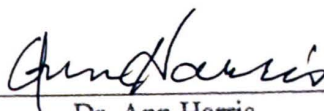


THE EFFECTS OF THE 6+1 WRITING TRAITS MODEL ON
THE COMPREHENSIVE WRITING ASSESSMENT
OF ELEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS

IRENE V. PORTER

To the Graduate and Research Council:

I am submitting herewith a field study written by Irene Porter entitled, "The Effects of the 6 + 1 Writing Traits Model on the Comprehensive Writing Assessment of Eleventh Grade Students." I have examined the final copy of this paper for form and content, and I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Education Specialist, with a major in Administration and Supervision.




Dr. Ann Harris
Major Professor

We have read this field study
and recommend its acceptance:

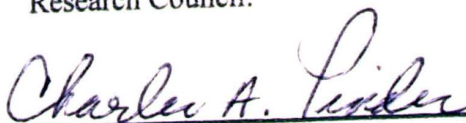


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Date

12-11-06

THE EFFECTS OF THE 6 + 1 WRITING TRAITS MODEL ON THE
COMPREHENSIVE WRITING ASSESSMENT OF ELEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS

A Field Study

Presented to the Graduate and Research Council
of Austin Peay State University

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
of Education Specialist

By
Irene V. Porter
December 2006

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this field study to my family: my husband Theophilus, who always encouraged me when I wanted to give up and to my children Jackie and Joseph who always were patient with me when I was busy with my studies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my God for giving me the wisdom and knowledge to complete my Education Specialist degree. I want to thank Dr. Ann Harris for assisting and guiding me through the process of writing this field study. I also want to thank Dr. Carlette Hardin and Dr. Anne Wall for serving on my Field Study Committee. I want to thank Dr. Al Williams for encouraging me to believe in my abilities to become an administrator. I want to thank Dr. Ridenhour for his valuable guidance of the statistical tests and his assistance with the organization of the statistical data. Finally I want to thank my husband for his encouraging words throughout my academic career and my children for being understanding and patient with me while pursuing my academic goals.

ABSTRACT

The focus of this study was to determine the effectiveness of the 6 + 1 Writing Traits Model on the writing assessments of eleventh grade students. Data of eleventh grade students at a High School were compared between the years 2002 (n=186) and 2004 (n=225) using the Chi-Square test. The results of this study revealed the effectiveness of the 6 + 1 Writing Traits Model on student achievement in writing on the 11th grade Tennessee Writing Assessment. Students' scores in the experimental group increased in 2004 in categories of effectiveness of the 6 + 1 Traits of Writing, gender and ethnicity when scores were compared to the control group scores in 2002. African-American students' test scores did not show a difference but decreased in category 3 (limited - some degree of proficiency) on the 11th grade Tennessee Writing Assessment.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Importance of The Problem.....	1
Purpose of the Study.....	1
Research Questions.....	2
Hypothesis of the Study.....	2
Limitations of the Study.....	3
Definitions of Terms.....	3
Assumptions.....	4
II. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	5
Student Achievement Tests and Assessments in Writing.....	5
Unified Performance Standards.....	5
Teacher Influence on Student Writing.....	6
The Development of the 6 + 1 Model.....	7
The Strengths of the Model.....	8
III. METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES.....	12
Participants.....	12
Materials.....	12
Procedure.....	13
IV. DATA AND RESULTS.....	14
Writing Assessment Scores.....	14
Testing the Hypothesis.....	15

Hypothesis One	15
Hypothesis Two.....	17
The Comparison of African-American Student Writing Scores.....	17
Hypothesis Three.....	19
Comparison of Writing Assessment Scores of Caucasian Students	19
Hypothesis Four.....	21
Female Writing Assessment Scores.....	21
Hypothesis Five.....	23
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, and RECOMMENDATIONS.....	25
Summary.....	25
Conclusions.....	26
Research Question One.....	26
Research Question Two.....	26
Research Question Three.....	27
Research Question Four.....	27
Research Question Five.....	28
Implications for Educators.....	28
Recommendations.....	29
LIST OF REFERENCES.....	31
REFERENCES.....	32
APPENDICES.....	35
A-1 Approval letter from Austin Peay State Institutional Review Board.....	36
A-2 Approval Letter from Clarksville Montgomery County School System...	37

VITA.....	38
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Importance of the Problem

Since the No Child Left Behind Law (NCLB) was passed in January 2002, achievement tests have become more important in schools than ever. School systems are now held accountable for the academic achievement of all their students in various groupings. Teachers and students alike feel the pressure, the need and urgency of passing standardized tests in core subjects like math, science, and writing. Now that the new law (NCLB) is in effect, schools are focused on the fact that many 11th grade students have had difficulties passing the state writing assessment tests.

Since pressure has been put on all school systems to concentrate on students passing standardized tests, administrators and teachers are forced to find new and creative ways to help all students succeed. In fall 2003, the district writing model, also known as the “6 + 1 Traits of Writing,” was gradually introduced to the students in the county under study. This model of “6 + 1 Traits of Writing” is designed to help students and teachers concentrate on various characteristics of good writing. The model uses seven categories: Ideas, Organization, Voice, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, Conventions and Presentation; each of which focuses on specific areas of good writing.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to compare the state writing assessment scores of eleventh grade students during the 2001 academic year with eleventh grade students

during the 2003 academic year. The scores on the states competency writing assessment are to be compared before the district writing model in 2001 was implemented to the scores after the district writing model was implemented in 2003.

