

2022

Essential or Optional? Effects of Creative Writing on Expository Skills and Attitude in Middle School Students

Nicole Samuelson
nesamuelson99@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/elaia>



Part of the [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), [Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons](#), and the [Language and Literacy Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Samuelson, Nicole (2022) "Essential or Optional? Effects of Creative Writing on Expository Skills and Attitude in Middle School Students," *ELAIA*: Vol. 4, Article 8.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/elaia/vol4/iss1/8>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Honors Program at Digital Commons @ Olivet. It has been accepted for inclusion in ELAIA by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ Olivet. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@olivet.edu.

Essential or Optional? Effects of Creative Writing on Expository Skills and Attitude in Middle School Students

Cover Page Footnote

I would like to begin by thanking Dr. Beth Schurman for helping me tackle this enormous project and answering all my questions, no matter how panicked or late at night. I would not have finished this paper without your guidance and patience.

I would also like to thank Dr. Brian Stipp for assuring me that I could actually do this project and for making sure my project is the absolute best it could be. My research is much stronger thanks to you, and you made me feel capable of completing this project.

Thank you so much to Lauren Mohler and all the Grant Park staff for letting me come into your classroom and rearrange your curriculum to do my project. It was a pleasure to work with your students, and without your welcoming flexibility, this project would not have been possible.

On a personal note, I want to thank my roommates (past and present), Sabrina and Hannah. Thank you for listening to my ideas, worries, and complaints for the past two years. Your listening ears and encouraging words helped me stay sane. I love and appreciate you both!

Last, thank you Mom and Dad! You have provided funding, emotional support, and constant encouragement through this process and I couldn't have done it without you. Thank you for always making time and space for me.



Essential or Optional? Effects of Creative Writing on Expository Skills and Attitude in Middle School Students

Nicole E. Samuelson

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to begin by thanking Dr. Beth Schurman for helping me tackle this enormous project and answering all my questions, no matter how panicked or late at night. I would not have finished this paper without your guidance and patience.

I would also like to thank Dr. Brian Stipp for assuring me that I could actually do this project and for making sure my project is the absolute best it could be. My research is much stronger thanks to you, and you made me feel capable of completing this project.

Thank you so much to Lauren Mohler and all the Grant Park staff for letting me come into your classroom and rearrange your curriculum to do my project. It was a pleasure to work with your students, and without your welcoming flexibility, this project would not have been possible.

On a personal note, I want to thank my roommates (past and present), Sabrina and Hannah. Thank you for listening to my ideas, worries, and complaints for the past two years. Your listening ears and encouraging words helped me stay sane. I love and appreciate you both!

Last, thank you Mom and Dad! You have provided funding, emotional support, and constant encouragement through this process and I couldn't have done it without you. Thank you for always making time and space for me.

ABSTRACT

Background: Although emotional benefits and general writing improvement have been shown to be benefits of creative writing, its effectiveness in relation to expository writing skills has not been clearly established through research. *Methods:* This study was conducted with two groups of middle school students at a rural middle school in Illinois. One group received ten creative writing interventions over a month and the other group continued with normal instruction. The goal was to discover if these interventions would improve students' expository writing skills as well as their attitude towards and confidence in writing. *Results:* The data showed that although the experimental group did not improve significantly in either area, the control group did. However, breaking down the essay scores into categories shows that the results could have been affected by the rubric that was used. *Conclusion:* Overall, the study showed that more research is necessary in order to determine what type of creative writing intervention is most effective for strengthening expository writing skills.

Keywords: creative writing, expository writing, middle school, writing instruction, confidence, attitude

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is a complex endeavor requiring teachers to consider many factors such as student needs, cultural backgrounds, and state requirements when planning curriculum and classroom activities. The latter, particularly the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), have a large influence on what teachers teach in their classrooms. Specifically, within the English Language Arts content area, CCSS has led to a decline in the teaching of creative writing in middle school and high school classrooms (Applebee 2013; Frawley, 2014; Kitt, 2019; Wilcox, Jeffrey & Gardner-Bixler, 2015).

