's what actually you think about it . . . and I like humor a lot.

Again, when he was specifically asked about grammar and mechanics, Drew said "Well, I think it's pretty important, but I don't think it's something that should be over stressed, you know. I don't think the grade should depend on it but I think it's important because you have to use it sooner or later."

Before turning their papers in to the teacher, all four students talked about form, grammar, and mechanics as issues that the teacher wanted students to emphasize in the paper. Zima and Drew sarcastically agreed with the teacher about grammar and mechanics. This sarcasm was taken as a sign of disagreement with the teacher on what should be considered important in students' writing. For example, when he talked about his paper, Drew said that the teacher "wanted it to be four pages. He even told us he wants punctuation and all that stuff! He'll grade you on it! He pretty much laid it out for us, all we needed was words!" This showed that Drew did not really agree with the teacher, but he wrote his paper that way for the grade.

All four students perceived grammatical and mechanical errors as weaknesses of their writing after seeing the teacher's marks and grades. While Drew agreed with the teacher's marks with sarcasm, Nahed and Zima agreed but expressed frustration, and Bilal agreed without discussion. For example, when she talked about her last paper in the semester, Nahed said that students' papers were "crossed out and written over. He does look at them, but he looks at them not like somebody just reading a paper, he is concentrating on every little thing. When I wrote this example [pointing to the paper] and he came to it, I bet he was reading it like this [holding a pen in her hand and passing it over the paper] looking for little errors." This demonstrated that Nahed was more aware of what the teacher looked for and wrote her paper accordingly.

Analysis of the surveys, initial interviews, and interviews about their papers showed that tenth graders did not increase their perceptual alignment with the teacher regarding the importance of grammar and mechanics in writing. Doing what the teacher asked was for the purpose of getting a higher grade. Data analysis also showed that females increased their perceptual alignment with the teacher more than males did, and that

students with lower grades tended to agree more with the teacher on the issue of the importance of grammar and mechanics in students' writing.

Mary's Class

In the eleventh grade, as in the ninth grade, students' perceptions about the importance of grammar became more closely aligned with their teacher's perception (Figure 4). Of the twelve students in the class, three became less closely aligned, four became more closely aligned with the teacher's perception, and five did not change. Of the five who did not change, two students maintained a perception similar to the teacher's. This indicated that by the end of the semester, the number of students who showed alignment or closer alignment with the teacher (6 students) was more than the number of those who became less closely aligned (3 students).

When data were analyzed by gender, gender differences appeared (Figure 5). While there was no over all change in males' perceptual alignment with the teacher, there was an increase in the females'. Of the three males in this class, one maintained a perception different from the teacher's, one became less closely aligned, and one became more closely aligned with the teacher's perception. Of the nine females, two became less closely aligned and changed from "important" to "not important", three became more closely aligned and changed from "depends" to "important", and four did not change. Two of the four females who did not change maintained a perception similar to the teacher's. Because there were three males in this class, gender comparisons should be taken with caution.

Similar to the ninth and tenth grades, analysis by grades earned in the English class indicated that while eleventh grade students with grades of B or higher increased their perceptual alignment with their teacher, students with grades less than B did not (Figure 6). Of the six students with grades less than B in this class, two became less closely aligned, two became more closely aligned, and two did not change. Of the two who did not change, one maintained a perception similar to the teacher's while the other maintained a

perception different from the teacher's. Of the six students with grades of B or above, one became less closely aligned and two became more closely aligned with the teacher. The other three maintained their perceptions throughout the semester, one similar to the teacher's and two different from it.

Analysis of the interviews showed trends similar to those shown by analyzing surveys. In their initial interviews Ben, Farid, and Denissa mentioned having an "introduction, a body, and a conclusion" as important qualities of writing. Of these three, Denissa and Ben added grammar and mechanics as important qualities of good writing. The fourth student, Carrie, concentrated on content and style as the important qualities of writing. Carrie did not mention grammar, mechanics, or form as important qualities of good writing. She said that what made students' writing good was "The way they carry on sentences. They use expanded vocabulary and they change the words around in it. They make you interested in it. You may've known about it [the topic], but it interests you." When Farid and Carrie were specifically asked about the importance of grammar and mechanics in writing, both of them said they were important.

When they were asked to talk about the strengths and weaknesses of their papers before turning them in to the teacher, Farid was the only one to mention grammar and mechanics as strengths of his paper. When he was asked to mention the strengths of his paper, Farid said that his paper "had an introduction, a body, a conclusion, and she [the teacher] said write two pages. I wrote two pages . . . I indented. I wrote paragraphs and used good grammar."

When they talked about their papers after seeing the teacher's marks and grades on them, Farid, Carrie, and Denissa mentioned grammar and mechanics as important issues in writing but Ben did not. For example, when Denissa was asked how the teacher's marks would influence her future writing, Denissa said she would watch her "spelling and put fewer commas." Carrie was influenced in the same way Denissa was. When she was asked how the class influenced her writing, Carrie said that if she were to teach English she would "teach how the paper's supposed to be. How it's supposed to have an introduction,

body, conclusion, and a thesis statement. I would teach that and I would have my students spell the words right. I would have, not spelling tests, but just tests on different words." Both the analysis of initial interviews and interviews with students when they talked about their papers supported the analysis of the surveys. This analysis showed that in the eleventh grade, students' perceptions about the importance of grammar and mechanics became more closely aligned with their teacher's perception. It also showed that females increased their perceptual alignment with the teacher more than males did.

Shannon's Class

As in the ninth and eleventh grades, twelfth grade students' perceptions of grammar and mechanics became more closely aligned with their teacher's perception (Figure 4). Of the seventeen students who started with perceptions different from the teacher's, eight ended more closely aligned, one became less closely aligned, and eight did not change. Of the eight students who did not change, four maintained a perception similar to the teacher's, "important".

Similarities and differences appeared when survey items were analyzed by gender (Figure 5). Both males' and females' perceptions were similar, becoming more closely aligned with the teacher's perception. The differences occur because females showed more active perceptual change than males did. Of the eight males in the class, three males (33%) changed. Of the fifteen females, eight (53%) changed their perceptions. Compared to males, more females who started the semester with perceptions different from the teacher ended more closely aligned with the teacher. While six of twelve females who started different became more closely aligned, only two of the five males who started different became more closely aligned with the teacher. Also, one of the males in this class became less closely aligned with the teacher compared to two females who did the same thing.

Unlike ninth, tenth, and eleventh grades, analysis by grades earned in the English class indicated that students in both grade categories in this class became more closely aligned with their teacher's perception (Figure 6). Of the thirteen students with grades of B or above, four became more closely aligned with the teacher's perception, two became less

closely aligned, and seven did not change. Of the seven who did not change, two students maintained a perception similar to the teacher's. This meant that while three students with grades of B or above started the semester with perceptions similar to the teacher's, the semester ended with four of these students either having a perception similar to or becoming more closely aligned with the teacher's.

Of the ten students with grades less than B, four became more closely aligned with their teacher's perception, one became less closely aligned, and four did not change. Of the four who did not change, two students started with a perception similar to the teacher's and maintained that perception. This meant that the perceptions of students with grades less than B became more closely aligned with their teacher's perception.

In this class, unlike the three other classes, students with grades less than B showed more perceptual alignment with the teacher than students with grades of B or above, Figure 6. This difference was very small. This conclusion was based on the fact that only one student with a grade less than B became less closely aligned with the teacher compared with two with grades of B or higher. Six students in each grade category ended the semester more closely aligned with the teacher.

As with the other classes, the analysis of interview data supported the trends which appeared from analyzing survey data. In their initial interviews, two interviewees from this class, Margaret and Shadi, perceived that grammar and mechanics were important in writing. When they were asked what they would look for in a good writing, Shadi said, "I'd probably see the structure of it, the grammar, how they put their words on paper, and if it is understandable and interesting." Margaret said, "Mechanics and grammar are important. That is because I am a bad speller. If a person can't read the word that you try to write down, or that you try to make them understand, it is not good. So mechanics are important to me."

In the initial interviews, grammar and mechanics were important qualities of good writing according to Shadi and Margaret, but they were not part of the qualities of good writing according to Paul and Helena. For example, all that Paul said about good writing

was that "It would be very detailed. It would stay strictly to the subject. They'd use words that I can understand, words I know. They talk about the subject in details and they'd be to the point. They say nothing more and nothing less." When specifically asked about the importance of grammar and mechanics, Helena said, "As long as the writing is interesting, they shouldn't really matter," and Paul said, "Not really. If it is very serious writing, then yes. When I write to my girl friend, I really don't care about grammar and commas. I want to write how I want to write."

When they talked about their papers before turning them in to the teacher, Paul and Shadi thought that grammatical and mechanical correctness were strengths in their papers. The effect of what the teacher practiced in class was evident on more than one student. Paul, for example, mentioned that he paid attention to the mechanics because the teacher emphasized them. The following excerpt from Paul's interview is an illustration of this point:

The Interviewer. Are there things that you expect the teacher to look for?

Paul. I guess she would emphasize word choice and grammar.

The Interviewer: Why?

Paul. She's always pretty picky about that.

The Interviewer: Word choice and grammar?

Paul. Yeah.

The Interviewer: How did you deal with that in your paper?

Paul. Spell checking [on the computer]. This is my third draft. My second one went to my teacher and my first one went to spell check, but what I did not check was spacing. My spacing, like double spacing after the period. I put commas everywhere and that took me a while. I checked on the spacing and punctuation.

The Interviewer. Why did you spend time on the punctuation?

Paul. 'Cause it seems like more professional and better. If you don't put some periods you don't know where the sentences end. . .

Margaret said something similar to this. She said that, "Every time when you write

something, [Mrs. Shannon finds] something's wrong with it all the time. She looked at our rough draft. She made us turn in our rough draft along with our paper so that she could see how much revision we did on it. If she didn't see a lot of revisions she would give us poor. If there was an obvious spelling mistake then we did not revise."

In the interviews about their papers after seeing the teacher's marks and comments, Shadi, Margaret, and Paul said that grammar and mechanics were "important", but Helena did not. When she saw her teacher's marks and the grade, Helena said that she wrote her paper the way she chose to write it and that was by "putting down all the information that I know in different paragraphs and having a good opening sentence [which] attracts the readers and make them want to read on." There was no mention of the importance of correctness in Helena's description of her writing in spite of the numerous grammatical and mechanical marks which the teacher had made on the paper. When Helena was specifically asked about those marks, her response was, "I really don't look at the teacher's remarks. I just look at my grade." When she was asked why she did not look at the teacher's marks and comments, Helena said "I don't bother. When she gives it [the assignment] to us, we go over it. Then I write my paper. I just write what I think I should write."

Contrary to Helena, Shadi said that the qualities of good writing were "the facts, the style, the grammar, the ideas, and making sure that they go in order [organization]." Paul's final definition of good writing was no different from Shadi's when the latter said that good writing had to have a "good introduction that catches the reader and a good conclusion, and good grammar so you can understand, and big words to make it seem professional."

Summary

Data analysis concerning the importance of grammar and mechanics showed four trends. First, except in Mark's class, students with grades of B or above increased their perceptual alignment with the teacher concerning the importance of grammar and mechanics in writing. Second, except in Shannon's class, students with grades of B or less showed neutral perceptual alignment with the teacher. Third, females showed closer perceptual·

alignment with the teachers' perceptions than males did. Fourth, data analysis for all four classes demonstrated that students' perceptions became more closely aligned with their teachers' perceptions concerning the importance of grammar and mechanics in writing as shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Students' Perceptual Alignment with Teachers' Perceptions on the Importance of Grammar and Mechanics

Class	Ending perceptions	No change	More closely aligned	Less closely aligned
Sam	Important	6	0	2
	Depends	4	4	1
	Not important	0	0	0
Mark	Important	2	0	7
	Depends	4	4	2
	Not important	1	4	0
Mary	Important	2	0	3
	Depends	3	4	0
	Not important	0	0	0
Shannon	Important	4	0	2
	Depends	4	4	1
	Not important	4	4	0
Totals		34	24	18

Self-efficacy as Writer and Attitude Toward Writing

Teachers

In the teachers' survey, the items which measured teachers' attitudes toward writing and teachers' self-efficacy as writers were items number 4, 5, 12, 15, 19, 22, 31, 40, 45, and 49. Responses of "almost always" or often were considered "positive", responses of "sometimes" were considered "neutral", and responses of "seldom" or "almost never" were considered indicative of a "negative" attitude toward writing and negative self-efficacy as writer. As shown in Table 7, while Sam's and Shannon's attitudes and self-efficacy were positive, Mark's was negative and Mary's, though negative, leaned toward being neutral.