Research Questions

Specific questions addressed by the research included:

1. Is there a significant difference in state writing scores of 11th grade students using the district writing model and those who did not use the model?
2. Is there a significant difference in state writing scores of 11th grade African American students using the district writing model and those who did not use the model?
3. Is there a significant difference in state writing scores of 11th grade Caucasian students using the district writing model and those who did not use the model?
4. Is there a significant difference in the state writing scores of female 11th grade students using the district writing model and those who did not use the model?
5. Is there a significant difference in the state writing scores of male 11th grade students using the district writing model and those who did not use the model?

Hypothesis of the Study

1. There will be no significant difference in state writing scores of 11th grade students using the district writing model and those who did not use the model.

2. There will be no significant difference in state writing scores of 11th grade African American students using the district writing model and those who did not use the model.
3. There will be no significant difference in state writing scores of 11th grade Caucasian students using the district writing model and those who did not use the model.
4. There will be no significant difference in state writing scores of female 11th grade students using the district writing model and those who did not use the model.
5. There will be no significant difference in the state writing scores of male 11th grade students using the district writing model and those who did not use the model.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations to external validity are:

1. The scores will be restricted to eleventh grade students at one high school in the district.
2. There is no physical evidence to show how often students were exposed to the district writing model.
3. The school is located in a transit area; therefore, student mobility is higher than at an average school.

Definitions of Terms

1. Conventions- The mechanical correctness.

2. District Writing Model - 6 + 1 Traits of Writing
3. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) - A federal mandate passed by President George Bush and his administration in 2001 to ensure that every child receives a quality education, i.e., to reduce educational achievement gaps among any group of learners.
4. Northwest Regional Laboratory - A nonprofit private corporation that provides research to improve education for children, youth and adults.
5. Value-added assessment - A method of analyzing student standardized test scores to determine and compare the extent to which student knowledge has grown over time in a matched group of students.
6. Writing Prompt - It defines the topic for student writing and has two parts, which include the writing topic and the directions for writing.

Assumptions

The following assumption was made during this study:

All teachers at this high school used the district writing model as instructed during the year of 2003-2004.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Student Achievement Tests and Assessments in Writing

This literature review will describe the extent of the effect the district writing model has had on the improvement in writing in elementary and middle schools. There are numerous reasons for educators to focus on improving writing skills, the first being to teach students to convey ideas in written form. In addition, being able to write effectively will place students in the positive position of being able to pass standardized tests, which are now a requirement under the federal law, No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

Unified Performance Standards

Goertz (2001) in her article discusses the value of writing performance in educational reform. The NCLB Act changed the educational goals of all states, making them accountable by implementing unified performance standards. These performance standards were first implemented for math and science and later adopted for English and writing.

With the unified performance standards in effect, there is now the need for unified assessments in measuring student achievement. This has been discussed in an article on the Value - Added Assessment published by the American Educational Research Association (2004). This article explains the Value - Added Assessment, with its focus, not on student test scores, but on the gains of student achievement from year to year. Kupermintz (2002) discusses the reasons for the creation of the state Value - Added

Assessment System. This system tracks individual student learning in several subjects over a given period of time, helping state schools to evaluate the influence schools and teachers have on the process of student learning.

Teacher Influence on Student Writing

Teachers play a huge role in student achievement in writing. Zemelman and Daniels (1988) in their book, *A community of writers: Teaching writing in the Junior and Senior High School*, emphasize the importance of the role of the teacher in the classroom. Good teachers recognize that they teach students before they teach content. Setting the mood in the classroom, teachers should not focus on achievement tests, but on a wide range of reading, writing and collaborative activities that will help students avoid limiting themselves in learning to write. The 6 + 1 writing model does that, in focusing on the primary traits of good writing.

Good writing is a process that is not developed in a short amount of time (Nippold, Ward-Lonergan, & Fanning, 2005). They discuss the relative abilities of persuasive writing techniques used in children, adolescents and adults. Their description of the knowledge and complex thought processes that are needed to convince the reader of a diversity of viewpoints is a strong basis for teaching persuasive writing. The writers are very convincing of the need for a student to be able to prepare and adopt a perspective and write from it. The importance of teacher influence in writing instruction cannot be more emphasized. However, several teachers are faced with the dilemma of deciding which strategies to teach.

Many studies have been conducted to show the importance of the need for instructional strategies that will help improve the writing process. Bellamy (2000) suggests that students be given a rubric that contains the major aspects of good writing so that students are able to judge their work with guidance of the teacher.

One important aspect to plan is the revision of the writing project. Now, creating a grade-free zone allows students to concentrate on writing without the fear of making a poor grade. The authors suggest that young writers are especially damaged if teachers focus more on the grade than on the process of writing. Assigning grades to a paper without allowing the student to go through the revision process sets students up for failure.

When students are allowed to set their own writing goals, they are able to set goals according to their abilities. Students are more aware of their limitations in writing than the teacher. Knowing this, students will be able to achieve their goals causing them to become more confident in their growing writing ability.

