A QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL STUDY ON THE EFFECTS OF A PROGRAM OF INSTRUCTION FOR DEVELOPING GREATER SYNTACTIC AWARENESS, FLUENCY, AND MATURITY IN STUDENT WRITERS

by

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(Under the Direction of Peter Smagorinsky)

ABSTRACT

Today, despite over a hundred years of debate and research in the field, there is still tremendous discord in what constitutes the best-practices for grammar and mechanics instruction in the field of English language arts pedagogy. In a quasi-experimental design study, an inquiry into a grammar and mechanics instructional approach I developed as a high school English teacher was conducted in an effort to ascertain whether the approach helps foster significant writing improvement within secondary ELA students.

The results of the study reveal that students did demonstrate over four times more growth on the grammar and mechanics assessments and approximately twice as much growth in writing achievement on writing assessments when exposed to my approach as compared to the semester where a teacher delivered their usual instructional approach. Additionally, there exists a much stronger correlation with the students' performance on the grammar and mechanics assessments in the second (treatment) semester than the first, and this stronger correlation is an additional supportive compelling aspect in helping to conclude that the instructional approach does appear

to be beneficial and more effective in helping students improve as writers when compared to other grammar and mechanics instructional approaches commonly employed by high school English teachers today.

Perhaps this study can contribute to discussion and spark further research into the efficacy and merit of "middle-ground" approaches on the grammar and mechanics instructional continuum and make a small contribution to the long debate regarding how to best help students grow and develop foundationally as writers.

INDEX WORDS: Grammar, Grammar and Mechanics Instruction, Writing Instruction, Syntactic Awareness, Fluency, and Maturity, Sentence Fluency and Variety, Sentence Repertoires, Quasi-experimental Study, Mixed-Methods Study

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this to my wife and kids. I couldn't have done it without you, My Darling. The odds have been stacked against us, yet we have stuck together and battled every step of the way. Always and forever, I love you more. And to my children (and grandchildren), please know how much I love you. Dreams, aspirations, and objectives can be achieved, no matter how unlikely they may initially seem. Please, always remember that. I will always be here if you need me. And if you actually ever do read this, I hope this message finds you in the midst of living out your dreams, because life is merely a dream lived in the reality we construct while awake.

Lastly, to all those who have, are, or who will. There should be more of us.

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Finally, I would like to acknowledge the spirt of UGA. Though I was not born there, currently do not reside there, and only spent a little over three years there, I am and will forever be proud to call myself a Georgia Dawg!

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It was May of 2003, and there we were after school in my Orange County, California "portable" classroom—a day like any other--this particular student and I discussing his essay grade. I, the neophyte high school English teacher, was trying to explain the score on the "Six-Traits of Writing" rubric I had given this young man, something I had done several times prior to this instance and hundreds of times since. The young man, John, was 18 years-old and in my "Intermediate" Senior English class. The "Intermediate" designation meant he was in the track below College Prep English but above Remedial English; consequently, he was bound for either community college, the military, or the workforce. Ironically, he was not even that interested in school: His stated goal was to "go to college for as long as he could and have as much fun as he could" before eventually becoming an elementary P.E. teacher because "they make decent money and have the easiest job in the world." He was not interested in school, but he actually did like learning more than he would ever publically admit, and he absolutely loved to argue. He was really good at it too.

If memory serves, I had given John a low "C" holistically on the paper and had rated him as a "2" in both "Conventions" and "Sentence Fluency" according to the Six Traits of Writing categories. His content and ideas, organization, voice, and word choice had all been proficient or above, but his paper was littered with grammatical errors, mechanical flaws, and syntactic ignorance. We proceeded to discuss his paper in detail, as I had noted every comma and punctuation error, fragment, run-on, and lack of flow and consistency in the margins. When he

asked why he received a "two" in those categories, all I had to do was point to the litany of purple (I always avoided the dreaded red pen when grading due to the "stigma" attached to the color's usage in writing assessment) marks and remind him that we had "covered grammar" earlier in the year: We had "gone over" phrases, clauses, fragments, run-ons, comma and semi-colon usage, etc. He assented with a head nod. I then added, "So you received a two because the majority of your sentences are poorly or incorrectly constructed," to which he responded: "So, how do I write better ones then?" I really didn't have a good answer for him.

It is the inherently basic and essential nature of that question which undergirds what became a framework pursuit of my secondary English teaching practice for over ten years across four states, because, though I am sure I retorted with something peremptory in nature in an effort to not let him think he had in any way won the argument that day, I knew in my heart instantaneously that I did not have a satisfactory answer to John's question. This fundamentally bothered me.

Consequently, I began a personal quest to try and find a digestible, simple, systemic, effective, non-tedious way to help my students become more informed and skilled in writing mechanically and structurally sound and more syntactically aware, fluent, and mature sentences. In other words I wanted to find a way to address students' writing on a foundational level so that they might possess more technical agency in their ability to, at a fundamental level, write fluent sentences. I was not ardently clinging to past notions of traditional "back when I was a kid" instructional practices. And I wasn't interested in "correctness" or linking back to the days of grammar, rhetoric, and logic, though as Newman (1996) points out, as English teachers, "we still evaluate students' writing in terms of correctness every day;" however, we do so "without having reformulated a consensus about what this concept means" (p. 23). He explains that as

English teachers and teachers of language in general, "we are in a double bind" because "on the one hand, it is impossible to apply the notion of 'correctness' to language form because there are no coherent grounds for doing so. Yet, on the other, it has proven quite hard to eliminate or replace" (p. 27).

Admittedly, my specific concern for my students was not about organization, content, or ideas; it was about students possessing syntactic skill sets so that they could organize and present their content and ideas in a grammatically sound and coherent way, particularly in academic and professional settings. And as Newman (1996) pragmatically and somewhat reluctantly explains, "being able to produce recognizable texts is necessary for membership in the academic community;" therefore, in accordance, "students' errors together with stylistic infelicities mark the distinction between being accepted as members and being excluded from that community" (p. 35). It is this idea of exclusion that concerned me because I wanted my students to possess the linguistic agency to gain access to the academic and professional worlds if and/or when they desire to do so. Despite my own reservation about "correctness" and the value of grammar instruction, I did not want them to be excluded because they could not produce "recognizable texts."

Interestingly enough, upon investigating I found there was no district mandated grammatical program, scope, sequencing, or official district materials pertaining to language, grammar, and mechanics instruction, though there seemed to be for almost everything else in English language arts domain. This also held true for the district in Washington state that I worked for later in my career for over six years. In order to do accomplish my objective, I knew that I was going to have to actually teach the dreaded "G" word (grammar-cue gasp in horror), and I was going to have to find way to do that was generative in nature; I also came to tacitly

realize over the process of this exploration that, in order for this to be meaningful, effective, and to actually impact students' writing processes, I was going to have to find a way for this entity to move students from "declarative" grammatical knowledge (i.e, "what one either does or does not know") to "procedural" (i.e, "concerns how one might be able to do something") knowledge (Smagorinsky, Smith, 1992, p. 281). In other words, they couldn't just know what a semi-colon is or identify semi-colon errors, but they actually must garner the ability to actively incorporate these syntactic structures correctly and effectively in their own writing, and this needed to be done despite the reams of research that have loudly and emphatically proclaimed in a resounding voice that "the teaching of grammar in isolation does not lead to improvement in students' speaking and writing, and that in fact, it hinders development of students' oral and written language" (NCTE, 1985). I knew that this was no small task.

The resulting constantly tweaked and refined approach that I developed and implemented became a foundational staple of my classroom for my decade as a high school English teacher. This approach has its genesis in the experience I had in 2002 when I had the extremely fortunate opportunity to student teach at Cherry Creek High School in the suburbs of Denver, Colorado. Here I encountered an English department entrenched (this process had begun as a collective departmental undertaking in the late 1990's) in developing a curriculum that would address its students' grammatical shortcomings in an effort to improve the scope, sequencing, and vertical alignment of the teaching of grammar and mechanics associated with writing. They had undertaken this exploit to "demonstrate the importance of grammar and mechanics to the students and the community" and to try to generate standardized test (SAT/ACT) and writing improvement (S. Kascht, personal communication, September/October, 2002). Even though I left Cherry Creek in December of 2002 to take my first English teaching job in Orange County,

California, this experience had a profound impact on the secondary English teaching career of mine that followed.

Background for Study

After John's question I began to try to develop an effective foundational syntactic instructional approach, and, consequently, I found myself harkening back to what I had experienced in Cherry Creek. For example, I noticed that when I gave students feedback on their writing, I could point out errors such as fragments, run-ons, erroneous comma-usage, simple sentence structures, lack of sentence variety, active/passive mistakes, etc., but I wasn't able to help them understand how to go about fixing, improving, or averting them altogether. Newman (1996) refers to these "errors' as being "ungrammatical" rather than "erroneous, mistaken, or wrong" (p. 25). I also realized that, by and large, the tools, resources, and curriculum materials available to me were there to assess grammar and mechanics or to identify grammatical errors, not to teach, extend, develop, or improve student understanding, mastery, accuracy, or successful, skillful application.

Take for example the "Six Traits of Writing" curriculum (http://educationnorthwest.org/traits) that were the materials available to me at each of the three districts in three different states that I taught in over my ten-year teaching career and are ubiquitous in the world of secondary writing instructional materials today in American schools. The rubrics for "Six-Traits" include the assessment of writing in the following six categories: ideas/content, voice, organization, word choice, conventions, and sentence fluency. I found that I was basically giving students a number on a 1-4 or 1-6 scale in each of these six categories because I was a teacher in a "Six Traits" school district, yet there was nothing available to me from the district that I could find to help instruct students on correcting or avoiding "ungrammatical" errors, only in assessing and

critiquing them. Consequently, I eventually arrived at the difficult conclusion that I was evaluating, "correcting," and critiquing my students' writing without actually foundationally helping them improve as writers. For as Bartholomae (1980) explains: Students' "failed sentences" can be interpreted "as stages of learning rather than the failure to learn, but also as evidence these writers are using writing as an occasion to learn" (p. 254). This epiphany spawned my interest, and over the next ten-plus years I systematically set about trying to develop, refine, and improve an applied grammar and mechanics approach grounded by my introductory experience at Cherry Creek High School as a student teacher.

I continued my quest when, after three years, I left Southern California and moved on to Sumner, Washington where I spent six years teaching and working with my students and colleagues on this issue. Though I generally had very positive results and came to firmly believe in the efficacy, importance, and value of my grammar instructional approach despite a plethora of research stating the inefficacy of grammar instruction prevalent in academia, I came to realize that I had very little evidence to support my conclusion with the possible exception of my own anecdotal experiences. During the development of my approach there emerged some distinguishing features: My approach eschews the extremes of the grammar instruction continuum and includes a minimalist philosophy towards Traditional School Grammar (TSG) methodology; it also places an emphasis on feedback and meta-cognition facilitated by formative instructional practices, and aligns with contemporary teacher effectiveness evaluation systems and Common Core assessment practices, all of which are heavily supported by research though I knew very little about this research and literature as I organically developed and implemented the approach in my classroom. Yet, despite the positive results I was seeing in my students' work and performance and the positive feedback I was receiving from my students, parents, and

colleagues who often commented to me about how foundationally prepared the students who had me the previous year were in their classes, I consistently heard the resounding and empathically authoritative voices of researchers such as Hillocks, Smith, and Cheville (2006) proclaiming that "research has consistently shown that the teaching of grammar as a separate subject has little or no effect on students' language development" (263). The words of Smagorinsky (2006) are equally pertinent and resonant when he more broadly and eloquently wrote about the field of composition research and the ontological, epistemological, and pedagogical changes that have manifested a sort "nature of knowing wrestling match" that has become emergent over the last twenty or so years in academe. He writes:

> Guided by the general premise of the decentering of the subject and the idea that meaning cannot be fixed in language, many researchers have moved from the search for universals (e.g., best practices for teaching regardless of setting and participants) and generated new questions about the situated nature of teaching and learning as they are enacted amid competing political agendas, constructed subjectivities, social goals and structures, discourses, and value systems. At the same time, the enduring promise of Enlightenment rationalism has maintained the value of empiricism in its quest for revealing truths about social practices" (p. 12)

So, I beat on, boat against the current, tantalized by the "enduring promise of enlightenment" in an empirical quest to reveal "truth" about my own practice. And I do hope you will forgive my Fitzgeraldian allusion as an indulgence; I am an English teacher after all and cannot help myself.

Purpose of Study

The central problem addressed in the study is the following: Was the grammar and mechanics instructional approach I developed effective in helping my students improve as writers, and, if so, is it effective in helping the students of other secondary English teachers as well?

Research Questions

As a result of the quandaries discussed in the introduction, be it the lack of certainty regarding the study of language and syntactic development specifically, or more generally, the lack of certainty about the nature of knowledge and human beings ever truly "knowing" anything, I have been persistently dogged by a nagging pair of questions that has shrouded my confidence about my grammar and mechanics instructional approach and its efficacy. It is these questions that also serve as the guiding questions for my research. They are:

1. Was the grammar and mechanics instructional approach I developed effective in successfully helping my students improve as writers or was it a waste of instructional time that could have been more effectively spent?
2. If my approach was indeed "beneficial" and "effective" in helping my own students improve as writers, would this approach also be "beneficial" and "effective" in helping other teachers' students improve as writers as well?

These are the guiding questions that I hope my research may help to provide a bit of "answer" to, if such a thing exists.

Overview of Research Design

My inquiry unfolded along two pathways. First, in a preliminary inquiry, I investigated and analyzed the data from my last two years in the classroom in Washington state (2009-10, 2010-11) as a high school English teacher with my own students in an effort to explore the efficacy of the grammar and mechanics approach I developed and implemented with my own

students and its connection with helping my former students improve as writers. After examining the resulting and determining the need for further study, I recruited seven teachers from three other 9-12 high schools in Georgia to implement my approach with their students to further investigate this subject in an effort to move the approach outside the confines of my own classroom. The resulting quasi-experimental design investigated if the approach I developed results in statistically significant correlations with writing improvement when compared to the "business as usual" approach by the teachers. In conjunction with quantitative correlation analysis, I implemented a survey instrument with the participating teachers in an effort to attain feedback that is qualitative in nature as well, all in effort to inquire if the grammar and mechanics instructional approach I developed is effective in helping students improve as writers.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There is a long and winding evolution in the history of language and grammar instruction extending back over 2,500 years ago to the English language roots of Greek and Latin. In fact, students attended "Grammar Schools" (rather than elementary schools as they are commonly referred to today) for the great majority of our country's history where their education was intensely focused on "The Three R's" (Reading, wRiting, and aRithmetic). Researchers have been exploring and critiquing the value and efficacy of grammar instruction for more than a century. As far back as Hoyt's (1906) study where he questioned the amount of curriculum space and instructional time that formal grammar instruction should be given in schooling, researchers, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders have been formally inquiring about the value and importance of grammar instruction. Yet, despite the fact that people have been researching and debating this topic for over 100 years, there still exists today a large contingency of both collegiate and k-12 teachers who passionately, nostalgically, and ardently cling to the importance, value, and mandate that "grammar" be emphatically and consistently taught to children in the education process while on the other side of the continuum there exits just as passionate and ardent a cadre vehemently railing against such a practice who argue that the teaching of grammar is not helpful but, in fact, may be harmful to students. Consequently, when exploring the issue of grammar, grammar instruction, and its place in education, one cannot help but to feel confused and unsure. And more than a century later, with all its research, publication, teaching, and scholarship, there are still a great many English Language Arts teachers clinging to

the traditional instructional approaches of those forlorn from the past and the "doctrine of correctness" when it comes to language instruction while there are also has been, currently is, and probably always will be a large group of teachers "tugging at the rope that might topple formal grammar and the doctrine of correctness" for good (Tchudi, 2010, p. 126). It seems as though the battle over grammar instruction is an ever-expanding, unrelenting, and infinite conflict that has raged on for over a century, and there is no end to the quarrel in sight. Though there is research dating back over 100 years on the subject, there seems to be less clarity and more confusion than ever before on if, how, and/or how much grammar instruction should be in schools today.

Traditional School Grammar

In looking back on the history of grammar instruction, Noguchi (1991) pronounces that "anti-grammar studies have, by far, outnumbered, the pro-grammar ones" (p. 2). For example, Braddock et al.'s (1963) seminal research review bluntly states:

> In view of the widespread agreement of research studies based upon many types of students and teachers, the conclusion can be stated in strong and unqualified terms: the teaching of formal grammar has a negligible or, because it usually displaces some instruction and practice in actual composition, even a harmful effect on the improvement of writing. (p. 37-38)

After receiving criticism that the study was flawed due to "excessive reliance on studies which lacked experimental control," (Noguchi, 1991, p. 2) Braddock et. al's 1963 study was followed up by Hillocks, Jr.'s (1986) landmark meta-analysis study which scathingly concluded 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. (p. 248-249)

Cheville, Hillocks, Jr. and Smith (2003) declare that is a "fact that for a century, research has consistently shown that the teaching of grammar as a separate subject has little or no effect on students' language development," (p. 263) which only serves to further buttress Hillocks' (1986) notorious treatise containing the peremptory and definitive statement that:

> 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. (p. 248)

It is these peremptory statements and others like it that leave one to wonder: What exactly is "Traditional School Grammar," (TSG) what is so bad about it, and why is it still being taught in schools today if it is at best ineffective and at worst possibly even deleterious to students?

Defining Traditional School Grammar and its Shortcomings

Tchudi (2010) details the pendulum swings and the evolution of the teaching of language and its ebb and flow on grammar emphasis in his essay for the National Council for Teachers of English's 100th anniversary publication. He remarks how in the early 1900's the great majority of English teachers "inherited methods of teaching language" that "reflected Enlightenment

confidence in learning through rule study (made explicit by Lindley Murray, the leading textbook author of the nineteenth century" (p.125). He expounds that this inherited instructional method evolved to also include "parsing (writing out the grammatical characteristics of every word in a passage" along with "the sentence diagram (invented by Alonzo Reed and Brainerd Kellog as an alternative to parsing)" and wide-spread practices that included instructional elements such as "exercises in the correctness of 'false syntax,' as well as "rigorous red-penciling on student themes" (p. 125). These "traditional" school grammar instructional emphases "firmly ensconced grammar at the center of the language curriculum," indelibly intertwined with what Andrus Leonard (1929) dubbed "the doctrine of correctness" in English usage. These aforementioned practices, methodologies, and pedagogical underpinnings have defined Traditional School Grammar for well over a century now.

Any conversation about grammar must also involve the axiomatic conundrum implicit in defining grammar, for as Cheville, et al., (2006) contend, "the term itself has so many meanings" (p. 263). Cheville, et al., go on to cite the work of Francis (1954) and Hartwell (1985) in detailing two important meanings of grammar: The first definition they detail as "the systematic description, analysis, and articulation of the formal patterns of language"; additionally, they present grammar as a concept often connoted as "a set of rules governing how one ought to speak and write" (p. 263). They continue by explicating that Traditional School Grammar (TSG) "combines the exploratory function of grammar with prescription," including "parts of speech' and other terms that purport to identify the function of words, phrases, and clauses" and "mechanics and usage rules" that "prescribe a standard for correctness" (p. 263). It is the prescriptive function along with aspects detailed earlier by Tchudi (2010) that has characterized the bulk of grammar instruction in American education encompassed by the term TSG.

Problems with Traditional School Grammar (TSG) Instruction

Cheville, et al., (2006) go on to enumerate problems endemic to the prescriptive TSG instructional approach; they include:

(1) TSG is an inadequate description of the way language works;

(2) Students have difficulty learning TSG;

(3) Teachers assumptions of deficit associated with TSG undermine language learners' esteem and development;

(4) In contrast to a fixed form and "correctness" typically associated with TSG, "the explicit study and negotiation of language variety facilitates language development;"

(5) TSG has no impact on student writing (p. 264-266).

In addition, Graham and Perin's (2007) meta-analysis presents its findings that grammar instruction involving "the explicit and systematic teaching of the parts of speech and structure of sentences" reveals "an effect for this type of instruction for students across the full range of ability" as being "surprisingly…negative," adding that the negative effect is "small" but "statistically significant," thereby indicating that "traditional grammar instruction is unlikely to help improve the quality of students' writing (p. 21). Yet, despite this deluge on TSG, there remains a passionate and intractable cadre of folks out there adamantly persisting with their TSG approach, perhaps anachronistically and nostalgically, and one can't help but wonder as to why they do so. And they persist despite what Hymes (1974) put forth where he builds on the work of Vachek (1959) in arguing that "all existing varieties of English can be said to be mutually complimentary with regard to the social to the types of social institution in which the speaker of English may find himself placed" (p. 152-153). Summarily, his contention is that "correctness" of language may not, in fact, be universal, but instead is entirely subjective and contextually

based; therefore, even down to the level of sentence construction, Hymes (1974) asserts that: "It is being increasingly recognized that that the single sentence is itself an arbitrary boundary" (p. 150-151). Yet, despite this evolving paradigm shift away from "correctness" and uniformity in language, in many classrooms across the country grammar instruction has largely held firm and resistant against the sway of change while clinging to vestiges of TSG.

Why Does TSG Instruction Persist?

In all likelihood, many English teachers have continued to emphasize a TSG approach to instruction for a litany of reasons, be it continuing to teach the way they were taught in their own schooling, peer pressure, the pressure to conform to the "norm," lack of access to research and/or resources resulting in ignorance, and perhaps even plain ol' laziness. D'Eloia (1981) does eloquently offer twelve possible theoretical explanations as to why teachers persist in teaching grammar despite its documented lack of value, though none are research-based or empirically validated. And while no one has, as of yet, provided a "satisfactory, empirically documented answer" (Smagorinsky, Wright, Augstine, O'Donnell-Allen, & Kopnak, 2007) as to why TSG practices persist in the classroom, Johnson, Smagorinsky, Thompson, & Fry (2003) identified six research-based reasons as to why the "equally reviled warhorse of the English curriculum—the five-paragraph theme" continues to be mandated by English teachers despite "near-universal vituperation among composition theorists" (p. 78). Each of these six reasons may very well be equally pertinent, plausible, and applicable reasons for the persistence of TSG instructional practices, given the close relationship between the entities of TSG language instruction and five-paragraph theme composition. The six identified reasons are:

1. Teachers enculturation to tradition of schooling through their apprenticeships of observation (Lortie, 1975);
2. The limitations of teacher preparation programs which emphasize the teaching of literature to the neglect of writing and language;

3. Shortcomings of teachers, who employ methods such as disembodied grammar instruction in spite of students' annual inability to learn it;
4. Poor work conditions (too many students, too little planning time, etc.) that limit teachers' ability to teach in more adventurous mays;
5. Institutional pressures such as testing mandates;
6. And the five-paragraph theme's potential as a useful genre to learn and reapply to new situations (p. 78-79)

The sixth reason (reapplication to new situations) might be equally applicable to Traditional School Grammar instruction and its "reapplication" in writing and high-stakes assessment which I will discuss in more detail later. Each of these six reasons offer possible explanations as to why, despite the numerous and ubiquitous research-based conclusions that TSG grammar instruction "doesn't work as widely practiced," TSG language instruction continues to be "such as staple of the English curriculum" (p. 78).

Of particular consequence is the preparation that that English Education majors receive while in teacher preparation programs. Smagorinsky, Wilson, and Moore (2011) build on the work of Tremmel (2001) in contending that the vast majority of English teachers "launch their careers with preparation largely in the area of literature instruction," and, therefore, begin the teaching of writing and grammar with "marginal preparation" that is then, as a resulting consequence, "shaped by school settings in which both the available textbooks and the imperatives of test preparation conspire to mediate teacher conceptions of instruction" (p. 266). The result is that language and writing instruction remain "highly problematic," as teachers enter "the often-bewildering complexity" of their first jobs (McCann, Johannessen, & Ricca, 2005). Because of their marginal and often neglectful preparation, teachers are frequently forced to formulate their grammar and writing instruction on curricular support materials, such as "grammar and composition textbooks and the preparation materials that accompany high-stakes assessments" in an effort to mitigate and assuage the effects of their non-existent pedagogical

writing and grammar preparation (Smagorinsky, Wilson, & Moore, 2011, p. 266). I know I for one can attest first hand to this practice as a young English teacher myself, as I received very little preparation for the teaching of language, grammar and mechanics, and writing in my teacher preparation program and turned to a variety of sources resulting in the amalgam approach that I developed myself in order to provide grammar, mechanics, and writing instruction to my students.

Cheville, et al., (2006) posit that the major, more contemporary reason teachers have continued with TSG approaches in to the new century is the high-stakes assessments so predominant to the lives and mindsets of those teaching in the No Child Left Behind era. They contend that the current high stakes tests (those prior to the coming Common Core era consortium assessments which will begin in the 2014-2015 school year; I will detail more on this topic later) place a "high emphasis on the standard of correctness that TSG is designed to provide," which along with "the desire for the expedient processing of student essays by human scorers" (Hillocks, 2002) only serve to reinforce the focus on "surface-level errors" typically associated with "grammar" and TSG. Because of the ease in which "surface level" grammar errors can be assessed in multiple choice, machine-scored tests, these types of assessment items have predominated many of the NCLB high-stakes ELA assessments over the past decade and a half; consequently, an emphasis on the standard of correctness has been reinforced to teachers by a large extent because of the practice. The ensuing question that many in the education field find themselves asking is: "Are we assessing what we value or are we merely valuing what we can easily assess?" Next, I will examine Georgia's high stakes assessments (the CRCT and EOCT) as examples in an effort to explore this topic in more depth and detail.

TSG and Georgia's High Stakes Tests

In looking at the Georgia Department of Education's (GADoE) supporting documents for the Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT), it is readily apparent to me and, in all likelihood, to a great many teachers that the CRCT places a "high emphasis on the standard of correctness" which aligns with the instructional emphases present in the Traditional School Grammar instructional approach. Take for example the 4th grade English/Language Arts Grammar/Sentence Construction domain description as found on the GADoE website for CRCT content descriptions. Under the (2012) ELA Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) link, the following description can be found:

> Grammar and Sentence Construction refers to a student's skill in forming, using, and explaining various structures in Standard English grammar and usage. This domain also refers to a student's control over language conventions governing capitalization, commas, quotation marks, and spelling. This domain also refers to a student's skill in identifying and analyzing sentence patterns, including problematic structures such as sentence fragments and run-ons. Finally, the domain refers to a student's command over precise word choice to convey ideas and identify contexts that require formal English (Georgia Department of Education, State School Superintendent, p. 8).

This shaping definition results in a test given to students where, according to the 2013 Georgia Department of Education "Grade 4 CRCT Study Guide" students, parents, and teachers are given the following guidelines and directives about being prepared for the CRCT Assessment:

> Within the Grammar/Sentence Construction domain, students understand and control the rules of the English language to use correct capitalization and punctuation. They can spell

> grade-level words correctly and can correctly use frequently confused words (e.g., to, too, two). Students are able to use complete sentences, recognizing and correcting fragments and run-ons. They are able to use commas before a coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence, and use commas and quotations to mark direct speech. Additionally, students are able to use relative pronouns and adverbs as well as form and use prepositional phrases. Finally, students are able to use precise language to communicate ideas. (Georgia Department of Education, p. 27)

Consequently, the CRCT ELA Assessments in the language, conventions, and grammar domains have generally been designed and administered to students very much in the spirit of the following 4th grade ELA CRCT practice assessment excerpt (2002) found on Cobb County School District's website:

> 15. Which sentence below is written correctly?
>
> A. Cheetahs can run more faster than all animals.
> B. Cheetahs can run more fast than all animals.
> C. Cheetahs can run fast to all animals.
> D. Cheetahs can run the fastest of all animals.
>
> 16. Which correction should be made to the sentence below?
>
> The third step is to spread the tomato sauce even on the dough.
>
> A. change step to steps
> B. change even to evenly
> C. take out the word sauce
> D. change is to are
>
> 17. What change should be made to the sentence below?
>
> There is twelve cookies in a dozen.
> A. change There to Their
> B. change is to are
> C. change cookies to cookie
> D. change a dozen to an dozen

18. How should the underlined phrase in the sentence below be corrected?

The students notebook fell off her desk and onto the floor.