Table 7

Distribution of Teachers' Responses to Survey Items Measuring Attitude Toward Writing and Self-concept as Writers

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Sam	4, 5, 15, 22, 40, 45	12, 19	31, 49
Mark	22	4, 5, 45	12, 15, 19, 31, 40, 49
Mary	5, 12, 40	4, 15, 22	19, 31, 45, 49
Shannon	5, 12, 22, 31, 45	4, 15, 19, 40	49

Two of the teachers, Mark and Shannon, took the time at the end of the survey to write about themselves and their thoughts regarding writing. What they wrote supported what appeared in the data analysis. Explaining his negative attitude and self-efficacy, Mark wrote, "I don't enjoy the writing process even today . . . several negative experiences as a child with writing have been difficult to overcome when it comes to this subject." When she explained how positively she perceived her efficacy and her attitude toward writing, Shannon wrote, "Although I enjoy writing in the summer, (that's when I am most productive) I find creative writing difficult during the school year. The demands of my job don't leave much energy or creativity for writing." Sam, in several short conversations, expressed that he wrote almost every day and that he was considering a career in technical writing after retirement.

Even though not every teacher was asked about his or her attitude toward writing, analysis of the interview data supported survey data results. In her initial interview, Shannon made statements similar to what she wrote on the survey papers indicating that she had a positive attitude toward writing and that she viewed herself as a good writer. Mary, at different times in her initial interview, made remarks alluding to how she perceived herself negatively as a writer. When she was asked about what the word writing triggered in her mind, Mary said, "Poetry." When she was asked "Why?" she said, "I think because I like poetry so much and I'd like to be able to write poetry and I don't write poetry well. So, when I think of a good writer, I think of a poet." Also, when she was asked about what made some people better writers than others, Mary used her negative

experience as an example and said, "I think that family background has something to do with it. I know that personally as well as see it in my students. I have some things I still have to work on because that's the way my parents say it." This indicated that Mary perceived her attitude and her self-efficacy as a writer in a negative way.
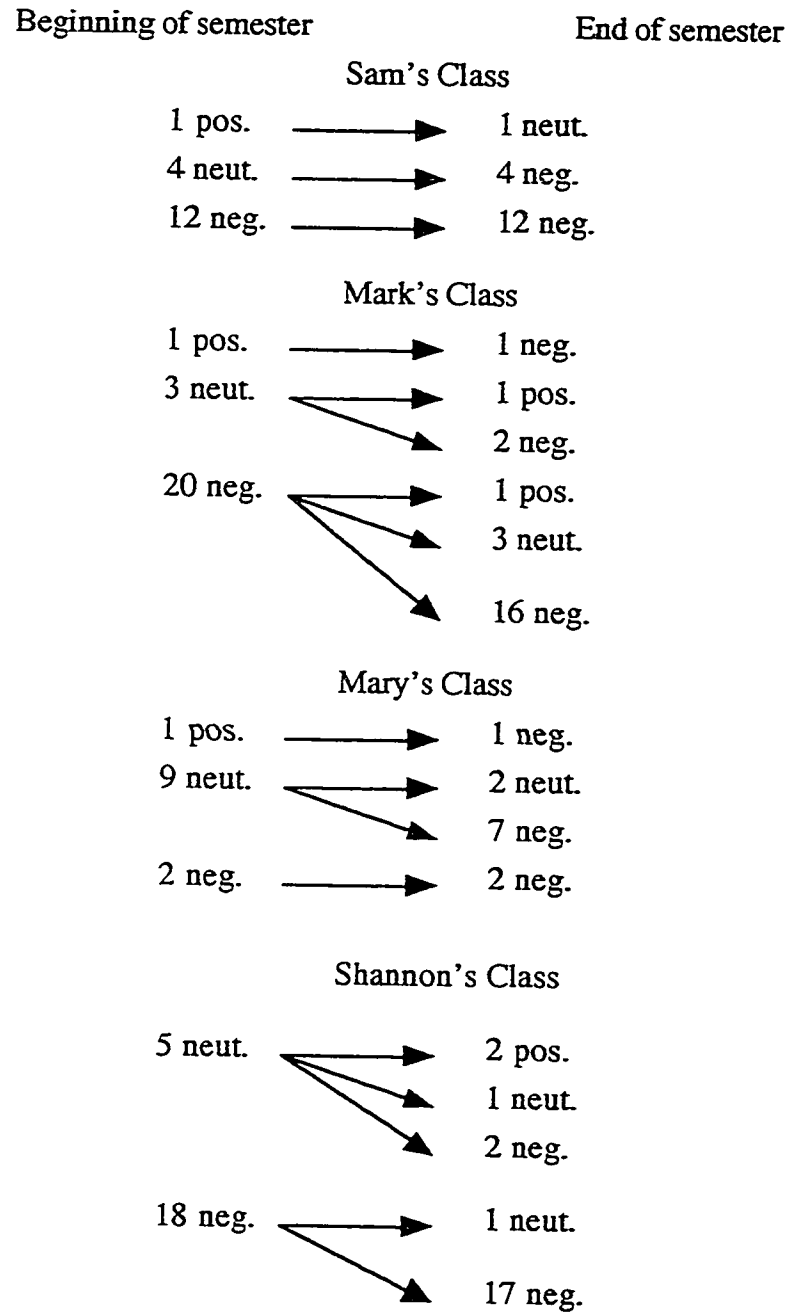
Analysis of observational data also supported the trends which were revealed by analyzing surveys. During classroom observations, Sam was the only teacher who used his own impromptu writing to demonstrate to his class how an introduction should look and where a thesis statement belonged in it. After class, Sam expressed how proud he was of the paragraph he wrote on the board and said that "It came naturally. I've never thought of it before. I think it helped them understand how to write an introduction." Mary and Mark talked to their students about good writing without modeling it, and Shannon used published literature to model good writing. In class, Shannon talked to her students about herself as a writer and about a summer writing project she participated in. This seemed to have an effect on her students as will be shown later.

Students

Analysis of survey items on this topic showed an overriding trend. This trend indicated that attitudes toward writing and self-efficacy as writers were negative for the vast majority of students in each class. This negativity was there at the beginning of the semester, continued throughout it, and mostly increased by the end of it. Neither teacher variables nor student variables seemed to have any positive effect on students' attitudes in this regard. Analysis by class showed an increase in the number of students whose attitudes and self-efficacy were negative, Figure 7. For example, every student in Sam's class who began the semester without a negative attitude showed a change toward negativity. The only student who started as "positive" changed to "neutral" at the end of the semester. The four students who started the semester as "neutral" ended as "negative", and the twelve who started as "negative" did not change.

In Mark's class, the number of students with "negative" attitudes changed from 20 at the beginning of the semester to 19 at the end of the semester (Figure 7). Among the

Figure 7. Distribution of students based on their attitudes toward writing and self-efficacy as writers.

Beginning of semester   End of semester

Sam's Class

1 pos. ⟶ 1 neut.
4 neut. ⟶ 4 neg.
12 neg. ⟶ 12 neg.

Mark's Class

1 pos. ⟶ 1 neg.
3 neut. ⟶ 1 pos.
      2 neg.
20 neg. ⟶ 1 pos.
      3 neut.
      16 neg.

Mary's Class

1 pos. ⟶ 1 neg.
9 neut. ⟶ 2 neut.
      7 neg.
2 neg. ⟶ 2 neg.

Shannon's Class

5 neut. ⟶ 2 pos.
      1 neut.
      2 neg.
18 neg. ⟶ 1 neut.
      17 neg.

pos. = positive attitude   neg. = negative attitude
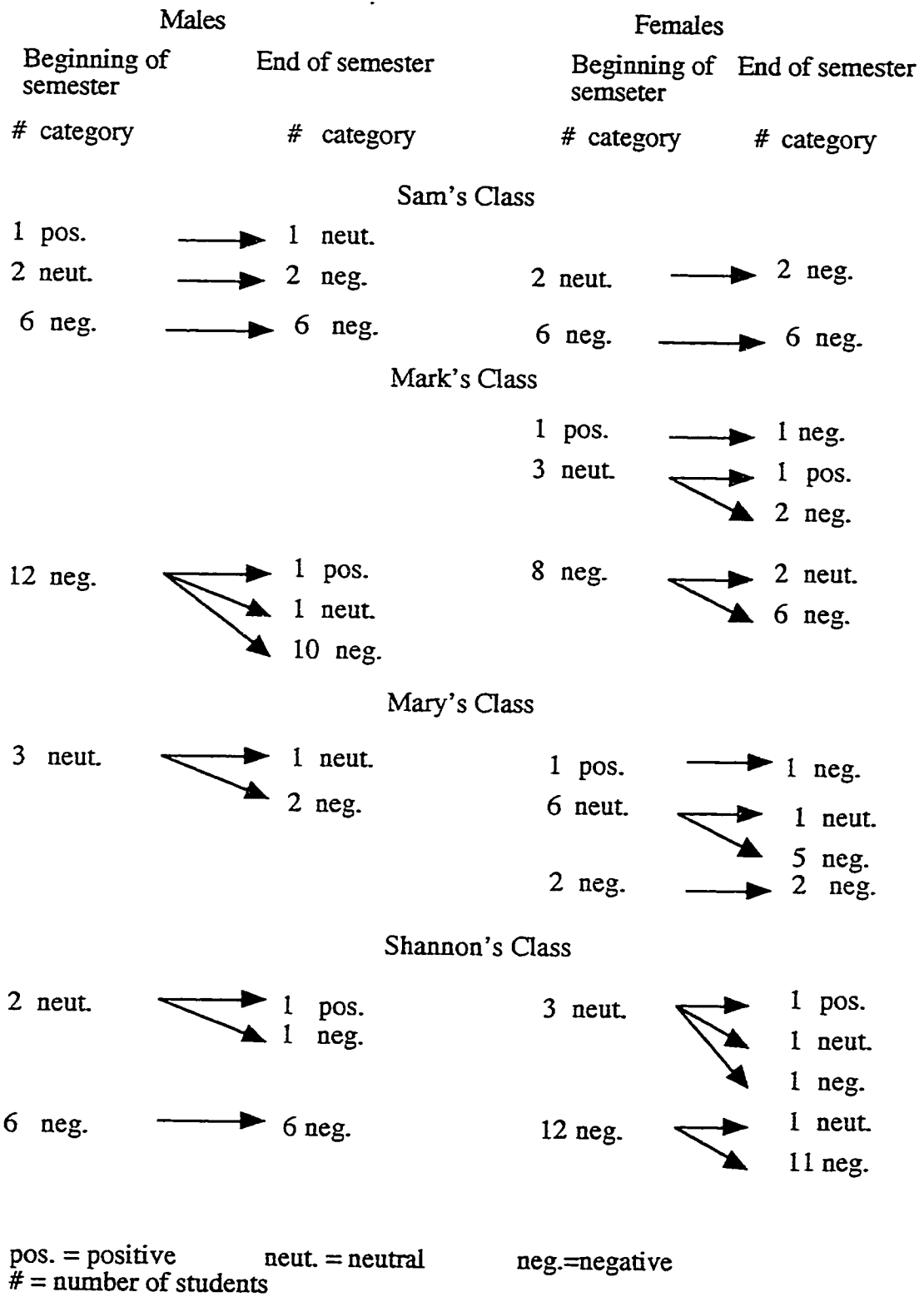neut. = neutral attitude

majority of the nineteen students who ended as "negative", sixteen of them, started as "negative" and maintained this negativity throughout the semester, one started as "positive", and two started as "neutral".

Of the twelve students in Mary's class, the number of students with negative attitudes and self-efficacy increased from two at the beginning of the semester to ten at the end of the semester (Figure 7). Of these ten, two maintained a starting negative attitude, seven started as neutral, and one started as positive. This indicated that Mary's class started the semester with only two students' attitudes as negative and ended the semester with only two as neutral. In Shannon's class, the number of students with negative attitudes increased from eighteen at the beginning of the semester to nineteen at the end of semester (Figure 7). Of the nineteen students who ended as negative, seventeen maintained this attitude throughout the semester.

Analysis by gender showed a trend. This trend indicated that the majority of males and females in all four classes had negative attitudes toward writing. It also indicated that there were no gender differences with regards to writing attitudes and self-efficacy as writers (Figure 8). Six of the nine males in Sam's class, for example, started the semester as negative. This number increased to eight at the end of the semester because two of the males who started as neutral changed to negative. The only male who started as positive changed to neutral. Of the eight females in Sam's class, six started as negative and maintained this attitude and the other two changed from neutral to negative.

All the twelve males in Mark's class started the semester with "negative" attitudes. Ten of them maintained this negative attitude and two changed. One the two who changed ended as "positive" and one ended as "neutral". Of the twelve females in Mark's class, eight started the semester as "negative", one as "positive", and three as "neutral". Of the nine females who ended as "negative", six started as such, one started as "positive", and two started as "neutral". This indicated that the number of females who were identified as "negative" increased from eight at the beginning of the semester to nine at the end of the semester.

Figure 8. Distribution of students' attitude toward writing based on gender.

Males		Females	
Beginning of semester	End of semester	Beginning of semseter	End of semester
# category	# category	# category	# category

Sam's Class

1 pos.	→ 1 neut.		
2 neut.	→ 2 neg.	2 neut.	→ 2 neg.
6 neg.	→ 6 neg.	6 neg.	→ 6 neg.