Teachers may need to adjust their own ideas of allowing students to grade their own papers. Many teachers are afraid students might be dishonest in their grading; however, in the Perchemlides and Coutant study, (2004) their experience showed that most students, in general, are honest in their self assessments, with some students being harder on themselves than teachers would be.

The Development of the 6 + 1 Model

During the 1980s, teachers from school systems across the country met to discuss and formulate a better way to assess student writing instead of using the current grading

system, consisting of a single score (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 2001). The selected teachers were able to identify common characteristics of good writing by examining thousands of student writing samples. These qualities were used to form the 6 + 1 Traits of Writing. This model consists of the following traits: ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation. From this basis of good writing, teachers now have the freedom to begin teaching good writing by first introducing some of the seven traits when they teach writing, gradually adding all the traits (NWREL, 2001).

Perchemlides and Coutant (2004) also emphasize five steps teachers need to take to achieve this goal: (a) create a grade-free zone, (b) allow students to set their own writing goals, (c) provide a common language (The 6 + 1 Traits of Writing), (d) provide evaluative and instructional models, and (e) replace fear with excitement.

Creating a common language by using the 6 + 1 Traits allows teachers and students to effectively evaluate the writing process. When teachers and students are comfortable with the common language, re-teaching a lesson might not be necessary and the writing process is not slowed. The common language also allows students to understand what the teacher wants in a writing assignment.

The Strengths of the Model

Research has been conducted that shows the improvement of student writing by using the District Writing Model (Paglin, 2002). Paglin suggests the use of Ruth Culham's book, *6 + 1 Traits of Writing: The Complete Guide*. In the second chapter of the book, Culham (2003b) describes the steps for good writing, which include prewriting,

drafting, sharing, revising, editing and publishing. Culham suggests various teaching activities for each trait that may be used by different grade level teachers to implement the writing process in the classroom.

Much improved writing achievement scores are beginning to find their way into the literature. James, Abbott and Greenwood (2001) described a fourth grade nine-year-old boy whose work indicated he was in the first grade, fifth month level of writing. James et al. were trained through workshops on how to use the 6 + 1 writing model in the classroom. The student participated in small-group instruction, receiving personal attention, while being trained thoroughly to implement the 6 + 1 Traits in his writing. Not only did the fourth grader improve his writing, but after nine weeks of writing experience with the 6 + 1 Traits, the students who were in the low achievement group made the greatest improvements.

Jenny Wilson Elementary School, in Kansas, also implemented the 6 + 1 Traits into their curriculum. The model was taught by beginning with idea and content traits in kindergarten and first grade; they then added one trait each year until all six traits were introduced by fifth grade. Students were taught writing as an ongoing process; they were not scored on their writing until they could identify the weaknesses in their writing using a rubric (Jarmer, Kozol, Nelson, & Salsberry, 2000).

The 6 + 1 Writing Model is an efficient use of good classroom instruction. The model gives the teacher the grading rubric, helping the teacher to focus on the traits of good writing (Smith, Ellis, & Bentley, 2003). They are of the opinion that teachers need to teach students “the specific criteria for writing” and that teachers can influence students to improve their confidence through writing. The writing that is done using these

criteria helps students improve their writing skills. Students were effectively able to use the given rubric and objectively grade their own writings.

One of the key issues of the writing process is that teachers need to become better facilitators when teaching students to write (Totten, 2004). He points out the fact that it is difficult to influence how schools are organized and how teachers teach. He suggests various workshops that teachers are able to attend in order to improve the knowledge of the subject matter; thereby, enabling them to help students improve.

The impact that teachers can have influencing their students cannot be understated. Arter, Spandel, Culham and Pollard (1994), in their studies emphasize the impact teachers can have on students when they train them to be self-assessors. The authors write about teachers who scored student work while learning more about the process of writing and becoming better writers. During this discovery process, more learning occurred when students were allowed to evaluate their own writing and encouraged to make corrections.

Student feelings of inadequacy and bewilderment were addressed with an article, which appeared in the Instructor (Culham, 2003a). When teachers add comments to students' papers that do not identify or explain what a student needs to do in order to improve their writing, the student shuts down. The article also states that the 6 + 1 Writing Traits model helps a student to better understand what is expected in good writing and therefore makes revisions easier. Zhang (2001) agrees with this finding and emphasizes the importance of students being allowed to revise their writing. During this revision process, students are allowed to internalize what they have learned.

The ability to write effectively has been observed in various segments of our society. According to Urquhart (2005), there has been a decline in student writing ability, which has been observed by teachers, employers and professors alike. She states that there is a huge difference between the knowledge of basic writing, which includes correct spelling and punctuation, and the more advanced level of writing, which consists of the writer's understanding of audience and conveying a thought with precise and easy to understand language.

Students must be able to understand the structure of good writing in order to imitate it. Smith et.al (2003) in the article *Successful Use of the Six Traits in Writing*, describes the importance of students understanding the structure of good writing. He suggests that when teachers use the six trait writing model, they give students the tools to evaluate their writing so as to improve it by making revisions. Smith et.al encourages the process of revision and the time necessary for this task. These specific traits help students focus, giving them a needed guide. Hawk and Cross (1987) in their article agree that it is very important to adopt a writing assessment that can be used by all teachers successfully.