A. The students's notebook
B. The students' notebook
C. The student's notebook
D. The students notebook's (Riverside Publishing Company, p. 4)

Similarly, in examining the Georgia End of Course Test (EOCT) for Ninth Grade Literature and Composition, the same sort of philosophical and pedagogical underpinnings are present in the secondary high stakes assessment realm as well. The *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT Study Guide* (2012) provides the following guidance for students, parents, and teachers preparing for Content Domain IV: Language on the EOCT exam, the results of which comprise 20% of every student's 9th grade English grade and are also tied to graduation requirements for students as well:

> Content Domain IV focuses on your ability to recognize and use Standard American English correctly. Questions for this content domain will ask you to revise text in order to clarify meaning, add variety and interest. Questions will also ask you to revise structure based on grammar and usage. Other questions will require you to correct errors in capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. (p. 90)

In order for students to fulfill the standard of adequately demonstrating an "understanding of Standard English grammar and usage," they must, according to the 2012 *Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT Study Guide*, "Identify and correct the grammatical errors in a sentence or part of a passage." The following list identifies "some of the topics you may see on the Ninth Grade Literature and Composition EOCT":

Subject-verb agreement; Sentence structure (inappropriate fragments and run-ons);Verbs (correct tense, shifts in verb tense, inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood, and use of irregular verbs); Precise word choice; Homonyms; Double-negatives/comparisons; Pronouns and pronoun-antecedent agreement(including inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person and vague pronouns; i.e., ones with unclear or ambiguous antecedents); Commonly confused words/misused words; Placement of modifiers(phrases and clauses within a sentence, recognizing and correcting misplaced and dangling modifiers); Parallel structure; Use of phrases and clauses to convey meaning and add variety and interest to writing or presentations." (p. 91)

Consequently, a student's performance in their ninth grade ELA classes and, therefore, a teacher's efficacy as an instructional agent might be said to hinge upon students successfully navigating questions such as the following EOCT sample questions:

1. What is the correct way to write this sentence?

   Teresa studies for an hour, outlined her paper, and then taking a break.

A. Teresa studied for an hour, outlined her paper, and then had taking a break.
B. Teresa studied for an hour, outlined her paper, and then takes a break.
C. Teresa studied for an hour, outlined her paper, and then took a break.
D. Teresa studied for an hour, outlined her paper, and then will take a break.

2. Which sentence displays correct parallel structure?

A. Growing the tomatoes required digging, weeding, and water.
B. He told us which route to take and the route that should be avoided at all costs.
C. The coach smiled at her, invited her to join the drill, and then she blew the whistle.
D. High-tech sports fabrics wick moisture away, are color fast, and require no ironing.

3. In which sentence is the phrase "on the porch" used as an adjective?

A. On the porch is my favorite place to be.
B. The children played on the porch.
C. The dog on the porch scared me.
D. I waited for him on the porch.

4. In which sentence is the underlined group of words a dependent clause?
A. The used car still ran well because its owner maintained it carefully.
B. Because the used car still ran well, the price was rather high.
C. The used car still ran well, but the paint was fading badly.
D. A used car still running well is a rarity.

With test items such as these, one can easily see how a teacher might deduce the importance of implementing a Traditional School Grammar (TSG) and "doctrine of correctness" approach in their classroom in an effort to help prepare students for the high stakes exam that they will face which is comprised of numerous of discrete, decontextualized questions targeting their declarative grammar knowledge and "correctness." With this assessment methodology driving the accountability measures for teachers, it is no mystery as to why TSG instructional approaches have persisted in classrooms despite the reams of research warning against its "negligible" and possibly even "deleterious" effects. It seems quite reasonable that a number of teachers are feeling pressured to implement TSG in an effort to help their students perform on high stakes tests, not to improve as writers, and this pressure may be a byproduct of the No Child Left Behind testing and accountability movement rather than teachers making sound, autonomous pedagogical choices to drive improvement for their students.

However, despite the underlying logic of the tactical approach used by many teachers to implement a TSG approach to help students prepare for high-stakes assessments such as the CRCT and EOCT, one must question whether this approach is, in truth, a sound approach. Even in the NCLB era of high stakes assessments predicated to a large extent on students' declarative grammatical knowledge, are there better, more hybrid approaches for teachers to take in preparing their students for the test while also actually helping students to improve as writers?

In the post-Hillocks (1986) world, there are a number of approaches that have emerged in the lurch. Alternative approaches such as "Structural Grammars, Transformational-Generative

Grammar, Columbia School Linguistics, and Systemic Functional Linguistics" as well as Sentence Combining and other progressive approaches have all become known and implemented in classrooms across the country in various degrees of ubiquity and fidelity (Smith and Wilhelm, 2007, p. 4). Researchers, authors, and teacher leaders have emerged on the antithetical side of the TSG grammar instructional continuum. People such as Constance Weaver (1979), Lucy Calkins (1986), and Nancie Atwell (1987) have introduced instructional approaches far removed from the practices of TSG heavily predicated on cognitive and constructionist principles of learning through "mini-lessons" that emphasize "the best ways to teach the grammatical concepts needed for revision and sentence editing" (Weaver, 1996, p. 150). Calkins (2013) and her K-8 *Units of Study* have become a staple of elementary school writing curriculum founded upon the premise that teachers must be "kid watchers" (Goodman, 1978) in order to deliver effective instruction and that every student must participate in mini-lessons, conferences, and small-group work on a daily basis in order to effectively learn grammar and improve as writers. Weaver has spent the better part of the last 30 years making the case for indirect rather than direct instruction, and counsels teachers "not to teach grammar as complete description of the structure of English," but instead to "focus instructional attention on those aspects of grammar that are most critical in helping student punctuate sentences conventionally" (Weaver, 1996, p. 181). In fact, Weaver dogmatically and resoundingly declares to all English teachers that "grammar in context is the solution," and that English teachers should "teach only the concepts that are critically needed for editing writing," while proclaiming that these concepts and terms should be taught "through mini-lessons and conferences while helping students edit" (National Council of Teachers of English, 2005).

There is even a seething debate in teaching circles as to what exactly constitutes "context." For example, Anderson (2005) notes that "experts tell us to teach grammar and mechanics in context;" consequently, a great many teachers "have become paranoid about teaching grammar in context" because they mistakenly interpret "context" to exclusively mean "using whole texts only" (p. 12). He qualifies "context" as being "about meaning," explaining that "any chunk of meaning is a context" (p. 11). He contends that teachers should not be limited to entire essays only, and, in fact, encourages teachers to "zoom into the sentence level, or the paragraph level, and zoom back out to the essay level or beyond" (p. 11). Yet despite all of this contrasting certainty and contradictory confusion, a great many teachers have persisted with teaching grammar to students for decades in a vast myriad of ways in English classrooms across the country without being sure as to why they have done so or how to best do so. And I cannot help but wonder about the lingering consequences of this practice.

Kollin and Hancock (2005) argue that the dogmatic grammar war between the prescriptive practices of TSG and the constructionist-centered, "context-only" approaches of those such as Weaver has had repercussions on more than just the world of U.S. K-12 curriculum and instruction. They also note the compounding effect this conundrum has had on teacher education in this country as well, proclaiming that:

> The strides that linguistics has made during the past several decades has almost completely eluded the prospective English teacher. Rarely does an English or education major's program call for more than one or two courses having to do with language – possibly a class that includes the history of English and/or an introduction to linguistics. But many teacher-training programs certify secondary English teachers without the students having had a single course in modern grammar. And it's certainly possible that

> these new teachers had little or no grammar instruction in their own middle-school and high-school experiences. (p. 19)

In my experience it is these statements, and many others like it, that have served as both conversation starting and finishing points for discussions revolving around the subject of the teaching of grammar in school. And there are reams of research detailing the difficulties of new teachers to teach the language and writing domains of English as a subject: (Tremmel, 2001; Smagorinsky, Cook, Johnson, 2003; Smagorinsky, Wright, Augistine, O'Donnell-Allen, & Kopnak, 2007; Smagorinsky, 2010; Smagorinsky, Wilson, & Moore, 2011). Yet, despite Hillocks' (2006) and others' definitive and conclusive statements regarding grammar instruction and its "deleterious" effect on students, both the instruction of grammar and the debate over the efficacy of the instruction of grammar rages on today. What is a teacher to do?

The Grammar Instruction Conundrum

Teachers today find themselves facing the grammar instruction conundrum: Should I provide direct, prescriptive grammar and mechanics instruction in my class, and if so, should I take a more traditional (TSG) approach or should I look for an alternative approach (such as that advocated Weaver and others) solely focused on helping student improve as writers only within the context of their writing without the use of the practices of TSG and direct instruction? Adjacent to this core question, there are ancillary questions that teachers face, such as: Is grammar, in of itself, an academic subject with intrinsic value that students should learn or is grammar's only value in the improvement of a student's academic writing? How do I conduct "mini-conferences" and "context-only lessons" when I see 150 or more students everyday as a secondary English teacher? And what curricular materials should I use to teach? To make things all the more confusing, if the teaching of grammar is regarded somewhere between being, at best,

mildly effective to at worst outright harmful and "deleterious" to students, one cannot help but ask why are grammar instruction and grammar instructional resources and materials are so ubiquitous today. Take for example the wealth of grammar instructional books available for purchase: upon entering the search term "grammar instruction books" on Amazon.com, I was greeted with 1,537 results with philosophical approaches and titles running the gamut, varying from *Breaking the Rules: Liberating Writers Through Innovative Grammar Instruction* by Edgar H. Schuster (2003) to *Grammar By Diagram: Understanding English Grammar Through Traditional Sentence Diagraming* by Cindy L. Vitto (2006). Obviously, given the huge and constantly proliferating volume of instructional and pedagogical resources available, there are large cadres of English language academics ardently advocating for their positions on extreme ends of the grammatical continuum.

For example, illustrative of those residing on the intrinsic value of grammar as an academic subject, TSG extreme end of the continuum is "The Sentence Structure Dilemma," an opinion-editorial article written by Cumberland County College Professor Walter H. Johnson in the January, 2006 *English Journal* extolling the virtues of his department's policy, which, in his opinion, "holds students accountable for total control over the rules that govern sentence structure" (p. 14). According to Johnson, the policy mandates that "any student paragraph or essay that contains one sentence error (comma splice, fused-sentence, or fragment) cannot receive a grade higher than a C; two such errors result in a D; and three or more result in an automatic F" (p. 14). It is his contention that the department's policy hinges upon the theory that "the sentence unit is the foundation upon which the paragraph and, subsequently, the entire essay are built, and we all acknowledge the consequences of a weak foundation" (p. 14). Johnson concludes by exclaiming that "sentence structure rules cannot be so easily modified…And when

a student's grade for a paragraph or an essay can be drastically lowered because of a one-sentence error, then that error needs to have universal agreement," thereby quite ironically and resoundingly calling for the dogmatic and universal acceptance of grammar rules while possibly breaking one himself by beginning his last sentence with the word "And" (p. 15). Clearly, Johnson and others such as "language correctness" advocates William Safire and James Kirkpatrick ardently believe in the "standard of correctness" and its importance in society. Representative of the cadre on the other end of the spectrum are folks such as Edgar H. Schuster and his 2003 book entitled *Breaking the Rules: Liberating Writers through Innovative Grammar Instruction*. In his introduction he preaches the debunking, disavowing, breaking, and outright disregarding of a whole "host of rules that have accrued through the centuries since the first grammars of English were written and that are now so essential a part of school" (xii). He refers to these rules as "mythrules," decrying that they are rules "that no one—other than a handful of pop-grammarians and hardened purists who look for their authority somewhere in the sky rather than here on earth" must "obediently, mindlessly, and submissively follow" (xii). Without question, there are intelligent and edified academics passionately and zealously shouting from their respective grammarian bully pulpits on both extreme sides of the grammar instructional continuum. For many English teachers, this opaque dichotomy can be confusing, flummoxing, and disarming, thereby leaving many quite unsure as to what or how to teach in terms of grammar, or if to teach it at all.

In this quagmire of uncertainty and confusion, I resided as a young and evolving teacher during my decade-long tenure as a high school English teacher from 2002 through 2012 across four different states, and as I noted in the numerous previously cited studies regarding the struggles of neophyte teachers and language and grammar instruction, I am quite certain that I

was not and am not alone in a lack of certitude surrounding grammar instruction. In this uncertainty there is also a vast multitude of questions many teachers find themselves with, such as: should "grammar" be taught? If so, how? What exactly should I teach? How often and for how long? Does grammar instruction actually help my student improve as writers? And many more. Therefore, the grammar conundrum doggedly persists.

In order to explore the heart of these questions, I wanted to investigate why grammar instruction had "failed" in the years past. Noguchi (1991) discusses logical causes as to "why grammar instruction has generally proved ineffective in improving writing." He delineates three possible causes: (1) Grammar is not adequately learned; (2) Grammar is not transferred to writing situations; (3) Grammar is not transferrable to writing situations (p. 4). Here in the heart of the grammar conundrum one must examine the underlying purpose and value in the teaching of grammar: Is it to edify students about the language itself, and, consequently, does the teaching of grammar possess intrinsic value, or is the teaching of grammar more pragmatic and strategic in nature in that its major purpose is to help students improve as writers, thereby tying its value to its efficacy in doing so?

Noguchi (1991) posits that while grammar pedagogy and instruction researchers "frequently take pains to verify that grammar instruction took place," they often fail in ascertaining "whether the instruction was successful and, just as important whether it was actually implemented" (p. 7-8). Noguchi terms this issue a "problem of non-application," whereby grammar instruction is afflicted not just as a "problem of knowledge of grammar" but also as a problem "afflicting all knowledge related to writing" (p. 8). For if the problem is that grammar, as a body of knowledge, cannot be studied and learned, then grammar instruction in rendered moot and absolutely by definition guaranteed to fail at the outset. But if the problem is

that of transference of knowledge into application in writing, then there may be hope for grammar instruction yet, for it is this central question that must shift for educators in the teaching of grammar.

While there is without question a group of traditionalist, such as the aforementioned Walter Johnson, William Safire, and James Kirpatrick who value the study of grammar as an academic subject in of itself and believe that, thustly, it holds intrinsic value, there does seem to be an ever-expanding contemporary majority of educators who believe that the value of grammar instruction is beholden to its value in helping students improve as writers. Smith and Wilhelm (2007) call for us to:

> "recognize that helping our students write more and correctly is important. It's important for all of us who stake our identities and credibility on what we write. It's important for students taking high-stakes tests. It's important on the job. It's important to getting a hearing in a public forum" (p.4).

Consequently, if the guiding aim for the teachers is to help students improve as writers, then the question becomes: "Does the teaching of grammar have the potential to help students improve as writers?"

Connection Between Grammar Instruction and Writing Improvement

Writing assessment rubrics, and, consequently, writing instruction, are often sub-divided into three components: content, organization, and style. This practice is pervasive and ubiquitous in education today. For example, as a high school English teacher in Washington state, we (the ELA teachers in school districts across the state) constantly referred to the state writing assessment rubric commonly known as the "COS Rubric" (Content, Organization, and Style), and students were and still are given point sub-totals in those three domains on the state

writing assessments that serve to comprise the holistic score. A worthy exploration and discussion then is to consider how grammar instruction might connect to and potentially help students improve in each of these three sub-domains of writing assessment respectively.

Grammar Instruction and Content/Ideas

While one may argue that when talking about the content of writing, one cannot separate the content of writing from its form, generally speaking most teachers would agree that grammar instruction is not equipped for or designed to help students improve the content and ideas aspect of their writing. That would not be its intended purpose, and consequently, the "knowledge of sentence structure can offer no help if writers have little, no, or inappropriate content to convey" (Noguchi, 1991, p. 9). Needless to say, if a teacher is striving to improve their students' content and ideas, grammar instruction is not the place to start. If a student is devoid of any substantive ideas or does not have anything to say, no amount of grammatical or syntactic knowledge will help in the generation of ideas and content.

Grammar Instruction and Organization

The second domain of writing to consider is that of organization. Might grammar instruction help students improve their writing in terms of organization? Given that grammar is often construed to be about the "order of things" in sentences, one might argue that grammar instruction can help students improve in terms of organizing their writing. Noguchi (1991) poses the following key question: "Does the arrangement or organization of sentences contribute to the arrangement or organization of the essay?" (p. 10). In essence, this question is asking if an essay can become the sum of its parts (sentences): For if every sentence in an essay is correctly and effectively organized, then one might logically conclude that an essay comprised solely of correctly and effectively organized sentences would score well in terms of organization. This

logic would be tragically flawed though, for as Noguchi explains, "Although a knowledge of formal grammar enlightens students on how forms are organized inside a sentence, it will not shed light on how one sentence is sequenced with respect to another and still another in a paragraph or essay" (p. 10). Consequently, much like an athlete might be highly skilled at a number of individual skill drills, this does not in any way mean they are highly effective in their respective sports come game time. For example, take a basketball player that is a highly skilled ball-handler who can adroitly spin multiple balls on his/her finger and can expeditiously and impressively dribble around the back between the legs, etc: While impressive in its own right, this skill set does not in any way mean that they are or are not a highly effective basketball player within the context of the game as a whole. It is the athlete's performance taken in whole within the context of the game that determines their level of efficacy. Often, the stand-alone, de-contextualized "part" of something may not translate effectively or at all to the contextualized "whole;" therefore, "we should not—and cannot—claim that a knowledge of the structure of sentences enhances a knowledge of the structure of essays" (p. 10). Just because a student may effectively organize individual sentences does not in any way mean that they are necessarily an effective writer in terms of organization, holistically.

Grammar Instruction and Style/Craft

In order to begin this discussion one must first explore the definition of "style" in connection to writing. The term "style" conjures up very different interpretations and connotations in writing as opposed to say music or fashion or the culinary arts. While Anderson (2005) uses the term "craft" when writing about this concept, Noguchi (1991) explains that style in writing can be defined "broadly" to include "characteristic or recurrent features," comprising "not only syntactic and morphological forms but also salient features of punctuation and

spelling" (p. 11). Anderson (2005) exclaims: "One principle that undergirds my thinking about grammar and mechanics is that they are inherently linked to craft" (p. 10). He continues that it is the "very idea of focusing on craft instead of correctness that so revolutionized my teaching of grammar and mechanics" (p. 10). Accordingly, the domain of writing that potentially holds the most promise for seeing improved student performance in concert with effective grammar and mechanics instruction is that of style (or craft). Style typically is associated with form. It is an aspect of writing that can be deliberately studied and analyzed by both teachers and students, both in terms of other writers and in reflection of one's own writing, and, as Noguchi (1991) explains, "the style of sentences can and does contribute significantly to the overall style of an essay" (p. 11).

There are many out there that contend that when compared to content/ideas and organization, style is the least important of three sub-domains of writing. Though this notion may hold some weight, I do believe that this is an overly simplistic, rudimentary, and specious conclusion. First, style is often myopically and incorrectly viewed as a kind of embellishment in that writers "add to sentences." Thinking along these lines imbues the notion that style is a cosmetic "addition" which can be absent or present from writing. This is not the case. Every single piece of writing, by definition because it is alive and extent on the page, has style. It is this "additive" line of thinking that leads to the "untenable conclusion" that there exists a 'styleless' way of writing or that there exists a way of writing that is completely devoid of or is "neutral" in terms of style. This conclusion is patently false. Some may want to mitigate and diminunize the importance of style when compared to content and organization in terms of writing, but this is problematic because style is, in fact, just as pervasive, "global," and "all-encompassing" as organization and content. Newman (1996) contends that while "the role of

form may not be consciously noticed," it is "of the utmost importance to writers and readers; for, of such stylistic matter are constellations of texts formed in the universe of discourse" (p. 33). As a result, style should not be given short shrift in terms of weight or instruction when seeking to help students improve as writers.

The next endemic problem within style and its connection to writing is that style is implicitly interwoven within both content and organization, and it synergistically interacts with both. When examining writing, style is a product of diction or words chosen by the author, which one might argue is "content," combined with the syntax, order, and sequencing of the words. The diction indelibly intertwines with the way that an author chooses to organize, structure, and punctuate his or her diction choices which results in style. Consequently, when conversing about style in writing, an author's style is the synergistic union of these elements in an animating concert on the page, and one element cannot be removed from the other. This axiomatic union results in a difficult truth that style is not something completely isolated from content and organization; consequently, Noguchi (1991) and many others like him make the argument that classroom writing instruction and teachers in general have probably "given too little attention to the interaction of style with content and organization" (p. 13). Weaver (1996) calls for teachers to "attend particularly to those aspects of grammar that are most critical in helping students punctuate sentences correctly," while suggesting that "a few basic grammatical concepts may be taught in separate language lessons, such lessons should be taught and reinforced as students are revising and editing their writing" (p. 181). Anderson (2005) rhetorically asks: "Do we want students to identify and correct errors, or do we want them to know how to use the power of punctuation to create a message that is clear and beautiful?" He answers "both, of course" (p. 10). Berger (2001) advocates an approach that "offers a purposeful

progression through a variety of sentence constructions" (p. 44). She cites a key question that continues to guide her instructional practice to this day: "How can I improve students' punctuation to expand their sentence repertoire?" She extolls the efficacy and importance of "systematic grammar and usage instruction *connected* (italics are in original source) to what students are reading and writing" and adamantly contends that "there is a place—a valuable place—for classroom lessons on sentence variation and punctuation" (p. 48). Finally, she decrees that:

> Students become better editors of their own writing and stronger critics of others' writing when they are exposed to a steady diet of sentence possibilities, explicit instruction, in the punctuation of those sentence patterns, and orchestrated practice of those patterns. This type of systematic instruction that is tied to their own writing helps students write better (p. 49).

Accordingly, a grammar and mechanics instructional approach that focuses in a systematic, targeted, contextualized, and strategic way on style (or craft), in expanding students "sentence repertoires," and on the way that students write in and for different situations and social contexts, is a more effective and conducive way for a teacher to approach grammar instruction as opposed to the standard-of-correctness-TSG practices so often implemented by teachers in the classrooms of yesterday and today. These are the "deluge of red-ink," TSG teachers we are all probably very familiar from our own childhood experiences with who attack student writing submissions with a "search and destroy mentality" looking for mechanical and grammatical errors while armed with their trusty red pens and their seek-and-destroy-all grammar-errors mentalities. On the other end of the spectrum exists an equally staunch cadre of anti-grammar teachers whose perspective on their students' writing is that grammar and

mechanical errors are "low-level errors" which have little effect of the content and message that the writer is trying to express. Quite frequently these are the teachers that forgo any kind of formal grammar and mechanics instruction based on their belief that "as students increase their reading and writing experience, they will correct all their errors on their own" (Nogushi, 1991, p. 13).

It is in the middle of this binary, dichotomous thinking that many non-extremists (such as myself) ask if there might be a middle ground. For as Noguchi contends: "What is needed are not extreme positions but rather a middle ground where students can learn about the detection, consequences, and elimination of the unconventional features without diminishing their desire to write" (p.14). Newman (1996) exclaims that "the gatekeeping role of error and other stylistic demands is what makes basic writing a legitimate discipline, different from other forms of writing instruction (p. 35). In order to do so, we must, as teachers, "look at the meaning which the form expresses," not as being "correct or incorrect," in any absolute or universal sense but rather assess students' work in terms of its "felicity of the information provided in the text about its writer or speaker's social identity" (p. 35). By viewing "correct use of form" as being "one that tells readers or listeners the information the writer or speaker wishes to convey regarding social and intertextual relations," the conception of "correctness" shifts to being "based upon accuracy" and the "assertion that the information given by the formal features of the text truthfully (or not) portrays the identity of the author and the genre of the text" (p. 34). This paradigm shift in conception of correctness towards being one of accuracy and felicity to the identify portrayed and the genre of text constructed by the author means that as teachers we must help our students ascertain the knowledge, skill sets, and agency needed to write in a variety of situationally appropriate (to the social context) styles while not detracting from or usurping

completely the creative and enjoyable aspects intrinsically connected to the writing and expression process as human beings.

In his chapter entitled "Some Basic Sociolinguistic Concepts," Michael Stubbs (2002) explains that "within standard English—and any other dialect, of course--there is stylistic variation according to social context;" therefore, "standard English has formal and informal styles in both writing and speech" (p. 76). Stubbs expounds on this concept by exemplifying that "If a pupil writes a letter to a prospective employer which is full of colloquiums and/or nonstandard forms, he will have to be warned of the conventions of English usage" (p. 75). It is this premise which I find to be very much in alignment with my own thinking, as I do not ascribe to, believe in, or want to students to be taught English language arts in a manner beholden to the "doctrine of correctness," but instead, believe, as Stubbs illustrates, that to hold the view "that someone's English is 'wrong' is to make not a linguistic, but a sociolinguistic judgment" (p. 77). In other words the way that a student speaks and/or writes is not "correct" or "incorrect" in any absolute or universal sense, but students must be taught and equipped with the linguistical agency to successfully present themselves in the most advantageous light for the vast myriad of sociolinguistic settings they will find themselves in. Helping students acquire and master a number of syntactic structures is essential in helping to arm and equip them with toolkits to be informed and successful in expressing and presenting themselves in writing in whatever social occasion they may find themselves.

As Newman (1996) articulately asserts, helping students master basic syntactic writing structures is "a form of acculturation into novel forms of literacy," the object of which becomes even more than "changing grammar and improving style and organization, is focused on acquiring a new way of meaning" (p. 36). Consequently, students must be empowered students

with the ability to "stylize" themselves as writers pertinent to the social situation they are writing in and for. Teachers today more than ever before must aim to equip students to with the ability to comport themselves effectively in a variety of situations from formal and professional settings to academic discourse to very informal and familial dialog they may engage in with close friends and family. Students must possess not only the desire to and knowledge of when to write in a professional style and manner and when to write with an academic style and voice and when to feel free to write in an informal and colloquial style (such as text messages, Tweets, blogs, Facebook, etc.), but they must also possess the knowledge and foundational skills-sets needed to effectively execute different styles of writing appropriate and conducive to the respective social situation. They must, as Berger (2001) alluded to, possess the "sentence repertoires" needed to be successful in writing for whatever the social situation they find themselves in.

Consequently, because of the rapidly evolving society of today with its increased globalization, social media explosion, and multifarious, multi-modal forums of communications, teachers must find "middle ground" in their instructional approaches and eschew the extreme ends of the aforementioned continuum. Too much teacher emphasis on grammar and conventions may very well produce the "deleterious" effect on students and their ability and affective condition towards writing previously indicated by Hillocks in his 1986 study, while too little attention to grammar and mechanics instruction may fail to equip students with the requisite knowledge base and agency to effectively write in a situationally appropriately manner. This neglect by the teacher may have a disastrous and crippling effect on the students and their academic and professional futures similar to or possibly even worse than the "deleterious" effect noted by Hillocks caused by teacher over-emphasis on grammar and mechanics.

There are a multitude of reasons as to what accounts for and what comprises the substantive differences between the consensus among researchers that teaching grammar is counter-productive and the on-going belief that the teaching of grammar is necessary, such as high-stakes testing, teacher ignorance, dogmatic beliefs, and more, all of which results in an overall lack of clarity on the issue. It is within this space, devoid of clarity and certitude, that many teachers choose to teacher grammar how they see fit, including a great many who still cling to Traditional School Grammar approaches despite reams of research definitely declaring the inefficacy of doing so. Noguchi (1991) contends, "that the study of grammar can play a more productive role in writing improvement," and that teachers must find a "middle ground" for instructional practices when it comes to grammar and mechanics instruction and style in writing. Scholars such as Hillocks, Smagorinsky, Braddock, Smith and Wilhelm, Noguchi, and countless others caution us that, "Paradoxically, maximizing the benefits of grammar instruction to writing requires teaching less, not more, of grammar," thereby "making grammar instruction both less expansive and more cost-efficient," which should ultimately carve out more time for the teacher to "create more time for other kinds of writing instruction" (p. 16).

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework Underlying My Instructional Approach

With the previously discussed grammar instruction conundrum in mind, the instructional approach I developed and continually tweaked and refined over ten years is a hybrid, "middle-ground" approach, combining limited elements of TSG with strains of the "context-only" approach insisted upon by the likes of Atwell (1987), Weaver (1996), and others. After reviewing a large amount of the contemporary literature available on the subject, I have come to the realization that theoretical and conceptual framework underlying my grammar and mechanics instructional approach is a "middle ground" approach more closely aligned with those advocated

for by Noguchi (1991), Newman (1996), Berger (2001), Anderson (2005), and Smith and Wilhelm (2007). My approach eschews the extreme ends of the continuum and seems to blend "a minimalist approach" in terms of teaching TSG grammatical terms and prescriptive direct instruction along with attempting to actively infuse the direct instruction with the "context" of students' writing in an effort to move students from declarative to procedural grammar and mechanics knowledge. It is a systematic approach designed to expand students "sentence repertoires," thereby equipping them with the syntactic agency to stylize themselves as writers in in the large variety of contexts they will find themselves writing in and for. It is also an approach that, in terms of pedagogical theory, is heavily undergirded by formative instructional practices such as those advocated for by Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2001), Hattie (2009), and Stiggins and Chappuis (2007) designed to generate systematic feedback to students and student meta-cognition.