Several studies specifically link the advent of the CCSS to this decrease in creative writing instruction (Applebee, 2013; Wilcox et al., 2013). For example, Wilcox interviewed teachers about the changes the CCSS had brought to their writing instruction and found that teachers responded by noting the increased emphasis on nonfiction writing when aligning their activities with the CCSS. Further, there is a perception among teachers that creative writing is taking time away from learning more important, required subjects (Frawley, 2014; Kitt, 2019). However, as teachers comply with these standards, some believe that creative writing instruction is still important in developing literacy skills (Kitt, 2019).

Creative writing can have many benefits in the classroom. Some of these benefits include increased confidence in and attitude towards writing (Benner-Rappell & Northcote, 2016; Tok & Kandemir, 2014). Other studies suggest that creative writing improves certain aspects of expository writing, like vocabulary or language (Dollins, 2016; Guillén & Bermejo, 2011). Most studies, however, do not investigate the specific academic benefits of creative writing, such as improved nonfiction writing. This study conducted an expository unit with a control group and an experimental group of middle

school students. Over a period of four weeks, the experimental group completed ten creative writing sessions in addition to the preexisting curriculum. The aim of the study is to discover if these ten creative writing interventions will improve attitude, confidence, and nonfiction writing skills.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In order to better understand the context of the study, teacher perceptions of creative writing must be explored. A review of the existing literature on best practices in writing instruction is also needed in order to place creative writing in the context of these known strategies. Finally, an investigation of prior research on the benefits of creative writing is necessary to show the research that still needs to be done on the benefits of creative writing. These findings leave a gap in the research regarding the relationship between expository and creative writing, which the present study helps to fill.

Teacher Perceptions of Creative Writing

With the mandating and implementation of the CCSS, which prioritize fewer creative forms of writing, many educators have spent more time and attention on research types of writing and less time on creative writing (Applebee 2013; Frawley 2014; Kitt 2019; Wilcox, Jeffrey, & Gardner-Bixler, 2015). Frawley (2014) interviewed fourteen teachers on their opinions of creative writing and found through coding that many thought creative writing was not worth the time. The teachers interviewed did not see creative writing as a vital subject, but instead as an optional part of a student's education. Many teachers also believed that creative writing would take up too much time that could be better spent preparing students for high-stakes, standardized tests. Kitt (2019) also interviewed eight British teachers in middle school and high school equivalents and found similar results through coding interviews. Though the CCSS are not used in the United Kingdom, the teachers in this study emphasized that they found creative writing difficult to incorporate because of the time it took and the difficulty of assessing creative writing. However, some also said that creative writing helps students become more comfortable with language in all contexts, which is important as students need to be able to write many different types of complex texts. Finally, these few teachers believed that creative writing helps develop student voice and empathy.

Some researchers attribute this hesitancy to incorporate creative writing into the curriculum to the advent of the CCSS. Wilcox et al. (2015) interviewed teachers on how the CCSS had influenced the way they teach writing. Teachers reported that the CCSS emphasized more nonfiction writing and less creative writing. Because of this, they taught less creative writing in their classes in order to focus on nonfiction writing and thus meet the new standards. Applebee (2013) agrees with this focus on nonfiction writing in the CCSS and writes that the CCSS lack a framework for quality writing, and instead focus on narrow skills, such as the difference between compound and complex sentences, or active and passive voice. Applebee (2013) believes that these narrow skills encourage students to write systematically but prevent students from using creativity to adapt their writing to different contexts. Cumulatively, research has shown that teachers have concerns about whether or not creative writing is a helpful strategy in teaching writing, partly because of the advent of the CCSS.

Best Practices in Writing Instruction

Much has been written on the best ways to teach expository writing. Although these studies are specific to nonfiction writing, many similarities can be found between creative writing instruction and nonfiction writing instruction. Graham and Perin (2007) conducted a widely-cited meta-analysis of the best practices in writing instruction for adolescent students wherein they examined 123 studies and categorized the strategies and the discovered effects. The researchers found that eleven strategies improved student writing: strategy instruction, summarization, peer assistance, goal setting, word processing, combining sentences, inquiry, prewriting, process writing, study of models, and grammar instruction. Process writing was found to be the most helpful.