Heefner and Shaw (1996) discuss the research they have conducted on a group of 206 deaf students, who ranged from grades 3 - 12 using the six-trait analytical scale to determine its effectiveness on assessing writing of deaf students. The six-trait analytical scale is a scoring rubric that provides specific information about the six writing traits. Both concluded that the six- trait analytical scale is reliable, valid in assessing writing not only of students in a regular classroom, but also effective in evaluating the writing of deaf students.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Participants

Data was obtained for the years 2001-2002 and 2003-2004 from eleventh grade students who attended a high school in a diverse military town in a southeastern state and who were given the state Comprehensive Writing Assessment during each of those years.

Materials

This study used the data from the state Value - Added Assessment System, the state Comprehensive Assessment Program in 2001-2002 and compared it to data of the State Comprehensive Assessment Program in 2003-2004 after the 6 + 1 Writing Traits Model was implemented. Prior to 2003 English teachers taught writing in the traditional way, which included teachers giving students writing prompts. Students chose a prompt and wrote essays according to teacher specifications. Teachers who taught subjects other than English were not required to give students writing assignments. Beginning in 2003, all teachers in the school system were expected to implement 6 + 1 Traits of Writing, which was adopted as the district writing model (DWM) during the 2003 - 2004 school year. All teachers were required to attend staff development sessions where they were instructed how to use the DWM, which consisted of the 6 + 1 traits: Ideas, Organization, Voice, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, Conventions and Presentation. The state Comprehensive Assessment (TCAP) was used to determine proficiency of student writing.

Procedure

Eleventh grade students in the year 2001 - 2002 were not exposed to the DWM and were given the state Comprehensive Writing Assessment in February 2002. During the 2003-2004 school year every teacher at this high school implemented the DWM by giving students writing prompts every six weeks for a total of six writing assignments per school year. Students were to concentrate on one or two traits of the DWM during each 6 - week grading period. Teachers had to collect students' work and present samples of writing to the administration. The state Comprehensive Assessment (TCAP) was administered to students in February 2004. The results were compared to the proficiency bands of students' achievement scores before the DWM was implemented and scores after the DWM was implemented.

Permission to conduct this study was obtained from the following sources:

- (a) approval letter from Austin Peay Institutional Review Board (See Appendix A-1)
- (b) approval Letter from Clarksville Montgomery County School System, (See Appendix A-2).

Statistical analysis was implemented to test the null hypotheses of no difference between the two groups. The eleventh grade students' scores in 2001-2002 not using the DWM were compared to the eleventh grade student scores in 2003-2004 using the DWM. The testing coordinator of the school, with permission of the school principal, provided the data for each given year. The researcher used the following data to create a database using the Microsoft Excel program. The data was also divided into categories of gender and ethnicity and effectiveness of the 6 + 1 Traits of Writing.

CHAPTER IV

DATA AND RESULTS

Writing Assessment Scores

The state writing assessment (TCAP) was administered to 186 eleventh grade students during the school year 2001-2002 and 225 eleventh grade students during the school year 2003-2004. Students during 2001-2002 were not taught the 6 + 1 Traits of Writing instructions and served as the control group. Students were taught the traditional way, which consisted of writing assignments and writing assessments in their English classes. Students during the school year 2003-2004 were taught the 6 + 1 Traits of Writing instructions and served as the experimental group. Students were given the 6 + 1 Traits of Writing rubric as a guide for writing and were required to write to a prompt every 6 weeks in all subject areas. The instructional categories for the 6 + 1 Traits of Writing consist of Ideas, Organization, Voice, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, Conventions, and Presentation. Teachers collected students writing samples every six weeks and turned in to the appropriate school principal student writings for categories of high, middle and low scores as judged by a rubric.

Both groups were tested using the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) and wrote to a written prompt for 25 minutes. The TCAP assessment consists of 6 categories of writing achievement. They are: 6 (outstanding) which demonstrates high degree of proficiency, 5 (strong) which demonstrates clear proficiency, 4 (competent) demonstrates proficiency, 3 (limited) demonstrates some degree of proficiency,

2 (flawed) demonstrates limited proficiency, 1 (deficient) demonstrates fundamental deficiencies.

Testing the Hypotheses

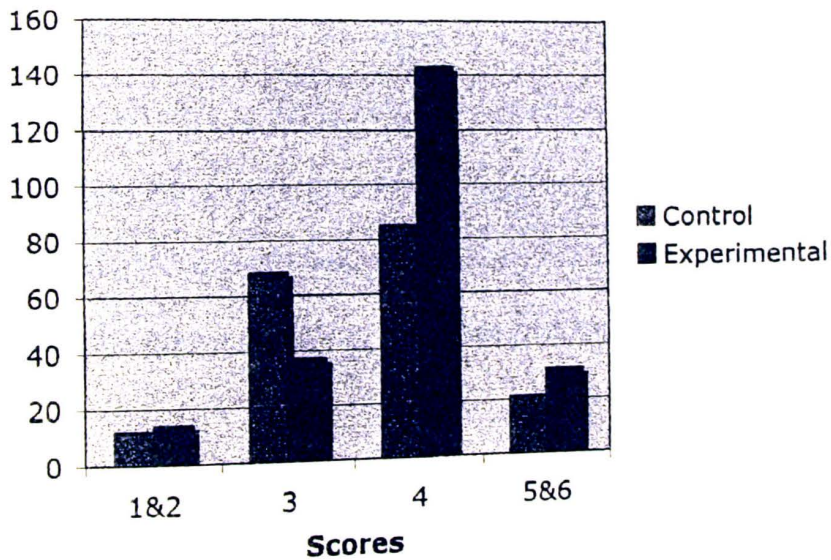
Five hypotheses were tested regarding the effects of the 6 + 1 Traits of Writing on the comprehensive writing assessment of eleventh grade students before and after the model was implemented and also based on ethnicity and gender between the two groups.