The approach's genesis began early in my teaching career as I started to think about all the essays I was grading with the same repetitive errors I was marking over and over again. I sought to synthesize the problems that were the most prominent, problematic, and prevalent in my students' papers. And the most glaring, over-arching problem, in my estimation, was the fundamental lack of an understanding and meta-awareness within my students about how to effectively write with a variety of syntactic structures which I felt was the main culprit in hindering the progression of my student towards "syntactic maturity", a term defined and investigated by (O'Donnell, Griffin, & Norris, 1967; O'Donnell, 1976; Hunt, 1970) and others. Its emphasis on helping students develop into more syntactic aware, fluent, and ultimately mature writers is one of the main distinguishing features of the instructional approach I developed.

Syntactic Awareness, Development, and Maturity

Hunt (1970) researched the concepts of “syntactic development” and “syntactic maturity” and believed that children developed as they aged not just in terms of vocabulary but in syntax as well. He posited that if a researcher were to know the normal stages of syntactic development, it would have practical, diagnostic, and curriculum consequences, and he developed the argument that one might even be able to design a grammar instructional approach curriculum that affords teachers the "means of hastening normal development" and that also "assures normal development for a larger proportion of children than now achieve it" (1). Hunt surmised that “clauses per T-Unit dramatically increase with syntactic maturity,” that “clause length also increases markedly with maturity,” and that "older writers, especially skilled adults, used a much larger number of sentence-combining, sentence-embedding, transformations per T-unit and per clause” (p. 5-8). He concluded his analysis by stating that "there is evidence to believe that throughout the school years, from kindergarten to graduation, children learn to use a larger and larger number of sentence-combining transformations per main clause in their writing” and that “skilled adults carry the same tendency still further" (9). It is the research of Hunt, O’Donnell, and others like them that establishes the foundation of the belief that there is a natural level of syntactic development and that there is a more syntactically “mature” way for human beings to write. Consequently, this also results in the premise that teachers might strive to seek ways to expedite student development towards “syntactic maturity” through their instructional approaches.

Given this premise, I noted with my students early in my career, much like Shaughnessy (1997) when she talks about the students she encountered in her Basic Writing course in New York City Colleges in the 1970’s, that in terms of punctuation, my students primarily only used

the "three most common marks: the period, the comma, and the capital" (17). Killgallon and Killgallon (2012) rhetorically ask their intended student audience in their "Student Worktext": "You already know how to use periods, commas, and question marks, but what about dashes, colons, and semi-colons?" (p. 112). Afterwards, they introduce a series of actives for students designed to help students "learn and practice how authors use dashes and semicolons and colons, and use them in your own writing" (112). In similar fashion, I also noted in my own experiences as a teacher, just as Killgallon & Killgallon (2012) and Shaughnessy (1997) did in theirs, that semi-colons and colons "rarely were used," quotations, underling, and italics were "often used incorrectly," and that hyphens, dashes, parenthesis, ellipsis dots, and brackets "were almost never used" by my students (Shaughnessy, 1997, p. 17); therefore, I knew that much like the students that Shaughnessy wrote about in her classes, my students were also limited to generally only using commas and periods and were severely limited in the manner in which they could express themselves via the written word because they lacked the fundamental syntactic "tool kits" to do so. And, as Shaughnessy decreed: "This means, of course, that the basic writer can say little through punctuation, whereas the experienced writer with a command of these slight notations, adds both meaning and flexibility to his sentences" because "parentheses and dashes, for example, help a writer overcome the linearity of sentences; the colon offers an economical way of presenting a series," and "punctuation provides a map for one who must otherwise drive blindly past the by-ways, intersections, and detours of a writer's thought" (p. 17).

Pedagogy and Connected Research Underlying the Instructional Approach

Consequently, in an effort to expand my student's syntactic awareness, fluency, and maturity and ultimately help them improve as writers, over the course of the last ten years I developed a comprehensive instructional approach that heavily emphasizes student

metacognition, feedback, and formative instruction techniques that includes the following distinguishing pedagogical components:

1. Pre-Assessments that are to be used for diagnostic purposes.
2. Monitoring and Meta-cognition Process: An individualized tracking, reflection, and goal setting process for every student which is designed to systematically stimulate student meta-cognition and provide consistent, timely, and constructive feedback that engenders meta-awareness for both teacher and, more importantly, each individual student on the grammar, mechanics, and writing.
3. An Instructional Framework containing the lessons that provide opportunities for teachers to instruct and guide students through "low-threat" opportunities to practice and prepare towards mastering syntactic structures (or sentence patterns). The ultimate intent is to help students move from acquiring declarative grammar, mechanics, and conventions knowledge to procedurally applying this newfound knowledge base (mastering of sentence patterns) in their writing. This framework will be explored in more depth and detail below.
4. Formative Assessments for each lesson
5. Unit Assessments (covers four lessons): These are recurrent assessments that are designed for progress monitoring and assessment of mastery for the four-lesson units
6. Mid-Point and Post-Assessments that can be used for both demonstration of mastery and growth measurement as well as diagnostically to inform instruction.

In the section that follows, I will expound on the instructional framework and its features, content, and pedagogy in more detail, as I believe these aspects to be important distinguishing features of the approach.

The Instructional Framework

Beginning with the 2009-2010 school years and in accordance with the structure presented in the Common Core Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010), I developed a separate 9/10th grade and 11/12th grade instructional framework. Within the two frameworks are a set of "lessons" focused on very specific syntactic skills. For example, in the 9/10th grade framework, the scope and sequencing of the lessons in the framework is:

1. Capitalization
2. Word Choice/ Homophones

3. Subject/Verb Identification & Agreement
4. Pronoun Case & Agreement
5. Quotations vs. Underlining/Italics;
6. Phrases;
7. Independent & Dependent Clauses;
8. Simple Sentences (independent Clauses)--with four (4) corresponding sentence patterns;
9. Comma & Semicolon Rules 1-5--with four (4) corresponding sentence patterns;
10. Comma & Semi-Colons Rules 6-10--with two (2) corresponding sentence patterns;
11. Colons- with two (2) corresponding sentence patterns;
12. Apostrophes;
13. Fragments & Run-ons;
14. Punctuation and Sentence Structures Review

For the 11/12th grade framework (which I often implemented with my Honors Tenth Grade English classes), the "lessons" included the following specific topics, scope, and sequencing:

1. Quotations vs. Underlining/Italics;
2. Independent & Dependent Clauses;
3. Phrases
4. Simple Sentences (independent Clauses)--with four (4) corresponding sentence patterns;
5. Comma & Semicolon Rules 1-5--with four (4) corresponding sentence patterns;
6. Comma & Semi-Colons Rules 6-10--with two (2) corresponding sentence patterns;
7. Fragments & Run-ons;
8. Colons- with two (2) corresponding sentence patterns;
9. Hyphens & Dashes--with three (3) corresponding dash sentence structures;
10. Subject/Verb Agreement;
11. Apostrophes;
12. Active/Passive Voice--with one (1) corresponding sentence structure;
13. Parallel Structure--with one (1) corresponding sentence structure.
14. Punctuation and Sentence Structures Review

Though each of these lessons contained identification and practice or declarative knowledge components, I also evolved with each passing year to increasingly emphasizing moving from declarative to procedural knowledge by progressing from introducing a rule with clear, simple definitions and examples as well as "counter-example," to preparation and practice exercises, to the application of the specific skill and/or syntactic structure within the students own writing. From there it was a matter of recursively reviewing those concepts and reminding students to

infuse and then normalize them in their writing, both in their formal academic writing and informal writing, thereby moving them towards procedural knowledge and expediting their development towards higher levels of syntactic maturity.

The following excerpt is provided as an example of the instructional framework, and it comes from lesson five of the 11/12th instructional framework. Within this framework students are given the "Rule" with clear, simple definitions and examples of the connected syntactic structure or sentence patterns as well as "counter-examples" to help provide a clear illustration of the concept, then practice exercises with the concept before moving to application of the concept into written practice whereby the knowledge moves from that of being declarative to procedural with the ultimate aim of the student internalizing and regularly incorporating these syntactic structures as a part of their "sentence repertoires" and writing toolkits:

C&S Rule8: Use a comma to separate conjunctive adverbs and transitional expressions that do not join independent clauses.
Conjunctive adverbs include: *however, therefore, and nevertheless.*
Typical transitional expressions include: *in fact, for instance, for example, and in addition.*

Examples *of "Lift-out" or "AA" Sentences- ("A's" are commas, "B's" are semi-colons)*

a. Tim, however, is very kind and caring.
b. Tennis, on the other hand, is a very individualistic sport.
c. In fact, we received a free month's service when charged us incorrectly.

*In "AA" sentences there is only ONE Independent Clause that is offset by commas within the sentence.

*Use a semicolon before conjunctive adverbs and transitional expressions between two independent clauses. Always use a comma after the conjunctive adverb or transitional expression, even when it is preceded by a semicolon. Examples:

Counter Examples *of "Joining Ind. Clauses or "BA" Sentences-*

a. The final exam was difficult; however, Mason earned a high score.
b. Austin is very kind; in fact, he volunteers at an animal hospital.
c. The Indianapolis Colts have had an awful season; nevertheless, people's hopes are very high for next year.

*In "BA" sentences there are TWO Independent clauses that are being joined; therefore, a semi-colon and a comma are necessary because of the TWO independent clauses that are being joined.

Practice Exercise

COMMA/SEMICOLON PRACTICE 7-CONJUNCTIVE ADVERBS, TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSIONS-(Rule #8-"BA" vs. "AA" Sentences

Directions: FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING BLANKS, PLEASE MARK "A" IF A COMMA IS REQUIRED, "B" IF A SEMI-COLON IS REQUIRED, "C" IF NO COMMA IS REQUIRED

1. Love is patient and kind ____ unfortunately ____ I get the hasty and brutal version.
2. I like to play Gears of War ____ however ___ Billy prefers to play Modern Warfare.
3. I am sure that Justin Bieber did what he was accused of ____ nevertheless____ I am still his biggest fan.
4. I think ____ therefore ____ that we should vote on the winner.
5. My dad never cries ____ however ____ my mom always does.

Application of the Skill

VI. Compound Sent Pattern #3-"BA" Sent Pattern

_____ __ ***however***__ _____.

Ind. Clause ***Punctuation*** ***Punctuation*** ***Ind. Clause***

6._____
_____

The guiding premise behind this process is that the students move from learning and practicing a specific syntactic skill to arriving at a point where they can apply and even begin to normalize a variety grammatically sound, syntactically "mature" sentence structures as a part of their emerging and developing sentence repertoires. Through extensive timely, specific, and corrective feedback, recursively reviewing the concepts, and by consistently and firmly requiring the students to use the different respective sentence structures in both formal and informal writing assignments, they are able to, with enough repetition, reach that point. Though my approach actually incorporates twenty-one syntactic structures, I only formally assess the

students on thirteen of them. Below are the thirteen syntactic structures (or sentence patterns) that students are assessed on for mastery as a central outcome of this approach:

I. Simple Sentence

_____.
Independent clause

1._____.

II. Simple Sentence with compound subject <u>and</u> compound verb

_____.
Independent clause

2._____.

III. Compound Sent Pattern #1

_____ __ _____.
Independent clause Punctuation Ind. Clause

3._____
_____.

IV. Compound Sent Pattern # 2

_____ __ _____ _____.
Ind. Clause Punctuation Conjunction Ind. Clause

4._____
_____.

V. Complex Sent Pattern #1

_____ ____ _____.
Dependent Clause Punctuation Ind. Clause

5._____
_____.

VI. Complex Sent Pattern #2

_____ _____.
Ind. Clause Dep. Clause

6._____
_____.

VII. Compound Sent Pattern #3-"BA" Sent Pattern

_____ __ however __ _____.
Ind. Clause Punctuation Punctuation Ind. Clause

7._____
_____.

VIII. Compound Sentence Pattern #4

_____ __ _____.
Ind. clause Punctuation (NOT semi-colon) Ind. Clause

8._____
_____.

IX. Sentence to Introduce a List

_____ __ _____.

Ind. Clause **Punctuation** **List**

9._____
_____.

X. Dash Sent Patterns-Write (2) Sentences (*of <u>two different types</u>*) using a <u>dash</u> correctly

10._____
_____.

10b._____
_____.

XI. Parallel Structure Sentence-Write a sentence demonstrating proper use of <u>Parallel Structure</u>

11._____
_____.

XII. Active vs. Passive Voice—Write a sentence demonstrating proper use of <u>Active Voice</u>

12._____
_____.

Also a noteworthy and distinguishing feature of this approach is its cohesion with the tenets of grammar instruction that Noguchi (1991) advocates for. The terms students are required to know are limited, with a focus being on only those that are pertinent to the successful execution of the thirteen sentence patterns. Noguchi pronounces: "In order to make grammar connect more efficiently and fruitfully to writing, teachers need to be more selective in what they teach." He asserts that we must, as teachers, "identify the real basics, the nitty-gritty of basic grammar, and then make these basics accessible to students as quickly as possible" (p. 17). Similarly, Smith and Wilhelm (2007) counsel English teachers to "think hard both about the number of [TSG] terms that we teach and the way that we teach them," and they declare that there are "only two justifications for the teaching of a term:"

1. The term is so commonly used that teachers, texts, and tests presume that students know it
2. The term is essential to being able to explain an important issue of style or correctness. (p. 13)

Research can provide guidance on the frequency and types of errors that students make within their writing. Specifically, the Connors –Lunsford Study (1988) was a "comprehensive study of over 3,000 graded college essays" whereby Connors and Lunsford identified the twenty "most frequently occurring 'formal and mechanical' (i.e. stylistic) errors" in student writing. In a similar fashion, the Hairston Study (1981) investigated what "people in the professions" deem to be "the most serious" errors in writing. Grammar instruction that targets those high-frequency, serious, "status-marking errors" in students' writing, such as those found in the Connors-Lunsford and Hairston studies is of particular importance in helping to equip students with the agency to present themselves stylistically, in terms of their writing, in the most advantageous light possible depending on the socio-linguistic context they may find themselves in. Avoiding high frequency and stigmatizing errors is of more importance in some writing contexts than others, particularly academic and professional contexts. In cross-referencing the Connors-Lunsford (1988) and Hairston (1981) study, my approach explicitly targets fourteen of the twenty high-frequency, status-marking errors identified by those studies. Consequently, Noguchi (1991) proposes that in order for grammar instruction to connect more effectively and efficiently to improving student writing," a "clear distinction" must be made between the "teaching of grammar as an academic subject and the teaching of grammar as a tool for writing improvement" (p. 17). He proposes that a "minimal set of categories" be identified by teachers in relation to the frequency and seriousness of the errors that their specific group of students make which will be taught to that group of students. This approach also aligns with that advocated by Smith and Wilhelm (2007), specifically and strategically targeting "basic categories" of grammar results in "Practical Benefits" for both teachers and students. Noguchi

(1991) notes that an approach adherent to the aforementioned minimalist philosophy will contain the following practical benefits:

1. It will successfully aid in correcting and helping students avert "highly frequent and stigmatized errors" in their writing.
2. It will "create more time to other matters of writing."
3. Because this approach is predicated on successfully building on the students' already consequential body of acquired language knowledge both explicit and conscious and implicit and unconscious, it "requires less effort," time, and frustration for teachers and students.
4. Ultimately, students' sentence mechanics will improve because they will be "learning about and partaking more consciously in the process (i.e. the operations) of sentence formation" (p. 60).

Now, in no way do I believe that my approach which is grounded in the aforementioned philosophy and methodology to be an earth shattering or entirely inventive and different approach than anything that has been developed or seen before on the face of the earth. I do believe it, however, to be more efficient, effective, and systematically focused on helping students attain syntactic knowledge and skill-sets to afford them the foundational ability to write more fluently and effectively on a technical level. It is my experience, exactly as Berger (2001) contends, that "students benefit from explicit instruction in grammatical concepts," and that is these grammatical experiences "that become an integral part of the entire writing process" for students (p. 44). For, just as she contends, I also found that by teaching students new sentence structures and requiring them "to incorporate them *consciously* (italics in original) into their written pieces," as a part of "the writing assignment itself, helps students to transfer their new knowledge directly into their writing" (p. 46). And, as she noted, it is imperative that the approach be "systematic" in "the teaching of conventions of punctuation and techniques of the structures" (p. 43). It cannot be random, and it cannot be merely on based on the formal assessment of the writing of the 150+ students that a secondary English teacher generally finds themselves with in a secondary public school setting today. By systematically moving kids

towards mastering thirteen or more syntactic structures (or sentence patterns) that might be used in a large variety of writing situations, from formal to informal, the primary intent of the approach is to help students acquire more writing linguistic agency to more effectively write in a variety of social contexts. Once mastered, these thirteen sentence structures can be applied in almost any writing situation a student may find themselves in thereby manifesting greater syntactic maturity in the students. For example, a student might use a colon or a dash to aid in the short-hand communication so ubiquitous in the character-starved world of Twitter or text-messaging. While, on the opposite end of the spectrum, a student might also use a colon, dash, or semi-colon syntactic structure in a formal academic paper or business letter. In either case, the student will possess the syntactic agency and procedural knowledge necessary to stylistically tailor their writing to the situation and context the student is writing for and in.

In addition to the philosophy and methodology just discussed, another clearly distinguishing feature of my approach is its pedagogical "infrastructure" because, embedded within the approach, are instructional practices at the forefront of today's research base for effective instruction which are designed to generate the timely, specific, and corrective feedback for students. In particular, the research-based work of Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2001), which is followed up by and extended by Dean, Hubler, Pitler, and Stone (2012) as well as Hattie's (2009) massive meta-study are indelibly embedded and implicit within my approach. Also present in the approach is the use of meta-cognitive strategies and techniques, which research has shown "has a positive impact on academic success" (Annable, 2012) in the areas of standardized tests (McDonald and Boud, 2003); (Zuliply, Kabit, and Ghani, 2009), reading comprehension (Dole, Sloan, and Trathen, 1995); (Lubliner and Smetana; Paris and Jacobs, 2005), and writing (Conner, 2007). Finally, there is also an emphasis on formative instructional

practices presented in the research-based work of William and Black (1989) and Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis, & Chappuis (2007), which results in consistent specific, timely, and constructive feedback. It is these specific aforementioned emphases that dually connect my approach to and distinguish it from other grammar instructional methods, both pedagogically and theoretically.

Metacognitive Strategies and Feedback

Metacognition can be simply thought of and defined as essentially the act of thinking about one's own thinking. Flavell (1979) discusses the relationship between metacognitive and cognitive strategies, delineating that "Cognitive strategies are invoked to *make* cognitive progress, metacognitive strategies to *monitor* it" (909). In essence, teachers such as Annable (2012) understand the value of student metacognition in helping students to develop and monitor progress and its efficacy and efficiency in providing student timely and consistent feedback on their work, and they are using metacognitive strategies and techniques to help facilitate student grammar and writing development and improvement. As I previously noted, at the end of each lesson and after each formal writing assignment, the assessment is handed back to the students. At that point I would guide each student to get out their "Tracking and Reflection Sheet" (see example on next page) in an effort to engage every student in metacognition about their work. After each grammar and vocabulary assessment, be it a pre-, formative, or summative assessment, every student in my class would examine and analyze their own assessment, track their performance on the assessment, and then identify their specific misunderstanding or misconception on their sheet. So, for example, on a vocabulary assessment each student would record their overall score and then note the specific word or words that they missed and try to identify why (the misconception) they missed it. On a grammar assessment, the students would

Pre-Test Scores (1. Wd. Parts): (2. Voc): (3. Gram & Mech): (4. Sent Patterns):

Q&U: Phrs: Cls: Com/Sem: Frag/RO: Col: Hyph/Dsh: Apos: Vb Agr: Act/Psv:

Prep Work Packet I Score: Prep Work Packet II Score:
Prep Work Packet III Score: Prep Work Packet IV Score:

	Vocab Quiz Score	**Gram Quiz Score**	**Vocab Unit Test Score:**	**Grammar Unit Test Score:**	**Words/Word Parts Missed**	**Grammar Skill:**
Lesson 1						**Quotations vs. Underline/Italics**
Lesson 2						**Phrases**
Lesson 3-						**Clauses**
(Unit I) Lesson 4-						**Simple Sentence Patterns A1-A4**
Lesson 5-						**Comma Semi-colon pt. 1 W/ SP**
Lesson 6-						**Comma Semi-colon pt. 2 W/ SP**
Lesson 7-						**Fragments/ Run-ons**
(Unit II) Lesson 8-						**Colons with SP's**
Lesson 9-						**Hyphens/Dashes with SP's**
Lesson 10-						**Verb Agreement & Subjunctive**
Lesson 11-						**Apostrophes**
(Unit III) Lesson 12-						**Active Passive**
Lesson 13-						**Parallel Structure w SP's**
Lesson 14-						**Punctuation and SP Review**
Lesson 15-						**Review/Intervention/Enrichment**
(Unit IV) Lesson 16-						**Review/Intervention/Enrichment**

***Looking at my results, what Lessons/Words/Grammar Skills do I most need to focus on for the Finals?**

PostTest Scores (1. Wd. Parts): (2. Voc): (3. Gram & Mech): (4. Sent Patterns):

Q&U: Phrs: Cls: Com/Sem: Frag/RO: Col: Hyph/Dsh: Apos: Vb Agr: Act/Psv:

Improvement: (1. Wd. Parts): (2. Voc): (3. Gram & Mech): (4. Sent Patterns):

Writing Tracking & Reflection Sheet

I. Essay #1: Genre/Style:_____ Topic:_____

Essay Grade: ___/100 **Writing Skill Score: /4** **Ideas & Content Score: /4**

Circle the following if they apply: Late (-10) **No Works Cited (-5):** **Missing Semi-colons/Vocab (-5):**

Prep Work Score: ___/ **Outline: yes/no** **1st Draft yes/no** **2nd draft yes/no**

***Color codes: Red=Stop, Fundamental Problems Yellow=Ok, but keep working Green=Solid, keep it up**

Intro Paragraph Score: /4
Grabber Outside to Inside Thesis

Body Paragraph(S) Score: /4
Topic Sent Lead Ins Set Ups Explanations
Text Notes Quotes/c.d.'s Transitions Clincher

Conclusion Paragraph Score: /4
Thesis Restatement: Inside Back to Out Finale

Six Trait Scores: Word Choice **/4** Sent Fluency **/4** Organization **/4**
Voice **/4** Conventions (G&M) **/4**

Manuscript & Works Cited: /4
Works Cited MLA Heading Formatting Length

After looking at the info above, what areas do I need to improve the most for the next writing assignment?

How am I going to improve and what resources am I going to utilize to help facilitate this improvement?

II. Essay #2: Genre/Style:_____ Topic:_____

Essay Grade: ___/100 **Writing Skill Score: /4** **Ideas & Content Score: /4**

Circle the following if they apply: Late (-10) **No Works Cited (-5):** **Missing Semi-colons/Vocab (-5):**

Prep Work Score: ___/ **Outline: yes/no** **1st Draft yes/no** **2nd draft yes/no**

***Color codes: Red=Stop, Fundamental Problems Yellow=Ok, but keep working Green=Solid, keep it up**

Intro Paragraph Score: /4
Grabber Outside to Inside Thesis

Body Paragraph(S) Score: /4
Topic Sent Lead Ins Set Ups Explanations
Text Notes Quotes/c.d.'s Transitions Clincher

Conclusion Paragraph Score: /4
Thesis Restatement: Inside Back to Out Finale

Six Trait Scores: Word Choice **/4** Sent Fluency **/4** Organization **/4**
Voice **/4** Conventions (G&M) **/4**

Manuscript & Works Cited: /4
Works Cited MLA Heading Formatting Length

After looking at the info above, what areas do I need to improve the most for the next writing assignment?

How am I going to improve and what resources am I going to utilize to help facilitate this improvement?

track their overall performance and then identify the specific skill in which they had the wrongdoing/ misconception on and attempt to clear it up, either by themselves with reflection and a resource, with a student partner, or by asking me (the teacher) about the misunderstanding on that skill. Similarly, each time the students received a graded formal writing assignment back from me, they would get out their "Writing Tracking and Reflection Sheet" (See example on previous page) and track their overall performance on the assignment and then would identify how they performed in each of the six traits of writing domains by processing, recording, and color-coding the feedback they received on the assessment rubric from me. In administering every writing assignment, I would require students to successfully use one or two of the syntactic structures (sentence patterns) that we had been working on. For example, in their "Of Mice and Men" essay, I might require each student to successfully use a semi-colon sentence structure twice and a dash sentence structure once somewhere in the essay. This would be a required assignment and would align with the syntactic structure(s) we were working on at the time. I would usually also require a "review" sentence type later in the year, as well in an effort to reinforce previously learned and mastered syntactic structures.

Consequently, once I had assessed their papers and passed them back, I would ask each student to track and reflect on their performance on their Six-Traits "Sentence-Fluency" and "Conventions" scores, but also on their performance on the required "sentence types" within their writing. So, in going back to the earlier example, if a student failed to successfully use a semi-colon twice within the essay, it would be noted in their grade and they would have to track and reflect on that aspect of their paper. The student might ask themselves questions such as: "Did I not 'get the points' on this aspect of the assignment because I do not know how to use a semi-colon in a sentence correctly or did I just make a silly error?" In addition, later in the year,

I would have the students examine their own writing in effort to identify the types of sentences they are or, perhaps, are not writing with. In order to do so, I would have them line up the thirteen syntactic structures or sentence patterns that we had worked to master, and I would have them go through a label each sentence type they had used in the writing of that particular essay. I would then ask them not note on their tracking sheets which of the sentence patters and/or punctuation marks they were using successfully, making numerous errors with, or not using at all. All of these metacognitive strategies I implemented in an effort to systematically provide my students with timely and specific feedback in order to engender meta-awareness within my students about their writing. It was my intention that by directly providing instruction and then having the student practice and reflect on this instruction in the manner I just described that this process would result in students emerging with enhanced syntactic awareness, fluency, and maturity. I wanted them to know and understand the syntactic structures they were effectively applying, those that they were frequently making errors with, and those that they were not using at all, and I wanted to think about "why's" for each.

In addition, after each formal, graded writing assignment, students would be asked to answer two questions: "After looking at the info above, what areas do I need to improve the most for the next writing assignment?" and "How am I going to improve and what resources am I going to utilize to help facilitate this improvement?" I systematically implemented all of these aforementioned metacognitive strategies and techniques in an effort to ensure that my students were "thinking about their thinking" and to provide them with consistent, timely, and specific feedback to every student.

Hattie (2009) and Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2001) detail the importance of providing corrective and timely feedback to students in order to maximize instructional efficacy.

Hattie identifies feedback as "among the most powerful influences on achievement," with an effect size of "d=0.73," well into what he terms the "Zone of Desired Effects," which begins at d=0.40 and maxes out at d=1.2 (p. 173). Hattie defines feedback as "information provided an agent (e.g., teacher, peer, book, parent, or one's own experience) about aspects of one's performance or understanding," and he cites Sadler (1989) in explaining that in order for feedback to fulfil a true instructional purpose, it must "provide information specifically relating to the task or process of learning that fills a gap between what is understood and what is aimed to be understood" (p. 174). Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2001) found that the type of specific feedback that "produces large effect sizes" of "d=0.90 and higher" is feedback that is "corrective in nature," which means that it is feedback that "provides students with an explanation of what they are doing that is correct and what they are doing that is not correct" (p. 96). Next, they note the significant impact that the timing of feedback has in enhancing or decreasing efficacy, explaining that "the timing of feedback appears to be critical to its effectiveness" (p. 97). Specifically, they present their findings that "Feedback given immediately after a test like situation is best" with an effect size of d=0.72, noting that the more delay that occurs in giving the feedback, the less improvement there is in achievement" (p. 97). The third criterion they identify for effective feedback is that "for feedback to be most useful, it should reference a specific level of skill or knowledge," proclaiming that "research has consistently indicated that criterion-referenced feedback has a more powerful effect on student learning than norm-referenced feedback" (p. 98-99). Lastly, they explain that while "we tend to think that providing feedback is something done exclusively by teachers," their research indicates, however, that "students can effectively monitor their own progress." They go on to explicate that this effective

practice often "takes the form of students simply keeping track of their performance as learning occurs" (p. 99).