Mark's Class

		1 pos.	→ 1 neg.
		3 neut.	→ 1 pos.
			↘ 2 neg.
12 neg.	→ 1 pos.	8 neg.	→ 2 neut.
	↘ 1 neut.		↘ 6 neg.
	↘ 10 neg.		

Mary's Class

3 neut.	→ 1 neut.	1 pos.	→ 1 neg.
	↘ 2 neg.	6 neut.	→ 1 neut.
			↘ 5 neg.
		2 neg.	→ 2 neg.

Shannon's Class

2 neut.	→ 1 pos.	3 neut.	→ 1 pos.
	↘ 1 neg.		→ 1 neut.
			↘ 1 neg.
6 neg.	→ 6 neg.	12 neg.	→ 1 neut.
			↘ 11 neg.

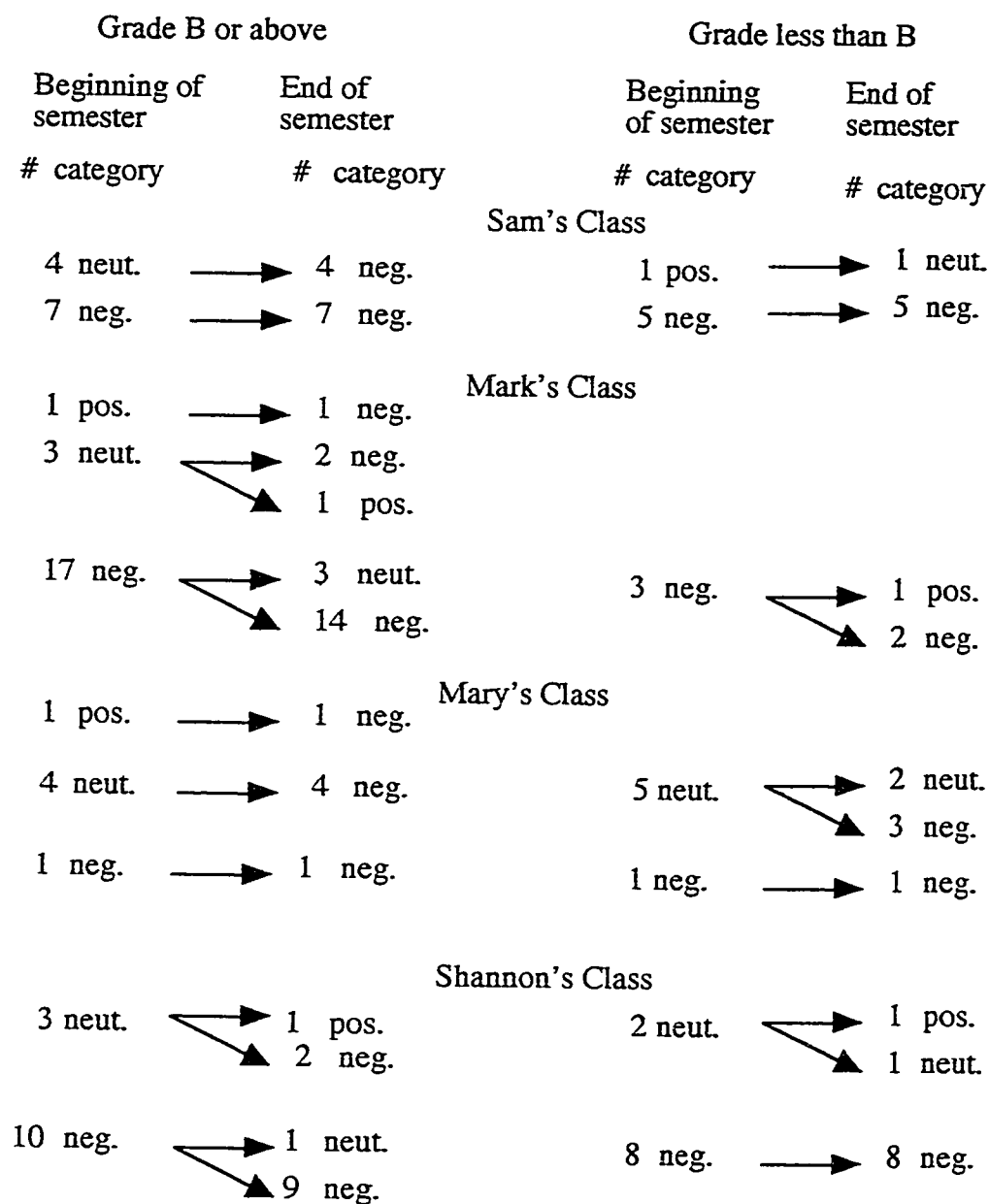pos. = positive neut. = neutral neg.=negative
= number of students

In Mary's class, all three males started the semester as "neutral". Two of these three males ended as "negative" and one maintained a "neutral" attitude. Of the nine females in this class, only two started as "negative", one was "positive", and six were "neutral". When the semester ended, eight females ended as negative, and one maintained her starting neutral attitude. This indicated that the majority of the males and the females in Mary's class changed toward negativity in their attitudes toward writing.

Shannon's class showed the same trend, too. The majority of the females and the males in the class were identified "negative". The semester started with six of the eight males in the class identified with "negative" attitudes and two males identified with "neutral" attitudes. When the semester ended, the six males who started as "negative" maintained their attitudes. Of the two males who started as "neutral", one changed to negative and one changed to "positive". Of the fifteen females in Shannon's class, twelve started as "negative" and three started as "neutral". Of the twelve females who started as "negative", eleven maintained their attitudes and one changed to "neutral". Of the three females who started as "neutral", one changed to "negative", one remained "neutral", and one changed to "positive".

As in analysis by class and by gender, analysis by letter grades indicated that the majority of students in both letter grade categories tended to show a high level of negativity in their writing attitudes and their self-efficacies as writers (Figure 9). This analysis also indicated that students with grades of B or higher tended to show higher levels of negative attitudes toward writing than students with grades less than B did. In Sam's class, for example, there were eleven students with grades B or above. The semester started with seven students with grades B or higher identified as "negative" and four as "neutral". When the semester ended, all eleven students in this letter grade category were identified as "negative". As for students with grades less than B, the semester started with five of them as "negative" and one as "neutral". When the semester ended, the five students who started as "negative" maintained this attitude and the one who started as "positive" changed to "neutral".

Figure 9. Distribution of students' attitude toward writing based on grade in the English class.

Grade B or above		Grade less than B	
Beginning of semester	End of semester	Beginning of semester	End of semester
# category	# category	# category	# category

Sam's Class

4 neut. ⟶ 4 neg.   1 pos. ⟶ 1 neut.

7 neg. ⟶ 7 neg.   5 neg. ⟶ 5 neg.

Mark's Class

1 pos. ⟶ 1 neg.

3 neut. ⟶ 2 neg.
          ↘ 1 pos.

17 neg. ⟶ 3 neut.   3 neg. ⟶ 1 pos.
           ↘ 14 neg.   ↘ 2 neg.

Mary's Class

1 pos. ⟶ 1 neg.

4 neut. ⟶ 4 neg.   5 neut. ⟶ 2 neut.
                                   ↘ 3 neg.

1 neg. ⟶ 1 neg.   1 neg. ⟶ 1 neg.

Shannon's Class

3 neut. ⟶ 1 pos.   2 neut. ⟶ 1 pos.
         ↘ 2 neg.   ↘ 1 neut.

10 neg. ⟶ 1 neut.   8 neg. ⟶ 8 neg.
          ↘ 9 neg.

pos. = positive   neg. = negative   neut. = neutral
# = number of students

Of the twenty-one students with grades of B or above, in Mark's class, seventeen were identified as negative when the semester started, three as neutral, and one as positive. The semester ended with seventeen of these students as "negative", three as "neutral", and one as "positive". Of the seventeen students who ended as negative, fourteen started as such, one started as positive, and two started as neutral. At the beginning of the semester, three students with grades less than B in the class were identified as "negative". When the semester ended, one of these three changed to "positive" and the other two maintained their negative attitudes. This indicated that the change toward negativity was higher among students with grades B or above than it was among students with grades less than B.

In Mary's class, the semester started with one of the six students with grades of B or higher identified as "negative", but when the semester ended all the students in this category were "negative". As for students with grades less than B, the semester started with one of the six students in this category identified as "negative" and five identified as "neutral". When the semester ended, four of the students in this category were "negative" and two were "neutral". This indicated that change toward negativity was higher among students with grades B or above than it was among students with grades less than B.

In Shannon's class, as in Mark's and Mary's classes, students with grades of B or above tended to show higher change toward negative attitudes than students with grades less than B. At the beginning of the semester, ten of the thirteen students with grades B or higher were identified as negative and three were identified as neutral. The semester ended with eleven of these students as negative, one as positive, and one as neutral. As for the students with grades less than B, the semester started and ended with eight of the ten students in this category as negative. These eight students maintained their attitudes throughout the semester.

Student Interviews

Analysis of interview data supported what appeared in the analysis of survey data. Males and females perceived their writing negatively. Students with grades B or above, as students with grades less than B, talked without enthusiasm about their writings and about

themselves as writers.

<u>Sam's Class</u>

Of the four students interviewed from Sam's class, two started with neutral attitudes and self-concepts, one started with negative, and one made it clear that everything was contingent upon what the teacher said or believed about the student's work.

In the initial interviews, when they were asked what they thought of themselves as writers and how they felt about writing, Karolina said that she was "Average. . . I'm not good but I'm not bad. I've seen people my age write better." Christina said that she was "Average . . . because sometimes I have good writing and sometimes I have bad writing. I always don't like my writing." In his initial interview, Brian said, "I hate writing. I don't put myself in it. I just write from the third person," and Nader said that "When I write and my teachers tell me I have very good writing and they tell that I have exquisite detail, lots of detail, I think that's important."

When they talked about their papers, only Nader said that he liked his paper and based his feeling on fulfilling the teacher's expectations as Nader thought those expectations were. The following excerpt from Nader's interview on his paper before turning it in to the teacher demonstrates this point.

The Interviewer: Do you like your paper?

Nader Oh yeah. I did a good job especially on the introduction.

The Interviewer: What makes you think it is good?

Nader: In my case I wrote it long enough and I included everything he wanted us to do. I included all the dates and everything and I followed his directions. I did everything he wanted us to do.

When Nader talked about his paper after seeing the teacher's remarks and grade, his tone was different. Before the interviewer finished asking him the first question, Nader interrupted and the interview went on as in the following excerpt:

The Interviewer: What do you . . .

Nader: I am not happy."

The Interviewer: You're not happy? Why?

Nader: I got a B. I am not happy. I should get an A.

The Interviewer: If I ask you again about what you think of this paper, what do you say?

Nader: I have to agree with the punctuation errors and some spelling errors, but I disagree with the grade...

Brian, Karolina, and Christina talked in ways which showed no enthusiasm about their writing. The following excerpt from Christina's interview is an example of that lack of enthusiasm:

The Interviewer: What do you think of your paper?

Christina: It wasn't my best work. I could have done better.

The Interviewer: What could you have done better?

Christina: Probably done it a couple of days before the due date.

The Interviewer: What else?

Christina: And just thought about it more...I had writers' block so it was pretty hard.

Like Nader, when they talked about their papers after seeing the teacher's remarks and grade, the other three students perceived of their writing based on the grade they had on it. Brian, for example, said that the low grade did not disappoint him "Because that just means I didn't try hard enough or I messed up somewhere." When she was asked about her paper after seeing the grade on it, Christina laughed and said that her paper was "Good because I got a good grade."

Mark's Class

Analysis of interview data supported the trends revealed by analyzing survey data. In the initial interviews, Zima and Drew perceived themselves as good writers. Nahed related her perception of her writings to the grades she used to get on her papers, but Drew and Zima did not. Nahed said "Seeing my grades, I think I'm really a good writer 'cause in the past, the big papers, I've usually got As on them." Bilal perceived that his attitude was neutral. When he was asked what he thought when writing was mentioned, Bilal said "I wouldn't say it was negative. I'd say it's O.K. by me, writing I mean."

When they talked about their first papers, Nahed and Bilal perceived them negatively. Nahed, for example, said "For this paper I just jotted down ideas without thinking about them. Ideas that should have been in the first paragraph, I put them in the third paragraph." At the end of the semester Nahed and Bilal were still negative about their writings. When she compared the last to the first paper, Nahed laughed and said that she liked the latter more but she still emphasized the negative aspect of her wiriting. She said that she wrote her last paper and she "did not wait for the last minute to do it. . . I wrote the first one anything, but for this one I wrote a rough draft, I have an intro. and . . . I told you wrote the first one in a rush."

Compared with Nahed and Bilal, Drew and Zima became more negative about their writing at the end of the semester. Before he turned his last paper in to the teacher, Drew compared it to his first paper in the semester and said that he liked the first one more "Just because I put my thoughts in it more, whereas for this one I was writing about something we learned in class." At the end of the semester, Drew said sarcastically that he liked his last paper because he "Got a good grade on it." Drew added later "If you want a good grade you gotta do what the teacher wants. If you want good writing then you do what you want." When Zima talked about her last paper before turning it in to the teacher she compared it to the first one and said "The first one has more reflection in it. . . I am just not too excited about this one." When she saw the teacher's remarks and grade on her last paper, Zima also said with sarcasm that "The grade is good! I like it."