More specifically, Cihak and Castle (2011) studied instructional methods for expository writing skills by testing the writing program *Step Up to Writing* in two eighth grade classes covering outlining, topic sentences and sentence structure, transitions, and supporting details. The students' writing improved after the unit, according to a holistic scoring rubric mandated by the state's education department. Additionally, many previously non-proficient students achieved proficiency in expository writing.

Although both of these studies cover expository writing, the findings have implications for creative writing instruction. First, both are representative of the existing research on expository writing and must be considered when researching techniques to improve student expository writing skills. Second, many important elements of expository writing have creative characteristics. For example, good sentence structure and vocabulary (Cihak & Castle, 2011; Graham & Perin, 2007) require creativity on the part of the student to provide variety.

Assessing Writing

An important element of writing instruction is the assessment of student work. The use of rubrics has been supported by research as an effective way to evaluate writing. Bradford, Newland, Rule, and Montgomery (2015) compared student writing experiences with and without rubrics. Students completed two writing assignments, and were given a rubric with one, but not the other. Overall, students scored higher when they were given a rubric compared to when they were not given a rubric. Further, students were more motivated when given a rubric, and students indicated that they preferred a rubric when writing because it helped them make sure they were following directions and writing quality pieces. Because a rubric was used to evaluate student writing, this is a valuable concept to keep in mind.

The rubric used in this study, titled English as a Second Language Composition Profile (Appendix A), was developed by Jacobs, Zinkgraf, Wormuth, Hardfiel, and Hughey (1981) and has been frequently used and cited. The rubric has five categories: content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. Each category has different point values that decrease in the order given with content worth thirty points and mechanics worth five. The rubric is a standard one to evaluate all writing, although it was developed to be used with English Language Learners. This rubric was used because it assesses many dimensions of writing while still prioritizing content. The

ESL Composition Profile also allows for a quantitative score of a qualitative subject, which makes it easier to compare student scores.

Benefits of Creative Writing

Some researchers have evaluated whether creative writing increases student confidence and attitude towards writing. Bennet-Rappell and Northcote (2016) found in a case study that two gifted students' attitudes and confidence improved after a unit of creative writing. The two students went through a nine-lesson creative writing unit and were interviewed before and after the curriculum. According to coding of the interviews, the students began the unit with very negative feelings about their intelligence and school in general. After the unit, they reported increased self-confidence and fewer negative feelings towards school. Another similar study by Turkel and Cetinkaya (2020) conducted a ten-week creative writing unit that required students to write creatively about a new topic each week. At the end of the unit, students reported better attitudes toward writing in general. Similarly, Tok and Kandemir (2014) conducted three creative writing activities with students and gave the students a survey before and after the activities. The survey measured students' attitude towards writing by asking how much they enjoyed writing and reported that students enjoyed writing more after the creative writing activities. These studies show that there are documented benefits of creative writing, establishing it as an important part of writing instruction.

There is further research that suggests that creative writing or elements of creativity in expository units improves all writing skills. Dollins (2016) used close reading and graphic organizers to work on students' creative use of language in nonfiction, which improved expository skills. Similarly, Guillén and Bermejo (2011) conducted a unit using creative writing that helped students work on literacy skills, which have many applications in different contexts. The unit used creative brainstorming to help students develop the setting and character of a short story. Guillén and Bermejo (2011) also used flow charts to help students write the events of their story using the problem-solution format. Overall, the unit helped students practice vocabulary, sequence, and description—traits that apply to expository writing.