In short, highly effective, research-based pedagogy suggests that students must be provided with corrective, timely, and specific feedback in order to maximize the positive effect on achievement, and they can be facilitated to do so themselves. This emphasis on providing student feedback is a central and distinguishing feature to the instructional approach I developed. As students move from the diagnostic assessment, to the instructional framework, to the formative and summative assessments, they are facilitated to receive and keep track of, for themselves, timely (immediately after all assessments), specific (lessons that are chunked by and focused on very specific syntactic skills and concepts), and corrective feedback connected to their foundational writing grammar and mechanics skills.

Though I was not familiar with the work of Marzano (2001) and his colleagues or Hattie (2009) at the genesis of its development, I now realize as a much more informed consumer of teaching and learning research that the approach I developed based on my own organic processes as a classroom teacher mirror those findings of Marzano and his colleagues as well as Hattie and many others like them detailing the importance of feedback on student achievement, and I developed and implemented within my classroom an approach to help ensure that my students were systematically and consistently facilitated through a process where they received specific, timely, and corrective on the foundational aspects of their writing grammar, mechanics, and conventions.

Formative Instructional Practices

William and Black (1989) define assessment as referring "to all those activities undertaken by teachers--and by their students in assessing themselves--that provide information

to be used as feedback to modify teaching and learning activities," while contending that assessment only becomes formative assessment "when the evidence is actually used to adapt the teaching to meet student needs" (p. 2). They make the case that "Firm evidence shows that formative assessment is an essential component of classroom work and that its development can raise standards of achievement," and ardently insist that they "know of no other way of raising standards for which such a strong prima facie case can be made" (p. 1). In their meta-analysis, they synthesize research to conclude that "Typical effect sizes of the formative assessment experiments were between d=0.4 and 0.7," and that these "effect sizes are larger than most of those found for educational interventions" (p. 2). Hattie (2009) ranked providing formative evaluation as the third most effective teaching technique he examined in *Visible Learning*, with an effect size of d=0.90, again well into the "zone of desired effects" (p. 181). Stiggins and Chappuis (2005) found that "Ongoing classroom assessments can be used in far more productive ways," which includes "student involvement in the assessment process, student-involved record keeping, and student-involved communication" (p. 12). They contend that "Wise teachers use the classroom assessment process as an instructional intervention to teach the lesson that small increments of progress are normal" and that success should be defined as "continual improvement over the long haul" (p. 13). They posit that assessment achievement gains are best achieved, when assessment meets four conditions:

1. Assessment development must always be driven by a clearly articulated purpose.
2. Assessments must arise from and accurately reflect clearly specified and appropriate achievement expectations.
3. Assessments methods used must be capable of accurately reflecting the intended targets and are used as teaching tools along the way to proficiency.
4. Communication systems must deliver assessment results into the hands of their users in a timely, understandable, and helpful manner. (p. 14-17)

Accordingly, Chappuis (2005) argues that effective formative assessment instructional practices follow seven strategies that "can help ensure systematic student involvement in the formative assessment process" (p. 39). The seven strategies are:

1. Provide a clear and understandable vision of the learning target.
2. Use examples to show weak work.
3. Offer regular descriptive feedback. She even suggests that students "traffic light" their work by "marking it with a green, yellow, or red dot" (p. 41).
4. Teach students to self-asses and set goals.
5. Design lessons to focus on one aspect of quality at a time by "breaking down the learning into manageable chunks for students" (p. 42).
6. Teach students focused revision.
7. Engage students in self-reflection and let them document and share their learning

Once again, though I was not explicitly conscious of the work of Stiggins and Chappuis as I developed my approach to grammar instruction, there is tremendous alignment to their research and the approach I developed and implemented in my classroom. The emphasis on formative instructional practices that result in specific, timely, and corrective feedback for students is at the very essence of the approach I developed where students move from pre-assessment, to instructional preparation and practice, to formative assessments, to demonstrating mastery of syntactic structures in formal summative assessments, to application and synthesis of them in their writing. The pedagogical progression of formative instructional practices built for student feedback is embedded in the instructional approach I developed and is supported by a nucleus of contemporary and highly-vetted research. I believe it to be germane in its efficacy in helping students move towards syntactic fluency and maturity. At every juncture in this approach students are asked to employ the assessments, be it diagnostic "pre," formative "lesson" assessments, summative assessments, and/or their writing assignments to track and reflect on their performance in an effort to generate meta-awareness for themselves and the teacher on that

very specific skill. An emphasis on the formative instructional practices and the resulting feedback that, I believe, enhances the efficacy of and is a distinguishing feature of my approach. Though this pedagogical approach to learning and achievement is supported by the research of some of the "big names" in education today such as Marzano, Hattie, Chappuis, and Stiggins, a more pragmatically inclined teacher may ask two key questions:

1. While all that is well and good, but how does this approach help me in my job and with its new and highly emphasized, formal high-stakes evaluation process?
2. How does this approach help my students on the upcoming high-stakes, Common Core assessments?

For teachers in the state of Georgia and many other states like it implementing very similar teacher evaluation systems revolving around either Danielson's (2013) or Marzano's (2012) frameworks and value-added evaluation systems, both of these questions are directly connected in Georgia to the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System.

An Analysis of the Alignment of the Instructional Approach to Georgia's Formal Teacher Evaluation Process, Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES)

Beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, the state of Georgia mandated that every teacher in the state be evaluated under TKES (Teacher Keys Effectiveness System); consequently, of immediate and paramount consequence to any teacher in the state when making any instructional decision is weighing the decision and its alignment against the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System and its resulting impact on their evaluation. The vast majority of instructional and pedagogical decisions made by teachers will, in all likelihood, either be directly or indirectly assessed for its alignment and potential merit according to the TKES teacher evaluation process.

One of the more interesting as aspects worth noting about Georgia's Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) is that it is very much undergirded by a great deal of the research

and theory just discussed in terms of formative instructional practices and importance of student feedback. Consequently, TKES presents a view of pedagogy and "good instruction" that is very much in concert with and supported by the work of Hattie, Marzano, Stiggins, etc. In terms of my own grammatical instructional approach, though I noted earlier that in accordance with the structure presented in the new Common Core Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010), that I developed separate 9/10th grade and 11/12th grade instructional frameworks, I should state that this structural configuration is designed to forge alignment to the new standards and was pragmatic in nature on my behalf. I also view this adaptation as a bit of a cosmetic one because I increasingly view the lines between the grade levels as essentially arbitrary though heavily emphasized in the school systems and by the standards that guide them. I find myself increasingly believing in the importance of the principles of differentiated instruction whereby a teacher can and should drive their instruction based on the assessment (in the truest sense of the word) of students and resulting knowledge of the individual student that comes from assessment.

The explicit concept of differentiated instruction is one of the ten standards identified as requisite for "effective teaching" in the newly-minted, paradigm-shifting teacher evaluation system (TKES). Differentiated Instruction is standard four of ten in the Georgia Department of Education TKES Handbook, and it simultaneously is undergirded by and supports several others of the TKES standards and is just one of the ten standards that a teacher is evaluated against in the state of Georgia today. Many states across the nation are moving to very similar teacher evaluation systems as well, with several basing their evaluations on either Danielson's (2013) or Marzano's (2012) teacher evaluation models in combination with "value-added" quantitative components connected to high-stakes assessment.

A key question then is: How might my approach help teachers, particularly those in Georgia, fare in the formal, high-stakes evaluation landscape that teachers find themselves in today? I believe this is a timely, pertinent, interesting question and is one that is worthy of exploration.

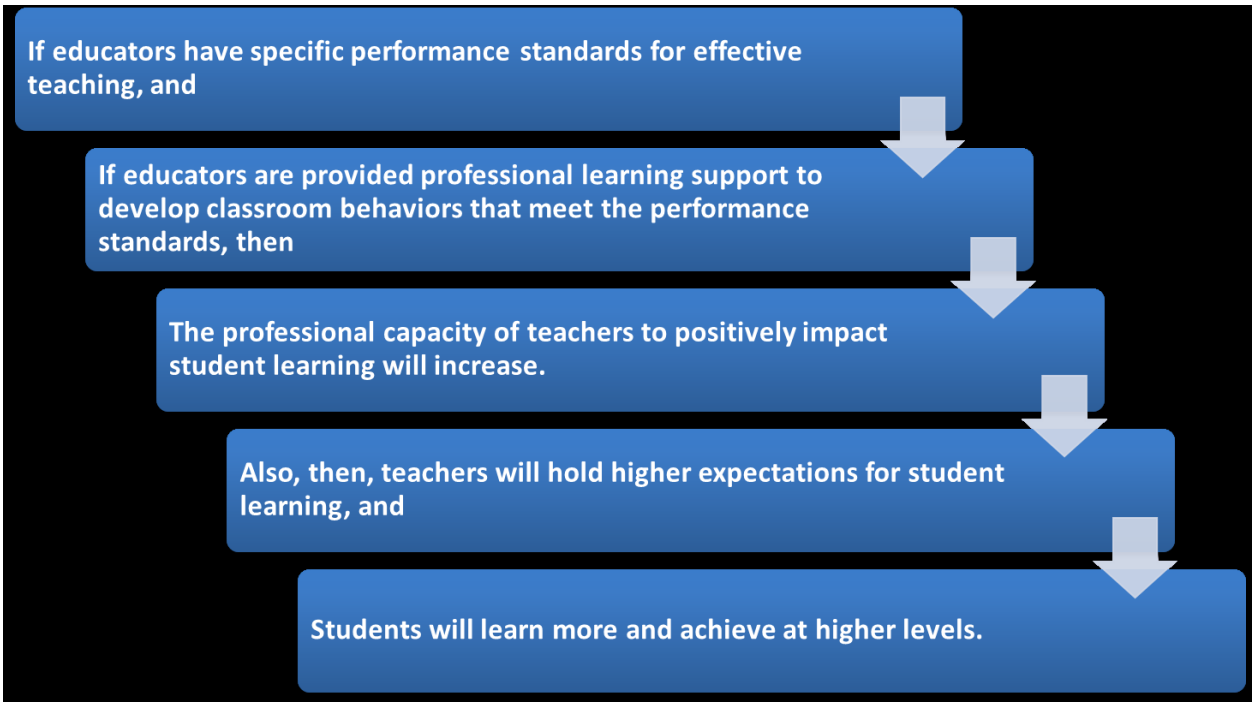
Background and Context of TKES

The Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) has its origins in the federal government's Race to the Top Initiative. According to the Georgia Department of Education's TKES website, in the "Spring of 2012, Race to the Top districts participated in a pilot of the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System" where 26 school districts provided "critical feedback and data that was used to revise and improve a new system designed for building teacher effectiveness throughout Georgia" in this process (http://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/Teacher-and-Leader-Effectiveness/Pages/Teacher-Keys-Effectiveness-System.aspx). The TKES system is, in large part, based upon Dr. James Stronge and his work on teacher effectiveness and teacher evaluation. Much of the undergirding theory and application of TKES can be found in Stronge's (2002) book "Qualities of Effective Teachers." In accordance with the research and findings of Stronge, the stated "Primary Purpose of the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System" along with its "Theory of Action" is detailed in the Teacher Keys Effectiveness Handbook (2012). According to page five of the handbook, "The primary purpose of TKES" is to:

- Optimize student learning and growth.
- Improve the quality of instruction by ensuring accountability for classroom performance and teacher effectiveness.
- Contribute to successful achievement of the goals and objectives defined in the vision, mission, and goals of Georgia Public Schools.

- Provide a basis for instructional improvement through productive teacher performance appraisal and professional growth.
- Implement a performance evaluation system that promotes collaboration between the teacher and evaluator and promotes self-growth, instructional effectiveness, and improvement of overall job performance.

Its stated purpose is undergirded by the following 'Theory of Action" also found on page five:



Consequently, TKES claims to be built upon the notion that the best, research-based practices of teaching will result in schools where "Students will learn more and achieve at higher levels" (p. 5).

The website goes on to explicate that the resulting TKES formal teacher evaluation system being utilized by all school districts in Georgia this school year consists of "multiple components, including the Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards (TAPS), Surveys of Instructional Practice, and Measures of Student Growth and Academic Achievement while proclaiming that the "overarching goal" is to "support continuous growth and development of

each teacher" (http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/School-Improvement/Teacher-and-Leader-Effectiveness/Pages/default.aspx). The Georgia Department of Education's Teacher Keys Effectiveness System Fact Sheet (2012) extends that TKES is a "common evaluation system that will allow the state to ensure consistency and comparability across districts, based on a common definition of teacher effectiveness" and that its multiple components result in "an overall Teacher Effectiveness Measure" more commonly referred to as a TEM score (pg. 2).

TKES' TAPS Component and the Instructional Approach

The mostly widely and easily implemented and instituted component thus far of TKES across the state of Georgia is the Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards (TAPS) component. For example, the district I currently work for is using TKES for its teacher evaluations this year, but only formally used the TAPS component of TKES last year while they are phasing in the other two TKES components (Student Surveys and the quantitative "Student Growth" component, commonly referred to as "value-added" in other states) in the upcoming years. There are a variety of reasons for this practice I am sure, ranging from the need for a gradual, phase-in implementation to the highly incendiary, deeply divisive, and decidedly controversial nature of the value-added component. There is also the reality that the observation process is something that teachers are largely used to and familiar with; it is just the methodology and scoring that is very different.

According to the Georgia Department of Education TKES Fact Sheet (2012), TAPS "provides evaluators with a qualitative, rubrics-based evaluation method by which they can measure teacher performance related to quality performance standards," and it claims to offer "a balance between structure and flexibility" (pg. 2). During the course of the school year teachers are assessed on ten standards in five domains, each of which they are given a rating in one of

four levels (Exemplary, Proficient, Needs Development, or Ineffective). The ten standards include: Professional Knowledge, Instructional Planning, Instructional Strategies, Differentiated Instruction, Assessment Strategies, Assessment Uses, Positive Learning Environment, Academically Challenging Environment, Professionalism, and Communication. The documentation of teacher performance involves three components:

a. Self-Assessment-to be "completed by the teacher at the beginning of the year,"

b. Observations- Conducted by evaluating administrator in the form of "two formal observations and four walkthroughs/ frequent brief observations of teachers evaluated by the TKES." The formal observations "must be at least 30 minutes in duration" while "Walkthroughs" are to be "a minimum of ten minutes and should focus on a limited number of teacher performance standards and/or indicators," and

c. Documentation- Where the teacher is "responsible for submitting documentation as requested by the evaluator for consideration in the formative assessment, either prior to or after the actual classroom observation." Accordingly, teachers may "organize the material as they see fit," and evaluating administrators are instructed that "emphasis should be on the quality of work, not the quantity of material presented" (pgs. 2-4).

After all of the aforementioned process has been completed, in order to generate a summative assessment, the evaluating administrator gives the teacher "a rating on each individual standard," whereby "the teacher is provided with a diagnostic profile of his/her performance for the evaluation cycle" (p. 4).

The evaluating administrator is instructed when "making judgments for the summative assessment on each of the ten performance standards," to determine "where the 'totality of the evidence and most consistent practice' exists, based on observations and the documentation of

practice and process provided by the teacher." Consequently, along with the ten separate ratings, the teachers "receive an overall TAPS point score" where "Exemplary" ratings are worth 3 points, "Proficient," 2 points, "Needs Development," 1 point, and "Ineffective" ratings have no point value. Finally, the fact sheet explains that the "TAPS rating will be appropriately scaled to represent a specific percentage of the Teacher Effectiveness Measure" (p. 4).

Given this is the landscape that teachers find themselves teaching in today, how might does the approach I developed function in the new, high-stakes TKES "TAPS" world? Does it align with and help teachers be successful in this new high-stakes evaluation world they find themselves in?

In undertaking this exploration I am going to start by examining the most pertinent TKES standards in detail and discussing the alignment of the approach against these standards. I will focus on standard numbers two through six (Instructional Planning, Instructional Strategies, Differentiated Instruction, Assessment Strategies, Assessment Uses) beginning with Standard Two: Instructional Planning.

TAPS Performance Standard Two: Instructional Planning. According to the TKES Handbook (2012), Performance Standard Two (Instructional Planning) is defined as "The teacher plans using state and local school district curricula and standards, effective strategies, resources, and data to address the differentiated needs of all students." The handbook also gives "Sample Performance Indicators," which "may include, but are not limited to" the teacher:

2.1 Analyzes and uses student learning data to inform planning.
2.2 Develops plans that are clear, logical, sequential, and integrated across the curriculum (e.g., long-term goals, lesson plans, and syllabi).
2.3 Plans instruction effectively for content mastery, pacing, and transitions.
2.4 Plans for instruction to meet the needs of all students.
2.5 Aligns and connects lesson objectives to state and local school district curricula and

standards, and student learning needs.

2.6 Develops appropriate course, unit, and daily plans, and is able to adapt plans when needed (p. 47).

In addition, the TKES Handbook explicates that "Contemporary Effective Teacher Research" has found that "an effective teacher:"

- Constructs a blueprint of how to address the curriculum during the instructional time.
- Uses knowledge of available resources to determine what resources s/he needs to acquire or develop (p. 47).

Because the instructional approach I developed is based on giving each student a diagnostic assessment where a teacher can ascertain by skill strand each student's level of mastery, or lack thereof, along with formative assessments to "progress monitor" each student's learning growth along the way in conjunction with an instructional framework and a tracking and reflection process, this approach allows the teacher to "Analyze and use student learning data to inform [their] planning" as well as "Plan instruction effectively for content mastery, pacing, and transitions" and "Plan for instruction to meet the needs of all students" (p. 47). Consequently, my approach to grammar instruction is in alignment with the tenets presented by Performance Standard Two-Instructional Planning which has been identified by the state to being integral in improving student achievement.

TAPS Performance Standard Three: Instructional Strategies. According to TKES' TAPS Performance Standard 3: Instructional Strategies, an effective teacher "promotes student learning by using research-based instructional strategies relevant to the content to engage students in active learning and to facilitate the students' acquisition of key knowledge and skills" (p. 48). The Sample Performance Indicators examples delineated by the Handbook "may include, but are not limited to" a teacher:

3.1 Engages students in active learning and maintains interest.

3.2 Builds upon students' existing knowledge and skills.

3.3 Reinforces learning goals consistently throughout the lesson.

3.4 Uses a variety of research-based instructional strategies and resources.

3.5 Effectively uses appropriate instructional technology to enhance student learning.

3.6 Communicates and presents material clearly, and checks for understanding.

3.7 Develops higher-order thinking through questioning and problem-solving activities.

3.8 Engages students in authentic learning by providing real-life examples and interdisciplinary connections. (p. 48)

The TKES Handbook continues by noting that "Contemporary research has found that an effective teacher:"

- Stays involved with the lesson at all stages.
- Uses a variety of instructional strategies.
- Uses research-based strategies to make instruction student-centered.
- Involves students in cooperative learning to enhance higher-order thinking skills.
- Uses students' prior knowledge to facilitate student learning (p. 48).

In particular, my instructional approach helps teachers systematically "engage students in active learning" and "build upon students' existing knowledge and skills." I also believe it is highly effective in helping teachers to "Reinforce learning goals consistently throughout the lesson" and "communicate and present material clearly" while consistently "checking for understanding" (p. 48).

TAPS Performance Standard 4: Differentiated Instruction. Standard Four declares that an effective teacher "challenges and supports each student's learning by providing appropriate content and developing skills which address individual learning differences" (p. 49). Sample "Performance Indicators include but are not limited to" a teacher who:

4.1 Differentiates the instructional content, process, product, and learning environment to meet individual developmental needs.

4.2 Provides remediation, enrichment, and acceleration to further student understanding of material.

4.3 Uses flexible grouping strategies to encourage appropriate peer interaction and to accommodate learning needs/goals.

4.4 Uses diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment data to inform instructional modifications for individual students.

4.5 Develops critical and creative thinking by providing activities at the appropriate level of challenge for students.

4.6 Demonstrates high learning expectations for all students commensurate with their developmental levels.

In addition, the Handbook decrees that "contemporary research has found that an effective teacher" does the following:

- Differentiates for students' needs using remediation, skills-based instruction, and individualized instruction
- Uses multiple levels of questioning aligned with students' cognitive abilities with appropriate techniques (p. 49).

It is my belief that the instructional approach I developed allows a teacher to do all of the aforementioned performance indicators the Handbook specifies regarding differentiated instruction because of the skill specific feedback the approach generates for both students and teachers. Specifically, it allows a teacher to differentiate their instruction for students by student readiness and to flexibly group the students based on their performance on the specific skill assessments. This approach is also specifically predicated on the use of "diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment data to inform instructional modifications for individual students." In short, this approach is very much in alignment with effective practices advocated by TKES TAPS Standard Four: Differentiated Instruction.

TAPS Performance Standard 5: Assessment Strategies. The TKES handbook defines Standard Five (Assessment Strategies) as "The teacher systematically chooses a variety of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment strategies and instruments that are valid and

appropriate for the content and student population" (p. 50). Sample performance indicators "may include, but are not limited to" a teacher who:

5.1 Aligns student assessment with the established curriculum and benchmarks.
5.2 Involves students in setting learning goals and monitoring their own progress.
5.3 Varies and modifies assessments to determine individual student needs and progress.
5.4 Identifies and uses formal and informal assessments for diagnostic, formative, and summative purposes.
5.5 Uses grading practices that report final mastery in relationship to content goals and objectives.
5.6. Uses assessment techniques that are appropriate for the developmental level of students.
5.7 Collaborates with others to develop common assessments, when appropriate (p. 50)

In addition, the TKES Handbook continues that "Contemporary research has found that an effective teacher" does the following:

- Offers regular, timely, and specific feedback and reinforcement;
- Gives homework and offers feedback on the homework;
- Uses open-ended performance assignments" (p. 50).

Again, the alignment between the instructional approach and the TKES standard is readily evident, as the instructional approach give the teacher a toolkit to fulfil each of the Standard Five Performance Indicators, and if used effectively, is particularly well-suited in helping teachers to "involve students in setting learning goals and monitoring their own progress," varying and modifying "assessments to determine individual student needs and progress," identifying and using "formal and informal assessments for diagnostic, formative, and summative purposes," and in using "grading practices that report final mastery in relationship to content goals and objectives" (p. 50).

TAPS Performance Standard 6: Assessment Uses. This standard is defined by the TKES Handbook as "The teacher systematically gathers, analyzes, and uses relevant data to

measure student progress, to inform instructional content and delivery methods, and to provide timely and constructive feedback to both students and parents" (p. 51). Sample teacher performance indicators examples "include, but are not limited to" a teacher who:

6.1 Uses diagnostic assessment data to develop learning goals for students, to differentiate instruction, and to document learning.

6.2 Plans a variety of formal and informal assessments aligned with instructional results to measure student mastery of learning objectives.

6.3 Uses assessment tools for both formative and summative purposes to inform, guide, and adjust instruction.

6.4 Systematically analyzes and uses data to measure student progress, to design appropriate interventions, and to inform long- and short-term instructional decisions.

6.5 Shares accurate results of student progress with students, parents, and key school personnel.

6.6 Provides constructive and frequent feedback to students on their progress toward their learning goals.

6.7 Teaches students how to self-assess and to use metacognitive strategies in support of lifelong learning.

In addition, the TKES Handbook continues that "Contemporary research has found that an effective teacher" does the following:

- Analyzes student assessments to determine the degree to which the intended learning outcomes align with the test items and student understanding of objectives.
- Interprets information from teacher-made tests and standardized assessments to guide instruction and gauge student progress by examining questions missed to determine if the student has trouble with the content or the test structure.

Once again, the alliance between the instructional approach and the TKES standard is readily evident, as the instructional approach gives the teacher a toolkit to fulfil each of the Standard Six Performance Indicators, and if used effectively, is particularly well-suited in

helping teachers to fulfill each of the seven sample teacher performance indicators associated with this standard. A teacher implementing my approach or one that is similar would "score" very well on this standard and all of the other previously addressed TKES standards, as it truly connects with and embodies the spirit, research, and pedagogy of the TKES standards for effective teaching.

TKES' TAPS and the Instructional Approach Conclusion. Given that the five standards discussed above comprise the pedagogical core of the TKES' TAPS Standards for teacher evaluation and that there is tremendous alignment between the performance indicators of the standards and the pedagogical structure of my instructional approach, a key distinguishing feature of the approach I developed is its philosophical and pedagogical alignment with the high-stakes, formal TKES teaching evaluation systems and the multitude of others out there across the country emerging out there like it. There are a number of seismic shifts on the educational landscape as we transition from the No Child Left Behind to the Common Core eras, and teacher evaluation is certainly one the biggest and most pertinent to teachers today. The reality for teachers is that, like it or not, they are going to have their performance, efficacy, and value judged on TKES or other high-stakes systems just like it; consequently, the pragmatic outcome is that a great many will be looking for instructional practices that align with the tenets of the systems that they are evaluated on. It is certainly a strength and distinguishing feature of my instructional approach that it contains tremendous alignment with TKES and its brethren.

Yet, given that the TAPS component of TKES is set to only comprise fifty percent of a teacher's evaluation score known as the Teacher Effectiveness Measure (TEM), there is another worthy aspect to explore. Does the approach align with the new high-stakes assessments that

will comprise the Measures of Student Growth and Academic Achievement component of TKES which will makes up the other fifty percent of a teacher's TEM (evaluation) score?

TKES' Measures of Student Growth and Academic Achievement and the Instructional Approach

Across the country as new teacher evaluation systems take hold in vast majority of states in the union, teachers' job performance are being directly tied to student performance on high-stakes standardized tests. Thus the concept of "value-added" assessment practices has become of imperative importance in the lives of teachers. Value-added assessment is defined as being:

> A new way of analyzing test data that can measure teaching and learning. Based on a review of students' test score gains from previous grades, researchers can predict the amount of growth those students are likely to make in a given year. Thus, value-added assessment can show whether particular students - those taking a certain Algebra class, say - have made the expected amount of progress, have made less progress than expected, or have been stretched beyond what they could reasonably be expected to achieve. Using the same methods, one can look back over several years to measure the long-term impact that a particular teacher or school had on student achievement. (The Center for Greater Philadelphia, 2004)

And in the state of Georgia its iteration of the quantitative "value-added" concept is the TKES' Measure of Student Growth and Academic Achievement component is based on each student's performance on the high-stakes assessments and the growth demonstrated from one year to the next. Because the assessments are about to undergo radical changes as the next generation of assessments connected to the Common Core Standards roll out, teachers must be very attuned to content, methodology, and pedagogy of the new assessments in order to help students and

themselves perform and "score well" both on the assessments themselves and the quantitative evaluation component that is formulated by the assessment results of their students. Consequently, a related and worthy exploration is this: How are the assessments going to change in terms of methodology, pedagogy, and content emphasis and how well does my instructional approach align with these changes?

Common Core Assessments

Each of the 45 states that have adopted the Common Core Standards has had to grapple with how to assess the new and dramatically different standards with antiquated and ill-matched assessment systems, methods, and processes that were put in place during the No Child Left Behind era. Consequently, the vast majority of the states have elected to join one of two consortiums that have emerged to develop Common Core assessments. These two consortiums are Smarter Balanced, which as of today counts 24 states and the Virgin Islands as members, and the Partnership for the Readiness of College and Careers (PARCC), which currently has 18 states plus the District of Columbia as members. Beginning in the 2014-15 school years these two consortiums represent the present and future of high-stakes, formal assessment in the U.S, and, subsequently, they will also play a pivotal role in student "success" and teacher performance evaluation. Therefore, a salient exploration is: "How does the instructional approach align with the content, pedagogy, and methodology of the new and looming Common Core assessments?"