<u>Mary's Class</u>

In their initial interviews, three of the four interviewees from this class indicated that they did not have a positive perception of themselves as writers. These students were Farid, Denissa, and Carrie. The fourth student, Ben, perceived of himself positively as a writer. An example of a negative perception was Denissa's description of herself as a writer in the following excerpt from her initial interview:

The Interviewer: What do you think of yourself as a writer, a good writer, an average writer, or a poor writer?

Denissa: Between average and poor, I guess.

The Interviewer: Between average and poor. Why did you rate yourself that way?

Denissa: Because I am not a good writer.

The Interviewer: How did you know that? Did someone tell you that?

Denissa: No. I am not sure.

The Interviewer: How did you discover that?

Denissa: Well, first of all I don't know how to spell things right and if a teacher would give me a topic about eight pages long, I would definitely need some help. Like once we had to write a report about dinosaurs and I didn't know anything about them. I had to copy most of it and I don't think that's very good.

When they talked about their papers, grades assigned to papers were the only measure students in this class used to perceive of their papers. Both males and females perceived their writing negatively after seeing the teacher's remarks. For example, Farid said that he was a bad writer because he failed the high school proficiency test in writing. When Denissa talked about her paper before turning it in to the teacher, Denissa said that she liked her paper because it showed the amount of effort she put into it. When she looked at the grade the teacher assigned to that paper, Denissa said that "It's bad . . . I thought I would get at least a B." Ben, who started by perceiving himself as a good writer, said that he started the paper with "Good intentions, but it didn't work out as well as I intended. . . I had a good idea, but when I tried to put it into action it didn't work out as well as I thought it would. A lot of these small errors [reference was to the teacher's corrections]." This indicated that as in the ninth grade, students in the eleventh grade perceived of themselves and their writing in the light of grades and test results. It also meant that, compared to the beginning of the semester, students in Mary's class ended the semester with a more negative attitude toward writing.

Shannon's Class

When interview data were analyzed, results supported what appeared in the analysis of survey items on this issue. In his initial interview, for example, Paul said that writing

was "Like a punishment." When he wrote his first "I Search" paper in which he had to interview people on the topic he searched, Paul was asked if he liked his paper and his response was, "No. I don't like the way I wrote it . . . the interviews weren't real. I had to make 'em up, and I couldn't think of anything to write so I just put down anything." Paul maintained this negative attitude toward writing through out the semester. The following excerpt from Paul's interview before turning in his last paper for the class is indicative of Paul's negative attitude.

The interviewer: What do you think of this paper compared to the first one?

Paul: I didn't like it.

The Interviewer: You didn't like it? Why not?

Paul: Because I had a hard time writing it . . .

The Interviewer: What are the strengths of this paper, if there are any?

Paul: I don't think there is any.

The Interviewer: You don't think there are any strengths!

Paul: Not really.

Shadi started the semester with a neutral attitude. In the initial interview, when he talked about his attitude toward writing, Shadi said "I don't write in my free time. I don't like doing that, but when I have to write I do . . ." When he talked about his own writing for the class, Shadi said, "I thought that my writing was good in the last three years, but when I wrote my first paper [for this class] I learned that . . . I am a senior and the words I use should be more bigger . . . sentence structure, spelling, things that I've been missing." This indicated that Shadi's attitude and self-efficacy as writer became more negative because of the issues the teacher emphasized in this class, that is, grammar and mechanics.

Helena is another example of a change from a positive attitude to a negative one. In her initial interview, Helena said "I think what I write is good. It just doesn't get graded well. I feel that my writing is pretty good." When she was interviewed about her last paper for the class, Helena talked in a negative way. She said "I don't like it . . . I don't know why. I just feel that I did not want to write it and I wrote it because I had to. It is

not something I like." This indicated that Helena's perception of her writing and writing ability became negative. When she was asked about the strengths of her paper Helena said "Nothing." When she was asked what the teacher might have liked in her paper, Helena's answer was "Nothing." When she was asked how she felt about writing in general, Helena said "I don't like writing . . ." Helena attributed her attitude to the process the teacher followed in teaching writing. The teacher asked students to write a reflective essay on their papers, attach it to the paper, and turn both in to the teacher. This reflective piece should answer a set of questions the teacher put on the board. Helena perceived this teacher's practice as "Boring . . . I just don't like answering those kind of questions because all of the questions have basically the same answer. . . nobody in the class likes doing that. It doesn't help me. I think it's pointless." Paul also agreed with Helena on this teacher's practice without being negatively impacted by it. Referring to the reflective piece of writing, Paul said "I don't like that. I think that's a waste of time."

<u>Summary</u>

Students' negative attitudes toward writing and their negative self-efficacy as writers persisted through out the semester. Negative attitudes and self-efficacy increased over the semester regardless of teacher variables.

<div align="center">Chapter Coda</div>

Data analysis in this chapter showed several trends. First, on the issues of defining writing and the importance of grammar and mechanics in writing, students' perceptions became more closely aligned with their teacher's. Second, on the issue of defining writing, males' perceptions became more closely aligned with their teacher's perceptions than females' perceptions did. Third, on the issue of defining writing, the perceptions of students with grades of less than B became more closely aligned with their teacher's perceptions than the perceptions of students with grades B or higher did. Fourth, on the issue of the importance of grammar and mechanics, females' perceptions became more closely aligned with their teacher's perceptions than males' perceptions did. Fifth, on the issue of the importance of grammar and mechanics, the perceptions of students with grades

of B or higher became more closely aligned with their teacher's perceptions than the perceptions of students with grades less than B did. Sixth, students' attitudes toward writing started as negative and continued to be negative throughout the semester. That was regardless of teacher variables or student variables.

Overall, students' perceptions tended to become more closely aligned with their teachers' perceptions. Differences varied from class to class across gender and letter grades. Generally, students' attitudes toward writing and their self-efficacy as writers became more negative by the end of the semester.

Chapter V

Conclusions, Discussion, and Implications

Conclusions

Three categories emerged and were analyzed in Chapter IV: (1) defining writing, (2) the importance of grammar and mechanics in writing, (3) attitude toward writing and self-efficacy as writer. Research findings led to three kinds of conclusions. The first kind of conclusions had to do with the alignment between students' and teachers' perceptions. Research findings led to the conclusion that students tended to increase their perceptual alignment with their teacher's perceptions after a semester of interaction. This increase in perceptual alignment with the teacher was not across the board. There were differences in the students' perceptual alignment with their teacher's perceptions. These differences were gender related and letter grade related. The second kind of conclusions had to do with students' attitudes toward writing and students' self-efficacy as writers. Findings in this area indicated that students' attitudes toward writing and self-efficacy as writers tended to be negative regardless of teacher variables or student variables. The third kind of conclusions had to do with the contradiction between what the teachers said on the surveys and what they did when they were teaching. To clarify the conclusions, I will discuss each one of them separately in relation to existing theory and research.

Discussion

Students' Perceptual Alignment With Their Teacher's Perceptions

Shared Trends

As indicated above, findings of this research in the area of perceptual alignment between students and teachers led to the conclusion that students tended to increase their perceptual alignment with their teacher's perceptions after a semester of interaction. This tendency was demonstrated in the issue of defining writing as well as in the importance of grammar and mechanics in writing. Even though the rate of increase in perceptual alignment with the teacher varied, research findings indicated that this tendency was true across gender and letter grades. This conclusion is in line with established theory and

91

research in the fields of social psychology, educational psychology, and education.

The theory of minority influence in social psychology says that the majority change their opinion when they are exposed to the opinion of a persistent and consistent minority, that is, one or more individuals (Moscovici, 1980; Nemeth, 1987). In his lab experiments, Nemeth showed that "movement in the private realm [adopting a minority position] should be easier for those facing a consistent minority [the teacher in the case of the classroom] since people are unwilling to become deviant even if they have adopted a deviant point of view" (p. 241). In the case of this study, students' movement in the teacher's private realm was demonstrated when students increased their perceptual alignment with their teacher on the issues of defining writing and the importance of grammar and mechanics in writing.

Regarding defining writing, all four teachers, who represented the persistent and consistent minority in the classroom, emphasized that writing was "communication" and emphasized the importance of "correctness" in writing. Even for those who did not say so on the surveys, this emphasis was consistent when the teachers talked about writing and when they corrected students' papers. As described on page 18 in the review of the literature in this research, by emphasizing the importance of "correctness", participating teachers in my study fit what Anson (1989) categorized as "dualistic" teachers who, comprising a majority, use response styles that focus almost entirely on the surface features of the students' texts, and do so consistently, in spite of the differences in the essays' contents. Teachers in my study consistently and persistently emphasized the importance of the surface features of students' texts. This teacher persistence and consistency might have been a factor in effecting students' perceptual alignment with their teacher's perceptions. Teachers' insistence on defining writing as "communication" has its history in the rhetorical tradition and it is most predominant among high school teachers, according to Applebee (1981). The issue here is whether or not one agrees with the teachers' insistence on defining writing as communication, as the teachers did in this study.

To the teachers in this study, writing was mainly expository. Its main function was persuasion, and it had a certain preferred form. The teachers posited themselves as the only experts on whether students' writings were persuasive or not or whether it communicated or not. They did that when they crossed out, corrected, accepted, or rejected what the students wrote without any discussion with the students. As decribed in the review of the literature on pages 16 and 17 of this research, teachers in this study held what Phelps (1989) called the "evaluative" perception of writing in which teachers treat the inscribed text as self-contained and complete in itself. The emphasis of teachers who hold this belief and perceive of writing as such leads readers to project the writer's competence from the text. The notion of competence here is relatively fixed, either as a kind of talent or ability, or as a level of knowledge and skill. Teachers' practices that were based on this evaluative belief about writing might have sent the message that writing had to fit a certain mold known only to the teacher. How much the writing fit or did not fit the mold was determined by the grade assigned by the teacher. This perception of writing and the roles of students and teachers attached to it fit Murray's (1990) identification of the teacher as reader in high school students' writings. Murray said that the teacher was the most important reader, if not the only reader, for high school students. In addition to being consistent, the role of the teacher as the most important reader in high school students' writing might have contributed to increasing students' perceptual alignment with their teacher on the question of defining writing.

Although Mary and Shannon required student-writers to have peer editors, little attention was given to critical reading as a means to the improvement of the writing abilities of student-writers. Peer reviewers either did nothing, as Shadi said, or focused on surface issues such as spelling or punctuation, as Farid said. Most students thought that critical reading was the responsibility of the teacher. This also might have lead to a greater dependence on the teacher and increased the students' perceptual alignment with the teacher's perceptions.

In their teaching, all four teachers in this study fit into what Berlin (1987) calls the

Current-Traditional paradigm where good teaching means engaging in the successful transmission of cultural tradition, and where students would be evaluated by the teacher's expertise and understanding of standards of excellence. This Current-Traditional paradigm, according to Berlin (1987), has been the dominant pedagogical stance within composition for the last hundred years. The teachers in this study fit this pedagogical paradigm and tend to belong to the text centered theory as described by Nold (1978) and detailed on page 19 of this study. For example, the four teachers insisted that the thesis statement in a paragraph must be placed in a certain place in the paragraph. They also insisted that the paragraph should have a certain length and a certain number of sentences, that is, three to eight. The teachers in this study also insisted that structure and correctness were valued more than content in evaluating writing. This teacher emphasis on structure and correctness might have been a driving force behind the students' perceptual alignment with their teachers, according to Deford (1986) who says that

> Within classroom interactions about writing instruction, for example, a teacher may caution children to make sure they spell everything correctly, or may mark spelling errors with a red mark after a paper is completed. In either instance, the writer understands that spelling is important in the teacher's evaluation of good writing. Future writing will be influenced by this criteria in such a way that writers may be more concerned with the mechanics of their writing than in what they want to communicate through writing. (p. 165)

The above argument led to the belief that much of the student writing outcomes might have depended on choices made by writing teachers, staff developers, curriculum designers, and policy makers and where they stood on the issues of writing instruction and how they executed their views and choices.

