
Volume 3

Issue 1 *Special Issue: Learning from the Research of Practitioners at the University of South Florida*

Article 5

2018

Impact on Student Learning: Monitoring Student Progress

Deanna T. Vaccaro

University of South Florida, d_vaccaro24@hotmail.com

Laura D. Sabella

University of South Florida, lsabella@usf.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/jpr>

 Part of the [Language and Literacy Education Commons](#), and the [Secondary Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Vaccaro, Deanna T. and Sabella, Laura D. (2018) "Impact on Student Learning: Monitoring Student Progress," *Journal of Practitioner Research*: Vol. 3 : Iss. 1 , Article 5.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.5038/2379-9951.3.1.1070>

Available at: <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/jpr/vol3/iss1/5>

Impact on Student Learning: Monitoring Student Progress During Reflective Essay Writing

Abstract

Monitoring each individual student's learning can be a challenge. It is easy for a teacher to ask the whole group a question, but doing so is not an effective strategy to determine individual student's progress. In Florida, student teachers are required to ask the question, "What is my impact on student learning?" as a part of the final internship experience. This study takes place in the final internship of a Secondary English Education major's eleventh grade English Honors class at a high performing, high achieving high school in a large school district. A class of 24 students was taught how to write a personal, reflective essay while the researcher used three teaching strategies to monitor students' learning: supervising/circulating while students were writing, initiating interaction with each student rather than waiting for him/her to ask questions, and one-on-one writing conferences to supply students with feedback during the writing process. A pre-assessment was administered in the form of a baseline writing sample, a post-assessment to apply the essay structure was administered after the skill set was taught, and anecdotal notes and observations were taken during monitoring. Whole class results were examined across pre- and post- assessments. The results show the three monitoring activities were effective in monitoring student progress and had a positive effect on student learning and their growth on the overall learning of a personal, reflective essay.

Editor's Note: The first author in this article conducted this inquiry during her final semester in an undergraduate teacher education program. The second author of this article, served as her mentor in the writing of this paper and was her instructor for the senior seminar course that took place during the time of the inquiry.

Background

This study takes place in the final internship of a Secondary English Education major's 11th grade English Honors class at a high performing, high achieving high school in one of the largest school districts in the country. Blume High School has been designated as a National Demonstration School for the past two years for their district's curriculum. Additionally, Blume offers over fifty honors courses and twenty AP courses. This school has also been recognized as having one of the highest AP exam pass rates in the county for the year 2014.

The demographic make-up of the school is diverse, consisting of White, Black, Hispanic, Multiracial, Asian, and Pacific Islander ethnicities. The school also has English Language Learners (ELL) and students with Educational Plans (EP). Less than half of students at Blume are on the free and reduce lunch plan, and few students are labeled exceptional. Lastly, Blume offers multiple tracks to graduation including: the college preparatory track, the standard/traditional track, and the accelerated standard diploma track (Education Connection, n.d.).

As an intern teacher entering this unfamiliar high school environment, I was nervous about not being prepared with knowing the content well enough to teach my assigned classes. I anticipated that one of my main challenges would be learning the curriculum, but as my first evaluation wrapped up during the third week of my internship, my collaborative teacher (CT), the host teacher in whose classroom I was completing my internship, mentioned that I should start focusing on monitoring individual student progress.

Identifying My Problem of Practice

During my internship experience at Blume High School as a pre-service teacher, I identified a problem of practice: how to monitor student progress throughout a unit of study. As mentioned, I realized that I needed to ensure my students were progressing in the classroom—and that I was monitoring each individual student’s progress—during my first evaluation conference with my collaborating teacher when she told me to shift my focus to this aspect of teaching.

At the time of my first evaluation conference, I understood how to monitor the understanding of a class after a lesson as a whole group. I used strategies such as asking students to show me their comprehension using the thumbs up/down method and taking mental notes of the success and student participation of class discussions. I also knew that student progress was monitored individually using periodic quizzes and tests. The part of monitoring student learning that I did not fully comprehend, however, was the idea behind monitoring the success and progress of each individual student at the end of every lesson, every single day.