PARCC and Smarter Balanced ELA Assessments

When examining the body of literature, released assessment items, and exemplars by the PARCC and Smarter Balanced consortiums, there are a couple of points that become crystal clear. The first thing that becomes clear is that these are going to be completely different, more compositional and contextualized assessments as compared to its predecessors such as the CRCT

and EOCT. In accordance with the Common Core Standards and its emphasis on literacy across content areas, the ELA assessments are going to have a variety of subject areas on them, including a great deal of "Science" and "Social Studies" texts and passages. Secondly, both consortiums have indicated that they will eschew stand-alone, multiple choice questions and will, in fact, only contain items that assess a minimum of two standards. These assessment shifts will result in a minimal number of selected "response items" rather than multiple choice items and a far greater number of constructed response items and "performance task" assessments. It is an emphasis on constructed response and performance tasks that is particularly pertinent and is a major paradigm shift because it means that, beginning next year with the introduction of these assessments, students' grammar and mechanics knowledge will be almost entirely assessed within the context of their writing performance in conjunction with their constructed response and performance task assessment items. For example, the PARCC Consortium declares in their released assessment items and sample score rubric that its ELA assessment items will do the following:

- Require students to demonstrate they can apply the knowledge of language and conventions when writing.
- Requires students to demonstrate they can apply the knowledge of language and conventions when writing.
- Students are also required to demonstrate that they can apply the knowledge of language and conventions when writing (an expectation for both college and careers). (PARCC, 2013)

In similar fashion the Smarter Balanced Consortium indicates on its Initial Achievement Level Descriptors and College Content-Readiness Policy Document (Smarter Balanced, 2013) that there is only one target area pertaining to language, grammar, and mechanics that is directly targeted by the assessment. An example found in the 11th (and final) grade is as follows:

> Target 8. LANGUAGE & VOCABULARY USE: Strategically use precise language and vocabulary (including academic and domain-specific vocabulary and figurative language) and style appropriate to the purpose and audience when revising or composing texts.

The level four (4) score band (the highest achievement level) indicates that in order to achieve a four in this target area on the assessment:

> Level 4 students should be able to provide thorough evidence that they can strategically use vivid, precise, and varied syntax, vocabulary (including extensive use of academic and domain-specific vocabulary and figurative language), and style appropriate to the purpose and audience when revising and composing texts. (p. 92)

This is the only ELA target to be found within the entire 117 page document relevant to how students will be assessed and scored in terms of their language, grammar, and mechanics. I explored all of the released assessment items available on both websites, and all of them very much seem to support this conclusion as well; therefore, this means that it appears as though beginning next year all students residing in those 45 states administering new high-stakes Common Core assessments will have their language, both in terms of syntactic and vocabulary knowledge and performance, assessed solely within the context of their writing. There will be no stand-alone grammar questions. There will be no overt emphasis on the "doctrine of correctness" as we saw with the CRCT and EOCT items earlier.

These paradigm shifts in assessment represent huge changes for teachers, and, out of necessity for themselves with the new formal teacher evaluation systems as well as their students and the new Common Core assessments, they may increasingly find themselves searching for grammar and mechanics instructional approaches that are vastly different from the TSG laden approaches they used before. Many teachers may begin to seek approaches that aid in helping

students improve in their performance, foundationally, as writers. And it is my belief that these shifts in assessment philosophy and pedagogy are another timely, strong, and distinguishing feature of my approach, as it, in many ways, dually and concurrently helps teachers do both. It aligns, both qualitatively (with components such as the TKES' TAPS) and quantitatively (with value-added components such as the TKES' Student Growth and Academic Achievement), with the philosophy and methodology of both the new teacher evaluation systems and the high-stakes Common Core assessments about to dominate the landscape of education for years to come.

Conclusion

In exploring what it is about my instructional approach that connects it to and distinguishes it from other grammar instructional methods, both pedagogically and theoretically, I have developed a much more thorough and nuanced understanding of my approach with its intentions and philosophic underpinnings as well as the great litany of others out there grappling with and researching for themselves the grammar instruction conundrum. And in doing so, I now realize that my approach is theoretically situated somewhere in the "middle ground" of the grammar instructional continuum, concurrently containing aspects of both a "minimalist" TSG approach and of the "context only" approach. Because it dually connected to facets of both side of the grammar instruction continuum, my approach is, therefore, connected to a number of phenomenal language and grammar scholars, researchers, and teachers, such as Hoyt, Hunt, O' Donnell, Braddock, Hillocks, Smagorinsky, Noguchi, Newman, Weaver, Smith and Wilhelm, Berger, and Anderson, just to name a few. But, pedagogically, with its emphasis on formative instructional practices, feedback, and meta-cognition, it is also connected to a contemporary cadre of folks as well, including William and Black, Flavell, Stiggins and Chappuis, Hattie, Marzano, and others. I also discovered that my approach has some important, timely, and

pertinent distinguishing characteristics, including its synergistic alignment with the emerging powerful forces on the contemporary educational landscape, including the new Common Core assessments and high-stakes teacher evaluation systems such as Georgia's TKES. I believe my approach's synergistic alignment with these new and emerging forces are a particular strength, both theoretically and in practice.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

As a result of the aforementioned quandaries, be it the lack of certainty regarding the study of language and syntactic development specifically, or more generally, the lack of certainty about the nature of knowledge and human beings ever truly "knowing" anything, I have been persistently dogged by a nagging pair of questions that has shrouded my confidence on my grammar and mechanics instructional approach and its efficacy. It is these questions that also serve as the guiding questions for my research. They are:

1. Was the grammar and mechanics instructional approach I developed effective in successfully helping my students improve as writers or was it a waste of instructional time that could have been more effectively spent?
2. If my approach was indeed "beneficial" and "effective" in helping my own students improve as writers, would this approach also be "beneficial" and "effective" in helping other teachers' students improve as writers as well?

These are the guiding questions that I hope my research may help to provide a bit of "answer" to, if such a thing exists.

Research Design

My inquiry unfolded along two avenues. First, in a preliminary study, I investigated and analyzed the data from my last two years in the classroom in Washington State (2009-10, 2010-11) as a high school English teacher with my own students. In order to do so, I culled together data points which includes my students' Pre-, Mid-point, and Post-assessment data for both my grammar and mechanics approach and formal writing assignments and then conducted a statistical correlation analysis seeking to ascertain whether or not there exists a strong correlation

between student performance in the grammar and mechanics assessments results with their writing assessment results.

For the follow up study, in August of 2012 I recruited seven teachers from three different high schools in Georgia to implement my approach with their students to further investigate this problem in an effort to move the approach outside the confines of my own classroom in a quasi-experimental design. The participating teachers administered pre-assessments in grammar and mechanics and writing and then conducted "business as usual" in terms of their grammar and mechanics and instruction for the first semester. In other words, participating teachers did whatever they have normally done with their students in the first (fall semester) in terms of grammar and mechanics instruction. At the mid-point of the year, the participating teachers administered mid-point assessments to ascertain measurements of student improvement in conjunction with the teacher's "business as usual" grammar and mechanics instructional approach in both grammar and mechanics and writing. Then, beginning with the start of second (spring) semester, the participating teachers implemented the instructional treatment (my grammar and mechanics approach), including the instructional framework, formative assessments, and tracking and reflection process with their students. At the conclusion of the semester, they administered post-assessments for both grammar and mechanics and writing to their students.

After collecting the data from the teachers, I conducted a statistical correlation analysis seeking to ascertain whether or not there exists a strong correlation between student performance in the grammar and mechanics assessments results with their writing performance. In addition, I conducted a comparative analysis between the "business as usual" semester with the treatment semester with the intent of investigating if the approach I developed results in statistically

significant correlations with writing improvement when compared to the "business as usual" approach by teachers other than myself. In order to supplement the quantitative data, I also administered a Google survey instrument via email to the participating teachers in an effort to attain some feedback that is qualitative in nature as well, all in effort to inquire if the grammar and mechanics instructional approach I developed is effective in helping students improve as writers.

Sites and Participants of Research

The research on my own 10th and 12th grade classes originated from the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years from a rural-suburban high school (Spearton High School, pseudonym) in Washington State located between Seattle and Tacoma. Spearton HS has about 1500 students and is comprised of about 77% White, 11% Hispanic, 6% multi-race, 3% Asian, and 2% African-American students.

The research in the seven other participating teachers' classrooms took place in three different urban-suburban high schools in the north metro-Atlanta region. There was one participating teacher from Adams High School (pseudonym). Adams HS has over 2300 students with 55% White, 19% Black, 14% Asian, and 8% Hispanic students. There was also one participating teacher from Carson High School (pseudonym). Carson is a brand new high school opened within the last two years, and its population is growing with each passing year as it moves towards full capacity. Currently, it has about 1600 students total, with 62% White, 18% Asian, 9% Black, and 8% Hispanic student demographics. Finally, there were five participating teachers from Nelson High School (Pseudonym). Nelson has about 1950 students, with 47% White, 40% Asian, 7% Black, and 4% Hispanic student demographics.

All of the teachers participating in the follow up study were 9-12th grade public high school English teachers, and all of the student data submitted by the participating teachers was anonymous (in terms of student identity) data submitted by the teachers to me electronically via the emailing of Excel documents at the conclusion of the 2012-2013 school year. The participating students in each of the seven teachers' English classes varied in class-placement designations, ranging from "on-level" to Honors and AP classes. All seven high school teachers voluntarily agreed to participate in the study.

Methods for Preliminary Study

Before describing the methodology of the research for the preliminary study, I feel that it is necessary to preface my explanation by stating that this is a look back at data collected as a teacher in a high school classroom. This was not a carefully controlled experiment with meticulously isolated dependent and independent variables. There are numerous confounding variables. That stated, I do believe that there is still value in taking a look at the data and seeing if it has a story to tell.

For the preliminary study, I went back into my grade book for the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years at Spearton HS and extracted grammar and writing pre- and post-assessment data. For the 2009-1010 school year, I used assessment scores for 74 sophomore students: 30 of those students were in my "Regular" Sophomore English, while 44 were Sophomore Honors English students. Of particular note, the "Regular" group was a group of students who were identified by the administration as struggling students who were designated as being "at-risk" for not passing the state's reading and writing high-stakes assessments, while the "Honors" kids were able to self-select (with parental approval) into the class and generally did so with the aim of either preparing for International Baccalaureate English which begins at 11th grade or for

Running Start which is a program in Washington state that allows students to begin taking dual-credit community college courses their junior year. One way or another, most of the students at the Honors level were there with the intent of preparing to be successful in collegiate level English classes the following year, while the primary focus given to me by the administration with the "Regular" students was more to prepare them to pass the minimum proficiency state assessments.

Then from the 2010-2011 school year, I gathered assessment results from 121 of my students, 58 12th grade College Prep English students and 63 10th grade Honors English students. The Senior College English class was targeted to students who had decided for whatever reason not to enroll in the dual-credit I.B. English class but did intend on enrolling in either a two or four year college following high school; therefore, the primary focus of this class was to prepare students to be successful in a collegiate level English class the following year.

For both the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school year I used the following measures: a Grammar Pre- and Post Test1, Grammar Pre-and Post Test2, and Writing Pre- and Post-Assessments. Both Grammar Pre- and Post-Tests 1 and 2 were the exact same test. In other words I gave the same test as the Pre- and the Post- because I did not use it for instructional purposes at all during the year, just for assessment.

Grammar Pre/Post-Test1 contained 85 total questions and assessed students' knowledge over the following the grammatical concepts:

- quotations vs. underlining/italics,
- Independent/dependent clauses,
- sentence run-ons and fragments,
- colons,
- and apostrophes.

Grammar Pre/Post-Test2 assessed students' knowledge over comma and semi-colon usage and had 68 questions total.

The writing "pre-test" was a district-wide assessment where students were given a literary passage and asked to write a multi-paragraph literary analysis essay about the passage. The Writing "Post Test" for the tenth graders was a literary analysis essay on William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* while for the 12th graders it was a literary analysis essay in response to William Shakespeare's *Hamlet.* Both writing assessments were scored on a rubric containing a 1-4 scale based on the "Six Traits of Writing" (voice, sentence fluency and variety, content and ideas, organization, conventions, and word choice). In order to arrive at a cumulative score for the essays, I, along with the input from one other assessor scored all of the essays. My high school had a "Writing Center" where I was able to ask another certificated, professional educator to score essays with me in an effort to reduce bias and broaden perspective. We each separately scored the essays on a 1-4 scale with pluses and minuses. I equated a + to being a .3 and – to being a -.3. So, for example a 2+ was calculated as 2.3 and a 3- was calculated as 2.7. We scored each of the six traits on a 1-4 scale and then doubled the content and ideas score and divided the total by seven to get a mean "Six-Trait" score that was somewhere between 0.0 - 4.0.

All of the Pre-tests were given to the students the first week on school which was in early September; Grammar Post-Tests 1 and 2 were given in my classroom after completing the instruction of lessons 1-12 as outlined in the instructional framework which was in late November/early December. The Writing "Post-Test" comes from the first literary unit that we finished after completing the entire grammar curriculum lessons 1-14. For the sophomores, this was the *Lord of the Flies* Literary Analysis Essay which was completed and turned in to me in

mid-December to me both in 2009 and 2010 and for the seniors the *Hamle*t Literary Analysis Essay which was also turned in right before the Christmas break in late December.

For the 2010-2011 school year I also decided to incorporate two other measures into the study completely out of curiosity. For my 12th graders I also included the scores from their research papers which were completed towards the end of January 2011 to look into whether the mode or type of writing revealed any interesting or significant differences. I also included in the study for both the 10th and the 12th graders from the 2010-2011 school year a "Post-Assessment" on sentence patters where, after completing the entire grammatical curriculum, I asked them as part of the final I administered at the end of the first semester (January, 2011) to demonstrate their ability to accurately and effectively construct syntactic structures or sentence patterns when given a blank template to do so; for example, one the prompts is below:

IV. Complex Sent Pattern #1

_____ ____ _____.

Dependent Clause **Punctuation** **Ind. Clause**

4._____
_____.

Here the student is asked to demonstrate in a sentence of their own construction that they can correctly and effectively apply and implement the grammatical concepts from the unit which were designed to help students be able to more effectively construct a variety of fluent and grammatically correct sentence types using an enhanced, enlarged, and more varied set of punctuation pieces. Though it is problematic that I did not pre-test for this, I thought it might be interesting to include this information in the study.

Methods for Follow up Study

After examining the results of the initial study, beginning in August of 2012, I was intrigued enough about the results I found that I decided to initiate a quasi-experimental design study to further investigate the efficacy of my instructional approach. According to Gehle (2013), Quasi-experimental designs are designs in which:

> a controlled experiment is carried out in order to determine if there exist statistical similarities within or between groups of subjects. The process requires a pre-test and a post-test of the subjects, and the application of a treatment or condition change. A control group must also be established to make a statistical comparison that helps determine the effectiveness of the treatment or condition applied.

In order to begin the experiment, I visited each of the three Georgia high schools (Adams, Carson, and Nelson, all pseudonyms) detailed previously in order to explain the study and seek English teachers who would be interested in participating in the follow up study.

After procuring the agreement to voluntarily participate in the study from the seven teachers from the three different sites, I the returned to each of the sites in late August of 2012 to meet with the teachers, provide them with the materials and my contact information, and outline the study. During this August meeting, each of the seven teachers that agreed to participate was instructed to administer the pre-assessments in grammar and mechanics, sentence patterns, and a writing assessment of their choosing.

Each of the grammar and mechanics assessments (Pre-, Mid-, and Post-) for the follow-up study contains 90 multiple choice questions on the 9/10th grade test and 85 questions on the 11/12th grade test. There are nine sentence pattern prompts for the 9/10th grade sentence pattern assessment and 13 on the 11/12th grade assessment. I gave teachers the answer key to score the

grammar and mechanics assessments, samples sentence patterns to guide the scoring of the sentence pattern assessments, and instructions to score the writing however they normally do with the only mandate being that the results had to be reported to me on a 1-100 scale. This allowed for the teachers to conduct their classes, including the planning, instruction, and assessment as normally as possible and also allowed the student writing assessments to be scored by the same process by the same person for each assessment period.

The pre-assessments serve as the baseline for the first semester's "business as usual" control-group instruction. After administering the three pre-assessments, the teachers were instructed to institute whatever instructional approach they usually implemented with their students for the entire first semester at the conclusion of which (sometime in mid-December of 2012) they were to administer the mid-point assessments in grammar & mechanics and sentence patterns along with a writing assessment of their choosing. The mid-point assessments were designed to measure the performance of the students over the first semester's time span with the teacher's "business as usual" instructional approach as the impetus, and they serve as the control group for the experiment.

In early December of 2012, I re-visited each of the three sites to meet with the participating teachers to give them the mid-point assessments and to provide guidance in implementing my "treatment" instructional approach. Each of the teachers was provided the instructional framework, formative assessments, post-assessments, and the tracking and reflections sheets to implement with their students. I instructed them to not feel like they were beholden to follow the instructional framework lockstep with the students, but, instead, encouraged them to use the results of the mid-point assessments to drive their instruction of the students. I tried to impart the notion that the instructional framework was not a curriculum that

had to be covered in its entirety, nor did they have to cover each lesson in sequence; instead, I tried to cultivate the idea that they could use the assessment results from the mid-point assessments to ascertain knowledge and skills gaps in their students so that they could differentiate their instruction to work with students to address those gaps by using the instructional framework and formative assessments as tools. Finally, I left the teachers with instructions to administer the post-assessments (which were exactly the same as the pre-assessments for the grammar and mechanics and sentence patterns) to the students as close to the end of the second semester as possible in May of 2013. Each of the seven teachers scored the assessments at each of the three periods and then emailed me the anonymous results at the conclusion of the school year from their classes in Excel documents which I coalesced into the data set for the experiment.

The results from the post-assessments were then used in conjunction with the results from the mid-point assessments to measure the performance of the students over the same time span (a semester) with the same students with my instructional "treatment" approach serving as the impetus for change. This allows for comparisons to be made between the "business as usual" approach (the control group) versus my instructional approach (the treatment) with the same students (549 total), in the same location, with the same teacher, with the same amount of instructional time for both instructional approaches to have been implemented.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

Results and Data Analysis for Preliminary Study

Table 1

Mean raw scores and growth for the 2009-10 school year

	2009-2010			
Measure	**Number**	**Pre-Test Mean**	**Post-Test Mean**	**Growth**
Grammar 1	74	51.15	71.02	+19.87 (+38.84%)
Grammar 2	74	44.25	54.50	+10.25 (+23.16%)
Writing	74	2.17	3.02	+0.85 (+39.17%)

Table 2

Mean raw scores and growth for the 2010-11 school year

	2010-2011			
Measure	**Number**	**Pre-Test Mean**	**Post-Test Mean**	**Growth**
Grammar 1	121	54.18	70.16	+15.98 (+29.49%)
Grammar 2	121	48.99	56.38	+7.39 (15.08%)
Writing	121	2.27	2.7	+0.43 (+18.94%)

Tables 1 and 2 above reveal that students demonstrated gains on each of the assessments in both years of the preliminary study. As indicated in table 1, the mean score for 2009-2010 moved from a score of 51.15 out of 85 (60.17%) on the Grammar Pre-Test 1 to an average Post-Test Score of 71.02 (83.56%), a gain of 19.87 points and 38.84%. On Grammar 2 the students

progressed from Pre-Test average of 44.25 out of 68 (65.07%) to a Post-Test average of 54.50 (80.15%), demonstrating a gain 10.25 points and 23.16%. The Writing assessments reveal that the students moved from a Pre-Test average score of 2.17 on a 4 point scale (54.25%) to a Post-Test average of 3.02 (75.5%) which is a gain of .85 points and 39.17%. In sum, during the 2009-2010 school year the students gained 19.87 points on the Grammar Post-Test1, 10.25 points on Grammar Post-Test2, and .85 points in Writing, improvements of 38.8%, 23.2%, and 39.2% respectively.

As indicated in Table 2 above, during the 2010-2011 school year students moved from a mean score of 54.18 out of 85 (63.74%) on Grammar Pre-Test1 to a mean Post-Test Score of 70.16 (82.54%), a gain of 15.98 points and 29.49%. On the Grammar Part 2 assessment the students progressed from Pre-Test mean score of 48.99 out of 68 (72.04%) to a Post-Test mean of 56.38 (82.91%), a gain of 7.39 points and 15.08%. The Writing "Tests" indicate that the students moved from a Pre-Test mean score of 2.27 on a 4 point scale (56.75%) to a Post-Test mean of 2.7 (67.5%), an increase of 10.75 points and 18.94%. In sum over the 2010-11 school year, the students gained 15.98 points on the Grammar Post-Test1, 7.39 points on Grammar Post-Test2, and .43 points in the Writing process, improvements of 29.5%, 15.1%, and 18.9% respectively.

Gains of 23, 15, and 21 points for the sophomores in my 2009-2010 classes and 19, 11, 11 points for the sophomores and seniors in 2010-11 on the Grammar 1, 2, and Writing Assessments respectively demonstrate growth and learning; however, there are certainly some marked differences between the two years. If I were to speculate, I would guess that the numbers are much higher for the 2009-2010 school year because all of the 74 students were sophomores and 30 of the 74 sophomores were struggling or "at-risk" students, which means

they started from further back, and were, therefore, able to demonstrate more growth thereby causing gains to be larger than those of the 2010-2011 groups which was comprised of 58 twelfth-grade College Prep and 63 tenth-grade Honors English students. Another distinction of note between the two years is that many of the 58 twelfth-grade students had previously had me as their teacher during their sophomore years. It is my belief that this is a large reason why the pre-assessment mean scores were a fair amount higher, thereby leaving less room for student to demonstrate growth.

Correlations were also computed between the three measures for both pre-tests and post-tests. These correlations are summarized below in Table 3 for 2009-2010 and in Table 4 for 2010-2011 below.

Table 3

Correlations between pre-test and post-test results for 2009-2010

	Measures					
Measures	**Gram 1 Pre-test**	**Gram 2 Pre-Test**	**Writing Pre-Test**	**Gram 1 Post-Test**	**Gram 2 Post-Test**	**Writing Post-Test**
Gram 1 Pre	1	.664**	.319*	.633**		
Gram 2 Pre	664**	1	.433**		.645**	
Writing Pre	.319*	.433**	1			**.245**
Gram 1 Post	.633**			1	.654**	**.442****
Gram 2 Post		.645**		.654**	1	**.437****
Writing Post			.245	.442**	.437**	1

Table 4

Correlations between pre-test and post-test results for 2010-2011

Measures								
Measures	Gram1 Pre-test	Gram2 Pre-Test	Writing Pre-Test	Gram1 Post-Test	Gram2 Post-Test	Sent Pattern Post-Test	Writing Post Test(Lit. Analysis)	Writing Post-Test (Research)
Gram 1 Pre	1	.640**	.428**	.618**		.294**		
Gram 2 Pre	.640**	1	.515**		.699**	.285**		
Writing Pre	.428**	.515**	1			.114		.393**
Gram 1 Post	.618**			1	.606**	.559**	**.527****	**.453****
Gram 2 Post		.699**		.606**	1	.255**	**.532****	**.409****
Sent Patt Post	.294**	.285**	.114	**.559****	.255**	1	.284	.295**
Writing Post (Lit. Analysis)				.527**	.532**	.284	1	.563**
Writing Post(Research)			.393**	.453**	.409**	.295**	.563**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

As I previously mentioned, for the 2010-11 school year, I added in the Sentence Pattern Post-Test component for which I only gave the post-assessment. I did not administer a pre-assessment to my students that year because I was still developing my approach at that time, but on the post-assessment students attained a mean score of 7.98 out of a possible 9.0 (88.66%). I included this measure because I was interested in looking into the correlations that exist between students' demonstrated mastery of sentence patterns and their writing performance.

The correlations in tables 3 and 4 present intriguing information. With r= .5 being regarded as a moderately strong to strong correlation, as indicated in table 3 for the 2009-2010 school year there is a moderately strong correlation with how the students performed on the Writing Post-Test and how they performed on the Grammar Post-Tests with r=.442 for Grammar Post-Test1 and r= .437 for Grammar Post-Test2, while there is an intriguing low correlation (r=

.245) with how they performed on the Pre-Writing Assessment to the Post-Writing Assessment. This number indicates that there is no clear relationship between how students performed on the Pre-Writing Assessment to how they performed on the Post-, which is different than I would have expected. Typically, I would have expected a strong relationship between how students performed on a writing assessment at the start of the year to one at the end of the year, but this was not the case.

As shown in table 4, for the 2010-2011 school year the correlations with the Writing Post-Tests also divulge interesting results. The Literary Analysis Writing Post-Assessment has a strong to moderately strong correlation (r= .527) with both Grammar Post-Test1 and Grammar Post-Test2 (r= .532), while the Writing Pre-Assessment has a moderately low correlation (r= .393) with the Research Paper Writing Post-Assessment. The data also reveal that for both the 2009-2010 (r= .319 and r= .433) and the 2010-2011 (r= .393 and r= .515) school years the Grammar Pre-Test 1 & 2 scores have a moderately strong to strong correlation with the Writing Pre-Assessment scores and that there is, in particular, a stronger correlation between Grammar Pre-Test 2 (comma and semi-colon usage) and the Writing Pre-Assessment with correlations of r= .433 in 2009-2010 and r= .515 for 2010-2011. The Sentence Pattern Post-Assessment proved to have low correlations with all of the assessments with the exception of the Grammar Post-Test 1 (r=.559). I think the lower than expected correlations are a result of the students scoring so highly on the assessment with students mean scores being 7.98 out of 9 (88.6%). Analysis also reveals that for 2009-2010 school year Grammar Post-Test 1 & 2 scores are statistically positively related with the Writing Post-Assessment scores (r= .442 and r= .437) with even stronger correlations for the 2010-2011 Literary Analysis Writing Post-Assessment with r= .527 and r= .532. This indicates that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between

Grammar Post-Test (both parts 1 and 2) and the Writing Post-Assessment scores. In summation there is a strong correlation with the scores earned by students on the Grammar and Writing Post-Assessments.

Consequently, because of the strong correlational relationship between the grammar and writing assessment results, I felt somewhat confident in answering my first research question that the grammar and mechanics instructional approach I developed was reasonably effective in successfully helping my students improve as writers. I concluded that there did seem to be a sufficient amount of evidence that the grammatical instructional approach I developed and used with my students did have a positive, significant impact on my students' performance and improvement as writers. This conclusion was far from certain in my mind though, and I was certainly left with far more questions than answers.

There are so many confounding variables and problems in this preliminary study, as it was admittedly a very flawed, retrospective inquiry to begin with. Was it actually the instructional approach that helped students improve or was it natural student growth and maturity, the writing topic and student interest in it, innate student characteristics, other content, curriculum, and/or approaches I used as a teacher? Was it my own grading biases as a teacher subconsciously validating my own instruction while grading? Whatever the case, I felt like the results were interesting and significant enough to warrant a more thorough research inquiry. The present study the form of a quasi-experimental design that took my instructional approach and put it in the hands of other teachers in varying contexts with a treatment group for comparison.

Results and Data Analysis for Follow up Study

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std
G&M Pre	549	17	88	64.55	11.80
SP Pre	549	0	13	5.83	2.40
Wrt Pre	549	50	100	80.57	8.40
G&M Mid	549	22	88	65.38	11.93
SP Mid	549	0	13	6.60	2.21
Wrt Mid	549	50	100	81.97	8.66
G&M Post	549	20	90	71.88	12.29
SP Post	549	0	13	7.49	2.10
Wrt Post	549	50	100	84.41	8.44

Note: G&M=Grammar & Mechanics Assessment; SP=Sentence Pattern Assessment; Wrt=Writing Assessment

Table 2

Gain scores

Assessment	Median Score	Gain
Gram & Mechanics Pre	64.55	
Gram & Mechanics Mid	65.38	.83
Gram & Mechanics Post	71.88	6.50
Sentence Pattern Pre	5.83	
Sentence Pattern Mid	6.60	.77
Sentence Pattern Post	7.49	.89
Writing Pre	80.57	
Writing Mid	81.97	1.40
Writing Post	84.41	2.44

As indicated on table one above, the results of the follow-up study reveal the 549 students belonging to seven different teachers from three different high schools spread across ninth through twelfth grade began the school year with a mean score of 64.55 on the Grammar and Mechanics Pre-Test (out of 90 for 9/10th grade; 85 for 11/12th grade), a 5.83 out of 9 (for ninth and tenth graders) or 13 possible (for eleventh and twelfth graders) in Sentence Patterns, and an 80.57 out of 100 for the Writing Pre-Assessment. At the mid-point of the school year, with each teacher's "business as usual" approach serving as the instructional base, the students' mean scores moved to 65.38 on Grammar & Mechanics, 6.60 on Sentence Patterns, and 81.23 on Writing. As shown on table 2, these scores represent gains of .83 points in Grammar and Mechanics, 0.77 points in Sentence Patterns, and 1.4 points in Writing.