Hypothesis One

The first hypothesis stated there was be no significant difference between the state writing scores of 11th grade students using the district writing model and those who did not use the model. The null hypothesis was rejected since there is a statistical difference of $p < 0.05$.

Figure 4-1 shows the score results of eleventh grade students during the two school years. Cells 1 and 2 (deficient and flawed) and cells 5 and 6 (strong and outstanding) were collapsed together because of their small size. The data collected were analyzed using the Chi square Test, which showed there is a statistical difference of $p < 0.05$ between the score results of eleventh grade students in the control group and the experimental group.

A Comparison of Writing Assessment Scores



Note. Control Group $n=186$, Experimental group $n=225$
 Pearson Chi-Square = 22.485, $DF = 3$, $P\text{-Value} = 0.000$
 Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 22.591, $DF = 3$, $P\text{-Value} = 0.000$

Figure 4-1. Writing assessment scores comparison of Control and Experimental Groups.

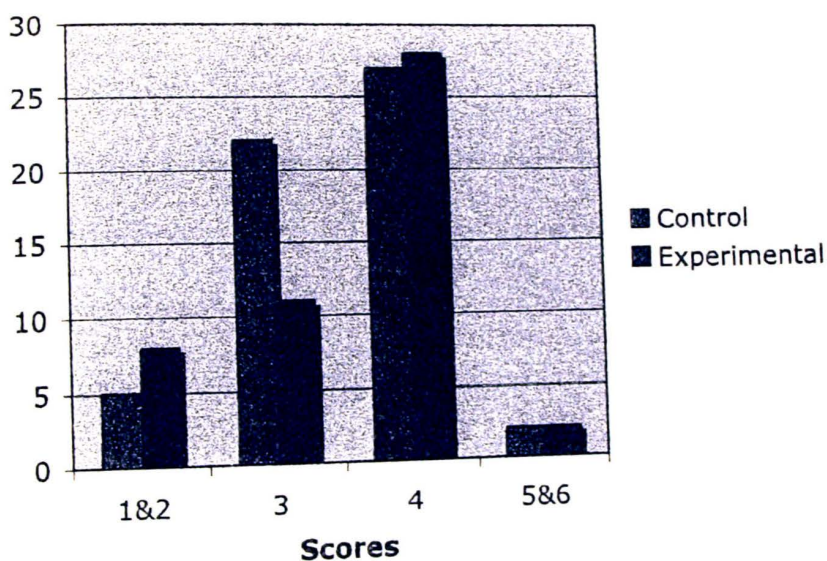
Hypothesis Two

The second hypothesis stated there was no significant difference in the state writing scores of 11th grade African-American students using the district writing model and those who did not use the model.

The Comparison of African-American Student Writing Scores

Figure 4-2 identifies the standardized writing scores of eleventh grade African American students from the 2002 T-CAP writing scores and compares them to the 2004 writing scores of eleventh grade African American students. Cells 1 and 2 (deficient and flawed) and cells 5 and 6 (strong and outstanding) were collapsed together because of their small size. There is no statistical difference ($p = 0.269$) of the writing scores of eleventh grade African American Students before and after the 6 + 1 Traits of Writing was implemented. The data showed there was no significant difference in writing achievement in category 3 (some degree of proficiency) of African-American students in 2004 when compared to scores of African American students in 2002.

Writing Assessment Scores of African American Students



Note, Control group n= 56, Experimental group n= 49
 Pearson Chi-Square = 3.928, DF = 3, P-Value = 0.269
 Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 3.988, DF = 3, P-Value = 0.263

Figure 4-2. Writing assessment scores comparison of Control and Experimental Groups.

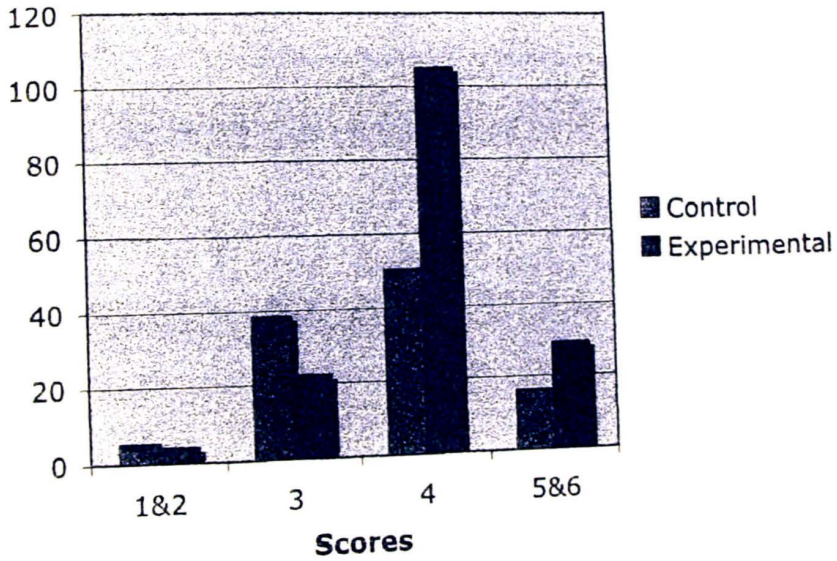
Hypothesis Three

The third hypothesis stated there was no significant difference in state writing scores of 11th grade Caucasian students using the district writing model and those who did not use the model.