During this conference, when my CT asked me about specific students and whether I really knew if they understood the lesson from that day, I stumbled because I realized that I did not know whether each student was actually grasping the concepts as I assumed, or if I was just jumping to conclusions based on the success of the class as a whole. At this moment, I realized that I needed to focus

more on monitoring individual student progress in my classes to ensure that all students are successful and understanding the material by the end of each class.

Through conferencing with my CT and recalling my coursework during my education at the university, I remembered that monitoring student understanding and learning is essential in the classroom (Smagorinsky, Johannessen, Kahn, & McCann, 2010). To jog my memory and to further explore my problem, I began to research how to ensure that each student is developing as a learner. Shortly after, I came across an article by Kathleen Cotton that addressed my area of focus by approaching student learning in a way that made me understand that it is not enough to monitor the class as a whole. She explicitly explains that one must ensure that each student is developing as a learner and provides numerous strategies that past research proved is effective in the classroom in order to monitor student progress (Cotton, 1998). Cotton's article provided much of the basis of my understanding into how to begin to monitor student progress on a daily basis.

Deciding How to Address My Problem of Practice and Literature

I decided I would work to improve this area of practice as I taught a class of twenty-four students how to write a personal, reflective essay. I used three of the teaching strategies to monitor each of my student's learning: supervising/circulating while students were writing, initiating interaction with each student rather than waiting for him/her to ask questions, and one-on-one writing conferences to supply students with feedback during the writing process (Atwell, 2014; Cotton, 1998).

From many strategies for monitoring student progress, I settled on three. First, I chose supervising/circulating while students were writing because, from my practicum internship, I learned that circulating would ensure that students stay on task through proximity control. Circulating is when the teacher walks around the classroom as students are working in order to ensure that they are on task and completing the assigned work as directed. Circulating also allowed me the opportunity to informally evaluate each student's work. As I walked around the room, I could monitor their progress and provide help to any student that I saw needed assistance or could use some extra guidance through the writing process. Cotton (1998) indicates that circulating the room during seatwork allows the teacher to note individual students who need extra support in staying on task and improves student accountability. By supervising students during the writing process, I could monitor who needed extra support in order to ensure that he/she completed the task correctly (Atwell, 2014).

Additionally, I chose initiating interaction with each student rather than waiting for him/her to ask questions. Initiating interaction is when the teacher

takes the initiative to ask the student a question or engage in conversation about their assignment, while they are working, instead of waiting for the student to ask or call the teacher over for help. Unlike the previous strategy, I could not recall seeing this done in a class before or intentionally doing it myself in the classroom, though Atwell (2014) recommends it as a strategy for engaging students about the books they are reading. Cotton (1998) discusses how effective teachers use this strategy to increase awareness of “how well or poorly students are progressing.” This strategy was well aligned with my goal of monitoring student progress and I was interested in trying it.

Lastly, I chose to complete one-on-one writing conferences with my students because I recalled from Atwell (2014) that this is a great strategy to use when students need individual support and feedback. One-on-one writing conferences occur when the teacher pulls each student aside individually in order to provide detailed feedback tailored to the student’s specific needs. Rather than addressing strengths and weaknesses as a class, this strategy allowed me to individualize my feedback to each student and focus on the particular areas in their essay that need improvement. Cotton (1998) supports this idea by explaining how conferencing can provide an opportunity for the teacher to work through problems students have with their writing in an individual, private manner. Using a combination of experience, Cotton’s article, and Atwell’s text, I chose these three strategies to use in my classroom when monitoring student learning.

Throughout my university coursework, I learned about monitoring student progress. When my collaborating teacher pointed out that I should focus on this aspect of teaching in my classroom, I relied upon what I learned from two texts written by Peter Smagorinsky that discussed lesson plan design and teaching writing in the secondary classroom. Both of these texts provided useful information about assessing using rubrics and teaching strategies that have proven effective in the classroom. Additionally, as I skimmed back through these texts, I realized that I needed further research about effective strategies used in the classroom when monitoring student learning so I began searching my university’s databases for scholarly articles. Eventually, I came across the article “Monitoring Student Learning in the Classroom” that was based on Kathleen Cotton’s research on what effective teachers do in the classroom to monitor student learning. Much of her research and findings aligned with my objective so I used some of her strategies to support my understanding and learning of how to monitor student learning in my classroom.