The vast majority of students were lead to believe that writing meant following the teacher's formula and other external constraints such as time, length, and form. Fitting the dominant current-traditional paradigm (Berlin, 1987; White, 1994) and the text-centered theory of reading (Nold, 1978), teachers, in all the cases studied here, made writing a teacher-based magic trick mastered only by the teacher rather than making it an extension of the student's cognition. Teachers in this study focused mainly on correctness

and form when they taught writing and when they graded students' papers. Little attention was paid to content, and no discussion of any kind was held in any of the classes observed about the subject matter that appeared in students' writings. This concept was captured by Macrorie (1980) when he wrote

> The principal reason education doesn't 'take' better than it does is that it's a closed loop, with knowledge and experience of experts on one side and no way for it to flow into or over on the other side, where in darkness—lie the knowledge and experience of students. The discipline of real learning consists of the self and the others flowing into each other. (p. 13)

Another factor which might have effected students' perceptual alignment with the teacher's perceptions is the teacher's use of letter grades as reward and punishment. This teacher use of grades to make students produce a certain kind of writing is similar to B. F. Skinner's use of food to make his pigeons perform a certain task. Students in this study were not different from what was described by Britton (1975), Applebee (1981), and Murray (1990). These scholars said that high school students wrote mainly for the grade and had the teacher as the main reader of their writing. In this research, writing for a grade was clearly expressed by Drew when he said, "If you want a good grade, you've got to write what he wants you to write." The grade and the teacher as the main reader were clearly there when Nader expressed his displeasure with the grade and said, "I wrote every thing the way he [the teacher] wanted. The introduction, the way he wanted it. The theses statement, the way he wanted. I wrote everything the way he wanted . . . I deserve an 'A' or at least an 'A-' for doing that."

If a student did not follow the "assignment" as the teacher perceived it, or if a student wrote about an assignment symbolically, as Drew did on his first paper, the teacher was ready to bring that student back in line by marking down the student's paper. Mark said that he assigned Drew's paper a low grade because Drew did not answer the question directly. "He wrote his response in an almost poetic way", Mark said. With the exception of Drew and Zima, good writing meant having the three ingredients which all four teachers prescribed: (1) an introduction, (2) a body, and (3) a conclusion. A thesis statement and hooking the reader were, of course, a must in good writing as all four -

teachers repeatedly emphasized when they explained writing assignments or when they graded students' papers. On every paper they graded, the four teachers wrote comments like "Good thesis statement," or "Where is your thesis?", or "Thesis not clearly stated," or "Thesis does not belong here." Teachers in this study did the same thing with conclusion.

Not only did all four teachers emphasize the thesis statement, but some of them provided it and hoped that writing a good thesis statement would be the thing their students had learned from the class, as Sam said. When he was asked what he learned about writing from Mr. Sam's class, Nader emphatically said, "The thesis statement. I never knew that word before." This teacher emphasis on the thesis statement and the sentences supporting it made the majority of students increase their perceptual alignment with their teachers and view writing in association with mechanical steps which needed to be followed rather than viewing and associating writing with making meaning and intellectual growth.

Differences Across Gender

If theory and research in the fields of social psychology, educational psychology, and education account for the increase in students' perceptual alignment with their teacher's perceptions, how can one account for the differences in perceptual alignment which were gender and letter grade related? This research indicated that, on the issue of grammar and correctness, females' perceptual alignment with the teacher's perceptions was higher than males'. It also indicated that, concerning defining writing, females' perceptual alignment with the teacher's perceptions was not as high as the males'. This might look contradictory in the light of the fact that both males and females were exposed to the same perceptions under the same classroom contexts. If interpreted in terms of what theory and research in social linguistics, feminist criticism, and social constructivism tell us, this contradiction would not continue to hold as explianed in the following paragraphs.

The conclusion which indicated that females' did not increase their perceptual

alignment with their teachers as much as males did might have happened because writing, as taught by teachers like the ones in this research, is "manly", according to Brody (1993) who wrote that teachers

> assumed responsibilities for training young gentlemen, as had Quintillian, for whom the education of a declamatory style was one and the same as the education of a moral, manly boy . . . if exposed too soon to the moderns, a student's writing risked corruption by the 'flowers' of modern 'affection,' a luscious place of vegetation, but an unnatural and monstrous place that breeds a death of one's nature. (p. 18)

As feminist criticism emphasizes, women suffer (Iser, 1972; Lakoff, 1973; 1975) when they write in the way they are taught to write, that is, in the "manly way". They suffer because they find themselves having to reconcile the contradiction between the way they are institutionalized in society and the way they are institutionalized in schools. The former tells females to be affectionate and express their feelings openly. The latter tells them to be "manly" and refrain from expressing affections. This may be the reason why females are less likely to accept writing as "communication", the type of writing which shows no "affection" because this way of writing, according to Iser (1972), makes the female suffer

> not simply from the powerlessness which derives from not seeing one's experience articulated, clarified, and legitimized . . . [in writing], but more significantly, the powerlessness which results from the endless division of self against self, the consequence of the invocation to identify as male while being reminded that to be male . . . is to be not female [emphasis is original]. (pp. 42-43)

It might be this suffering which made fewer females in this study perceive writing as "communication" than males did. On the issue of defining writing in this study, even though males and females increased their perceptual alignment with their teacher's by almost the same percentage, the percentage of females who perceived writing as communication was markedly lower than the percentage of their male counterparts at the beginning and at the end of the semester. At the beginning of the semester, 47% of the males (15 males) perceived writing as "communication" compared with 27% of the females (12 females), Chapter IV, Figure 1 . At the end of the semester, 69% of the males (22 males) perceived writing as such compared with 50% of the females (22

females).

Rubin (1993) shows the negative effects of gender biases on assessment, indicating that gender perceptions and expectations can influence assessment decisions that seem neutral on the surface. Rubin also discusses the effects of gender on the way teachers read and evaluate student texts, insisting that gender is a "significant presence in the writing class that we need to examine more closely" (p.1). Combining an anaylsis of representative case studies of teachers struggling with gender bias with a review of relevant insights from feminist and reader-response theories, Rubin challenges teachers to become more aware of gender issues in the writing classroom. Brody (1993) offers an excellent historical analysis of how hegemonic patriarchal societies canonize males and females to perceive writing. In the preface to her book, Brody says

> Beginning my work in the late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century schooltexts, I found that the advice to write with a manly style was given easily, with the comfort of a familiar homily. Without bones, flesh, or blood, spoken and written words were held to a masculine standard of excellence as if they might be indeed the signs of a natural, noble character (p. ix).

These, and other writers, emphasize that our society is inequitable and gives preference to males' ways of writing. Inequitable patriarchal societies equate "virtuous" and "clean" with masculinity while they equate "base" and "weak" with femininity as historically documented by Brody (1993) who affirms that, "With interesting longevity, a gendered representation of language available to all of Quintillian's readers survives into our time, linking effective writing to the masculine, weak writing to the feminine" (p. 17). This manly way of defining writing makes female students less likely to relate to it than male students. This lack of relating to a way of writing which negates the feminist identity suggests an explanation for the difference between females' and males' perceptual alignment with the teachers' definition of writing, that is, "communication".

After interpreting and explaining why females did not increase their percpetual alignment with their teacher's definition of writing as much as males did, I will discuss what might appear its contradiction, that is, the finding which indicates that females

increased their perceptual alignment with their teacher more than males did, on the issue

of correctness. This finding could be easily understood in the light of what happens in

society and in the classroom. In addition to being expected to "communicate" in a

"correct standard" form, females are exposed to other social influences which require

them to accept rules and regulations. In society, females are generally trained to be more

obedient to authority figures and follow the rules more closely than males are. Since

grammar and mechanics in writing have clearly defined sets of rules, females are more

likely to try to adhere to these rules than males are. Also, the sensitivity to correctness

may derive, as Lakoff (1975) suggests, from the fact that a woman's position in society

depends upon how others view her

> she must dress decoratively, look attractive, be compliant, if she is to
> survive at all in the world. Then her appearance and appearances
> (including, perhaps overcorrectness and overgentility of speech and
> etiquette) is merely the result of being forced to exist only as a reflection
> in the eyes of others. (p. 27)

This suggests that the forces which require correctness are not exerted equally on females

and males. With society exerting more pressure on females to adhere to the rules of

correctness, females are more likely to accept the rules of correctness in writing even if

teacher influence was the same on females and males. This offers an explanation to the

phenomenon which indicated that, on the issue of correctness, female students in this

study increased their perceptual alignment with the teacher more than males did. Such

explanation is also in line with social constructivism which says that the larger context in

which we live affects our cognition of the information we receive. This means that social

factors outside the classroom have an impact on what goes on in the classroom. In

agreement with Foucault, Brody (1993) says that

> discourses are not simply passive fields of utterances, texts that are
> somehow beyond the places that produce texts and the people who read
> them. A discourse is comprised of writers, readers, places, and writing.
> The subjects, the student writer being advised, is as much a creation of the
> discourse as the sites that produce the text. The discourse of advice to
> writers creates subjects who understand themselves according to the rules
> of operation a discourse has put in place. (p. 7)

The rules of operation, which tell females to be more obedient and adhere closely to

correctness, operate in society and in the classroom to make females more compliant and more attentive to correctness. Females, obviously, are the subjects of heavier pressure for correctness than males are because, even if a teacher's demands for correctness operate the same for males and females, social demands are not. This may explain why, on the issue of correctness, female students in this study increased their perceptual alignment with the teacher more than males did.

Differences Across Letter Grades

Having interpreted gender related differences and what seemed to be contradictory in the research findings related to them, interpreting what might seem contradictory in the findings related to differences across letter grades is a little more difficult. This difficulty had arisen because in my review of the literature I did not find any work that dealt with the effects of letter grades on students' perceptual change. This lack of research on this issue might be, as Brossell (1983) wrote, because "Unfortunately, the current level of knowledge about such influences does not allow us to understand the precise ways in which human factors affect writers and their performance" (p. 165). Regarding defining writing, findings in this research indicated that students with letter grades less than B increased their perceptual alignment with their teacher's perceptions more than students with letter grades B or higher, but this was the opposite regarding the importance of grammar and mechanics. Expectancy research offers a good interpretation to what seemingly appears to be contradictory in these findings.

In the classroom, students who have more knowledge about a rule are more likely to accept such a rule, let alone apply it. One would assume that students with higher grades are more likely to be the students who have more knowledge of the rules of subject areas. The acceptance of the rules of grammar and mechanics by students with higher grades is in line with a significant body of research which indicates that school discourse practices favor students with a certain kind of "cultural capital" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). The favored discourse practices are those ways of talking, thinking, acting, doing, and valuing associated with white, able-bodied, middle- and upper-class

males (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Curtis, Livingstone, & Smaller, 1992).

Grammatical and mechanical correctness are at the heart of favored discourse practices. Students who come from more educated wealthier families find that school literacy practices resemble literacy practices in their homes and therefore they are more likely to accept the rules of school discourse. Because of their quick acceptance of school discourse, these students appear to be quick, and they usually get higher grades, compared to their less privileged classmates (Gee, 1992). These implicit social and political aspects of writing are likely to make students with higher grades more accepting of the rules of writing because: first, these students are served better by such rules; second, it is relatively easy for these students to apply these rules because they are familiar to them. This offers an explanation to the research finding which indicated that students with higher grades became more closely aligned with the teachers on the issue of grammar and mechanics. That is why a student like Nader, whose father is a teacher, disagreed with most of his teacher's remarks on the paper except the grammatical and mechanical errors which Nader described as "those are solid, you can't argue with those."

It is interesting to notice that students with low grades always blamed themselves for their low grades. They saw the problem in themselves rather than seeing it in the multiplicity of social and educational factors which work against these students. Students with lower grades also viewed their grades in the light of grammatical and mechanical errors. Farid believed that he should have received a higher grade on one of his papers because the teacher did not find any spelling or grammar mistakes in it. Denissa, on the other hand, switched from describing her first paper from the perspective of how much effort she put into it to describing it from the perspective of how the teacher marked and graded it. This switch happened from the time Denissa turned her paper in to the time she received it with the teacher's marks and grade on it.

Expectancy literature, as explained above, gives a viable interpretation to why students with higher grades increased their perceptual alignment with their teacher's perception regarding grammar and correctness. If that is the case, how does one account

for the research finding which indicated that students with letter grades less than B increased their perceptual alignment with their teacher more than students with letter grades B or above did? One way of interpreting this could be attained by looking at what the students in this research said and did to get higher grades.

In an educational system which gives so much emphasis to grades and evaluation, students who can not have "high" grades through their work, are more likely to look for different means of attaining these "high" grades. Writing what they expect to be pleasing to the teacher and depending on the teacher to be their critical reader are among these different means which will ultimately lead to higher perceptual alignment with the teacher, at least in the ways perceptions are expressed. When he was asked about what advice he would give students to become good writers, Farid confidently said, "Do what the teacher tells you to do." Also when Drew saw the grade assigned to his first paper, he was disappointed that he had a "C". When he was asked about what that taught him, Drew said that he learned what the teacher wanted and he would make sure to follow that closely to get the "A". This could be a reason why students with low letter grades, in their attempt to get higher grades, increased their perceptual alignment with their teachers more than students with high grades did.

<u>Attitude Toward Writing and Self-efficacy as Writer</u>

So far, explanations have been offered for research findings which showed that students' perceptions became more closely aligned with their teachers' perceptions and for gender and letter grade differences in students' perceptual alignment with their teacher. Attention is now turned to the third finding which indicated that students' attitudes toward writing as well as their self-efficacy as writers were negative. Not only did that negativity persist throughout the semester, but it also increased by the time the semester ended. More than one factor could have contributed to this result.