Tok and Kandemir (2015) also found that creative writing practice positively affected expository writing skills. The authors conducted three creative writing activities in an English class consisting of 31 seventh-grade Turkish students and conducted a pre- and post-test in the form of an expository writing sample in addition to the attitude survey mentioned earlier. After scoring the samples using a rubric, Tok and Kandemir (2015) found that student scores rose significantly, although there was no control group. This study is important to the proposed study because it is a recent study that specifically studied the effects of creative writing practice on expository skills. Further, a recent meta-analysis by Sahin and Polatcan (2019) analyzed twenty-five Turkish studies about creative writing and concluded that creative writing generally increased academic performance in students.

The present study fits into the existing research for several reasons. It takes place over a longer time period than most existing studies (e.g., Tok & Kandemir, 2017) and will

demonstrate if and how a longer-term intervention is helpful. The study also helps to discover whether or not creative writing should be added to the list of best practices in teaching writing (Graham & Perin, 2007). Finally, it aims to give teachers more insight into how creative writing may be helpful.

METHODS

This study was conducted in a rural middle school with two sections of a sixth-grade English Language Arts class. Students were informed of the purpose of the study and those who chose to participate signed a permission form. Permission from guardians and the school administration was obtained as well. Before the study began, all students completed a survey through Google Forms to assess their confidence in and attitude towards writing (Appendix B). A sample expository essay from each student was also obtained by the researcher and scored using a rubric, which evaluated content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics (Jacobs, et al., 1981). Ten creative writing mini-lessons were developed, based on ten writing prompts from *642 Things to Write About: Young Writer’s Edition* (Appendix C). Some examples were: “Describe your dream treehouse,” and “You find the end of the rainbow at last. What do you find?” (Tsang & 826 Valencia, 2014). Each lesson included the prompt, an objective outlining the specifics of the writing task, and some examples and guiding questions to help students complete the task.

These lessons were given to the experimental group of students ($n = 13$). They were introduced during the morning work time as the first task students did in the classroom. The classroom teacher gave a brief summary of the activity, as well as some examples, after which students had about fifteen minutes to write. Further, the objective, task, and examples were posted on the board for students to refer to. This writing work was not graded, and students were aware of this. The lessons were delivered between two to three times per week over a period of four weeks. The control group ($n = 9$) did not go through these creative writing lessons and instead did their usual morning assignments, which generally consisted of extra time to work on that day’s tasks.

After the lessons were finished, both groups of students retook the Google Forms survey and wrote another expository essay, which was scored by the researcher using the rubric (Jacobs et al., 1981). Students’ responses on the surveys were converted to numbers one through five, and a two-tail, dependent sample t-test was conducted between each group’s pre-and post-study responses. A dependent sample t-test was also used to compare each group’s pre- and post-study expository essay scores, in order to measure progress.

RESULTS

The experimental group (Table 1.1) did not improve their expository writing skills in a statistically significant manner. This group started the unit with an average score of 77.1 out of 100 and ended the unit with an average essay score of 78.2. However, the control group, who did not receive the creative writing mini-lessons, did experience a

statistically significant improvement ($t(2)=0.04$, $p<.05$). The group’s pre-study essay scores were an average of 74.1 (SD=2.82), and the post-study scores produced an average of 79.2 (SD=2.82). These results show that the creative writing mini-lessons did not significantly improve the treatment group’s expository writing skills.

The attitude and confidence surveys did not yield statistically significant results with either group (Table 1.2). Out of the highest possible score of 55, the experimental group had an average of 33.7 confidence score pre-study, and 33.6 post-study. Similarly, the control group began with an average confidence score of 39 and ended with an average score of 33. Thus, the creative writing mini-lessons did not significantly impact student attitude towards and confidence in writing.