Lastly, when designing the lesson plans and choosing the formative assessments that would be used each day, I modified resources from the district’s

curriculum text for the unit students were studying; as well as, a curriculum guide recommended by my CT, the *This I Believe* lesson plan packet that she used to teach this unit in previous years. Soon, I was able to make sense of exactly what I needed to do in order to ensure that I was effectively monitoring my student's progress and learning in my classroom.

Context of the Study

School and Class Description

For the purpose of this study, I chose to examine and focus on my second period eleventh grade English honors class. The needs and academic levels of students in this particular class were very diverse. The demographic make-up of this class was very similar to the entire school as it consisted of all ethnicities that are found throughout the school community. There were also students on free or reduced lunch, students on EP plans, and an ELL student. There were students on each of the graduation tracks that Blume High School offers (Education Connection, n.d.).

I chose this class because it was one of my most challenging classes. This group often gets off task and feeds off each other's irrelevant comments during a lesson, and my focus becomes behavior management rather than really monitoring whether or not students are learning the material. Although behavior management is important in order to help students focus so that they can learn, the strategies that I chose to help monitor student progress were geared toward keeping students on task. By choosing these particular strategies, I was essentially managing their behavior and reaching my goal to monitor their learning simultaneously.

Additionally, this particular class was chosen because on paper, the statistical information presents a classroom that should be high performing and high achieving; however, this was not necessarily the case with a majority of the students in my second period. School records showed that a majority of students in this class period were taking multiple Advanced Placement classes, had a weighted GPA of 3.5 or higher, and were considered gifted. Knowing that my students should be performing at a higher level was very aggravating, but was also another motivator for myself as I implemented the strategies that I chose in order to monitor their progress and show my impact on their learning.

Moreover, this class brought with them a lot of "baggage" or unfortunate living arrangements that are not presented in district or school information summaries. From talking to the students, other teachers, guidance, and administrative staff, I learned many of the students in the class were dealing with situations outside of the classroom that were unfortunate—living in unstable

home environments, victims of sexual assault, lacking self-sufficiency—and these circumstances may have been affecting their performance in the classroom. I believed confidently that with proper support and the right tools, such as the three strategies I would use to monitor student progress, I could positively impact students' learning; I set a goal to closely monitor my students' progress while teaching a specific skill set (Cotton, 1998).

Content Description

I chose to teach this group of students how to write a personal, reflective essay; it is the embedded assessment requirement for unit four in the district's curriculum guide and the eleventh grade Professional Learning Community (PLC) decided it was important to teach this skill set to our students. The personal, reflective essay also aligns with the state writing standards regarding writing narratives to develop real experiences. In addition to being an end-of-unit requirement, I knew it was important for students to be exposed to a variety of writing styles so that they understand individuals write for different reasons (Smagorinsky et al., 2010).

Furthermore, I chose to teach the personal, reflective essay because I had learned it would inspire and encourage my students to complete the assignment since it was all about them (Smagorinsky et al., 2010). This aspect of narrative writing from Smagorinsky stuck with me because it led me to choose this unit in particular as a strategic method because I learned most students would take ownership and pride in an assignment where they had to talk about themselves and their life experiences. In hopes of showing my impact on student learning, I wanted the assignment for this study to be something that my students would enjoy so that the data would accurately reflect their growth as they learned to improve their writing with feedback.

Moreover, I tweaked the prompt so that students were specifically writing and reflecting on a personal belief, rather than the broad topic of "the pursuit of happiness" for which the district's curriculum book called. With this adjustment, my hope was that students would get a bit more personal and reflective on why they believe or are passionate about the topic they chose, as the *This I Believe* curriculum inspires students to do with personal narratives (National Public Radio, n.d). I chose to make this change to the prompt because as students were studying the unit, they struggled with making connections and relating to the main idea of Transcendentalism. Most of my students are from major cities and had a tough time understanding why someone would choose to live in the wilderness as a pursuit to happiness. Additionally, my eleventh grade students were not used to writing narratives; for most of them, this was a completely unfamiliar experience. By changing the prompt to make it more relatable, my hope was that students

would enjoy the writing assignment a bit more, as I previously said I wanted them to do, and make the unit more relatable using this different approach while still meeting the unit goals and standards.