At the end of the second semester with my instructional approach serving as the instructional base, as shown on table 1, the mean scores increased to 71.88 in Grammar and Mechanics, 7.49 in Sentence Patterns, and 84.41 in Writing. As indicated on table 2 above, the scores represent gains of 6.50 points in Grammar and Mechanics, .89 points in Sentence Patterns, and 2.44 points in Writing from the mid-point assessment results. Consequently, in comparing the two time periods, students demonstrated gains of 5.67 points more on the grammar and mechanics assessments, .12 points more on the sentence pattern assessments, and 1.04 points more on the writing assessments over the span of second (treatment) semester when compared to the first (control group) semester.

Table 3

Correlations

	GMPre	SPPre	WrtPre	GMMid	SPMid	WrtMid	GMPost	SPPost	WrtPost
GMPre	1	.594**	**.443****	.861**	.585**	.471**	.822**	.478**	.493**
SPPre	.594**	1	**.344****	.602**	.749**	.297**	.473**	.607**	.360**
WrtPre	.443**	.344**	1	.436**	.351**	.646**	.456**	.349**	.650**
GMMid	.861**	.602**	.436**	1	.590**	**.441****	.799**	.476**	.474**
SPMid	.585**	.749**	.351**	.590**	1	**.353****	.539**	.688**	.423**
WrtMid	.471**	.297**	.646**	.441**	.353**	1	.551**	.396**	.685**
GMPost	.822**	.473**	.456**	.799**	.539**	.551**	1	.523**	**.563****
SPPost	.478**	.607**	.349**	.476**	.688**	.396**	.523**	1	**.492****
WrtPost	.493**	.360**	.650**	.474**	.423**	.685**	.563**	.492**	1
N	549	549	549	549	549	549	549	549	549

Notes: GM=Grammar and Mechanics; SP=Sentence Patterns; Wrt=Writing
***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

A correlation analysis also reveals noteworthy information. With r= .5 being regarded as a moderately strong to strong correlation, as indicated in table three above, there are interesting differences in the correlations between the grammar and mechanics and sentence pattern assessments with the writing assessments at each of the three assessment junctures. At the pre-assessment point, the correlation between the Grammar and Mechanics Pre-Assessment and the Writing Pre-Assessment is r=.443; it is r=.344 between the Sentence Pattern Pre- and the Writing Pre-. At the mid-point, with each teacher's "business as usual" approach serving as the instructional impetus, there were gains of .83 points in Grammar and Mechanics, 0.77 points in Sentence Patterns, and 1.4 points in Writing. The correlation between the Grammar and

Mechanics Mid-point Assessment and the Writing Mid-point Assessment is r=.441; for the Sentence Pattern Mid-point Assessment and Writing Mid-point Assessment it is r=.353. Finally, on the Post-assessments, with my "treatment" approach serving as the instructional impetus with gains of 6.50 points in Grammar and Mechanics, .89 points in Sentence Patterns, and 2.44 points in Writing respectively, the correlation between the Grammar and Mechanics Post-Assessment and the Writing Post-Assessment is r=.563; for the Sentence Pattern Mid-point Assessment and Writing Mid-point Assessment it is r=.492.

As previously noted, given that the students demonstrated gains of 5.67 points more on the grammar and mechanics assessments, .12 points more on the sentence pattern assessments, and 1.04 points more on the writing assessments over the span of the second (treatment) semester compared to the first (control) semester combined with stronger positive correlations between the assessment results in grammar and mechanics and sentence patterns to writing indicates that students demonstrated greater gains over the second semester time-span when compared to the first. It also demonstrates that there is a stronger positive relationship between the assessments over that time span as well. In sum, students improved more as writers over the second semester compared to the first, and there is a stronger positive correlational relationship between their improvement as writers and their improvement on the grammar and mechanics and sentence pattern mastery.

In addition a regression analysis was also computed to address the question: "How much of the variation in writing assessment results can be explained by the grammar and mechanics and sentence pattern assessments?" Analyses were conducted for each time point as shown below.

For the Pre-tests, 19.70% of the variation in Writing can be explained by Grammar and Mechanics (GM), $F(1, 547)=133.83$, $p<.01$. Further, 1.0 % of the variation in Writing can be explained by Sentence Patterns (SP) $F(1, 546)=6.86$, $p<.01$. Therefore, GM and SP are statistically significant predictors for writing based on the F-test.

For the Mid-point tests, 19.40% of the variation in Writing can be explained by GM, $F(1, 547)=131.86$, $p<.01$ and 1.30% of the variation in Writing can be explained by SP for Pre-test, $F(1, 546)=9.17$, $p<.01$. Therefore, GM and SP are statistically significant predictors for writing as well at the mid-point juncture.

For the Post-tests, 31.70% variation in writing can be explained by GM, $F(1, 547)=254.24$, $p<.01$ and 5.40% variation in writing can be explained by SP for Pre-test, $F(1, 546)=46.71$, $p<.01$. GM and SP are statistically significant predictors for writing, and the p-value for the SP is smaller than the pre- and mid- tests. These results provide additional support for the aforementioned conclusion that the Writing scores have a stronger positive relationship with Grammar and Mechanics and Sentence Patterns at the Post-test point then at the Pre- and Mid-test points.

I also wanted to examine the differences between the time points. A repeated-measures ANOVA test was conducted for the grammar and mechanics (GM), sentence pattern (SP), and writing assessments (Wrt) respectively in an effort to see if there is significant difference among three time points – Pre-, Mid-, and Post-. The results are in table four below.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Grammar and Mechanics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
GMPre	64.546	11.7988	549
GMMid	65.383	11.9304	549
GMPost	71.882	12.2883	549

The descriptive statistics suggest that the student performance on the grammar and mechanics assessments (GM scores) increased from Pre- to Mid- and from Mid- to Post-. The repeated measure ANOVA F test examines whether there is statistically significant differences among the three time points. The Greenhouse-Geisser is $F(1.897, 1039.505)=353.804$, $<.01$, and the effect size is 0.392. The effect size is considered large, which suggests the increases among the three time points on GM may be meaningful.

The same analyses were also conducted for Sentence Patterns and Writing and are contained in tables 5 and 6 below.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for Sentence Patterns

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
SPPre	5.834	2.3952	549
SPMid	6.603	2.2120	549
SPPost	7.490	2.0967	549

The descriptive statistics suggest that the students' performance on sentence pattern assessments (SP) increased from Pre- to Mid- and from Mid- to Post-. The repeated measure ANOVA F test examines whether there are statistically significant differences among three time points. The Greenhouse-Geisser is $F(1.874, 1027.028)=234.597$, $<.01$, and the effect size is 0.3. The effect size is large, which ensured the increase among the three time points for SP.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for Writing

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
WrtPre	80.566	8.4006	549
WrtMid	81.973	8.6631	549
WrtPost	84.406	8.4446	549

The descriptive statistics suggest that the students' performance on the writing assessments (Wrt) increased from Pre- to Mid- and from Mid- to Post-. The repeated measure ANOVA F test examines whether there are statistically significant differences among three time points. The Greenhouse-Geisser is $F(2, 1096)=84.28$, $<.01$, and the effect size is 0.133. The effect size is nearly large, which ensured the increase among the three time points for Wrt.

The Cronbach's alpha was used to evaluate the internal consistency of each test, and the reliability coefficient for Grammar and Mechanics test (GM) is .935, for Sentence Patterns it is .864, and for Writing it is .853. Each of these fall in the "Excellent" to "Good" range.

In analyzing at the differences between the two time periods, growth in writing increases faster than the sentence patterns but much slower than the grammar and mechanics when comparing the gains in student performance from first semester to second. A highly influential factor in this result is the fact that there are significant differences in the number possible to

demonstrate gain in the three assessments types: In the grammar and mechanics assessment there are 90 (9-10th grade) and 85 (11-12th grade) points possible, and on the writing assessments students are scored on a scale of 0-100, while on the sentence patterns assessments students only had nine (9-10th grade) and 13 (11-12th grade) points possible to demonstrate growth. This obviously means that comparisons in growth between the three different assessment types will divulge very different results.

For example, in the first semester on the grammar and mechanics assessments, the students' raw score mean was a 65.38 on the mid-point assessment while their mean on the post-assessment was a 71.88; meanwhile, their gain score was 0.84 points (about 1.3% improvement) while their gain in second semester was 6.5 points (just under 10% improvement). On the writing assessments, the mid-point raw mean score was 81.97 with a gain of 1.41 points (1.7% improvement) while on the post-assessment the mean raw score was 84.41 with a gain of 2.43 points (3% improvement). On the sentence pattern assessments, with the smaller points possible, the same comparison reveals that the students' mean score was 6.6 at the mid-point with a gain of 0.77 (13.2%) while on the post-assessment their mean was a 7.49 with a gain of 0.89 (13.5%). This analysis reveals that while the raw and gain scores appear to be much larger and more significant for grammar and mechanics, the conclusion is somewhat skewed because, in fact, the most growth, percentage-wise, actually took place on the sentence pattern assessments. Looking at the results in this manner, I believe this helps shed light on the discrepancies in the assessment results between the grammar and mechanics and writing assessments versus the sentence pattern assessments. The far fewer number of points possible on the sentence pattern assessments makes some of the results a bit misleading when compared to the other two assessment types.

In summing up the quantitative analysis, the correlation between students' grammar and mechanics and sentence pattern performance with their performance on the writing assessments increased significantly at post-test juncture, and the variations of performance in writing that can be explained by grammar and mechanics and sentence patterns also increased at post-test juncture as well when compared to the pre- and mid-point assessments. The repeated sample ANOVA tests, on one hand, indicate that all test scores increase as time goes on (from pre- to mid-, from mid- to post); however, the results also reveal that the treatment approach (my instructional approach) does significantly increase grammar and mechanics and writing scores at 0.05 alpha level. And while this significance does not hold for the sentence sentence-pattern assessments, I do believe, as explained in the paragraph above, that the small number of points possible on the sentence pattern assessments plays a highly influential role in this conclusion.

Qualitative Data Results

As a follow up to the study in an effort to gather some qualitative data, I administered a Google survey to each of the seven teachers involved in the study via an email link. Six of the seven teachers responded. The survey contained 12 questions and is below:

Chris Clayton's Grammar & Mechanics and Writing Research Questions

This is a series of questions designed to qualitatively investigate the effects of the language strand instructional approach developed by Chris Clayton which you implemented in the second semester of the 2012-2013 school year.

1. Would you describe the instructional approach you used to teach the language strand (i.e.grammar and writing mechanics) first semester?

2. How was the instructional approach of 2nd semester similar and how was it different from how you taught the language strand component of the curriculum in the 1st semester?

3. Could you describe how you used and implemented the intervention in your teaching 2nd semester with your students?

4. What percentage of time would you say you dictated to the language strand component 1st semester and why?

5. What percentage of time would you say you dictated to the language strand component 2nd semester and why?

6. What do you see as the effects of the control (1ST semester's) instructional approach?

- Students wrote with more grammatically correct sentences
- Students wrote with greater sentence variety
- Students able to write more articulate products
- Students liked writing more
- Students able to write quickly and/or efficiently
- Students more likely to write on own
- Allowed you as teacher to conference with students in a more specific and informed manner about their writing
- Students' performance on standardized assessments improved
- Students' grammar and syntax knowledge improved
- Students' writing fluency increased
- Students' voice in writing became more lively, distinctive, personal, and/or articulate
- Enhanced Students' ability to write effectively in academic voice
- Students able to effectively use an increased variety grammatically correct sentences with a greater variety of punctuation structures
- Other:

7. What do you see as the effects of the control (2ND semester's) instructional approach?

- Students wrote with more grammatically correct sentences
- Students wrote with greater sentence variety
- Students able to write more articulate products
- Students liked writing more
- Students able to write quickly and/or efficiently
- Students more likely to write on own
- Allowed you as teacher to conference with students in a more specific and informed manner about their writing
- Students' performance on standardized assessments improved
- Students' grammar and syntax knowledge improved
- Students' writing fluency increased
- Students' voice in writing became more lively, distinctive, personal, and/or articulate
- Enhanced Students' ability to write effectively in academic voice

- Students able to effectively use an increased variety grammatically correct sentences with a greater variety of punctuation structures
- Other:

8. In your estimation, what do you think the primary outcome for your students was resulting from your 1st semester language strand instructional approach?

9. In your estimation, what do you think the primary outcome for your students was resulting from the 2nd semester language strand instructional approach?

10. On a 1-10 scale (with 1 being lowest and 10 being highest) how effective do you think your 1st Semester language strand Instructional approach was in terms of improving the foundational aspects of your students' writing?

11. On a 1-10 scale (with 1 being lowest and 10 being highest) how effective do you think the 2ND Semester language (intervention) strand Instructional approach was in terms of improving the foundational aspects of your students' writing?

12. Finally, which language strand instructional approach would you prefer to implement with your students next year, given the choice--your 1ST Semester (Control) or 2nd Semester (Intervention)?

The comprehensive summary of results for the survey are contained in appendix F.

In analyzing the anonymous results of the survey, it does appear that the vast majority of the six teachers that responded to the survey generally instituted an “in-context” of writing approach to their grammar and mechanics instruction. For example, one teacher said his/her first semester grammar and mechanics instruction “was embedded within their writing instruction” and that “students got feedback on essays regarding their performance and things to work on for improvement” and that he/she “occasionally taught mini-lessons on areas of need.” This “in-context” approach appears to be the primary grammar and mechanics instructional approach that comprises the “business-as-usual” comparison semester, though there does, according to the anonymous responses from the teachers, appear to be a great deal of variation in what the “in-context” approach looks like. Some teachers took “points off” for grammatical errors in essays

while others tried to provide “targeted instruction” and “sentence exercises” for students based on identification of errors within writing assignments.

When asked about differences between first semester with their own approach and second semester with the “treatment” instructional approach, several noted that the “treatment approach” of second semester was “more systemic” and “structured.” One also noted that it required “more time” and “covered grammar” from “top to bottom.” In addition, most noted a bit of an increase in time dedicated to covering grammar and mechanics from first semester to second semester. Another teacher remarked that he/she felt that s/he was “required to” devote more instructional time to grammar and mechanics instruction “by this program.” This reflection appears to be a failure to either communicate clearly on my part or a lack of understanding on his/hers that there was no “requirement” for her to cover the “program” in its entirety. As I stated earlier, my instructions to the teachers were to use the assessments, instructional framework, and tracking and reflection mechanisms to determine what their students needed based on the results of the diagnostic assessments and differentiate their instruction accordingly. Clearly, this teacher did not understand or recall this direction. Perhaps, this misunderstanding is a shortcoming of my not being more present throughout the semester.

When looking at questions six and seven, there were some interesting differences revealed by what the teachers observed in the outcomes of students’ written products from first to second semester. In the first semester, with the teacher’s “business-as-usual” approach, more teachers felt like they could “conference with students in a more specific and informed manner about their writing,” and more teachers felt like their approach “enhanced students’ ability to write effectively in an academic voice.” In contrast, in accordance with the second semester “treatment” approach, more teachers felt like their students “wrote with greater sentence variety”

and "effectively used an increased variety of grammatically correct sentence with a great variety of punctuation structures." Also noteworthy was that five of the six teachers indicated that they felt like their students "grammar and syntax knowledge improved" compared to three with the first semester approach.

In looking at question 10 and 11 where each of the teachers was asked to rank on a 1-10 scale the efficacy of the approaches "in terms of improving the foundational aspects of your students' writing," the average score of for first semester was a 5.5 while the average score for the second semester "treatment" approach as 5.67. Though they are extremely close, I do find it interesting that the second semester approach was slightly higher given that the first semester is the teacher's own approach. I expected teachers to staunchly defend their own approach, but they seemed to see merit and weaknesses in both of the approaches and did provide a slightly higher score to the treatment approach which surprises me.

Lastly, on question 12, when asked which approach they would implement next year, three of the six said they would stick with their own approach, one indicated they would prefer to use the "treatment" approach and two responded that they would want to use aspects of the two combined.

In thinking about the qualitative data revealed by the survey results, I expected that the teachers would prefer and defend their own approaches, which a few did. I think it is the nature of teaching and human beings in general to justify the way we do things. However, that stated, I was surprised by the comments and reflections of some about trying a new and different approach. For example, one teacher remarked that his/her students "gained a better understanding of grammar terms and overall applications," and she continued that "Their syntax improved and they increased on standardized tests," though they "did not enjoy the one size fits

all approach to the lessons though." He/she remarked that they "plan to blend the two methods next year" and to "apply more of a differentiated approach after a diagnostic test."

Consequently, in looking at this remark and several like it from other teachers, the biggest issue I wish I could go back in time to clarify and re-emphasize with the teachers if I had the chance to do it all over again is that it was and absolutely is my intention that should be exactly the approach that should be used by teachers. In no way did I want or do I currently think that teachers should implement my approach in a prescriptive and regimented manner with a scope and sequence that is to be strictly followed. It was and is my intention that based on the results of diagnosis using the assessments teachers should utilize the instructional framework and formative assessments as resources to differentiate their instruction in an effort to provide the skill set instruction needed by their specific students.

In reflecting on the quasi-experimental design, I feel like a lack of clarity and understanding on this aspect is one of the biggest shortcomings of the experiment. Perhaps, if I had been able to conduct more frequent and systematic visits to each of the seven teachers through the process, this misunderstanding could have been avoided, but as a full-time school district employee and student myself, this was just not feasible. I wish that it would have been, as it may have improved both the results and experience for all involved, including the students and the teachers.

Conclusion

In addressing my second and final guiding question for my research, it is my opinion that based on all of the evidence detailed above, including both the quantitative (which is far more clear and favorable) and the qualitative (which is much murkier and less favorable) components, that the grammar and mechanics instructional approach I developed over the course of my

decade-long teaching career does hold promise in being "beneficial" and "effective" in helping other teachers' students improve as writers, though I certainly do still feel like I am left with many more questions than answers. As noted in the results above, even though there did seem to be a lack of clarity in how my instructional approach was to implemented by some of the teachers, there was a marked and significant improvement in student performance in all three areas (grammar & mechanics, sentence patterns, and writing) when comparing the results from first semester to second, and of particular importance, students had about twice as much gain in their writing scores in the second semester when compared to the first. With 549 students spread out among seven teachers, I feel reasonably confident and gratified that my approach may have been integral in helping students improve as writers. As a teacher, that was always my main focus, and though I am certainly left with a lot of questions and feel like there are a number of things that I could have done differently or better in the experiment, I am thrilled that this process may have very well contributed to students in other teachers' classes improving as writers.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATION OF THE RESEARCH

There are a couple of key issues one must consider when examining this research project. The concepts of internal validity and construct validity must be examined. According to Trochim (2006) internal validity is a conception which questions "whether observed changes can be attributed to your program or intervention (i.e., the cause) and not to other possible causes (sometimes described as "alternative explanations" for the outcome)." He explains that internal validity means "that you have evidence that what you did in the study (i.e., the program) caused what you observed (i.e., the outcome) to happen." Another key issue to consider is the concept of construct validity, which refers to "the degree to which inferences can legitimately be made from the operationalizations in your study to the theoretical constructs on which those operationalizations were based."

In terms of internal and construct validity, there is a multitude of questions that can be raised in examining my research as to whether it was "the treatment" (my instructional approach implemented in varying ways by seven different teachers in three different high school settings) that caused the outcomes of the experiment to happen. Was the improvement in students' writing performance in the second semester a result of the treatment or are there reasonably plausible alternate explanations for the outcome? Was it, instead, perhaps something the teachers themselves did or innately possessed? Was it the essence of the writing assignments themselves that fostered improved performance? Were there discrepancies in the teachers' grading of the writing assignments? Or, perhaps, did it have more to do with the pedagogy

underlying the treatment with its emphasis on formative instructional practices, feedback, and meta-cognition than the actual treatment itself? I am not sure any of these questions can be accurately answered by this experiment with its quasi-experimental design. This shortcoming in design is one of the inherent differences differences between experimental and quasi-experimental designs, for as Gehle (2013) explains, because "quasi-experimental designs do not use random assignment of participants to the experimental and control groups," the resulting inherent danger due to the groups not being randomly assigned is that "they may not be equivalent." Consequently, the researcher "must be aware of potential issues with validity," cautioning that the "result of these issues may be, at the worst, a false conclusion that claims the conditions did or did not have a significant effect when in truth the opposite was true." Both of these issues related to validity must be kept in mind when examining this research, as it is indelibly an inherent flaw of both this research in particular and quasi-experimental designs in general.

Summary of the Research

My research unfolded in two waves. First, in a preliminary study, I investigated and analyzed the data from my last two years in the classroom in Washington state (2009-10, 2010-11) as a high school English teacher with my own students, totaling 179 over the two-year span. I culled together data points which include my students' pre-, mid-, and post-assessment data for both my grammar and mechanics approach and formal writing assignments and then conducted a statistical correlation analysis seeking to ascertain whether or not there exists a strong correlation between student performance in the grammar and mechanics assessments results with their writing assessment results in effort to analyze if the grammar and mechanics approach may have helped foster writing improvement.

Once I determined that there did appear to be promising results with my own students, I conducted a follow up study to see if the approach would work with other teachers implementing it. Consequently, I constructed and implemented a quasi-experimental design follow-up study, where in August of 2012 I recruited seven teachers from three different high schools in metro-Atlanta, Georgia to implement my approach with a cumulative total of 549 students to further investigate the efficacy of my grammar and mechanics instructional approach in helping students improve as writers.

The seven participating teachers administered pre-assessments in grammar and mechanics and writing and then conducted "business as usual" in terms of their grammar and mechanics instruction for the first semester. At the mid-point of the year, the participating teachers administered mid-point assessments to ascertain measurements of student improvement in conjunction with the teacher's "business as usual" grammar and mechanics instructional approach in both grammar and mechanics and writing. Then, beginning with the start of second (spring) semester, the participating teachers implemented the instructional treatment (my grammar and mechanics approach), including the instructional framework, formative assessments, and tracking and reflection process with their students. At the conclusion of the semester, they administered post-assessments for both grammar and mechanics and writing to their students.

The results of the study reveal that students did demonstrate tremendous growth on the grammar and mechanics assessments when exposed to my instructional approach, which is to be expected because the assessments are highly aligned to the instructional framework I developed; however, of more importance is that students, despite reservations revealed by many of the teachers via a post-experiment survey in implementing an instructional approach that they did

not design or have any ownership stake in, did demonstrate approximately twice as much growth in writing achievement when exposed to my approach as compared to the semester where the teacher delivered their own approach. This growth was measured on writing assessments designed and evaluated by the teachers themselves, and it compares the same students over the same time-period (a semester), with the same teacher. And, in addition, the students writing scores have a stronger positive correlational relationship with grammar and mechanics and sentence pattern assessment results at the post-test point then at either the pre- or mid-test points. This means not only did the students improve by a about twice as much in their writing performance from first to second semester but that there is a much stronger correlation with their performance on the grammar and mechanics assessments in the second semester than the first. Though certainly not causational, this stronger correlation is another compelling aspect in helping to conclude that my instructional approach does indeed appear to be beneficial and more effective in helping to students improve as writers when compared to other common grammar and mechanics instructional approaches employed out there by high school English teachers across the country today.

Implications of Study

As noted in the review of literature earlier, there is tremendous disagreement and disharmony in what constitutes best-practices in grammar and mechanics instruction in the field of ELA pedagogy. There are a great many teachers and academics who believe that direct, prescriptive grammar and mechanics instructional approaches connected to what has reified into a concept known as Traditional School Grammar (TSG) is not only intrinsically important for students to receive but is also highly effective in helping students improve as writers and students. While on the other side of the ledger there exists an equally staunch faction that

dogmatically proclaims all vestiges of TSG should be eradicated from the classroom and that the only grammar and mechanics instruction that students should receive must be "in context" with their writing. While some say TSG instruction still wields intrinsic value as an academic subject in of itself, others contend that the only value that any grammar instruction has is in its ability to help students write more effectively. Perhaps this study, and others like it, can help contribute to the discussion and further research into to notion that perhaps there is a middle-ground in this debate. It might also help other teachers think through their own instructional approaches to grammar and mechanics, and, perhaps, more thoughtfully and thoroughly consider the underlying purpose, rationale, and intended outcomes for their own grammar instructional approaches. Lastly, perhaps this research might make some small contribution to the centuries' long debate as to how to best help students grow and develop as writers. Though certainly far from perfect, it is my sincere hope that this research might further the often dichotomous and factionalized discourse on the murky and often disconcerting topic of grammar instruction and on the best practices for helping students grow and improve as writers.

Suggested Research

Because this study was conducted under the pragmatic constraints of being a full-time district level administrator, student, and parent, there are number of ways that this research could be extended upon and/or improved. As noted earlier, I think the study would certainly be strengthened if were to be conducted in a manner that was not of a quasi-experimental design. Because quasi-experimental designs do not use random assignment of participants, there are the endemic aforementioned concerns about internal and construct validity. Perhaps, in a future study, a researcher could design an experiment which might address these concerns.

Another way this research may be strengthened is by more frequent and systematic visits with the teacher and classroom observations. Observing the teachers and the students in the classroom during both the first and second semesters would strengthen the research tremendously. If I had been able to do so, I would have much stronger anecdotal qualitative data in terms of understanding the teachers' different "business as usual" approaches and how the students reacted and experienced both approaches. In addition, I would have also been able to more effectively explain and clarify the use of the treatment approach for the participating teachers. Had I been able to be present more often, it may have helped to ensure that teachers felt comfortable in using the approach in conjunction with both the grammar/mechanics and writing assessments. This may have allowed the teachers to use and more fully implement the approach with its intended diagnostic and formative features.

Additionally, one possibility that occurred to me after the fact would be to specifically include and keep track of the scoring of the domain "conventions" in connection with the writing assessments. I believe that by including student scores in conventions or something of its ilk such as "sentence fluency," might help to strengthen the investigation into the link between improvement in grammar and mechanics to improvement in writing. It would be very interesting to see the connections and correlations between students' improvements in grammar and mechanics to conventions to writing assessments, and if I were going to conduct further research in this area, I would certainly want to include this variable in the inquiry.

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Appendix A. 11/12th Grade Grammar and Mechanics and Sentence Pattern Pre- and Post-Assessment.

Grammar, Mechanics, & Syntactic Skill 11/12 Assessment

I. Choose the letter of the correctly punctuated sentences.

1. a. The movie 88 Minutes received poor reviews from the "Seattle Times".
   b. The movie 88 Minutes received poor reviews in the Seattle Times.
   c. The movie "88 Minutes" received poor review in the Seattle Times.
   d. None of the above

2. a. The poem Roads is from the book *Shining Hour.*
   b. The poem Roads is from the book "Shining Hour"
   c. The poem "Roads" is from the book "Shining Hour".
   d. None of the above

3. a. I read this crazy article called "Bone Theory" in "Newsweek" yesterday.
   b. I read this crazy article called Bone Theory in Newsweek yesterday.
   c. I read this crazy article called "Bone Theory" in *Newsweek* yesterday.
   d. d. None of the above

4. a. The song "Black" on Pearl Jam's album Ten is my favorite.
   b. The song *Black* on Pearl Jam's album Ten is my favorite.
   c. The song "Black" on Pearl Jam's album "Ten" is my favorite.
   d. None of the above

5. a. Sam Rosenstein wrote about William Shakespeare's play "Romeo and Juliet" in his article called "Star-Crossed Lovers" in *Literary Magazine Weekly*.
   b. Sam Rosenstein wrote about William Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet* in his article called "Star-Crossed Lovers" in *Literary Magazine Weekly*.
   c. Sam Rosenstein wrote about William Shakespeare's play "Romeo and Juliet" in his article called Star-Crossed Lovers in Literary Magazine Weekly.
   d. None of the above

II. *Directions: Mark "A" if the underlined phrase is a Prepositional Phrase; mark "B" if it is a Participial Phrase; mark "C" if it is an Infinitive Phrase; mark "D" if it is a Gerund Phrase.*

6. Crying and sobbing deeply, Madison tried to gather herself.
7. Samantha found her phone in the bottom of her backpack.
8. Crushed by the news, Jason withdrew from school that day.
9. Foreshadowing the climax of the film is the purpose of the unmarked grave shown at the very beginning of the movie.
10. Scott's goal is to become the President of the United States.

III. Mark "A" if the underlined clause is an <u>Independent Clause</u> or "B" if it is a <u>Dependent Clause</u>.

11. <u>Because I was late to school today</u>, I got a tardy.

12. <u>I was happy</u> when I got an A.

13. <u>Many fans wept</u> when the Seahawks lost the game.

14. Businesses were forced to close their doors <u>when the floods came</u>.

15. <u>The plot is strange</u>, yet the book is considered a masterpiece.

16. <u>I am exhausted</u>; however, I am dominating this final because of my superior skill.