TABLE 1.1: EXPOSITORY ESSAY SCORES (X/100)

Student Group	Pre-Study Mean (St. Dev.)	Post-Study Mean (St. Dev.)	t-statistic
Experimental Group	77.6 (±4.48)	78.5 (±5.42)	0.515
Control Group	74.1 (±2.82)	79.2 (±2.82)	0.044*

TABLE 1.2: ATTITUDE SURVEY SCORES (X/55)

Student Group	Pre-Study Mean (St. Dev.)	Post-Study Mean (St. Dev.)	t-statistic
Experimental Group	33.6 (±6.41)	32.8 (±6.79)	0.516
Control Group	39.0 (±6.72)	33.03 (±9.19)	0.154

DISCUSSION

The hypothesis that long-term creative writing instruction will improve students’ expository writing skills and confidence was not supported by this study. Although the experimental group did slightly increase their expository skills, it was not significant. The overall score only increased by less than a point. Surprisingly, the control group improved significantly, with an increase of more than five points (Table 1.1). The results of the attitude and confidence surveys were not significant for either group. However, the control group decreased in confidence by four points on the scale. There was a very high standard deviation on the control group’s post-study scores, so although the difference was large, it is not statistically significant (Table 1.2).

These results were surprising given the existing research. Studies like those by Tok and Kandemir (2015) and Dollins (2016) found significant increases in overall writing skills after creative writing practices. Tok and Kandemir (2015) in particular only did three creative writing interventions, and nevertheless saw a significant increase

in expository writing skills (2015). One would expect that if three creative writing interventions are effective, ten would be effective as well. Further, it appears that the interventions from Tok and Kandemir's study did not involve any instruction, only directions. This is in contrast to the interventions in this study, which incorporated some instruction, although it was minimal. Similarly, studies like those by Bennett-Rappell and Northcote (2016) and Turkel and Centikaya (2020) found that creative writing improves attitudes toward and confidence in writing. However, the results of this study were inconsistent with these prior findings.

Some insights arise when looking at scores of individual categories within the rubric for the essays. The three categories rated most heavily, content, organization, and language use, help explain the results more fully. Content scores, worth 30 points of 100 overall, improved by at least two points in both groups (Table 1.3). This improvement was statistically significant in the experimental group. This suggests that the creative writing interventions improved students' expository writing skills in terms of their overall composition skills and topic development. However, this should not be overly emphasized, as the control group also improved their content scores by a similar margin to the experimental group. The larger standard deviation within the control group decreased the t-statistic.

TABLE 1.3: EXPOSITORY ESSAY SCORES:
CONTENT, ORGANIZATION, LANGUAGE USE

Student Group	Pre-Study Mean (St. Dev.)	Post-Study Mean (St. Dev.)	t-statistic
Content (x/30)			
Experimental Group	22.9 (±2.40)	24.3 (±2.14)	0.038*
Control Group	22.0 (±2.83)	24.7 (±1.94)	0.061
Organization (x/25)			
Experimental Group	15.9 (±1.12)	16.5 (±1.33)	0.071
Control Group	13.3 (±2.60)	16.0 (±0.87)	0.018*
Language Use (x/25)			
Experimental Group	19.2 (±1.17)	18.2 (±1.46)	0.037*
Control Group	18.8 (±1.39)	18.3 (±1.80)	0.426

Examining scores in the organization category further illuminates this study's findings (Table 1.3). Both groups improved in organization scores, although the experimental group's improvement was marginal. However, the control group's organization scores increased significantly by an average of three points. This suggests that the "business as usual" activities the control group completed helped increase their organizational skills. This in turn increased the control group's overall writing scores, since the rubric used in the study emphasized organization as a key trait of quality expository writing skills.

Another surprising result of the present study was the statistically significant decrease in language use scores in the experimental group ($t(2)=.03$, $p<.05$) (Table 1.3). Since language use is worth 25 points on the rubric, this decrease contributed to the decrease in the overall essay scores. The mean of the pre-test language scores for the experimental group was 19.2 (SD=1.17), and the mean of the post-test scores was 18.2 (SD=1.46). The control group also decreased in language scores, although the change was not statistically significant. It is possible that the interventions decreased students' ability to use language competently. However, the interventions did not specifically focus on language use of any kind, so it is also likely that other factors were involved in this change.