Lastly, ensuring my students' successful progress on this essay in this unit was important because students had been studying *Into the Wild*, an extended personal, reflective essay as part of required reading for the unit from the district curriculum. Rather than giving students a traditional exam following the completion of the book, I decided to have students work on a personal piece that pushed them to evaluate their own lives and beliefs (Smagorinsky, 2008). Not only was this assessment aligned with what students had been reading and practicing, but it also provided students with another opportunity to make the unit more relatable to their own lives and understand the purpose of studying this novel. This vision was similar to the way that Jon Krakauer, the author of our class novel, approached the writing in his book/extended personal essay and how the authors of the *This I Believe* curriculum did in their unit plan (National Public Radio, n.d). By having students write about their own personal belief, I hoped for them to make the connection that they too are similar to the main character in the novel with choices they have made in their own lives.

Methods

This study took exactly seven full-length class periods to complete from the start of the pre-assessment draft to the completion to of the final post-assessment draft. There was one day to draft the pre-assessment, three days of instruction, and three days of writing with minor editing before turning in the final draft. Activities during instruction included revisiting excerpts from Krakauer's novel, analyzing sample essays from the *This I Believe* packet for structure, PowerPoint mini-lessons on areas of weakness, and a graphic organizer to arrange ideas before writing. Lastly, data was collected in the form of note-taking during formative assessments and recording directly on rubrics for both the pre- and post-assessments in order to compare for later analysis.

Learning Strategies, Techniques, and Activities

In regard to the problem of practice, I supervised students throughout each activity by circulating the room and informally assessing their progress. For each activity I chose a target area of which I would specifically take notice. For the first day when circulating, I decided to specifically look at students' topic sentences. As a way to monitor this step, students received a "thumbs up" stamp on their paper when their topic sentence met the expectations that we went over in the mini-lesson to ensure that they are not being too broad or narrow on their personal belief. If the student did not receive the stamp, I knew when meeting with them during writing conferences, that this was an area we needed to address

for improvement. At another point during the week, I decided to look for the structure format that students were required to follow that aligned with Krakauer's model in his novel. For this step, I required students to identify and color code on their papers their event, response, and reflection. As I moved around the room, I looked for the three different colors as identification on their essays.

Furthermore, I decided to initiate interaction with students who were off topic and students who I knew from previous experience with writing assignments would need additional support. I asked these students questions such as: "Can you briefly explain to me what your plans for writing are? What is your approach to explaining the event in your life that leads you to a personal belief or life changing experience? How can you add more imagery to your event so that it is a word picture for the reader?" I also initiated interaction with students who were on task to ensure that they were executing the assignment as directed. I asked these students questions such as: "Can you explain to me which areas in your essay you chose to add imagery for the reader? What strategies can you use to get the reader to feel the emotions you were feeling during this life changing event? What challenges are you facing while writing this essay and how can I support you?"

Lastly, writing conferences took place near the end of drafting. I called students to my desk, one at a time, specifically starting with students that scored very low on the pre-assessment and needed more support. I called them to my desk so that we could talk privately and so that the student would be more open to asking clarifying questions. Most of those conversations and feedback focused on structure to ensure organization and topic development, because these were the areas of weakness where they needed additional support. Other students, who I knew were on the right track from their pre-assessment score, I met with briefly to provide feedback to strengthen their essay. Most of the time, this feedback was suggestions on where to add additional detail and visual imagery to specific places in their essay. During these conferences I also looked for the formative assessment indicators that I placed or had students mark on their drafts as I was circulating and monitoring their writing process. If students were missing the "thumbs up" stamp near their topic sentence, did not color code, or coded incorrectly, this was the time that I would address these issues and work with students one-on-one to improve these areas.

These three strategies are used to help students grow and should result in a positive impact on their learning according to Cotton's article (Cotton, 1998). They were also used as main contributors to the way I collected data and

monitored student learning during instruction and activities so they are essential to this study and monitoring my impact on student learning.