Comparison of Writing Assessment Scores of Caucasian Students

Figure 4-3 identifies the standardized writing scores of eleventh grade Caucasian students from the 2002 T-CAP writing scores and compares them to the 2004 writing scores of eleventh grade Caucasian students. Cells 1 and 2 (deficient and flawed) and cells 5 and 6 (strong and outstanding) were collapsed together because of their small size. There is a statistical difference ($p < 0.05$) between the score results of eleventh grade Caucasian students before and after the 6 + 1 Traits of Writing was implemented. The data showed improvement in student writing scores for category 4 (competent) in 2004.

Writing Assessment scores of Caucasian Students



Note. Control group n=109 Experimental Group n=160
 Pearson Chi-Square = 18.651, DF = 3, P-Value = 0.000
 Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 18.460, DF = 3, P-Value = 0.000

Figure 4-3. Writing assessment scores comparison of Control and Experimental groups.

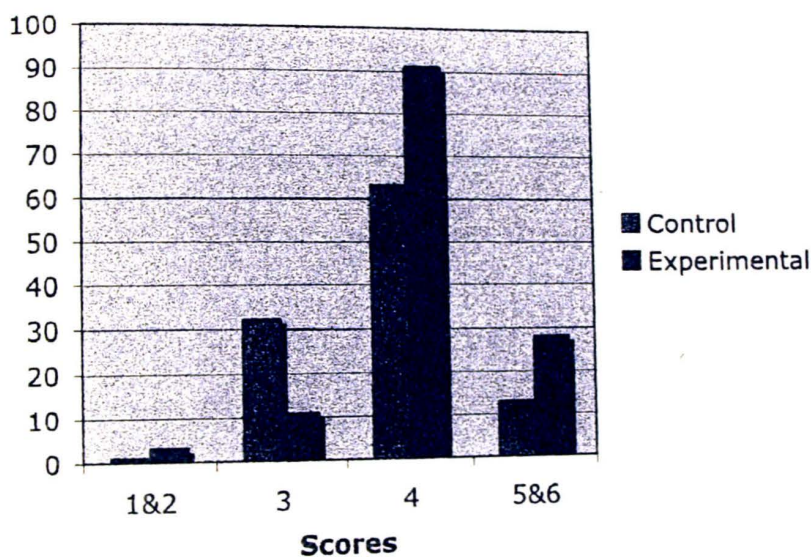
Hypothesis Four

The fourth hypothesis stated there was no significant difference in state writing scores of female of 11th grade students using the district writing model and those who did not use the model.

Female Writing Assessment Scores

The following Figure 4-4 shows the results of the Writing Assessment scores of female students before (2002) and after (2004) the 6 + 1 Traits of Writing Model was implemented. Cells 1 and 2 (deficient and flawed) and cells 5 and 6 (strong and outstanding) were collapsed together because of their small size. There is a statistical difference ($p. < 0.05$) between the score results of eleventh grade female students before and after the 6 + 1 Traits of Writing was implemented. The data showed improvement in female student writing scores for category 4 (competent) in 2004.

Writing Assessment Scores of Female Students



Note. Control group, $n = 109$, Experimental group, $n = 133$
 Pearson Chi-Square = 19.648, $DF = 3$, $P\text{-Value} = 0.000$
 Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 20.107, $DF = 3$, $P\text{-Value} = 0.000$

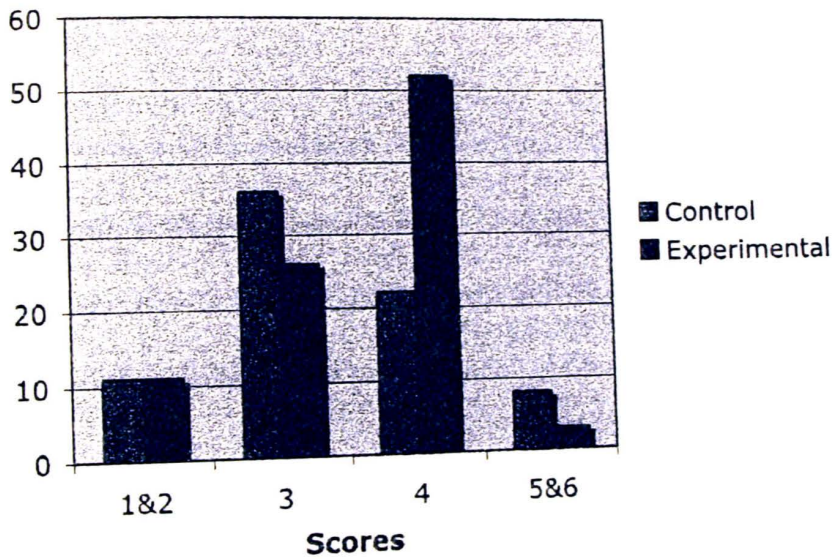
Figure 4-4. Writing Assessment Scores of female students before and after the 6 + 1 Writing Model.