There are several possibilities that explain why the findings of this study were inconsistent with those of prior studies. One is the presence of many uncontrollable factors. Adolescents are unpredictable, and often issues outside the classroom, such as emotional problems, worries at home, or classroom distractions influence behavior or learning in the classroom. These emotional issues are impossible to control and track. Further, the researcher was not able to be present for all of the creative writing interventions. It is possible that some students were not participating fully in the creative writing interventions, which focused mainly on individual work time. This would prevent these students from experiencing the full benefits of the activities.

Another possibility is that the interventions were not long enough or detailed enough to be effective. Each intervention had a short introduction, no more than two minutes, wherein the teacher gave examples and strategies to help students with the activity. For example, the teacher reviewed the "5 Ws and 1 H" questions to help students write a story before students began the activity. After this, students worked independently. It might have been more helpful if there was a more gradual release of responsibility, moving students from guided practice to independent application. The inverse could also be true; perhaps the prior studies yielded statistically significant results because of less instruction. It is possible that the present study incorporated too much instruction, which decreased the effectiveness of the interventions.

Another factor influencing the study's findings is what the control students were doing instead of the creative writing interventions. On the days that the experimental group did a creative writing intervention, the control group started on that day's activities early in order to have more time to work. According to the teacher, the control group was generally academically lower. This is confirmed by the overall expository essay scores, which show that although the group's post-test scores were similar, the control group began with scores more than five points below the experimental group's pre-test scores. According to the teacher's lesson planning calendar, students were able to start early on tasks like writing body paragraphs and introduction paragraphs for an essay, revising their essay, and reading the material related to their essay. This essay was the one used for the post-assessment. This factor likely had two effects on the outcomes of the study. First, it may have helped students get a better score on the essay, since they had more time to work on it in class. This would directly impact their scores on the rubric. Second, it could have improved students' expository writing skills because

of the increased practice time in expository writing. This is likely the reason students improved their organizational scores so significantly. These skills would have helped their expository writing skills improve, and therefore raised their essay scores.

A final limitation introduced in the present study is the small sample size. Since there were only nine students in the control group and thirteen in the experimental group, respectively, the outliers affected the standard deviation and the t-tests more than they would if the sample size was larger. The small sample size also forced students at many different abilities to be in the same evaluation group, which caused students in each group to have many different starting points in terms of writing skills. This likely skewed the results and prevented the averages from being an accurate average of general middle school students' writing skills.

More research still needs to be done in this area. The significant improvement in content scores suggests value in creative writing instruction for expository writing skills. A logical next step for research would be to try a longer, more detailed series of creative writing lessons with students. The extra directions and guidance may be needed to have a consistent effect on expository skills and attitude. Further studies would also help level out the many uncontrollable factors present when working with adolescents. Another important factor in further research would be the ability to control what is being taught in the control group during the time used for creative writing with the experimental work. For example, the control group could do bellwork focusing on expository writing skills, if the experimental group is doing bellwork focused on creative writing. This would mitigate the impact of an important variable in the research. Another change that would be possible with a larger sample size would be separating students by their pre-test scores so that students at similar levels are evaluated in the same group. This would help to eliminate some of the differences between the groups.

Creative writing has been shown by many studies, as discussed in the literature review, to be effective in improving writing skills and attitude and confidence. Although this study did not support these prior findings, categories within the data suggest that more research is needed. Creative writing should not be eliminated from a teacher's collection of helpful strategies because of this study. Instead, it is probable that the lessons should be extended and more control given over the control group. Writing instruction is complex and includes many factors, and thus the investigation of creative writing as an effective strategy should continue.