One of the factors could have been the way teachers treated students' writings. Teachers, most of the time, acted as error detectors and fault finders. In this regards, teachers in this study were typical current-traditionalists who viewed themselves as the

ones who have the knowledge and their role was to dispense that knowledge to their students in as much as the students could handle (Berlin, 1985). This kind of behavior might have left the students with feelings of ineptness and vulnerability which consequently lead to developing negative self-efficacy as writers (Brannon and Knoblauch, 1982). Margaret's frustration with this kind of teacher behavior made this point clear. Angrily, Margaret said that the teacher came around and started correcting students' errors even when students were only thinking about the topic and drafting their ideas about it. This teacher behavior that might have frustrated Margaret was not different from what Berthoff (1981) described. Berthoff said that teaching writing from this perspective is

> imply a matter of assigning topics and correcting the resulting work. But the fact is that teaching composition by arbitrarily setting topics and then concentrating on the mechanics of expression and the conventions governing correct usage does not guarantee that students will learn to write competently, and it certainly does not encourage the discovery of language either as an instrument of knowing or as our chief means of shaping and communicating ideas and experience. (p. 9)

Another factor that might have contributed to this student negativity toward writing could have been the question of ownership. "In their conscientious efforts to teach students how to write -- how to write properly [emphasis original]," many English teachers, as Romano (1987) wrote, "devise all kinds of schemes and methods that succeed in stripping writing of personality, in promoting a pretentious, impersonal point of view, and in censoring all but a safe, near-mechanical use of our living language" (p.5). Teachers, in this study, most of the time told the students what to write about and how to write it. This may have lead the students to either become apathetic about writing, as Helena did, or cheat on the assignment, as Paul said he did. Lack of ownership over their writing could have lead students to have a negative attitude toward writing and to consider it a "punishment", as Paul said.

This student negativity toward writing was reinforced by the way teachers often viewed and presented themselves to their students. Fitting the description given by Brannon and Knoblauch (1982), all four teachers in the researched classrooms viewed

themselves as "the authorities, intellectually maturer, rhetorically more experienced, technically more expert than their apprentice writers" (p. 158). Teachers showed their authority when they evaluated students' papers. Each teacher, unilaterally decided the worth of students' writings without offering any criteria for evaluation. Teachers were rarely writers in the classrooms observed. They were always the evaluators of students' writings. Teachers in this research always found mistakes in students' writings but they never explained to the students why they viewed those mistakes as mistakes.

This kind of authoritativeness might have lead to a feeling of powerlessness among students. In his initial interview, Shadi, for example, felt very confident of his writing abilities because, as he said, his former teachers told him he was a good writer and always gave him good grades. After getting lower grades on his writings in Shannon's class, Shadi in his last interview said that he discovered that he wasn't the good writer he told me he was.

The body of data that expectancy research has accumulated supports this result. Research findings in the field of expectancy suggest that while teacher expectations do have an effect on students, the effect is more likely to be negative than positive (Brophy, 1985; Eccles and Wigfield, 1985). This is perhaps not an amazing finding, but one that writing teachers need to have in mind: We communicate to students our perceptions that they are not good writers, and that our affective feedback will have an effect on their own attributions and their subsequent attitude toward writing. As Shaughnessy (1976) wrote, "However unsound such judgments may be at the outset, they do tend to fulfill themselves, causing students to lag behind their peers a little more each year until the gap that separates the groups begins to seem vast and permanent" (p. 275).

The Contradiction Between What the Teachers Said and What They Did

Even though research on teacher belief and the relationship of those beliefs to instructional practices has increased in the last decade, research findings in this area are contradictory. Some researchers have found that despite statements that are not based on established educational theory and research, teachers are theoretical in their teaching ·

practices (Harste and Burke, 1977). This claim was supported by DeFord (1985) in her doctoral dissertation that was supervised by Harste and Burke. Further support for this claim was provided by Mitchell, Konopak, and Readance (1991) when they found that teachers' beliefs and their instructional practices were highly consistent. Other researchers (Duffy, 1981; Hake & Williams, 1981; Feathers, 1981; Salzman, 1996) found that when responding to surveys or interview questions, teachers tended to say what they thought was 'Politically Correct' or what they thought the interviewer wanted to hear. This teacher behavior might cause what appears to be a discrepancy between teacher beliefs and teaching practices.

Findings in this study are in line with the research that found contradictions between what the teachers said on the surveys and interviews and what they did when they taught. When the teachers taught, their teaching practices were based on an implicitly held belief system which, Parker (1988) claims, was the "a priori personal theories of writing that teachers hold" (p. 20). In this study, contradiction between what the teachers said on the surveys and interviews and what they did when they taught was found in two issues studied in this research. On the issue of defining writing, the four teachers in this study indicated that they perceived writing as "self-expression" or "both self-expression and communication". When they teachers taught, the four teachers emphasized only one kind of writing, that is, communication. The same thing happened on the issue of the importance of grammar and mechanics. On this issue, the teachers whose responses on the surveys indicated that they perceived grammar and mechanics "not important" in students' writings, emphasized the importance of grammar and mechanics every time they talked about writing assignments and every time they graded and evaluated students' papers. This discrepancy between what the teachers said in the interviews and surveys and what they did when they taught could have been the result of different factors. It could have resulted from the lack of deep adoption and understanding of the theoretical views the teachers presented. It could have also been because teachers presented popular educational theory based views during the interviews, but their real

beliefs showed in their teaching. Unfortunately, this might have happened because as Anson (1989) says, teachers create idealized images of their own instruction and these images are often at odds with their actual practices. Additonally, this discrepancy could have occured because of the gap between what the teachers knew and their ability to implement their knowledge.

Implications

Implications For Teaching

Even though I do not intend to offer an extensive final balsam for how students ought to be taught, my main concern is the following: What implicit messages do we, writing teachers, send to our students when we deal with students' writings? What are our priorities in the teaching of writing? If our priority is the teaching of conventions, how much of our instruction should be in explicit teaching and how much should be implicit? Do we have a common language when we deal with student writing and do we share that common language with our students? The best answers to these questions, as many theorists and researchers have always suggested, could be attained when teachers become researchers of what goes on in their own classrooms. It is unfourtunate that, as Anson (1989) says, teachers create idealized images of their own instruction and these images are often at odds with their actual practices. In order to avoid the lore of teaching, teachers need to continually reflect on their own practices and they need to do that by themselves as well as doing it collaboratively with other teachers. None of the teachers in this study were aware that their beliefs about writing were in contradiction with what they did when they taught. When this contradiction was later brought to the teachers' attention, teachers recognized the contradiction and were thankful that it was brought to their attention. Later, two of the teachers who participated in this research agreed to work collaboratively with the researcher on doing classroom action research to improve their writing instruction.

Equally important to the teaching context is the need for knowing how successful teaching methods are interpreted and acted upon by teachers who understand them

through their own perceptions. When we prepare future teachers, we should not forget that these future teachers are members of interpretive communities who bring with them different influences which interfere with their understanding of what is being taught to them. The issue here is not how much teachers know about educational theory. They should know as much as possible. The point is whether or not teachers' teaching practices align with sound educational theory and research.

One of the most important teacher behaviors every teacher, writing teachers top the list, should master is empathy. Research on teacher empathy suggests that a positive correlation exists between high teacher empathy and student achievement at all grade levels, Goldstein and Michaels (1985). Empathetic writing teachers respond to students in an active listening way focusing on what the student wants to say, not on what the teacher wants. Active listening, sometimes called "Rogerian reflection", invites dialogue between student and teacher rather than inviting students' passive "reception" of teacher perceptions. None of the teachers in this study listened to what the students wanted to say in their writing. What the student wanted to say appeared to be marginal in teachers' interests when they read and responded to students' writings. In this study, teachers' main interests when they graded students' papers and when they taught writing were focused on two things: structure and correctness.

To have a positive and successful influence on students, it is not enough for writing teachers to know the theory and research in writing. Writing teachers should be writing practitioners as well. They should experience writing first hand and live the writing experiences with their students on a daily basis. Teachers should always test their beliefs and whatever misconceptions they may have about writing against sound educational theory. In addition to this, writing teachers should always examine their own beliefs about writing and the origins of those beliefs. This practice creates reflective teachers. This practice also becomes of utmost importance when we know that some teachers teach as they were taught; others think they are implementing educational theory but, in fact, they are not.

Implications For Research

Research focused on attitudes toward writing is still in its infancy despite the fact that many educators and educational psychologists have emphasized the importance of the affective domain in education, Bandura (1977, 1982). Affect, in fact, is the very basis on which most cognition stands (Cramer & Castle, 1994; Turner & Paris, 1995). Additional research needs to be done on teachers' and students' beliefs or perceptions about writing, how such they interact, and how they affect the writing outcomes. Because research on the interaction between teachers' and students' perceptions about writing is in its infancy, more research in this emerging field is badly needed due to its importance in staff development, curriculum design, and classroom instruction.

The student writer, the teacher, and the student text exist in social and educational contexts. Because of the nature of such existence, it makes more sense to study this triad in context rather than studying each one of them separately or studying them out of context. For better research results, it is not enough to survey students and teachers as it is not enough to interview them about writing. It is crucial for researchers to be actively aware of the visible and invisible forces at play in the writing classroom.

As demonstrated by this and other research (Davis, 1987; Fang, 1996; Gay, 1983), teacher attitudes toward writing and teacher beliefs about writing are promising areas for research. In my review of the literature I have come across very few studies of how teachers' and students' beliefs about writing develop. As reviewed in Chapter II of this research, numerous are the studies that describe teachers' beliefs and perceptions about writing. Studies of the mechanism of how such beliefs develop and how they interact with students' beliefs could have great impact on the theory and research about writing.

This study only interpreted the negativity of students' attitudes toward writing and students' self-efficacy as writers. Educators, parents, and staff-developers would benefit from research projects which would focus on the reasons behind such negativity. Where does this negativity start? What starts it? Researching such questions might be helpful in dealing with many of the educational problems in the writing classrooms.

Since this research was limited to one school in one community, it is important for researchers interested in this area to replicate this research in similar as well as in different settings. This research was conducted in a school where the majority of the student body (80%) came from a certain ethnic background; replicating this study with different ethnic populations has the potential of shedding the light on the generalizability of what was concluded here. Replicating this research with different ethnic populations has the potential to help educators better understand the role cultural backgrounds play in students' perceptual change. It is important to further research whether or not the perceptions of students from all cultural and ethnic backgrounds become more closely aligned with their teachers' perceptions about writing. If so, it is still important for educators to know whether or not cultural and ethnic differences correlate with students' perceptual alignment with the teachers' perceptions about writing.

Summary

This research studied whether or not high school English teachers' and their students' perceptions became more closely aligned after a semester of interaction. Findings indicated that students' perceptions became more closely aligned with their teachers' perceptions on the issues of defining writing and the importance of grammar and mechanics in writing. Findings indicated differences in students' perceptual alignment with teachers. These differences were gender and letter grade related. Findings also indicated that students' attitudes toward writing and their self-concept as writers were negative. This negativity persisted and increased regardless of teacher variables. Findings of this research indicated that there was a discrepancy between the teachers' beliefs or perceptions as expressed or inferred from teacher surveys and interviews and the teachers' teaching practices.

Limitations

Because of the limitations of this research, readers are cautioned not to automatically carry the findings to dissimilar settings. As described in Chapter I of this research, readers of this work should keep in mind the population of the school in which

the study was conducted, the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the population, as well as other limitations mentioned earlier. As such, this work adds to what we know about teachers' and students' perceptions about writing, how such perceptions interact, and whether or not they become more closely aligned after a semester of interaction.

Appendix A

Emig-King Writing Attitude Scale For Teachers

Category: Teacher Knowledge and Attitudes

Title: Emig-King Attitude Scale for Teachers

Authors: Janet Emig
               Barbara King

Age Range: Adult

Description of Instrument:

Purpose: To measure attitudes toward writing and changes in attitudes toward writing held by pre- and in-service teachers.

Date of Construction: 1979

Physical Description: This instrument is a revision of the teacher version of the "Emig Writing Attitude Scale" which was constructed in 1977 for the New Jersey Writing Project. The revised scale contains fifty statements representing three categories: preference for writing, perception of writing, and process of writing. Approximately thirty minutes are required for the administration of the scale which asks teachers to circle one of five points ranging from "almost always" to "almost never." Sample items:

Preference for Writing

I accept positions in groups that involve writing.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

Perception of Writing

Studying grammar formally helps students improve their writing.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

Process of Writing

I revise what I write.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

For Each item, circle your response.