Hypothesis Five

The fifth hypothesis stated there was no significant difference in state writing scores of male 11th grade students using the district writing model and those who did not use the model.

The following Figure 4-5 shows the results of the Writing Assessment scores of male students. Cells 1 and 2 (deficient and flawed) and cells 5 and 6 (strong and outstanding) were collapsed together because of their small size. There is a statistical difference ($p < 0.05$) between the score results of eleventh grade male students before (2002) and after (2004) the 6 + 1 Traits of Writing was implemented. The data showed improvement in male student writing scores for category 4 (competent) in 2004.

Writing Assessment Scores of Male Students



Note. Control group, $n = 77$, Experimental Group, $n = 92$
 Pearson Chi-Square = 19.648, $DF = 3$, $P\text{-Value} = 0.000$
 Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 20.107, $DF = 3$, $P\text{-Value} = 0.000$

Figure 4-5. Writing Assessment Scores of male students before and after the 6 + 1 Writing Model.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The “No Child Left Behind” law that was implemented in 2001 has forced many school systems to concentrate on how students perform on standardized tests in core subjects. Many school systems are now held accountable for student achievement. Administrators around the country have focused on finding ways to improve students’ scores.

Many studies have been conducted on the effects of the 6 + 1 Traits of Writing on student writing achievement tests in grades K-8. The research included information on student achievement tests and assessment in writing, unified performance standards, teacher influence on student writing, the development of the 6 + 1 Model and the strengths of the model (Arter, Spandel, Culham & Pollard, 1994; Bellamy 2000; Culham, 2003a; Culham, 2000b; Goertz, 2001; Hawk & Cross, 1987; Heefner & Shaw, 1996; James, Abbott, Greenwood, 2001; Jarmer, Kozol, Nelson & Salsberry, 2000; Kupermintz, 2002; Nippold, Ward-Lonergan & Fanning, 2005; Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 2001; Paglin, 2002, Perchemlides & Coutant, 2004; Smith, Ellis & Bentley, 2003; American Educational Research Association, 2004; Totten, 2004; Urquhart, 2005; Zemelman, 1988; Zhang, 2001). Studies found that most research was conducted on students in the elementary and middle school levels. Further research is needed to determine the effects of the 6 + 1 Traits of Writing on student writing assessment scores on the high school level. This study was conducted to determine the effects of the 6 + 1

Writing Traits model on the comprehensive writing assessment of eleventh grade students before and after the 6 + 1 Traits of writing was implemented, as well as the effects of the 6 + 1 Traits of Writing Model on African-American and Caucasian students scores and male and female students scores before and after the 6 + 1 Traits of writing were implemented.

Conclusions

Research Question One

The first question determined if there was an increase in student writing scores in the experimental group for the 2003-2004 school year after the district writing model was implemented when compared to the writing scores of the control group for the 2001-2002 school year before the district writing model was implemented. After applying the Chi-Square test, the results showed there is a statistical difference ($p < 0.05$). Students scores improved after the students were instructed, using the 6 + 1 Traits of Writing. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Research Question Two

This question determined if there was a significant difference in the state writing scores of African-American students in the experimental group for the 2003-2004 school year that used the district writing model and those in the control group for the 2001-2002 school year, that did not. The Chi-Square statistical test was applied on student scores and showed there is no statistical difference ($p < 0.263$) in writing scores of African-American students and the null hypothesis was accepted. This statistical difference of African-

American students scores during 2003-2004 could be due to extraneous factors. As none of the scores were statistically matched for data analysis, some outside factors could have influenced the statistical difference of African-American scores between the two years. Students could have been (a) more transit, (b) zoned more often, or (c) more often in the lower socio-economic group and had less verbal or linguistic skills to improve. Another possibility for the statistical difference in writing scores of African-American students could be that changes in teaching strategies take more time to produce positive results among this particular group. Since the purpose for the NCLB law is the reduction in achievement gap on standardized tests between minorities, further studies need to be conducted to determine the exact causes of this result.

Research Question Three

This question determined if there was a significant difference in the state writing scores of Caucasian students in the experimental group for the 2003-2004 school year that used the district writing model and those in the control group for the 2001-2002 school year, that did not. The Chi-Square statistical test was applied on scores of Caucasian students in 2001-2002 and compared to scores of Caucasian students in 2003-2004. The results showed there is a statistical difference ($p < 0.05$) in writing scores of Caucasian students and the null hypothesis was rejected.

Research Question Four

This question determined if there was a significant difference in the state writing scores of female 11th grade students in the experimental group for the 2003-2004 school

year that used the district writing model and those in the control group for the 2001-2002 school year that did not. The Chi-Square statistical test was applied on scores of female students in 2001-2002 and compared to scores of female students in 2003-2004. The results showed there is a statistical difference ($p < 0.05$) in writing scores of female students and the null hypothesis was rejected.

Research Question Five

This question determined if there was a significant difference in the state writing scores of male 11th grade students in the experimental group for the 2003-2004 school year that used the district writing model and those in the control group for the 2001-2002 school year that did not. The Chi-Square statistical test was applied on scores of male students in 2001-2002 and compared to scores of male students in 2003-2004. The results showed there is a statistical difference ($p < 0.05$) in writing scores of male students and the null hypothesis was rejected.