REFERENCES

- Applebee, A. N. (2013). Common core state standards: The promise and the peril in a national palimpsest. *English Journal*, 103(1), 25-33.
- Bennett-Rappell, H., & Northcote, M. (2016). Underachieving gifted students: Two case studies. *Issues in Educational Research*, 26(3), 407-430.
- Beers, G. K., Probst, R. E., & Rief, L. (2007). *Adolescent literacy: turning promise into practice*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Bradford, K. L., Newland, A. C., Rule, A. C., & Montgomery, S. E. (2015). Rubrics as a tool in writing instruction: Effects on the opinion essays of first and second graders. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 44(5), 463-472. doi:10.1007/s10643-015-0727-0.
- Cihak, D. F., & Castle, K. (2011). Improving expository writing skills with explicit and strategy instructional methods in inclusive middle school classrooms. *International Journal of Special Education*, 26(3), 106-113.
- Dali, K., Lau, A., & Risk, K. (2015). Academically informed creative writing in LIS programs and the freedom to be creative. *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science*, 56(4), 298-324. doi: <https://doi.org/10.12783/issn.2328-2967/56/4/3>
- Dollins, C. A. (2016). Crafting creative nonfiction: From close reading to close writing. *The Reading Teacher*, 70(1), 49-58. doi:10.1002/trtr.1465.
- English Language Arts Standards (2019). Common Core State Standards Initiative.
- Frawley, E. (2014). No time for the 'Airy fairy': Teacher perspectives on creative writing in high stakes environments. *English in Australia*, 49(1), 17-26.
- Gabriel, K. F., & Davis, T. M. (2015). Implementation of a writing strategy for students with learning disabilities in a rural setting. *Rural Special Education Quarterly*, 34(4), 40-49.
- Graham, S., & Perin, D. (2007). A meta-analysis of writing instruction for adolescent students. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 99(3), 445-476. doi:10.1037/0022-0663.99.3.445.
- Guillén, M. T. F., & Bermejo, M. L. G. (2011). Creative writing for language, content and literacy teaching. *International Education Studies*, 4(5), 39-46.
- Jacobs, H., Zinkgraf, S., Wormuth, D., Hardfiel, V., & Hughey, J. (1981). Testing ESL composition: A practical approach. *ResearchGate*, 1-4.

Kitt, B. (2019). Creating connections between senior and middle years: Perceptions on teaching the art of creative writing. *Literacy Learning*, 27(1), 51-59.

Sahin, N., & Polatcan, F. (2019). The effect of creative writing exercises in Turkish classes on students' academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *International Online Journal of Educational Sciences*, 11(2), 254-268. <https://doi.org/10.15345/iojes.2019.02.017>.

Tsang, M., & 826 Valencia. (2014). *642 things to write about: Young writers edition*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books.

Tok, Ş, & Kandemir, A. (2015). Effects of creative writing activities on students' achievement in writing, writing dispositions and attitude to English. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 174, 1635-1642. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.01.815.

Turkel, A., & Cetinkaya, M. (2020). The effect of creative writing activities on students' attitudes towards writing and their success. *International Online Journal of Educational Sciences*, 12(1), 172-183. <https://doi.org/10.15345/iojes.2020.01.010>.

Wilcox, K. C., Jeffery, J. V., & Gardner-Bixler, A. (2015). Writing to the Common Core: Teachers' responses to changes in standards and assessments for writing in elementary schools. *Reading and Writing*, 29(5), 903-928. doi:10.1007/s11145-015-9588-6.

Appendix A: ESL Composition Profile (Taken from Jacobs et al., 1981)