Data Collection and Analysis

Students wrote a personal, reflective essay on a personal belief. The exact prompt was: *Write a multi-paragraph reflective essay about a personal belief or significant insight about life* (National Public Radio, n.d). For the pre-assessment, students wrote a draft of the personal essay. Prior to the draft, I did not teach any skills or information regarding the structure or requirements that make up a personal, reflective, or narrative essay. For the pre-assessment, I gave students the prompt, the rubric, and a sheet of notebook paper in order to demonstrate what they already know about personal essays. I developed the prompt by combining terminology from the prompt in the district curriculum book with the *This I Believe* essay prompt. I also developed the rubric by modifying the state Common Core narrative writing rubric with the requirements from the state standards and the objectives from the district curriculum, which focused on structure (Appendix A).

For the post-assessment, I gave students the same prompt and rubric, asked them to edit and revise their draft based on the information they now know from the lessons they were taught on personal, reflective essays. Giving students rubrics along with their prompt provides them with a reference point when making decisions, gives them a clear-cut distinction among their performance level, and requires them to include certain aspects in their writing that they may otherwise would not do by choice (Smagorinsky, 2008).

As the pre-service teacher, I determined my impact on student growth by scoring both essays, the draft copy and final copy, using the same rubric. I created a chart/graph (*Fig. 1*) to show the growth of student knowledge, comparing what they knew about the structure of a narrative before the lessons to after instruction was delivered. The rubric (Appendix A) ensured that I collected comparative data in order to measure student growth and understanding (Smagorinsky, 2008).

Additionally, observational and anecdotal data was collected during circulating, interacting, and conferencing with students. Most of this data was collected as I wrote my notes about student understanding on my notepad. A lot of these notes were student questions and comments that I wanted to remember as they engaged in writing and rewriting their essay. The clarifying questions I asked ensured me that students were understanding and trying to improve their draft. I also took notes about recurring statements and questions that students made to ensure that I addressed the class as a whole if it seemed like I needed to clarify an aspect of the assignment. Moreover, I took mental notes as I circulated the room

during activities about student engagement and concentration was also noticed. Lastly, I made notes directly on each student’s paper to provide feedback in order to revisit what we discussed as we conferenced and engaged in academic dialogue during the writing process. These markings included the “thumbs up” stamp, color coding, and any additional quick feedback notes that I jotted down in the margins when I asked students questions during the initiating conversation stage.

Results

Finding #1: Monitoring to Address Problems of Writing Reflective Essays

The pre-assessment results revealed that most students did not know how to successfully write a personal, reflective essay. The class average score was 50.7%, but that improved to 80.5% on the final essay.

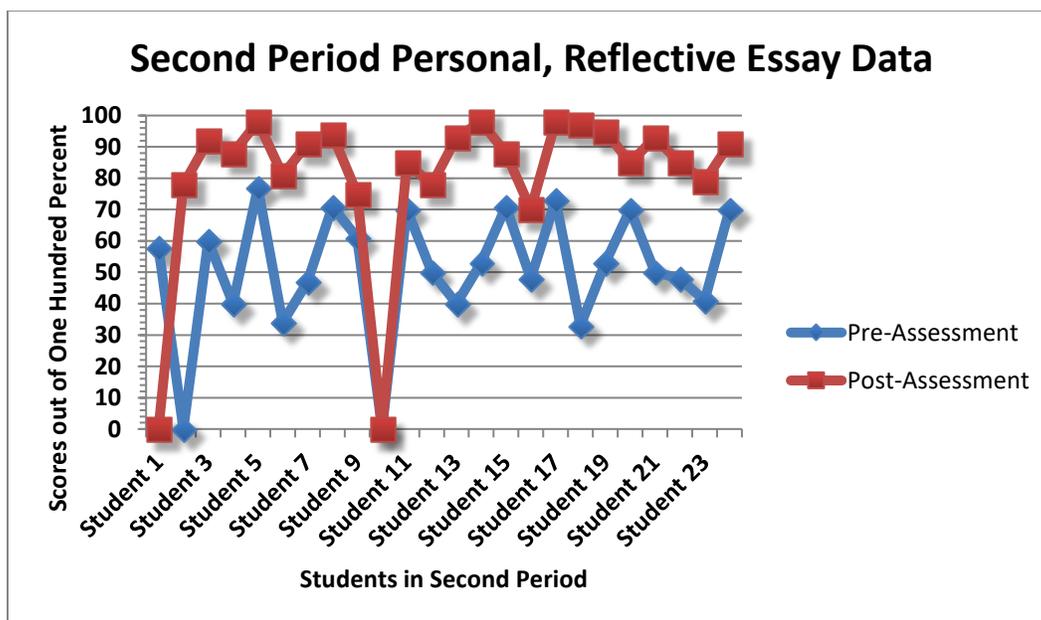


Fig. 1. Comparison of pre- and post-assessment data on a personal reflective essay