1. I write better than I speak.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

2. When I have free time, I prefer writing to reading.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

3. Studying grammar formally helps students improve their writing.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

4. I accept positions in groups that involve writing.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

5. I leave notes for members of my family.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

6. I prefer teaching writing to teaching literature.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

14. I am the most important audience for what students write.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

15. I write letters to editors.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

16. Students write better on topics I give them than on topics they choose themselves.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

17. When I have free time, I prefer writing to listening to music.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

18. Writing should be a part of most school courses.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

19. On my own I write stories, plays, or poems.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

20. Better student writers are more pleased with what they have written than poorer students.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

21. It is more important that students learn how to write essays than to write stories or poems.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

22. I like what I write.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

23. The research paper is the most important form of writing to teach in high school.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

24. When I have free time I prefer writing to being with friends or members of my family.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

25. I prefer teaching writing to teaching dramatics.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

26. Writing is a very important way for me to express my feelings.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

27. Students should learn to write sentences before they write paragraphs and themes.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

28. When I have free time, I prefer writing to pursuing my hobbies.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

29. I prefer teaching writing to teaching grammar and usage.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

30. Better student writers voluntarily revise what they have written.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

31. I keep a journal or diary.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

32. Doing workbook exercises helps students improve their writing.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

33. Someone who writes well is more successful in the world than someone who doesn't.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

34. I like what my students write.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

35. I prefer teaching writing to teaching reading. Almost always   Often

Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

36. I prefer writing to watching television.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

37. Writing is a very important way for students to express their feelings.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

38. Better student writers have a stronger sense of the differences between speaking and writing.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

39. I write better than I read.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

40. I write national public figures such as senators.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

41. If a paper is sloppy in appearance, I give it a lower grade.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

42. I reread what I have written.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

43. When I have free time, I prefer writing to playing sports and games.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

44. Writing is a form of learning.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

45. I write letters to my family and friends.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

46. Better student writers are more engaged in their writing than poor students.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

47. I buy books on writers and writing.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

48. I read professional journal articles on writing.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

49. I write for professional journals or magazines.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

50. Correctness is more important than originality in student writing.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

Please write any remarks you wish to make:

Please answer the following questions about yourself:

Gender: Male   Female

Years of Teaching experience:

Highest Degree Held:

Appendix B

Emig-King Attitude Scale for Students

Category: Writing

Title: Emig-King Writing Attitude Scale for Students (WASS)

Authors: Janet Emig and Barbara King

Age Range: Junior High and Senior High

Description of Instrument:

Purpose: To assess students' attitudes towards writing.

Date of Construction: 1979

Physical Description: WASS is a revision of the "Emig Writing Attitude Scale" (Student Version) constructed in 1977 for the New Jersey Writing Project. The revised scale contains 40 items. The items in the revised scale represent three categories: preference for writing, perception of writing, and process of writing. Approximately thirty minutes are required to administer the scale which asks students to circle one of five points ranging from "almost always" to "almost never." Sample items:

Perception of Writing: Good writers spend more time revising than poor writers.

Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Almost Never

Process of Writing: I voluntarily reread and revise what I've written.

Almost Always	Often	Somtimes	Seldom	Almost Never

Preference of Writing: I write letters to my family and friends.

Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Almost Never

For each itme, circle your response.

1. I write letters to my family and friends.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

2. On my own, I write stories, plays, or poems.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

3. I voluntarily reread and revise what I've written.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

4. When I have free time, I prefer writing to being with friends.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

5. I prefer topics I choose myself to one the teacher gives.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

6. On the whole, I like school.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

7. I use writing to help me study and learn new subjects.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

8. Girls enjoy writing more than boys do.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

9. I like what I write.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

10. Writing is a very important way for me to express my feelings.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

11. Doing workbook exercises helps me improve my writing.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

12. A student who writes well gets better grades in many subjects than someone who doesn't.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

13. When I have free time, I prefer writing to reading.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

14. I do school writing assignments as fast as I can.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

15. I get better grades on topics I choose myself than on those the teachers assign.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

16. I write for the school newspaper, literary magazine, or yearbook.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

17. I voluntarily keep notes for school courses.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

18. When I have free time, I prefer writing to sports.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

19. I leave notes for my family and friends.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

20. The teacher is the most important audience for what I write in school.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

21. Student need to plan in writing for school themes.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

22. When I have free time, I prefer writing to watching television.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

23. I write better than I speak.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

24. Good writers spend more time revising than poor writers.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

25. I accept positions in groups that involve writing.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

26. I write better than I read.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

27. I spend more time on a piece of writing I do outside school than one I do as an assignment.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

28. Studying grammar helps me improve my writing.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

29. I'd rather write than study literature.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

30. I share what I write for school with family and friends.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

31. I write public figures like my Congressman or Mayor.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

32. I write grafiti.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

33. In class, I share what I write with other members of the class.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

34. When I have free time, I prefer writing to listening to music.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

35. Teachers give poor grades to papers that have misspellings.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

36. Writing for others is more important than expressing myself.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

37. I can put off doing assigned writing until the last minute and still get good grade.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

38. I must learn to write a good paragraph before I can write an entire theme.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

39. I keep a journal or diary.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

40. I prefer writing to dramatics in English class.

Almost always   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Almost never

Appendix C

Preceptions of Writing: Interview Questions For Teachers

1- What does writing mean to you? What comes to your mind when I mention writing?

2- Do you think it is important for people to learn how to write? Why?

    2. A- Does writing well help people become more successful beyond high school? Why?

3- In your opinion, what are the qualities of good writing?

4- Of the qualities that you have mentioned, what do you consider the most important? Why?

    4. A- How important are mechanics and grammar in students' writing?

    4. B- How important is organization? Why?

    4. C- How important is style? Why?

    4. D- How important is originality? Why?

    4. E- How important is audience awareness? Why?

    4. F- Are there other qualities that you consider important? What are they? Explain why?

5- Do you teach these things in your classes? How and how often?

6- What, in your opinion, are the qualities of poor student writers?

7- What, in your opionion, are the qualities of good student writers?

8- What are the factors that contribure to different writing abilities among students?

    8. A- Do you see gender as one of these factors? How?

    8. B- Do you see social background as a factor in writing ability? How?

    8. C- Do you see ethnicity as a factor in writing ability? Why?

    8. D- Do you see socioeconomic background as a factor in writing ability? Why?

9- Do you accommodate these differences in your classroom? How?

    10- Does improving writing ability help students become better learners? How?

Preceptions of Writing: Interview Questions for Students

1- What does writing mean to you? What comes to your mind when I mention writing?

2- Do you think it is important for people to learn how to write? Why?

    2. A- Does writing well help people become more successful in the work place? Why?

3- What do you see in any student's writing to make you say it is good writing?

4- Of the qualities that you have mentioned, what do you consider the most important? Why?

    4. A- How important are mechanics and grammar in students' writing?

    4. B- How important is organization? Why?

    4. C- How important is style? Why?

    4. D- How important is originality? Why?

    4. E- How important is audience awareness? Why?

    4. F- Are there other qualities that you consider important? What are they? Explain why?

5- Does your teacher teach these things in class? How and how often?

6- What, in your opinion, are the qualities of poor student writers?

7- What, in your opionion, are the qualities of good student writers?

8- What are the factors that contribure to different writing abilities among students?

    8. A- Do you see gender as one of these factors? How?

    8. B- Do you see social background as a factor in writing ability? How?

    8. C- Do you see ethnicity as a factor in writing ability? Why?

    8. D- Do you see socio-economic background as a factor in writing ability? Why?

9- Do your teacher try to accommodate these differences in class? How?

10- Does improving writing ability help you and other students become better learners? How?

Appendix D

Classroom Observation Tool

Time	Number of event	Teacher says	Student says

References

Abelson, R. P. (1986). Beliefs are like possessions. Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior, 16, 223-250.

Anson, C. M. (1989). Writing and response: Theory, practice, and research Urbana, IL: National Council for Teachers of English.

Applebee, A. (1974). Tradition and reform in the teaching of English Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Applebee, A. (1981). Writing in the secondary schools Urbana, IL: National Council for Teachers of English.

Ardener, E., and Ardener, S. (1975). Belief and the problem of women. In S. Ardener (Ed.), Perceiving women, (pp. 1-16) New York, NY: Malaby.

Argyle, M. (1980). Language and social interaction. In H. Giles, W. Robinson, and P. Smith (Eds.), Language: Social psychological perspectives (pp. 397-408). Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. Psychological Review, 84, 191-215.

Bandura, A. (1978). The self system in reciprocal determinism. American Psychologist, 33, 344-358.

Bateman, D., and Zidonis, F. (1964). The effect of knowledge of generative grammar upon the growth of language complexity. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 001 241)

Bazerman, C. (1990). Discourse analysis and social construction. In Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, Vol. 13, 77 - 83.

Beach, R. and Bridwell, L. (1984). New directions in composition research. New York: The Guilford Press.

Bergege, P. and Luckmann, T. (1966). The social construction of reality. Garden City, NJ: Doubleday.

Berlin, J. (1987). Rhetoric and reality: Writing instruction in American colleges, 1900-1985. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois Univeristy Press.

Berthoff, A. (1981). The making of meaning: Metaphors, models and maxims for writing teachers. Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook.

Bleich, D. (1986). Gender interests in reading and language. In E. Flynn and P. Schweikart. (Eds.), Gender and reading, (pp. 234-266). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Borurdieu, P. and Passeron, J. (1977). Reproduction in education, society and culture, (pp. 234 - 266). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Bowles, S. and Gintis, H. (1976). Schooling in capitolist America. New York,·

NY : Basic Books.

Braddock, R., Lloyd-Jones,R., and Schoer, L. (1963). Research in written composition. Champaign, IL: National Council for Teachers of English.

Brannon, L., and Knoblauch, C. H. (1982). On students' rights to their own texts: A model of teacher response. College Composition and Communicatiion, 33, 157-166.

Britton, J. (1970). Language and learning. London: The Penguin Press.

Britton, J., Burgess, T., Martin, N., Mcleod, A., and Ross, H. (1975). The development of writing ability. London: Macmillan Education.

Brody, M. (1993). Manly writing: Gender, rhetoric, and the rise of composition. Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University.

Brophy, J. (1985). Teachers' expectations, motives, and goals for working with problem students. In C. Ames and R. Ames (Eds.), Research on Motivation in Education, Vol. 2, (pp. 175 - 214). New York, NY: Academic.

Brossell, G. (1983). Rhetorical Specification in essay examination topics. College English, 45 (2), 165-73.

Bruner, J. (1986). Actual minds, possible worlds. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bushman, D., and Ervin, E. (1995). Rhetorical contexts of grammar: Some views from writing-emphasis course instructors. In S. Hunter and R. Wallace (Eds.), The place of grammar in writing instruction, (pp. 136-158). Portsmouth, NH: Boyton/Cook.

Carroll, J. A. (1984). Process into product: Teacher awareness of the writing process affects students' written products. In R. Beach and S. Bridwell (Eds.), New directions in composition research, (pp. 315 - 333). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Chaiken, S. (1987). The heuristic model in pursuasion. In M. P. Zanna, J. M. Olson, & C. P. Herman (Eds.), Social influence: The Ontario Symposium,Vol. 5. (pp. 3-39). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Charles, C. M. (1995). Introduction to educational research. New York, NY: Longman Publishers.

Cole, M. (1985). The zone of proximal development: Where culture and cognition create each other. In J. V. Wertsch (Ed.), Culture, communication and cognition: Vygotskian perspectives (pp. 146-161), London: Cambridge University Press.

Connors, R. J., and Lunsford, A. A. (1988). Frequency of formal errors in current college writing, or Ma and Pa Kettle do research. College Composition and Communication, 39 , 395-409.

Crawford, M., and Chaffin, R. (1986). The reader's construction of meaning: cognitive research on gender and comprehension. In E. Flynn and P. Schweikart. (Eds.), Gender and reading: Essays on readers, texts, and contexts, (pp. 3 - 30). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Crawford, M., and English, L. (1984). Genetic versus specific inclusion of women in language: Effects on recall. Journal of Psycholinguistic Research, 13, 373 - 381.

Culler, J. (1982). On deconstruction. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Curtis, B., Livingstone, D., and Smaller, H. (1992). Stacking the deck: The streaming of working-class kids in Ontario Schools. Toronto, ON: Our Schools/Our Selves Education Foundation.

Daly, J. and Miller, M. (1975). The empirical development of an instrument to measure writing apprehension. Research in the Teaching of English, 9, 242 - 248.

Davis, B. G. (1987). The evaluation of composition instruction. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Davis, F. (1984). In defense of grammar. English Education, 16, 151-64.

Davis, K. (1987). How teacher opinions about writing instruction correspond with student attitudes about writing. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service ED 347 536)

De Ford, D. (1986). The contexts of literacy lerarning. In T. Raphael (Ed.), The context of school based literacy. New York, NY: Random House.

Dole, J. A., and Sinatra, G. M. (1994). Social psychology research on beliefs and attitudes: Implications for research on learning from text. In R. Garner and P. A. Alexander (Eds.), Beliefs about text and instruction with text, (pp. 245-264). Hillsdale, NJ : Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Duffy, G. G. (1981). Theory to practice: How it works in real classrooms. Research Series Number 98. East Lansing, MI: Institute on Research on Teaching, Michigan State University.

Eagly, A. H., & Chaiken, S. (1975). An attribution analysis of communicator characteristics on opinion change: The case of communicator attractiveness. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 32, 136-144.