ESL COMPOSITION PROFILE				
STUDENT	DATE	TOPIC		
SCORE	LEVEL	CRITERIA	COMMENTS	
CONTENT	30-27	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: knowledgeable • substantive • thorough development of thesis • relevant to assigned topic		
	26-22	GOOD TO AVERAGE: some knowledge of subject • adequate range • limited development of thesis • mostly relevant to topic, but lacks detail		
	21-17	FAIR TO POOR: limited knowledge of subject • little substance • inadequate development of topic		
	16-13	VERY POOR: does not show knowledge of subject • non-substantive • not pertinent • OR not enough to evaluate		
ORGANIZATION	20-18	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: fluent expression • ideas clearly stated/supported • succinct • well-organized • logical sequencing • cohesive		
	17-14	GOOD TO AVERAGE: somewhat choppy • loosely organized but main ideas stand out • limited support • logical but incomplete sequencing		
	13-10	FAIR TO POOR: non-fluent • ideas confused or disconnected • lacks logical sequencing and development		
	9-7	VERY POOR: does not communicate • no organization • OR not enough to evaluate		
VOCABULARY	20-18	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: sophisticated range • effective word/idiom choice and usage • word form mastery • appropriate register		
	17-14	GOOD TO AVERAGE: adequate range • occasional errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage but meaning not obscured		
	13-10	FAIR TO POOR: limited range • frequent errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage • meaning confused or obscured		
	9-7	VERY POOR: essentially translation • little knowledge of English vocabulary, idioms, word form • OR not enough to evaluate		
LANGUAGE USE	25-22	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: effective complex constructions • few errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions		
	21-18	GOOD TO AVERAGE: effective but simple constructions • minor problems in complex constructions • several errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions but meaning seldom obscured		
	17-11	FAIR TO POOR: major problems in simple/complex constructions • frequent errors of negation, agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions and/or fragments, run-ons, deletions • meaning confused or obscured		
	10-5	VERY POOR: virtually no mastery of sentence construction rules • dominated by errors • does not communicate • OR not enough to evaluate		
MECHANICS	5	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: demonstrates mastery of conventions • few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing		
	4	GOOD TO AVERAGE: occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing but meaning not obscured		
	3	FAIR TO POOR: frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing • poor handwriting • meaning confused or obscured		
	2	VERY POOR: no mastery of conventions • dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing • handwriting illegible • OR not enough to evaluate		
TOTAL SCORE		READER	COMMENTS	

Appendix B: Writing Attitudes and Confidence Survey
(Adapted from Gabriel & Davis, 2015)

- 1. I like to write.
(Never/Hardly Ever/Sometimes/Often/Almost Always)
- 2. I enjoy writing letters.
(Never/Hardly Ever/Sometimes/Often/Almost Always)
- 3. I like to write stories.
(Never/Hardly Ever/Sometimes/Often/Almost Always)
- 4. I like to write on Instagram, Twitter, or other social media.
(Never/Hardly Ever/Sometimes/Often/Almost Always)
- 5. I like to write at school.
(Never/Hardly Ever/Sometimes/Often/Almost Always)
- 6. I think I am a good writer.
(Never/Hardly Ever/Sometimes/Often/Almost Always)
- 7. Writing is fun.
(Never/Hardly Ever/Sometimes/Often/Almost Always)
- 8. I would like more time to write at school.
(Never/Hardly Ever/Sometimes/Often/Almost Always)
- 9. I think it is important to know how to write well.
(Never/Hardly Ever/Sometimes/Often/Almost Always)
- 10. I like to share my writing with others.
(Never/Hardly Ever/Sometimes/Often/Almost Always)
- 11. Writing is stressful.
(Never/Hardly Ever/Sometimes/Often/Almost Always)

Appendix C: Objectives for Creative Writing Interventions
(Taken from Tsang, M., & 826 Valencia; 2014)

- Intervention 1
Objective: Write a three-paragraph story from a picture.
- Intervention 2
Objective: Write a to-do list for a villain with fifteen items.
- Intervention 3
Objective: Write a haiku about your day.
- Intervention 4
Objective: Describe your dream treehouse in two paragraphs.
- Intervention 5
Objective: Write a three-paragraph story answering the prompt: The entire neighborhood is beige and gray, but at the end of the street sits a bright blue house. Who lives there?
- Intervention 6
Objective: Write a three-paragraph story that includes a streetlight, a bear, and a kid with a jar of honey.
- Intervention 7
Objective: Write a paragraph using the prompt: A group of students are hiking when they find a nest full of golden eggs. One of the eggs hatches. What happens next?
- Intervention 8
Objective: Write a paragraph answering the prompt: You find the end of the rainbow at last. What do you find?
- Intervention 9
Objective: Write two paragraphs answering the prompt: What does your pet do while it's alone at the house?
- Intervention 10
Objective: Write two paragraphs using the prompt: Congratulations! You're a teacher now and can teach any class you want. It can be normal (grammar) or new (advanced magic theory). What will your class be like?