17. Bob was cleared of all charges <u>after the jury found him innocent</u>.

18. <u>It rained</u>.

19. <u>Go to the office!</u>

20. <u>After the unbelievably traumatic event</u>, the community was still able to rally and rebuild.

IV. For each of the blanks mark "A" if a comma is required, "B" for a semicolon, "C" if no punctuation is required.

Bill Gaines **21**__ our principal __**22** called a faculty meeting this morning __**23** however __**24** he forgot to tie his shoes. At the faculty meeting__**25** he wound up falling on his tushy. After this happened __**26** everyone began to laugh __**27** cry __**28** and __**29** snort liquids out of their noses __**30** with extreme laughter. There were several loud __**31** boisterous __**32** teachers on the floor laughing __**33** they could not help it. While all of this was going on __**34** I was busy writing this assessment __**35** for I was focused on my task. At the end of the day around five o' clock __**36** I completed it __**37** and I took it to the copy room. Yes __ **38** due to my diligence __**39** you are all getting to take this wonderful assessment. I had chocolate milk after that. I could not __ **40** however __**41** help but think of Ron Burgundy famous words: "Milk was a bad choice." He is wrong __**42** it is delicious! It would __ **43** however __**44** be extra painful if it came out of your nose ___**45** so I hope that never happens to me.

V. Mark "A" to identify the sentence as a Fragment, "B" as a Run On, or "C" as a Complete Sentence.

46. He smiled.

47. Billy walked to school, he was cold.

48. The most amazing, handsome, talented, caring, skillful teacher in the world, Mr. Clayton.

49. Because he did not do well on the test.

50. Before the end of the day, the essay must be turned in.

51. He completed the assignment, his professor was happy.

52. Freddie Gronko, the most talented welder in the company, is a great guy he is also the hardest worker.

53. Wanting only the best for her children and doing everything possible for them.

54. Stop rubbing against my leg!

55. It is a shame what happened to Ben, he is such a talented and amazing guy.

VI. Choose the letter of the correctly punctuated sentence.

56. a. Billy and Suzy need to study: history, math, and science.
    b. Billy and Suzy need to study math, science, and history.
    c. Billy and Suzy need to: study math, science, and history.

57. a. I have the following items on my bathroom counter: soap, toothbrush, razor, and a loofa.
    b. I have the following items on my bathroom counter, soap, toothbrush, razor, and a loofa.
    c. I have the following items: on my bathroom counter soap, toothbrush, razor, and a loofa.

58. a. Lisa played several sports; softball, hockey, and mud wrestling.
    b. Lisa played several sports, softball, hockey, and mud wrestling.
    c. Lisa played several sports: softball, hockey, and mud wrestling.

59. a. Billy left dejected: he found out his girlfriend of eight years cheated on him.
    b. Billy left dejected, he found out his girlfriend of eight years cheated on him.
    c. Billy left dejected. he found out his girlfriend of eight years cheated on him.

60. a. Sarah stopped and posed a question: "What is the meaning of life?"
    b. Sarah stopped and posed a question; "What is the meaning of life?"
    c. Sarah stopped and posed a question. "What is the meaning of life?"

VII. Choose the letter of the correctly punctuated sentence or passage.

61. a. My ex-wife needs to eat a well balanced meal or she will have health problems.
    b. My ex-wife needs to eat a well-balanced meal or she will have health problems
    c. My ex wife needs to eat a well-balanced meal or she will have health problems

62. a. The senator-elect informed us that the senate will now require a two-thirds majority.
    b. The senator elect informed us that the senate will now require a two-thirds majority.
    c. The senator-elect informed us that the senate will now require a two thirds majority.

63. a. Bigfoot; look! I knew it, he does exist.
    b. Bigfoot. Look. I knew it…he does exist.
    c. Bigfoot—look! I knew—he does exist!

64. a. My favorite actor; John Cusack, is a number of wonderful films.
    b. My favorite actor—John Cusack—is in a number of wonderful films.
    c. My favorite actor—John Cusack, is in a number of wonderful films.

65. a. Atlanta—which hosted the 1996 Olympics—had a post-Olympic economic slump in 1997.
    b. Atlanta—which hosted the 1996 Olympics—had a post Olympic economic slump in 1997.
    c. Atlanta, which hosted the 1996 Olympics—had a post-Olympic economic slump in 1997.

VIII. Choose the letter of the correctly punctuated word.

66. **(A. It's b. Its c. Its')** a shame about what happened to the **67. (A. Smith's B. Smiths C. Smiths')** dog yesterday.

68. (A. Bill's B. Bills' C. Bills) favorite book is *Of Mice and Men*.

It would be great to get a **69. (A. month's B. months' C. Months)** pay after I had only worked for two **70. (A. week's B. weeks' C. weeks).**

IX. Choose the letter for the word that represents the correct <u>Verb Agreement & Subjunctive</u>.

71. The teachers on the SHS staff (A. is B. are) very dedicated to their students.

72. Everyone in the class (A. is B. are) hoping to get an "A" on this test.

73. Each of them (A. want B. wants) a new car for graduation.

74. Many students (A. want B. wants) to wear hats in school.

75. Our current English teacher, who is both dashingly handsome and undeniably intellectually superior, (A. is B. are) dedicated to his students.

76. I hate it when my parents treat me as though I (A. was B. were) a child.

77. If Allison (A. was B. were) a better hitter, she could make the varsity team.

78. Sometimes I wish I (A. was B. were) more talented.

X. Choose the letter of the sentence that is correctly written in <u>ACTIVE VOICE</u>.

79. a. Several cars were flipped over by the tornado.
    b. The tornado flipped over several cars.
    c. Several cars got flipped over by the tornado.
    d. None of the above

80. a. Katie was voted MVP by her team.
    b. Katie was awarded MVP by her teammates.
    c. The team voted Katie MVP of the team.
    d. None of the above

81. a. The winning touchdown was scored by Billy Bob.
    b. The winning touchdown came via Billy Bob.
    c. Billy Bob scored the winning touchdown.
    d. None of the above

82. a. After the ceremony, the trophy was awarded to the band.
    b. A trophy was presented to the band after the ceremony.
    c. The company gave the trophy to the band after the ceremony.
    d. None of the above

83. a. The film received a great of praise from critics.
    b. The film was well-received by critics.
    c. Critics were really taken-aback by the quality of the film.
    d. None of the above

84. a. The roses were sent to Maria by her boyfriend.
    b. The roses were sent to Maria.
    c. Maria's boyfriend sent her roses.
    d. None of the above.

85. a. The proposal for the new downtown stadium was defeated after considerable debate.
    b. After considerable debate the proposal for the new downtown stadium was defeated.
    c. The proposal for the new downtown stadium was defeated by the city council.
    d. None of the above.

Syntactic Structures (Sentence Patterns)

I. Simple Sentence

_____.
Independent clause

1._____.

II. Simple Sentence with compound subject and compound verb

_____.
Independent clause

2._____.

III. Compound Sent Pattern #1

_____ __ _____.
Independent clause **Punctuation** **Ind. Clause**

3._____
_____.

IV. Compound Sent Pattern # 2

_____ __ _____ _____.
Ind. Clause **Punctuation** **Conjunction** **Ind. Clause**

4._____
_____.

V. Complex Sent Pattern #1

_____ ____ _____.
Dependent Clause **Punctuation** **Ind. Clause**

5._____
_____.

VI. Complex Sent Pattern #2

_____ _____.
Ind. Clause **Dep. Clause**

6._____
_____.

VII. Compound Sent Pattern #3-"BA" Sent Pattern

_____ __ **however** __ _____.
Ind. Clause **Punctuation** **Punctuation** **Ind. Clause**

7._____
_____.

VIII. Compound Sentence Pattern #4

_____ __ _____.
Ind. clause **Punctuation (NOT semi-colon)** **Ind. Clause**

8._____
_____.

IX. Sentence to Introduce a List

_____ __ _____.
Ind. Clause **Punctuation** **List**

9._____
_____.

X. Dash Sent Patterns-Write (2) Sentences (*of <u>two different types</u>*) using a <u>dash</u> correctly

10._____
_____.

11._____
_____.

XI. Parallel Structure Sentence-Write a sentence demonstrating proper use of <u>Parallel Structure</u>

12._____
_____.

XII. Active vs. Passive Voice—Write a sentence demonstrating proper use of <u>Active Voice</u>

13._____
_____.

Appendix B. 11/12th Grade Grammar and Mechanics and Sentence Pattern Mid-Point Assessment.

Grammar, Mechanics, & Syntactic Skill 11/12 Assessment

II. Choose the letter of the correctly punctuated sentences.

1. a. The movie Mind Field received excellent reviews from the "Atlanta Tribune."
   b. The movie Mind Field received excellent reviews from the Atlanta Tribune.
   c. The movie "Mind Field" received excellent reviews from the Atlanta Tribune.
   d. None of the above

2. a. The poem Rally is from the book *Shimmering Lights.*
   b. The poem Rally is from the book "Shimmering Lights"
   c. The poem "Rally" is from the book "Shimmering Lights."
   d. None of the above

3. a. I read this interesting article called "Genie Theory" in "Time" yesterday.
   b. I read this interesting article called Genie Theory in Time yesterday.
   c. I read this interesting article called "Genie Theory" in *Time* yesterday.
   d. d. None of the above

4. a. The song "One Thing" on One Direction's album Up All Night is my favorite.
   b. The song *One Thing* on One Direction's album Up All Night is my favorite.
   c. The song "One Thing" on One Direction's album "Up All Night" is my favorite.
   d. None of the above

5. a. Suzy Smith wrote about Mitch Albom's play "Tuesdays with Morrie" in her article called "Life Lessons" in *Literary Magazine Review*.
   b. Suzy Smith wrote about Mitch Albom's play *Tuesdays with Morrie* in her article called "Life Lessons" in *Literary Magazine Review*.
   c. Suzy Smith wrote about Mitch Albom's play "Tuesdays with Morrie" in her article called Life Lessons in Literary Magazine Review.
   d. None of the above

II. *Directions: Mark "A" if the underlined phrase is a Prepositional Phrase; mark "B" if it is a Participial Phrase; mark "C" if it is an Infinitive Phrase; mark "D" if it is a Gerund Phrase.*

6. Crying and laughing simultaneously, Margaret tried to compose herself.
7. Sherry found her lipstick in the bottom of her purse.
8. Devastated by the catastrophe, Jordan moved out that day.
9. Clearly presenting the theme of the film is the primary purpose of the scene where the truth is revealed.
10. Steve's goal is to become an elementary school teacher.

III. Mark "A" if the underlined clause is an Independent Clause or "B" if it is a Dependent Clause.

11. Because I was late to work today, I got in big trouble.

12. I was happy when I received an acceptance letter from The University of Georgia.

13. Many fans wept when the Braves lost the World Series.

14. Businesses were forced to close their doors when the super-storm arrived.

15. The beginning of the movie is strange, yet I found the movie to be a riveting experience.

16. I am under the weather; however, I am dominating this test.

17. Ben was cleared of all wrongdoing after the investigation uncovered evidence proving someone else did it.

18. It snowed.

19. Go to your room!

20. After the unbelievably devastating storm, the community is going to recover and rebuild.

IV. For each of the blanks mark "A" if a comma is required, "B" for a semicolon, "C" if no punctuation is required.

Vic Samson **21** __ our superintendent __ **22** called a meeting this morning __ **23** however __ **24** he forgot to zip his fly. At the meeting __ **25** several people pointed this out. Because this happened __ **26** everyone began to point __ **27** laugh __ **28** and __ **29** completely lose focus __ **30** on the task at hand. There were even several silly __ **31** obnoxious __ **32** people who took videos on their phone __ **33** they thought it would be funny to watch later. While all of this was going on __ **34** I was busy getting my work done __ **35** for I was focused on what I needed to do. At the end of the day around five o' clock __ **36** I completed my work __ **37** and I saved it on my computer. Yes __ **38** due to my focused nature __ **39** I was able to complete this wonderful assessment for you to take. I decided to treat myself after that. I could not __ **40** however __ **41** forget the immortal words of Ben Franklin: "A penny saved is a penny earned." He is dead though __ **42** and money is so fun to spend! It would be wise of me __ **43** however __ **44** to save a little bit of money __ **45** life is a balance between being responsible and being spontaneous.

V. Mark "A" to identify the sentence as a Fragment, "B" as a Run On, or "C" as a Complete Sentence.

46. He smells.

47. Tim walked to school, he was late.

48. The most amazing, handsome, talented, caring, skillful news anchor in the world, Ron Burgundy.

49. Because he did not perform well at practice.

50. Before the end of the day, the assignment must be turned in.

51. He completed the assignment, his teacher was very happy.

52. Fergie is the most talented singer in the band, is a great person she is also the hardest worker and he is always on selfless.

53. Wanting only the best for her parents and doing everything possible for them.

54. Stop bumping into me!

55. It is a shame what happened to Kurt Cobain, he was such a talented and amazing person.

VI. Choose the letter of the correctly punctuated sentence.

56. a. Bobby and Shelly need to work on: verb tense, parallel structure, and word choice.
    b. Bobby and Shelly need to work on verb tense, parallel structure, and word choice.
    c. Bobby and Shelly need to: work on verb tense, parallel structure, and word choice.

57. a. I have the following items in my suitcase: socks, pants, shirts, and a pillow pet.
    b. I have the following items in my suitcase, socks, pants, shirts, and a pillow pet.
    c. I have the following items: in my suitcase; socks, pants, shirts, and a pillow pet.

58. a. Larry plays several instruments; piano, violin, and the tuba.
    b. Larry plays several instruments, piano, violin, and the tuba.
    c. Larry plays several instruments: piano, violin, and the tuba.

59. a. Becky left heartbroken: she found out her boyfriend of four years was cheating on her.
    b. Becky left heartbroken, she found out her boyfriend of four years was cheating on her.
    c. Becky left heartbroken-she found out her boyfriend of four years was cheating on her.

60. a. Mr. Smith posed a question to the class: "Why are you guys so mean to me every day?"
    b. Mr. Smith posed a question to the class; "Why are you guys so mean to me every day?"
    c. Mr. Smith posed a question to the class. "Why are you guys so mean to me every day?"

VII. Choose the letter of the correctly punctuated sentence or passage.

61. a. Our ex-president recommended arriving at a well balanced budget by 2015.
    b. Our ex-president recommended arriving at a well-balanced budget by 2015.
    c. Our ex president recommended arriving at a well-balanced budget by 2015.

62. a. The senator-elect informed us that the senate will now require a two-thirds majority.
    b. The senator elect informed us that the senate will now require a two-thirds majority.
    c. The senator-elect informed us that the senate will now require a two thirds majority.

63. a. The Lochness Monster; look! I knew, he does exist.
    b. The Lochness Monster. Look. I knew…he does exist.
    c. The Lochness Monster—look! I knew—he does exist!

64. a. My favorite rapper; Drake, is on a number of other artists' hit songs this year.
    b. My favorite rapper—Drake—is on a number of other artists' hit songs this year.
    c. My favorite rapper—Drake, is on a number of other artists' hit songs this year.

65. a. Detroit—primary home of the automobile industry —has had a post-recession renaissance.
    b. Detroit—primary home of the automobile industry—has had a post recession renaissance.
    c. Detroit, primary home of the automobile industry—has had a post-recession renaissance.

IX. Choose the letter of the correctly punctuated word.

66. (A. It's b. Its c. Its') terrible what happened to **67.** (A. Jones's B. Jones C. Jones') house last week.

68. (A. Ben's B. Bens C. Bens') favorite movie is *Justin Bieber: Never Say Never*.

It would be great to get a **69.** (A. month's B. months' C. Months) pay after I had only worked for two **70.** (A. week's B. weeks' C. weeks).

VIII. Choose the letter for the word that represents the correct <u>Verb Agreement & Subjunctive</u>.

71. The professors on the UGA faculty (A. is B. are) very dedicated to their students.

72. Everyone in the show (A. is B. are) hoping to get a good review in the paper.

73. Each of them (A. want B. wants) a pile of money for graduation.

74. Many students (A. want B. wants) to bring cell phones to school.
75. Our current History teacher, who is both oddly fascinating and undeniably strange, (A. is B. are) dedicated to his students.

76. I hate it when my parents treat me as though I (A. was B. were) a child.

77. If Austin (A. was B. were) a better hitter, he could make the varsity team.

78. Sometimes I wish I (A. was B. were) more forgiving.

X. Choose the letter of the sentence that is correctly written in <u>ACTIVE VOICE</u>.

79. a. Several cars were damaged in the hurricane.
    b. The hurricane damaged several cars.
    c. Several cars got damaged by the hurricane.
    d. None of the above

80. a. Kyle was voted Most Improved by his team.
    b. Kyle was awarded Most Improved by his teammates.
    c. The team voted Kyle Most Improved on the team.
    d. None of the above

81. a. The winning goal was scored by Becky.
    b. The winning goal came via Becky.
    c. Becky scored the winning goal.
    d. None of the above

82. a. After the ceremony, the award was given to the student.
    b. An award was presented to the student after the ceremony.
    c. The company gave the award to the student after the ceremony.
    d. None of the above

83. a. The play received a great of praise from critics.
    b. The play was well-received by critics.
    c. Critics were really impressed by the quality of the play.
    d. None of the above

84. a. The gifts were sent to the family by an anonymous donor.
    b. The gifts were sent to the family.
    c. An anonymous donor sent the family the gifts.
    d. None of the above.

85. a. The proposal for the new community center was defeated after considerable debate.
    b. After considerable debate the proposal for the new community center was defeated.
    c. The proposal for the new community center was defeated by the city council.
    d. None of the above.

Syntactic Structures (Sentence Patterns)

I. Simple Sentence

_____.
Independent clause

1._____.

II. Simple Sentence with compound subject <u>and</u> compound verb

_____.
Independent clause

2._____.

III. Compound Sent Pattern #1

_____ __ _____.
Independent clause **Punctuation** **Ind. Clause**

3._____
_____.

IV. Compound Sent Pattern # 2

_____ __ _____ _____.
Ind. Clause **Punctuation Conjunction** **Ind. Clause**

4._____
_____.

V. Complex Sent Pattern #1

_____ ____ _____.
Dependent Clause **Punctuation** **Ind. Clause**

5._____
_____.

VI. Complex Sent Pattern #2

_____ _____.
Ind. Clause **Dep. Clause**

6._____
_____.

VII. Compound Sent Pattern #3-"BA" Sent Pattern

_____ __ **however** __ _____.
Ind. Clause **Punctuation** **Punctuation** **Ind. Clause**

7._____
_____.

VIII. Compound Sentence Pattern #4-Colon

_____ __ _____.
Ind. clause **Punctuation (NOT semi-colon)** **Ind. Clause**

8._____
_____.

IX. Sentence to Introduce a List

_____ __ _____.
Ind. Clause **Punctuation** **List**

9._____
_____.

X. Dash Sent Patterns-Write (2) Sentences (*of <u>two different types</u>*) using a <u>dash</u> correctly

10._____
_____.

11._____
_____.

XI. Parallel Structure Sentence-Write a sentence demonstrating proper use of <u>Parallel Structure</u>

12._____
_____.

XII. Active vs. Passive Voice—Write a sentence demonstrating proper use of <u>Active Voice</u>

13._____
_____.

Appendix C. 9/10th Grade Grammar and Mechanics and Sentence Pattern Pre- and Post-Assessment.

Grammar, Mechanics, & Syntactic Skill 9-10 Assessment

I. Choose the correctly capitalized sentence.

1. a. Matt drove north from Mexico until he reached the southwest.
   b. Matt drove North from Mexico until he reached the southwest.
   c. Matt drove north from Mexico until he reached the Southwest.
   d. Matt drove north from mexico until he reached the southwest.

2. a. Is it just me or does it still feel like summer even though it is Labor Day?
   b. Is it just me or does it still feel like Summer even though it is Labor Day?
   c. Is it just me or does it still feel like summer even though it is Labor day?
   d. Is it just me or does it still feel like Summer even though it is labor day?

3. a. I heard mom saw senator Joan Johnson at Sumner Park yesterday.
   b. I heard Mom saw Senator Joan Johnson at Sumner Park yesterday.
   c. I heard mom saw senator Joan Johnson at Sumner park yesterday.
   d. I heard mom saw Senator Joan Johnson at sumner park yesterday.

4. a. My Christian sister reads *Twilight* every summer and every Christmas.
   b. My christian Sister reads *Twilight* every summer and every Christmas.
   c. My Christian sister reads *twilight* every Summer and every Christmas.
   d. My christian Sister reads *twilight* every summer and every christmas.

5. a. I pray to god that I will pass Advanced Placement History so that I can go to Winter formal.
   b. I pray to God that I will pass Advanced Placement history so that I can go to winter formal.
   c. I pray to God that I will pass advanced placement history so that I can go to Winter Formal.
   d. I pray to God that I will pass Advanced Placement History so that I can go to Winter Formal.

II. Directions: Circle A, B, or C to indicate the correct word choice in the sentences below.

6. (A. They're B. There C. Their) are 7 billion people in the world, and **7.** (A. they're B. there C. their) all trying to survive each day.
8. I played (A. good B. well) in my game last night.
9. (A. Your B. You're) the best friend I have ever had.
10. The dog chased (A. its B. it's) tail for an hour straight.

III. Choose the letter for the word that represents the correct verb agreement.

11. The teachers on the SHS staff (A. is B. are) very dedicated to their students.

12. Everyone in the class (A. is B. are) hoping to get an "A" on this test.

13. Each of them (A. want B. wants) a new car for graduation.

14. Many students (A. want B. wants) to wear hats in school.
15. Our current English teacher, who is both dashingly handsome and undeniably intellectually superior, (A. is B. are) dedicated to his students.

IV. Choose the letter of the answer that represents correct <u>pronoun</u> usage.

16. The boss will select (A. who B. whom) she wants to attend the conference in Florida.

17. Lars and (A. her B. she) jammed with Terrance and **<u>18.</u>** (A. I B. me) in my garage yesterday.

19. The show was performed by (A. her B. she) and me at the park yesterday.

20. Nick made Chris and (A. I B. me) an amazing five course meal last night.

21. Neither of my dogs will let (A. itself B. themselves) be petted by strangers.

22. Everybody voted for (A. his B. their) favorite performer in the talent show.

23. Either Jim or Kylee will present (A. his B. their) findings to the principal.

24. The lead character and the supporting character delivered (A. his B. their) lines flawlessly.

25. The baseball players are getting (A. her B. their) new jerseys today.

V. Choose the letter of the correctly punctuated sentences.

26. a. The movie <u>88 Minutes</u> received poor reviews from the "Seattle Times".
    b. The movie <u>88 Minutes</u> received poor reviews in the <u>Seattle Times.</u>
    c. The movie "88 Minutes" received poor review in the Seattle Times.
    d. None of the above

27. a. The poem <u>Roads</u> is from the book *Shining Hour.*
    b. The poem <u>Roads</u> is from the book "Shining Hour"
    c. The poem "Roads" is from the book "Shining Hour".
    d. None of the above

28. a. I read this crazy article called "Bone Theory" in "Newsweek" yesterday.
    b. I read this crazy article called <u>Bone Theory</u> in Newsweek yesterday.
    c. I read this crazy article called "Bone Theory" in *Newsweek* yesterday.
    d. d. None of the above

29. a. The song "Black" on Pearl Jam's album <u>Ten</u> is my favorite.
    b. The song *Black* on Pearl Jam's album <u>Ten</u> is my favorite.
    c. The song "Black" on Pearl Jam's album "Ten" is my favorite.
    d. None of the above

30. a. <u>Sam Rosenstein</u> wrote about <u>William Shakespeare's</u> play "Romeo and Juliet" in his article called "Star-Crossed Lovers" in *Literary Magazine Weekly*.
    b. Sam Rosenstein wrote about William Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet* in his article called "Star-Crossed Lovers" in *Literary Magazine Weekly*.
    c. Sam Rosenstein wrote about William Shakespeare's play "Romeo and Juliet" in his article called <u>Star-Crossed Lovers</u> in <u>Literary Magazine Weekly</u>.
    d. None of the above

VI. ***Directions: Mark "A" if the underlined phrase is a Prepositional Phrase; mark "B" if it is a Participial Phrase; mark "C" if it is an Infinitive Phrase; mark "D" if it is a Gerund Phrase.***

31. Crying and sobbing deeply, Madison tried to gather herself.

32. Samantha found her phone in the bottom of her backpack.

33. Crushed by the news, Jason withdrew from school that day.

34. Foreshadowing the climax of the film is the purpose of the unmarked grave shown at the very beginning of the movie.

35. Scott's goal is to become the President of the United States.

VII. Mark "A" if the underlined clause is an Independent Clause or "B" if it is a Dependent Clause.

36. Because I was late to school today, I got a tardy.

37. I was happy when I got an A.

38. Many fans wept when the Seahawks lost the game.

39. Businesses were forced to close their doors when the floods came.

40. The plot is strange, yet the book is considered a masterpiece.

41. I am exhausted; however, I am dominating this final because of my superior skill.

42. Bob was cleared of all charges after the jury found him innocent.

43. It rained.

44. Go to the office!

45. After the unbelievably traumatic event, the community was still able to rally and rebuild.

VIII. For each of the blanks mark "A" if a comma is required, "B" for a semicolon, "C" if no punctuation is required.

Bill Gaines **46**__ our principal __**47** called a faculty meeting this morning __**48** however __**49** he forgot to tie his shoes. At the faculty meeting__**50** he wound up falling on his tushy. After this happened __**51** everyone began to laugh __**52** cry __**53** and __**54** snort liquids out of their noses __**55** with extreme laughter. There were several loud __**56** boisterous __**57** teachers on the floor laughing __**58** they could not help it. While all of this was going on __**59** I was busy writing this assessment __**60** for I was focused on my task. At the end of the day around five o' clock __**61** I completed it __**62** and I took it to the copy room. Yes __ **63** due to my diligence __**64** you are all getting to take this wonderful assessment. I had chocolate milk after that. I could not __ **65** however __**66** help but think of Ron Burgundy famous words: "Milk was a bad choice." He is wrong __**67** it is delicious! It would __ **68** however __**69** be extra painful if it came out of your nose ___**70** so I hope that never happens to me.

IX. Choose the letter of the correctly punctuated sentence.

71. a. Billy and Suzy need to study: history, math, and science.
    b. Billy and Suzy need to study math, science, and history.
    c. Billy and Suzy need to: study math, science, and history.

72. a. I have the following items on my bathroom counter: soap, toothbrush, razor, and a loofa.
    b. I have the following items on my bathroom counter, soap, toothbrush, razor, and a loofa.
    c. I have the following items: on my bathroom counter soap, toothbrush, razor, and a loofa.

73. a. Lisa played several sports; softball, hockey, and mud wrestling.
    b. Lisa played several sports, softball, hockey, and mud wrestling.
    c. Lisa played several sports: softball, hockey, and mud wrestling.

74. a. Billy left dejected: he found out his girlfriend of eight years cheated on him.
    b. Billy left dejected, he found out his girlfriend of eight years cheated on him.
    c. Billy left dejected. he found out his girlfriend of eight years cheated on him.

75. a. Sarah stopped and posed a question: "What is the meaning of life?"
    b. Sarah stopped and posed a question; "What is the meaning of life?"
    c. Sarah stopped and posed a question. "What is the meaning of life?"

X. Choose the letter of the correctly punctuated word.

76. **(A. It's b. Its c. Its')** a shame about what happened to the **77. (A. Smith's B. Smiths C. Smiths')** dog yesterday.

78. (A. Bill's B. Bills' C. Bills) favorite book is *Of Mice and Men*.

It would be great to get a **79. (A. month's B. months' C. Months)** pay after I had only worked for two **80. (A. week's B. weeks' C. weeks).**

XI. Mark "A" to identify the sentence as a Fragment, "B" as a Run On, or "C" as a Complete Sentence.

81. He smiled.

82. Billy walked to school, he was cold.

83. The most amazing, handsome, talented, caring, skillful teacher in the world, Mr. Clayton.

84. Because he did not do well on the test.

85. Before the end of the day, the essay must be turned in.

86. He completed the assignment, his professor was happy.

87. Freddie Gronko, the most talented welder in the company, is a great guy he is also the hardest worker and he is always on time.

88. Wanting only the best for her children and doing everything possible for them.

89. Stop rubbing against my leg!

90. It is a shame what happened to Ben, he is such a talented and amazing guy.

Syntactic Structures (Sentence Patterns)

I. Simple Sentence

_____.
Independent clause

1._____.