When going back to the students’ rubrics to see in what areas students were losing the most points, the data revealed that first, students did not know how to narrow down their topic to one specific belief. Most of them either chose a belief that was too broad and could not be discussed in the paper using one particular event or they tried writing about multiple beliefs in their paper rather than basing their controlling idea on one specific belief statement. Additionally, most students did not know the structure of a personal, reflective essay. Some papers were missing one or multiple required body elements: event, response,

reflection. Points were frequently deducted for not choosing an event, choosing an event that was not personal to the individual student, not including a response, not responding to the event as it was happening, and not including communal relevance after their reflection. Furthermore, students wrote very little detail and elaboration in their essays and very few provided imagery and sensory details to help the reader understand the event.

All of these errors in the pre-assessment are consistent with the *This I Believe* curriculum that anticipated the need for extra instruction in these areas (National Public Radio, n.d). The curriculum pointed to areas that were consistent with many of my students' needs as revealed in the pre-assessment, and I used this knowledge to guide my monitoring of student learning. The pre-assessment gave me precise areas for which to monitor as I circulated and spoke with students. As I mentioned previously, I added a check point when students were writing for me to check their topic sentence and again when I had them to highlight and identify the structural elements in their drafts.

Additionally, other studies have shown that when it comes to personal experience narratives, students need help paying attention to detail and employing descriptive language (Smagorinsky et al., 2010). The key when teaching narratives, according to Smagorinsky, is to teach the skills and strategies that are "task-specific" to enhance the telling of a personal experience for a narrative. With all of this information in mind, I tailored the instruction to meet my students' needs and monitored their writing for inclusion of detail to ensure their success on the post assessment. The unit required students to focus on the structure of the essay, but the writing standards also called for students to develop their narrative; adding detail and descriptive language is a part of developing the narrative. Teaching students to add detail is always a challenge because they can relive their experience in their heads through memory, but putting the memory to paper so that the reader can experience the event in a similar way is a task with which many students in language arts struggle. I focused on this aspect of student writing during writing conferences; I could identify lack of detail and description and marked directly on each student's paper where her or she needed to add more detail.

Finding #2: The Benefits of Monitoring During Writing

The first benefit to monitoring student learning during writing was that students were more likely to be engaged in the writing process. As I learned in my practicum, students stayed on task and engaged in their writing when I was up circulating the room. They were on task further when I stopped to initiate interaction with them about their writing, even after I walked away to assist other students.

Secondly, I was able to address student weaknesses before the assessment of the final draft. While circulating the room, I looked for students to color-code their essay using the same method as they were taught while completing the activity with Krakauer's excerpt and a sample *This I Believe* essay. If I noticed a student who was not highlighting, I initiated a conversation to find out why the colors were not on the paper. If students were missing these markings or the paragraphs were mismarked, it was an indicator to me that this was another area for which the student needed additional support and feedback individually. For example, there was an instance when I asked a student where his reflection began because I did not see any green coding/highlighting on his draft. This question prompted him to ask for a reiteration of what the reflection paragraph should be because he was unaware. Without beginning the discussion, I would never have known that he was unaware what the reflection paragraph should entail.

I asked general questions to guide students to help me understand where they were having difficulty. All of my questions invoked conversations with my students and forced them to think about their writing and take their ideas to the next level. I realized through this process that some students did not understand the difference between event and response which affected their writing structure. By monitoring their learning throughout the writing process, I was able to clarify some of these fuzzy areas so that students could improve their writing structure. I also made marks or notes as I circulated that guided my individual conferences.

A third benefit from monitoring student progress was being able to work one-on-one with each student to target a specific area with which he or she struggled individually. For some, this was recalling certain details of their event that led to their personal belief. During the conferences, I was able to talk with these students and ask them questions that I as the reader had about their event when reading it, in order to help them add details to clarify the sequence of events. From observation and anecdotal data collection, I began to realize that my students would benefit if I conducted think-alouds with each of them during their individual conferences in order for them to grasp the expectation of developing their narrative with details and vivid imagery. I was able to implement think-alouds during writing conferences to model how to add those elements. Since each student has different life experiences and beliefs, the writing conferences helped give students the personal feedback that this assignment required in order to improve and be successful.