Elbow, P., and Belanoff, P. (1989). Sharing and responding. New York, NY: Random House.

Ely, M., Anzul, M., Friedman, T, Garner, D., and McCormack Steinmetz, A. (1995). Doing qualitative research: Circles within circles. London: Falmer Press.

Emig, J., and King, B. (1979). Emig-King attitude scale for teachers. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 236 629).

Emig, J., and King, B. (1979). Emig-King attitude scale for students. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 236 630)

Fang, Z. (1996). What counts as good writing? A case study of relationships between teacher beliefs and pupil conceptions. Reading Horizons, 36 (3), 249-258.

Feathers, K. (1981). Feathers Writer Interview Protocol. Available from Karen Feathers, Wayne State University, 233 Education Building, Detroit, Mi. 48202.

Fetterley, J. (1978). The resisting reader. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Fisk, S. T., & Taylor, S. E. (1991). Social cognition. New York, NY: McGraw Hill.

Flower, L. (1989). Cognition, context, and theory building (Occasional Paper No. 11).

Flynn, E. (1986). Gender and reading. In E. Flynn, and P. Schweikart (Eds.) Gender and reading: Essays on readers, texts, and contexts, (pp. 267 - 288). Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press.

Freedman, S. W., Dyson, A. H., Flower, L., and Chafe, W. (1987). Research in writing: Past, present, and future (Tech. Rep. No. 1). Berkley, CA: Center for the Study of Writing.

Freedman, S. W. (1987). Response to student writing. Urbana, IL: National Council for Teachers of English.

Gardiner, J. K. (1981). On female identity and writing by women. Critical Inquiry, 8, 347-61.

Gay, P. (1983). How attitude interferes with performance of unskilled college freshman writers. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 199 717)

Gee, J. (1992). Socio-linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses. Philadelphia, PA: The Falmer Press.

Gere, A., Schuessler, B., and Abbott, R. (1981). Measuring teacher attitudes toward instruction in writing. Washington: National Institute of Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 199 717)

Gere, A., and Smith, E. (1979). Attitudes, language and change. Urbana, IL.: National Council for Teachers of English.

Glaser, B. and Strauss, A. (1967). The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative reseach. Chicago, IL: Aldine.

Goldstein, A. and Michaels, G. (1985). Empathy: Development, training, and consequences. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Greenberg, K., Wiener, H., and Donavan, R. (Eds). (1986). Writing assessment: Issues and strategies. New York, NY: Longman.

Griffen, C. W. (1982). Theory of responding to student writing: The state of the art. College Composition and Communication, 33, 296-301.

Hake, R., and Williams, J. (1981). Style and its consequences: Do as I do, not as I say. College English, 43. pp. 433-51.

Hairston, M. (1981). Not all errors are created equal: Nonacademic readers in the professions respond to lapses in usage. College English, 43, 794-806.

Harste, J. C. and Burke, C. (1977). A new hypothesis for reading teacher research: Both the teaching and learning of reading are theoretically based. In P. D. Pearson (Ed.), Reading: Theory, research and practice [Twenty-sixth Yearbook of the National Reading Conference], (pp. 32-40). Chicago, IL: The National Reading Conference.

Heath, S. P. (1983). Ways with words. Cambridge, NY: Cambrige University Press.

Hilgers, T. (1984). Toward a taxonomy of beginning writers' evaluative statements on written compositions. Written communication, 1 (3), 365 - 384.

Hillocks, G. J. (1986). Research in written composition: New directions for teaching. Urbana, IL: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills and the National Conference on Research in English.

Holland, N. N. (1980). Unity identity text self. In J. P. Tompkins (Ed.), Reader response criticism, (pp. 118 -133). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Holt, J. R. (1982). In defense of formal grammar. Curriculum Review, 21, 173-78.

Hook, J. N. (1979). A long way together: A personal view of National Council for Teachers of English first sixty-seven years. Urbana, IL.: National Council for Teachers of English.

Hunt, R. A. (1989). A horse named Hans, a boy named Shawn: The Herr von Osten theory of response to writing. In Anson, C. M. (Ed.), Writing and response: Theory, practice, and research, (pp. 80 - 102). Urbana, IL.: National Council for Teachers of English.

Iser, W. (1978). The act of reading: A theory of aesthetic resoponse. Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press.

Kinder, R. M. (1990). Grading students' writing in college English: A history. Phoenix, AZ: University of Arizona.

Kolln, M. (1981). Closing the books on alchemy. College Composition and Communication, 32, 139-51.

Kolodny, A. (1985). Dancing through the minefield: Some observations on the theory, practice, and politics of a feminist literary criticism. In E. Showalter (Ed.), Feminist criticism, (pp. 46-62). New York, NY: Pantheon.

Koziol, S. M. (1979). PCRP assessment survey II: Practices and policies in written composition. Pittsburg, PA: University of Pittsburg.

Lakoff, R. (1975). Language and woman's place. New York, NY: Harper Colophon Books.

Lawson, B., Ryan, S., and Winterowd, W. (Eds). (1990). Encountering student texts. Urbana, IL: National Council for Teachers of English.

Lederman, M. J. (1986). Why test? In K. L.Greenberg, H. Wiener, and R.

Donavan (Eds.), Writing assessment: Issues and strategies, (pp. 35 - 43). New York, NY: Longman.

Leitch, V. (1982). Two poststructuralist modes of (inter) textuality. Critical Texts, 2, 3-5.

Lincoln, Y. and Guba, E. (1989). The failure of positivist science. Review of Higher Education, Vol. 12, (3), 221 - 240.

Lincoln, Y. and Guba, E. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Lindemann, E. (1994). CCCC bibliography of composition and rhetoric, 1992. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Lindemann, E. (1987). A rhetoric for writing teachers. New York: Oxford University Press.

Lunsford, A. A. (1986). The past— and future— of writing assessment. In K. Greenberg, H. Wiener, and R. Donavan (Eds.), Writing assessment: Issues and strategies, (pp. 1 - 12). New York, NY: Longman.

Macrorie, K. (1980). Telling writing. Rochelle Park, NJ: Hayden.

Markman, L. (1976). Influences of handwriting quality on teacher evaluation of written work. American Educational Research Journal, 23, 277-83.

Maykut, P., and Morehouse, R. (1985). Beginning qualitative research: A philosophical and practical guide. Washington, DC: The Falmer Press.

Mitchell, M. Konopak, B. and Readance, J. (1991). The coinsistency between Chapter I teachers' beliefs about reading and their instructional decision making and interactions. In J. Zutell and S. McCormick (Eds.), Learner factors/teacher factors: Issues in literacy research and instruction. [Fortieth Yearbook of the National Reading Conference]. (pp. 377-384), Chicago, IL: National Reading Conference Inc.

Moscovici, S. (1980). Toward a threory in conversion behavior. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), Advances in experimental social psychology, Vol. 13, (pp. 209-239). New York, NY: Academic Press.

Moscovici, S., Lage, E., and Naffrechooux, M. (1969). Influence of a consistent minority on the response of a majority in a color perception task. Sociometry, 32, 365 - 380.

Murray, P. Y. (1990). Teachers as Readers, Readers as Teachers. In B. Lawson, S. Ryan, and W. Winterowd (Eds.), Encountering student texts, (pp. 73 - 85). Urbana, IL: National Council for Teachers of English.

Nemeth, C. (1987). Influence processes, problem solving and creativity. In M. Zanna, J.Olson, and C. Herman (Eds.), Social inlfluence, (pp. 237 - 246). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Nemeth, C., and Wachtler, J. (1983). Creative problem solving as a result of majority vs. minority influence. European Journal of Social Psychology, 13, 45 -55.

Neuleib, J. and Brosnahan, I. (1987). Teaching grammar to writers. Journal of Basic Writing, 6 (1), 28-35.

Neuleib, J. (1977). The relation of formal grammar to composition. College Composition and Communication, 28, 247-50.

Newkirk, T. (1984). How students read student essays: An exploratory study. Written Communication, 1, 5-22.

Noguchi, R. R. (1991). Grammar and the teaching of writing. Urbana, IL: National Council for Teachers of English.

Nold, E. W. (1978). The basics of research: Evaluation of writing. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 166 713)

Parker, R. (1988). Theories of writing instruction: Having them, using them, changing them. English Education, 20 (1), 18-40.

Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1986). Communication and pursuasion: Classic and contmporary approaches. Dubuque, IA: Brown.

Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1981). Communication and pursuasion : Central and peripheral routes to attitude change. New York, NY: Springer-Verlag.

Phelps, L. W. (1989). Images of Student Writing. In C. M. Anson (Ed.), Writing and response: Theory, practice, and research, (pp. 37 - 67). Urbana, IL.: National Council for Teachers of English.

Purves, A. C. (1984). The teacher as reader: An anatomy. College English, 46, 259-65.

Reigstad, T. and McAndrew, D. (1984). Training tutors for writing conferences. Urbana, IL.: National Council for Teachers of English.

Rogoff, B. (1986). Adult assistance of children's learning. In T. E. Raphael (Ed.), The contexts of school based literacy, (27-42). New York, NY: Random House.

Romano, T. (1987). Clearing the way: Working with teenage writers. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Rubin, D. (1993). Gender influences: Reading student texts. Carbondale and Edwardsville IL: National Council for Teachers of English and Southern Illinois University Press.

Salzman, J. (1996). Measuring the consistency of the attitudes and practices of college composition instructions. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 400 884).

Schuessler, B., Gere, A., Abbotte, R. (1981). The rational and empirical development of four scales measuring teacher attitudes toward written composition: A preliminary investigation. Research in the Teaching of English, 15, 55 - 63.

Schweikart, P. P. (1986). Reading ourselves: Toward a feminist theory of reading. In E. Flynn and P. Schweikart (Eds.), Gender and reading, (pp. 31 - 62).

Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Seidman, E. (1966). Marking students' compositions: Implications for achievement motivation theory. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Stanford University.

Shaughnessy, M. (1977). Errors and expectations: A guide for the teacher of basic writing. New York, NY: Oxford.

Sherman, R., and Webb, R. (1988). Qualitative research in education: Focus and methods. London: Falmer Press.

Smith, F. (1988). Understanding reading: A psycholinguistic analysis of reading and learning to read. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Smith, F. R. and Feathers, K. M. (1983). Teacher and student perceptions of content area reading. Journal of Reading, 26 (4), 348-54.

Sommers, N. (1982). Responding to student writing. College Composition and Research, 33, 148-56.

Tanford, S., and Penrod, S. (1984). Social influence model: A formal integration of research on majority and minority influence processes. Psychological Bulletin, 95, 182 - 225.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processs. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1986). Thought and language. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Wall, S. V. and Hull, G. A. (1989). The semantics of error. In C. M. Anson (Ed.), Writing and response: Theory, practice, and research, (pp. 261 - 292)). Urbana, IL.: National Council for Teachers of English.

White, E. M. (1994). Teaching and assessing writing. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Williams, J. M. (1981). The phenomenology of error. College Composition and Communication, 32 (2), 152-68.

Williams, S. E. (1997). Teachers' written comments and students' responses: A Socially constructed interaction. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 408 589)

Wood, B., Bruner, J. S., and Ross, G. (1976). The role of tutoring in problem solving. Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 17, 89-100.

Ziv, N. (1984). The effect of teacher comments on the writing of four college freshmen. In R. Beach and L. Bridwell (Eds.), New directions in composition research, (pp. 362 - 380). New York, NY: The Gilford Press.

Abstract

DO HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH TEACHERS' AND THEIR STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT WRITING BECOME MORE CLOSELY ALIGNED AFTER A SEMSTER OF INTERACTION?

by

ADNAN MOHAMMAD SALHI

December 1998

Advisor: Dr. Karen Feathers

Major: Curriculum and Instruction

Degree: Doctor of Education

In this dissertation the researcher studied whether or not high school English teachers' and their students' perceptions about writing became more closely aligned after a semester of interaction. Four teachers, two males and two females, and their students were repeatedly surveyed, interviewed, and observed over time. Teachers were balanced on gender, educational level, and years of teaching experience. Students were balanced on gender, grade level, and letter grade in English. Data were categorized and analyzed using the methods of constant comparison and recursive analysis. Findings indicated that students' perceptions became more closely aligned with their their teachers' perceptions on the issues of defining writing and the importance of grammar and mechanics in writing. There were differences in students' perceptual alignment with the teachers' perceptions. These differences were gender and letter grade related. Findings also indicated that students' attitudes toward writing and their self-concept as writers were negative. This negativity persisted and increased regardless of teacher variables. Implications for education and research are included.

142

Autobiographical Statement

The author of this dissertation, Adnan Salhi, was born in Palestine in 1949. He graduated from high school in the city of Hebron and he earned an associates degree in science from Bir Zeit University, his undergraduate degree in English from the Lebanese University in Beirut, his M. A. in English form the Univesity of Detroit and his Ed. D. from Wayne State Univesity. The author is currently teaching language arts and science at a high school in Michigan.