II. Simple Sentence with compound subject and compound verb

_____.
Independent clause

2._____.

III. Compound Sent Pattern #1

_____ __ _____.
Independent clause **Punctuation** **Ind. Clause**

3._____
_____.

IV. Compound Sent Pattern # 2

_____ __ _____ _____.
Ind. Clause **Punctuation Conjunction** **Ind. Clause**

4._____
_____.

V. Complex Sent Pattern #1

_____ ____ _____.
Dependent Clause **Punctuation** **Ind. Clause**

5._____
_____.

VI. Complex Sent Pattern #2

_____ _____.
Ind. Clause **Dep. Clause**

6._____
_____.

VII. Compound Sent Pattern #3-"BA" Sent Pattern

_____ __ however __ _____.
Ind. Clause Punctuation Punctuation Ind. Clause

7._____
_____.

VIII. Compound Sentence Pattern #4

_____ __ _____.
Ind. clause Punctuation (NOT semi-colon) Ind. Clause

8._____
_____.

IX. Sentence to Introduce a List

_____ __ _____.
Ind. Clause Punctuation List

9._____
_____.

Appendix D. 9/10th Grade Grammar and Mechanics and Sentence Pattern Mid-Point Assessment.

Grammar, Mechanics, & Syntactic Skills 9-10 Assessment

I. Choose the correctly capitalized sentence.

1. a. Mark drove south from Canada until he reached the southeast.
   b. Mark drove South from canada until he reached the southeast.
   c. Mark drove south from Canada until he reached the Southeast.
   d. Mark drove south from canada until he reached the southeast.

2. a. Is it just me or does it still feel like winter even though it is Memorial Day?
   b. Is it just me or does it still feel like Winter even though it is Memorial Day?
   c. Is it just me or does it still feel like winter even though it is Memorial day?
   d. Is it just me or does it still feel like Winter even though it is memorial day?

3. a. I heard dad saw senator Jon Wilson at Sheraton Park yesterday.
   b. I heard Dad saw Senator Jon Wilson at Sheraton Park yesterday.
   c. I heard dad saw senator Jon Wilson at Sheraton park yesterday.
   d. I heard dad saw Senator Jon Wilson at sheraton park yesterday.

4. a. My Islamic cousin reads *Harry Potter* every summer and every Christmas.
   b. My islamic Cousin reads *Harry Potter* every summer and every Christmas.
   c. My Islamic cousin reads *harry Potter* every Summer and every Christmas.
   d. My islamic Cousin reads *harry potter* every summer and every christmas.

5. a. I pray to god that I will pass Advanced Placement Biology so that I can go to Prom.
   b. I pray to God that I will pass Advanced Placement biology so that I can go to prom.
   c. I pray to God that I will pass advanced placement history so that I can go to Prom.
   d. I pray to God that I will pass Advanced Placement Biology so that I can go to Prom.

II. Directions: Circle A, B, or C to indicate the correct word choice in the sentences below.

6. (A. They're B. There C. Their) are an estimated 100 million shoppers out on Black Friday, and **7.** (A. they're B. there C. their) all trying to get the best deals possible.
8. Tina sang (A. good B. well) in her concert last night.
9. (A. Your B. You're) the best chef I have ever seen.
10. The cat chased (A. its B. it's) ball of yarn for over 30 minutes.

III. Choose the letter for the word that represents the correct verb agreement.

11. The coaches on the volleyball staff (A. is B. are) very dedicated to their players.

12. Everyone who applied (A. is B. are) hoping to get a scholarship.

13. Each of them (A. want B. wants) a new toy for their birthday.

14. Many students (A. want B. wants) to wear pajamas to school.
15. Our English teacher, who is both very demanding and extremely fun and engaging, (A. is B. are) committed to her students.

IV. Choose the letter of the answer that represents correct pronoun usage.

16. The principal will select (A. who B. whom) she wants to attend the conference in New York.

17. Larson and (A. her B. she) jammed with Tommy and **18.** (A. I B. me) in the park yesterday.

19. The concert was given by (A. her B. she) and me at the park yesterday.

20. Nicky made Christy and (A. I B. me) a beautiful painting last night.

21. Neither of my cats will let (A. itself B. themselves) be petted by strangers.

22. Everybody voted for (A. his B. their) favorite presidential candidate in the last election.

23. Either Jackie or Karen will present (A. her B. their) findings to the boss.

24. The lead actor and the supporting actor delivered (A. his B. their) lines flawlessly.

25. The basketball players are getting (A. her B. their) new jerseys today.

V. Choose the letter of the correctly punctuated sentences.

26. a. The movie Mind Field received excellent reviews from the "Atlanta Tribune".
    b. The movie Mind Field received excellent reviews from the Atlanta Tribune.
    c. The movie "Mind Field" received excellent reviews from the Atlanta Tribune.
    d. None of the above

27. a. The poem Rally is from the book *Shimmering Lights.*
    b. The poem Rally is from the book "Shimmering Lights"
    c. The poem "Rally" is from the book "Shimmering Lights".
    d. None of the above

28. a. I read this interesting article called "Genie Theory" in "Time" yesterday.
    b. I read this interesting article called Genie Theory in Time yesterday.
    c. I read this interesting article called "Genie Theory" in *Time* yesterday.
    d. d. None of the above

29. a. The song "One Thing" on One Direction's album Up All Night is my favorite.
    b. The song *One Thing* on One Direction's album Up All Night is my favorite.
    c. The song "One Thing" on One Direction's album "Up All Night" is my favorite.
    d. None of the above

30. a. Suzy Smith wrote about Mitch Albom's play "Tuesdays with Morrie" in her article called "Life Lessons" in *Literary Magazine Review*.
    b. Suzy Smith wrote about Mitch Albom's play *Tuesdays with Morrie* in her article called "Life Lessons" in *Literary Magazine Review*.
    c. Suzy Smith wrote about Mitch Albom's play "Tuesdays with Morrie" in her article called Life Lessons in Literary Magazine Review.
    d. None of the above

VI. ***Directions: Mark "A" if the underlined phrase is a Prepositional Phrase; mark "B" if it is a Participial Phrase; mark "C" if it is an Infinitive Phrase; mark "D" if it is a Gerund Phrase.***

31. Crying and laughing simultaneously, Margaret tried to compose herself.
32. Sherry found her lipstick in the bottom of her purse.
33. Devastated by the catastrophe, Jordan moved out that day.
34. Clearly presenting the theme of the film is the primary purpose of the scene where the truth is revealed.
35. Steve's goal is to become an elementary school teacher.

VII. Mark "A" if the underlined clause is an Independent Clause or "B" if it is a Dependent Clause.

36. Because I was late to work today, I got in big trouble.

37. I was happy when I received an acceptance letter from The University of Georgia.

38. Many fans wept when the Braves lost the World Series.

39. Businesses were forced to close their doors when the super-storm arrived.

40. The beginning of the movie is strange, yet I found the movie to be a riveting experience.

41. I am under the weather; however, I am dominating this test.

42. Ben was cleared of all wrongdoing after the investigation uncovered evidence proving someone else did it.

43. It snowed.

44. Go to your room!

45. After the unbelievably devastating storm, the community is going to recover and rebuild.

VIII. For each of the blanks mark "A" if a comma is required, "B" for a semicolon, "C" if no punctuation is required.

Vic Samson __ **46** our superintendent __ **47** called a meeting this morning __ **48** however __ **49** he forgot to zip his fly. At the meeting __ **50** several people pointed this out. Because this happened __ **51** everyone began to point __ **52** laugh __ **53** and __ **54** completely lose focus __ **55** on the task at hand. There were even several silly __ **56** obnoxious __ **57** people who took videos on their phone __ **58** they thought it would be funny to watch later. While all of this was going on __ **59** I was busy getting my work done __ **60** for I was focused on what I needed to do. At the end of the day around five o' clock __ **61** I completed my work __ **62** and I saved it on my computer. Yes __ **63** due to my focused nature __ **64** I was able to complete this wonderful assessment for you to take. I decided to treat myself after that. I could not __ **65** however __ **66** forget the immortal words of Ben Franklin: "A penny saved is a penny earned." He is dead though __ **67** and money is so fun to spend! It would be wise of me __ **68** however __ **69** to save a little bit of money __ **70** life is a balance between being responsible and being spontaneous.

IX. Choose the letter of the correctly punctuated sentence.

71. a. Bobby and Shelly need to work on: verb tense, parallel structure, and word choice.
    b. Bobby and Shelly need to work on verb tense, parallel structure, and word choice.
    c. Bobby and Shelly need to: work on verb tense, parallel structure, and word choice.

72. a. I have the following items in my suitcase: socks, pants, shirts, and a pillow pet.
    b. I have the following items in my suitcase, socks, pants, shirts, and a pillow pet.
    c. I have the following items: in my suitcase; socks, pants, shirts, and a pillow pet.

73. a. Larry plays several instruments; piano, violin, and the tuba.
    b. Larry plays several instruments, piano, violin, and the tuba.
    c. Larry plays several instruments: piano, violin, and the tuba.

74. a. Becky left heartbroken: she found out her boyfriend of four years was cheating on her.
    b. Becky left heartbroken, she found out her boyfriend of four years was cheating on her.
    c. Becky left heartbroken-she found out her boyfriend of four years was cheating on her.

75. a. Mr. Smith posed a question to the class: "Why are you guys so mean to me every day?"
    b. Mr. Smith posed a question to the class; "Why are you guys so mean to me every day?"
    c. Mr. Smith posed a question to the class. "Why are you guys so mean to me every day?"

X. Choose the letter of the correctly punctuated word.

76. (A. It's b. Its c. Its') terrible what happened to **77.** (A. Jones's B. Jones C. Jones') house last week.

78. (A. Ben's B. Bens C. Bens') favorite movie is *Justin Bieber: Never Say Never*.

It would be great to get a **79.** (A. month's B. months' C. Months) pay after I had only worked for two **80.** (A. week's B. weeks' C. weeks).

XI. Mark "A" to identify the sentence as a Fragment, "B" as a Run On, or "C" as a Complete Sentence.

81. He smells.

82. Tim walked to school, he was late.

83. The most amazing, handsome, talented, caring, skillful news anchor in the world, Ron Burgundy.

84. Because he did not perform well at practice.

85. Before the end of the day, the assignment must be turned in.

86. He completed the assignment, his teacher was very happy.

87. Fergie is the most talented singer in the band, is a great person she is also the hardest worker and she is caring.

88. Wanting only the best for her parents and doing everything possible for them.

89. Stop bumping into me!

90. It is a shame what happened to Kurt Cobain, he was such a talented and amazing person.

Syntactic Structures (Sentence Patterns)

I. Simple Sentence

_____.
Independent clause

1._____.

II. Simple Sentence with compound subject and compound verb

_____.
Independent clause

2._____.

III. Compound Sent Pattern #1

_____ __ _____.
Independent clause Punctuation Ind. Clause

3._____
_____.

IV. Compound Sent Pattern # 2

_____ __ _____ _____.
Ind. Clause Punctuation Conjunction Ind. Clause

4._____
_____.

V. Complex Sent Pattern #1

_____ ____ _____.
Dependent Clause Punctuation Ind. Clause

5._____
_____.

VI. Complex Sent Pattern #2

_____ _____.
Ind. Clause Dep. Clause

6._____
_____.

VII. Compound Sent Pattern #3-"BA" Sent Pattern

_____ __ however __ _____.
Ind. Clause Punctuation Punctuation Ind. Clause

7._____
_____.

VIII. Compound Sentence Pattern #4

_____ __ _____.

Ind. clause **Punctuation (NOT semi-colon)** **Ind. Clause**

8._____
_____.

IX. Sentence to Introduce a List

_____ __ _____.

Ind. Clause **Punctuation** **List**

9._____
_____.

Appendix E. Links to 9/10th & 11/12th Grade Instructional Frameworks, Formative Assessments, and Tracking and Reflection Sheets

A. The 9/10th Grade Instructional Framework is located at:
http://www.portaportal.com/downloader.php?f=MDNmZTBiYmViMTNkMWRjNTk1YmFkZjUzYmE3NmYwZTM&i=MTQwMTc2NjM

B. The 11/12th Grade Instructional Framework is located at:
http://www.portaportal.com/downloader.php?f=MDNmZTBiYmViMTNkMWRjNTk1YmFkZjUzYmE3NmYwZTM&i=MTQwMTc2NjQ

C. The 11/12th Grade Formative Assessment Portfolio is located at:
http://www.portaportal.com/downloader.php?f=MDNmZTBiYmViMTNkMWRjNTk1YmFkZjUzYmE3NmYwZTM&i=MTQwMTg1MjY

D. The 9/10th Formative Assessment Portfolio is located at:
http://www.portaportal.com/downloader.php?f=MDNmZTBiYmViMTNkMWRjNTk1YmFkZjUzYmE3NmYwZTM&i=MTQwMTg1Mjc

E. The 11/12th Grade Grammar & Mechanics Tracking and Reflection Sheet is located at:
http://www.portaportal.com/downloader.php?f=MDNmZTBiYmViMTNkMWRjNTk1YmFkZjUzYmE3NmYwZTM&i=MTQwMTg1ND

F. The 9/10th grade Grammar & Mechanics Tracking and Reflection Sheet is located at:
http://www.portaportal.com/downloader.php?f=MDNmZTBiYmViMTNkMWRjNTk1YmFkZjUzYmE3NmYwZTM&i=MTQwMTg1ND

G. The Writing Assessments Tracking and Reflection Sheet is located at:
http://www.portaportal.com/downloader.php?f=MDNmZTBiYmViMTNkMWRjNTk1YmFkZjUzYmE3NmYwZTM&i=MTQwMTg1NDQ

Appendix F. Comprehensive Summary of Results from Google Form Survey Submitted to Participating Teachers

1. Would you describe the instructional approach you used to teach the language strand (i.e.grammar and writing mechanics) first semester?

Reactive. After grading papers, I would identify the errors that I saw and teach to those specific errors.

I teach grammar mostly in context or in response to student writing. For example, if on the first timed essay many students make parallelism errors, I would do some targeted teaching of that skill. Students might complete some sentence exercises on the topic and then once they have reviewed it, go back to their essays and fix the sentences that were marked as parallelism errors.

With 9th grade students, it was embedded with writing instruction. Students got feedback on essays regarding their performance and things to work on for improvement. I occasionally taught mini-lessons on areas of high need. With 10th grade students, they also got the embedded writing instruction. Additionally, they did SAT Prep three days a week, and frequently, the questions of the day were grammar-based. We reviewed concepts and issues through discussing those questions.

Blah

I incorporated it through writing and focused on specific topics as needed. I hit the main components like sentence fragments, commas, and spelling.

In 9th: I identify major grammar errors, teach them, and then take three points off each time students make those errors for the remainder of the year. In 10th: We work on any top errors I see appearing on each assignment. I keep a tally sheet of errors for each timed essay and use that tally sheet to determine what needs to be addressed.

2. How was the instructional approach of 2nd semester similar and how was it different from how you taught the language strand component of the curriculum in the 1st semester?

2nd semester required me to spend: 1. Significantly more time on grammar instruction 2. Time instructing on elements of grammar for which my students did not need remediation 3. Time instructing on grammar outside the impact of how it impacts writing fluency

I did the weekly lessons and was more systematic in my approach.

It was very different. It was stuctured and specific.

Blah Blah

2nd semester covered grammar top to bottom. It had less connection to the writing, even though I would consistently remind students to try to use the sentence patterns in their essays or remember to check their commas in writing they would complete for class.

I continued the same processes above, but added in direct instruction in grammar using the handouts provided from the Clayton packet.

3. Could you describe how you used and implemented the intervention in your teaching 2nd semester with your students?

I tried to get on a schedule, where I introduced the topic on Monday and gave out the rules and worksheet. On Wed, we'd review it (though the kids never did it), and on Friday was the quiz.

We systematically worked through the lessons and reviewed the information.

Every week or so, I taught the concepts explicitly, adapting the notes to an interactive guided notesheet. Students practiced as a class, and occasionally I included grammar questions on quizzes.

I did all the lessons with my 10th on-level students with unit quizzes (I did not have time to do a weekly quiz for each individual lesson). We did use the tracking chart to mark progress as I use a similar tracking program I created with essay scores. For 9th Honors, I taught the lessons that were identified by students as weak areas. I eliminated skills that were strengths on the mid-point test (for example, we did not complete a lesson on dependant versus indendant clauses). Students who had a weak area that was not in line with the rest of the class would often complete the practice questions even though they were not required and have me check them/help them.

No

We spent a few minutes a week on each scheduled topic, and we took the quizzes at appropriate intervals.

4. What percentage of time would you say you dictated to the language strand component 1st semester and why?

1-2 hours a month.

I would say 5-8% of total instruction time 1st semester on strictly grammar. I spend much more time on content, ideas, and organization with writing and less time on syntax. Students seem to do a good bit of grammar in middle school and I only need to target specific areas that show up in their writing.

No

That is hard to estimate, since it was mostly embedded instruction. Maybe 15%? 10%?

15-20%. Most of my students are fluent in basic grammar, so we spent time only on the errors that they still made.

10% - As a group students were not making many grammtical errors in their papers. There were a few students who were making errors and they were instructed individually.

5. What percentage of time would you say you dictated to the language strand component 2nd semester and why?

20% - We needed more time to go over the material as a group.

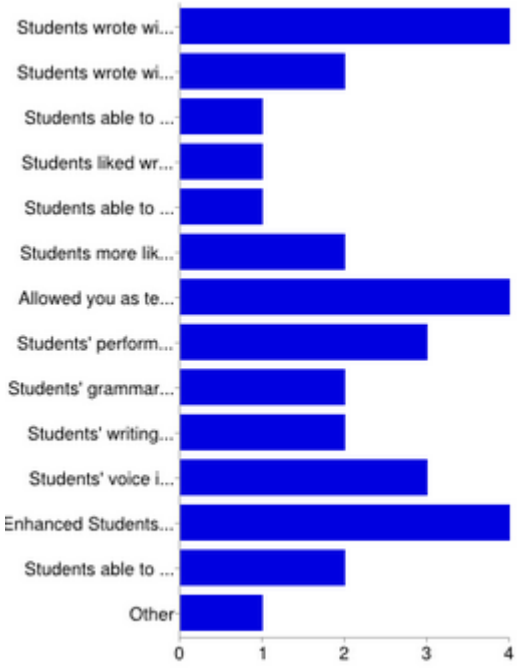
1-1 1/2 hours a week

Probably closer to 20%, since the direct instruction often took much longer than a traditional minilesson approach.

15%. The lessons do take a while to go through, especially those that have many rules. For my on-level students, I cut the explanatory literature preceding the lessons considerably. It was too overwhelming otherwise. I did reteach several lessons and spent extra time created some warm-up style sentences to use as re-inforcement. So, I might introduce the lesson on Tuesday, and then on Wednesday and Thursday, put three sentences up on the board re-targeting that skill. Otherwise, doing the practice questions just flew out of their heads the day after we had gone over the initial lesson.

30%. Because I felt I was required to by this program.

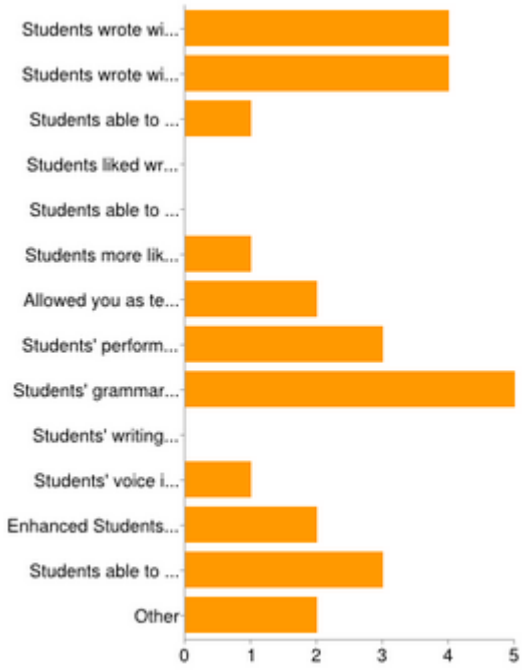
6. What do you see as the effects of the control (1ST semester's) instructional approach?



Students wrote with more grammatically correct sentences	**4** 67%
Students wrote with greater sentence variety	**2** 33%
Students able to write more articulate products	**1** 17%
Students liked writing more	**1** 17%

Students able to write quickly and/or efficiently	**1** 17%
Students more likely to write on own	**2** 33%
Allowed you as teacher to conference with students in a more specific and informed manner about their writing	**4** 67%
Students' performance on standardized assessments improved	**3** 50%
Students' grammar and syntax knowledge improved	**2** 33%
Students' writing fluency increased	**2** 33%
Students' voice in writing became more lively, distinctive, personal, and/or articulate	**3** 50%
Enhanced Students' ability to write effectively in academic voice	**4** 67%
Students able to effectively use an increased variety grammatically correct sentences with a greater variety of punctuation structures	**2** 33%
Other	**1** 17%

7. What do you see as the effects of the control (2ND semester's) instructional approach?



Students wrote with more grammatically correct sentences	**4** 67%
Students wrote with greater sentence variety	**4** 67%
Students able to write more articulate products	**1** 17%
Students liked writing more	**0** 0%
Students able to write quickly and/or efficiently	**0** 0%

Students more likely to write on own	17%
Allowed you as teacher to conference with students in a more specific and informed manner about their writing	23%
Students' performance on standardized assessments improved	30%
Students' grammar and syntax knowledge improved	53%
Students' writing fluency increased	0%
Students' voice in writing became more lively, distinctive, personal, and/or articulate	17%
Enhanced Students' ability to write effectively in academic voice	23%
Students able to effectively use an increased variety grammatically correct sentences with a greater variety of punctuation structures	30%
Other	23%

8. In your estimation, what do you think the primary outcome for your students was resulting from your 1st semester language strand instructional approach?

Through targeted lessons, students focused more on the lessons because they knew they were making the errors and the skills would help them improve their writing scores. The errors we went over in class deceased in their paper. However, students did not learn the terms and the lessons did not transfer into standardized tests as well although those scores did increase somewhat.

Students recognized from my samples and targeted lessons that in order to increase their score on the "voice and word choice" area of the rubric, they needed to vary sentences and eliminate repetition and grammatical errors. Many made a concerted effort to try using strong verbs or a mix of sentence patters in their writing. Some were successful on the first try, and others were rewarded for the attempt but needed some extra help.

The grammar instruction directly tied to an issue that was immediate to their writing needs. Thus, the outcome was one of immediate improvement in a small area.

More persuasive and focused writing and interest in writing

Yeah

Students understood the importance of examining details and improving on their personal grammar. Students were not excited to learn grammar, per se, but they understood that excellent grammar increased their fluency as writers.

9. In your estimation, what do you think the primary outcome for your students was resulting from the 2nd semester language strand instructional approach?

Students learned that grammar does not necessarily apply to writing at all. Students became poorly behaved and restless during these lessons.

Students gained a better understanding of grammar terms and overall applications. Their syntax improved overall and they increased on standardized tests. They did not enjoy the one size fits all approach to the lessons though. I plan to blend the two methods next year and apply more of a differentiated approach after a diagnostic test.

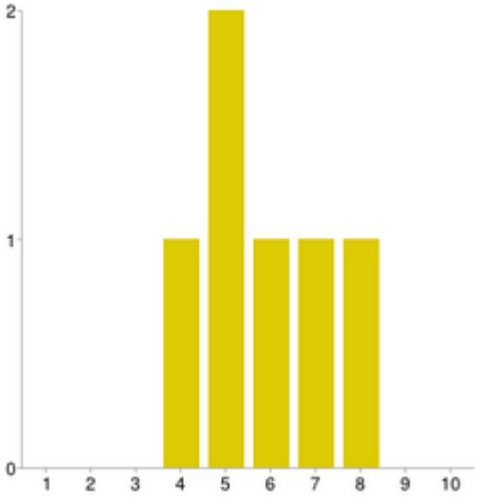
More awareness of what they don't know, but no effort in wanting to learn it

The instruction second semester focused more on reviewing and rebuilding a stronger base for grammar. Therefore, the outcome was that students were able to more comfortably discuss grammar and its connection to writing, in its discrete parts (clauses, punctuation issues, etc). However, I don't know that I can say for sure that the approach made a direct impact on my students' writing, because the data approach for the process asks me to consider my students' writing samples to see if the scores have improved, which doesn't directly reflect their improvement in language/grammar. It is very likely that increased scores on writing assignments are more largely connected to improved content and textual analysis, since that constitutes a majority of the grade of an essay. **Side note: for question 12, when I list the answer of "other", my response means that I would cut out some of the intervention content, but keep other parts. I don't know that reviewing all the way back to the most basic sentence construction was necessary or particularly beneficial for my students, while later instruction intervention, on using more skilled and varied syntax, was.

Students improved their score on multiple choice questions regarding grammar. Students may have a better understanding of a particular concept.

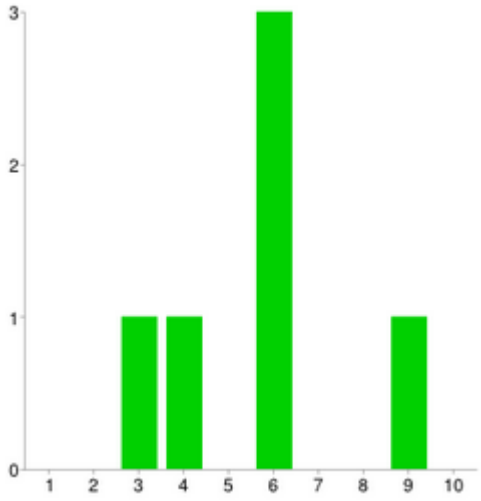
Yeah

10. On a 1-10 scale (with 1 being lowest and 10 being highest) how effective do you think your 1st Semester language strand Instructional approach was in terms of improving the foundational aspects of your students' writing?



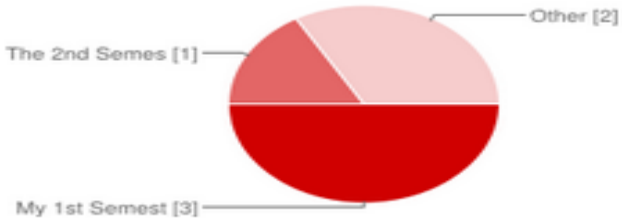
1	**0**	0%
2	**0**	0%
3	**0**	0%
4	**1**	17%
5	**2**	33%
6	**1**	17%
7	**1**	17%
8	**1**	17%
9	**0**	0%
10	**0**	0%

11. On a 1-10 scale (with 1 being lowest and 10 being highest) how effective do you think the 2ND Semester language (intervention) strand Instructional approach was in terms of improving the foundational aspects of your students' writing?



1	**0**	0%
2	**0**	0%
3	**1**	17%
4	**1**	17%
5	**0**	0%
6	**3**	50%
7	**0**	0%
8	**0**	0%
9	**1**	17%
10	**0**	0%

12. Finally, which language strand instructional approach would you prefer to implement with your students next year, given the choice--your 1ST Semester (Control) or 2nd Semester (Intervention)?



My 1st Semester (Control) Approach	**3**	50%
The 2nd Semester (Intervention) Approach	**1**	17%
Other	**2**	33%

Number of daily responses

Appendix G. IRB Approval Letter

PROJECT NUMBER: 2013-10216-0
TITLE OF STUDY: A Study of the Effects of a Program of Instruction for Developing Greater Syntactic Awareness, Fluency, and Maturity in Student Writers
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr. Peter Smagorinsky

Dear Dr. Smagorinsky and Mr. Clayton,

The University of Georgia Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed and approved your above-titled proposal through the exempt (administrative) review procedure authorized by 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) - Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless (i) the information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human participants can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the participants; and (ii) any disclosure of the human participants' responses outside the research could reasonably place the participants at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the participants' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Your approval packet will be sent by mail. Please remember that any changes to this research proposal can only be initiated after review and approval by the IRB (except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the research participant). Any adverse events or unanticipated problems must be reported to the IRB immediately. The principal investigator is also responsible for maintaining all applicable protocol records (regardless of media type) for at least three (3) years after completion of the study (i.e., copy of approved protocol, raw data, amendments, correspondence, and other pertinent documents). You are requested to notify the Human Subjects Office if your study is completed or terminated.

Good luck with your study, and please feel free to contact us if you have any questions. Please use the IRB number and title in all communications regarding this study.

Regards,
Megan

___
Megan E McFarland, M.S.
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