Discussion and What I Learned

Many of these skills and strategies that were used throughout this study came from coursework and texts used throughout my time in the Secondary

English Education program. However, it is one thing to sit in a classroom and hear a lecture or read a text on monitoring student learning and ensuring my impact on student learning, but it is another to actually go out in the field and apply what I have studied the past two years. One of the major things I learned from this study was to use my resources from coursework as references and to constantly reflect on my teaching and what the students were doing so I could make adjustments.

Additionally, through this experience as a practitioner, I learned that ongoing assessment is essential for student success. By supervising and circulating while students worked, I learned that students will more likely be on task while writing (Cotton, 1998). They are less likely to be off task when I am walking around to make sure that they are completing their activities than if I am not paying attention or sitting at my desk completing another task. I also learned that I need to know specifically what I am looking for as I circulate and supervise, and this can usually come from assessments and can be included in the daily objective. Furthermore, I learned that when I initiate interaction with students, it is likely to open the door for discussion and for the student to ask clarifying questions. Moreover, I learned that students benefit from one-on-one writing conferences because it allows me to target an individual's weakness and work with him/her to improve. Conferences allowed me to privately discuss with students where they needed to improve most and exactly where on their draft these improvements could be made.

I did not expect these writing conferences to give me a chance to build rapport with my students and learn more about them individually on a personal level. I did not think about this aspect going into this study, but it was a rewarding surprise during this phase of the assignment. When meeting with students, I learned about some of their personal beliefs that are rooted in deep, and sometimes intimate, life experiences. Learning these back stories about my students and getting to have these dear conversations could have also contributed to their success on this essay. By making it personal, it made the experience more enjoyable for myself and most importantly, my students.

Monitoring each individual student's learning can be a challenge, but these three strategies proved effective in this classroom and were a great factor in the growth and success of my students on the post-assessment (Cotton, 1998). The post-assessment results revealed a 30.2% increase in the class average, raising it to 80.5% (see *Fig. 1*). Also almost all students were able to receive maximum points compared to the pre-assessment. When I saw that my students' scores had increased, it made me feel like I was having an impact on their learning; the

strategies that I spent time to research developed the positive results that I anticipated.

Future Directions

There are areas for which I do wish I had given students more feedback and informal assessment throughout the writing process. My reflections are important so that improvement can be made if I teach this skill set again. By reflecting, I realized the areas that needed more attention and assessment. For teaching this skill set, I would give students a little more instruction during the pre-assessment phase. I recall during this phase that students were a bit overwhelmed and hesitant because they were scared that this pre-assessment would affect their grade. In this area, I need to make sure I reassure my students that the purpose of this phase is for me to get a grasp of what they know before diving into a new, major assignment. Their reaction during this stage could have caused some of the low data results that were collected because they were worried. By reassuring them that all I was looking for was their best effort, results for the pre-assessment could possibly have been a little higher.

Next, I would like to seek out additional opportunities for professional development; specifically, trainings on strategies for monitoring student learning and assessment. I realized that I still have much to learn about assessment, data collection, and monitoring each student's learning. I would like to continue to do more research on monitoring student progress through assessment—similar to this study—to continue to discover new things about my own teaching.

Lastly, I realized that I need to start a reflection journal of some kind so that I can reflect after each skill set. By writing down what I notice, I may be more likely to identify or anticipate problems before they occur. I will also have written records of what I learned and what I should change for the next time I teach this skill set. As I reflected at the end of the day during this study, I always tried to think of new ways to monitor and record the progression of my students' understanding and learning. I think reflection journals are a great way to brainstorm and draw important conclusions in the practice of teaching. As a result of reflecting on this study, I believe that I now have a better grasp of what it means to monitor progress of each individual student. I can confidently say that I know which students were struggling each day during activities, unlike before this study when I conferenced with my collaborating teacher. Because of this study, I now have a better understanding of what effective teachers do in the classroom, and that is, monitoring the progress of learning with each individual student on a daily basis.