Implications for Educators

The results from this study seem to suggest that there are statistical improvements in overall writing test scores among eleventh grade students, Caucasian students, male and female students. This is a very positive indication of the Writing Model's success. However, educators realize the NCLB Act requires that achievement gaps between racial and ethnic groups be reduced. The test scores for African-American students in this study show that this goal has not yet been achieved. Educators can use the result of this study to

conduct further research to determine the cause of the low writing assessment scores of African-American students after they were exposed to the DWM.

Since the introduction of the District Writing Model in 2003, the school system has hired many new teachers that did not go through the initial in-service training for the model. It is important to continue training teachers that are new to this school system. Further it is important to understand when comparisons are made between the scores of various schools in this system, that each school has certain freedoms on the implementation the District Writing Model as to its exact variation of implementation. Since all schools in this system are implementing the DWM, it is recommended to track the same students over time by comparing students TCAP writing assessment scores from the elementary through high school years.

Recommendations

Due to the statistical results of this study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. It is recommended that student scores in other schools in this county be compared, before and after the writing model was implemented.
2. It is recommended that further studies be conducted to determine if writing scores improved in this county on all grade levels, before and after the writing model was implemented.
3. It is recommended that further studies be conducted to determine the effects of the 6 + 1 Traits of Writing on ACT scores.

4. It is recommended that further studies be conducted to determine the effects of high mobility students and standardized testing.
5. It is further recommended that longer studies be conducted to determine the effects of the 6 + 1 Traits on the writing scores of African American students.

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APPENDICES

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A-1

Approval letter from Austin Peay State Institutional Review Board

AP
Austin Peay
State University
College of Graduate Studies

April 15, 2005

Ms. Irene Porter
3116 Trenton Rd.
Clarksville, TN 37040

RE: Your application regarding study number 05-040: What is the effect of the use of the District writing model on student achievement in writing on the Tennessee comprehensive writing assessment of 11th graders?

Dear Ms. Porter:

Thank you for your recent application submission. We appreciate your cooperation with the human research review process. I have reviewed your request for expedited approval of the new study listed above. This type of study qualifies for expedited review under FDA and NIH (Office for Protection from Research Risks) regulations.

Congratulations! This is to confirm that I have approved your application through one calendar year. This approval is subject to APSU Policies and Procedures governing human subject research. The full IRB will still review this protocol and reserves the right to withdraw expedited approval if unresolved issues are raised during their review.

You are granted permission to conduct your study as described in your application effective immediately. The study is subject to continuing review on or before April 15, 2006, unless closed before that date. Please visit our website at www.apsu.edu and click on the IRB link to find the forms to report when your study has been completed and to request an annual review of a continuing study. Please submit the appropriate form prior to April 15, 2006.

Please note that any changes to the study as approved must be promptly reported and approved. Some changes may be approved by expedited review; others require full board review. Please contact me at (221-7415; fax 221-7641; email pinderc@apsu.edu) if you have any questions or require further information.

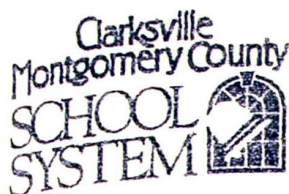
Again, thank you for your cooperation with the APSU IRB and the human research review process. Best wishes for a successful study!

Sincerely,

Charles A. Pinder

A-2

Approval Letter from Clarksville Montgomery County School System



Board of Education 621 Gracey Avenue Clarksville, Tennessee 37040
931-920-7819 Fax: 931-920-9819 email: sallie.armstrong@cmcss.net
Sallie Armstrong
Curriculum & Instruction Director

April 21, 2005

Irene Porter
3116 Trenton Road
Clarksville, TN37040

Dear Ms. Porter:

Your research study to determine the effect of the use of the District Writing Model on Student Achievement in Writing on the Tennessee Comprehensive Writing Assessment of 11th graders has been approved by the research committee. The date of approval was April 20, 2005.

Now that you have approval from the research committee, you may contact the principal(s) for approval. The principal(s) has the final authority and responsibility for approving or disapproving research conducted in their building.

Please read the Research Policy and Procedures Handbook for all information concerning research in Clarksville-Montgomery County Schools.

If you have questions, please call my office at (931) 920-7813.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sallie Armstrong".

Sallie Armstrong
Director of Curriculum and Instruction

SA/ph

VITA

Irene Veronika Porter was born in Rocourt, Belgium. She attended elementary and middle school in Birkenheide, Germany and high school in Hochspeyer, Germany. She attended vocational school for physician assistant in Kaiserslautern, Germany. Afterward, she worked as a physician assistant in the emergency room at a clinic in Kaiserslautern, Germany from 1977 to 1981. She came to the United States in January, 1982, and received her Associate Degree from Austin Peay State University in applied science in 1995. She obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree in Foreign Languages from Austin Peay State University in 1999. In addition she received her certification in secondary education in 2000 and a Masters of Arts degree in Curriculum and Instruction, both from Austin Peay State University. She is now attending Austin Peay State University to earn an Educational Specialist Degree in Administration.

She began teaching in Clarksville, Tennessee at Northwest High School in 2000 and worked concurrently at Rossvie High School in 2001 and also at Austin Peay State University as an adjunct instructor in 2002. She is presently employed at Kenwood High School as a German teacher.