References

- College Board. (2014). *SpringBoard English Language Arts Grade 11*. NY, NY: College Board.
- Cotton, K. (1998). *Monitoring Student Learning in the Classroom*. Retrieved May 29, 2017, from Education Northwest :
<http://educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/monitoring-student-learning.pdf>
- Education Connection. (n.d.). *Student Summary*. Retrieved February 22, 2017, from Education Connection: <https://edconnect.sdhc.k12.fl.us>
- Hillsborough County Public Schools. (n.d.). *School Information and Demographics*. Retrieved February 22, 2017, from Bloomingdale High School:
http://bloomingdale.mysdhc.org/School_Information
- Krakauer, J. (1996). *Into the Wild*. New York, New York: Villard Books.
- Myers, D. G. (2012). *Psychology of Everyday Life*. New York, New York: Worth publishers.
- National Public Radio. (n.d.). *This I Believe*. Retrieved May 29, 2017, from This I Believe: http://www.npr.org/thisibelieve/guides/tib_highschool_curriculum.pdf
- Smagorinsky, P. (2008). *Teaching English by Design*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Smagorinsky, P., Johannessen, L. R., Kahn, E. A., & McCann, T. M. (2010). *The Dynamics of Writing Instruction*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Appendix A

Scoring Elements	Not Yet		Approaches Expectations		Meets Expectations		Advanced
	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4
Focus	Attempts to address the prompt, but lacks or is off-task.		Addresses prompt appropriately, but with a weak or uneven focus.		Addresses prompt appropriately and maintains a clear, steady focus.		Addresses all aspects of prompt appropriately and maintains a strongly developed focus.
Controlling Idea/Belief Statement	Attempts to establish a controlling idea, but lacks a clear purpose.		Establishes a controlling idea with a general purpose.		Establishes a controlling idea with clear purpose maintained throughout response.		Establishes a strong controlling idea with a clear purpose maintained throughout response.
Event or Incident	Attempts to provide an event or incident that supports the controlling idea.		Presents an event or incident relevant to the controlling idea with minor lapses in accuracy/ completeness.		Presents an event or incident that is relevant to the controlling idea with accuracy and completeness.		Accurately presents an event or incident that is relevant to all parts of controlling idea.
Response	Attempts to describe thoughts or feelings (about the event or incident) when it was happening.		Presents an appropriate description of the thoughts or feelings (about the event or incident) when it was happening.		Presents an appropriate and sufficient description of the thoughts or feelings (about the event or incident) when it was happening.		Presents a thorough and detailed description of the thoughts or feelings (about the event or incident) when it was happening.
Reflection	Attempts to reflect on the event or incident after it happened.		Presents an appropriate reflection after the event or incident has occurred. The transition between response and reflection may not be clear.		Presents an appropriate and sufficient reflection after the event or incident has occurred. The transition between response and reflection is apparent.		Presents a thorough and detailed reflection after the event or incident has occurred that is universal. The transition between response and reflection is apparent and intentional.
Details/Imagery	Attempts to include details and imagery to enhance understanding.		Uses details when appropriate, but some areas lack vivid imagery.		Uses details and imagery appropriately to enhance the reader's understanding.		Uses details and imagery to significantly enhance the reader's understanding.
Organization	Attempts to organize ideas, but lacks control of structure.		Uses an appropriate organizational structure to address the specific		Maintains an appropriate organizational structure to		Maintains an organizational structure that intentionally and effectively enhances the

			requirements of the prompt, with some lapses in coherence or awkward use of organizational structure.		address the specific requirement of the prompt.		presentation of information as required by the prompt.
Conventions & Style	Attempts to demonstrate standard English conventions, but lacks cohesion and control of grammar, usage, and mechanics.		Demonstrates an uneven command of standard English conventions and cohesion. Uses language and tone with some inaccurate, inappropriate, or uneven features.		Demonstrates a command of standard English conventions and cohesion, with few errors. Response includes language and tone appropriate to the audience, purpose, and specific requirements of the prompt.		Demonstrates and maintains a well-developed command of standards English conventions and cohesion, with few errors. Response includes language/tone consistently appropriate to the audience, purpose, and specific requirements of the prompt.