5-2012

Creating Critical Thinking Writers in Middle School: A Look at the Jane Schaffer Model

Richard A. Roybal
Dominican University of California

https://doi.org/10.33015/dominican.edu/2012.edu.01

Recommended Citation
Roybal, Richard A., "Creating Critical Thinking Writers in Middle School: A Look at the Jane Schaffer Model" (2012). *Graduate Master's Theses, Capstones, and Culminating Projects*. 125.
https://doi.org/10.33015/dominican.edu/2012.edu.01

This Master's Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Scholarship at Dominican Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Master's Theses, Capstones, and Culminating Projects by an authorized administrator of Dominican Scholar. For more information, please contact michael.pujals@dominican.edu.

Creating Critical Thinking Writers in Middle School:

A Look at the Jane Schaffer Model

Richard A. Roybal

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science in Education

School of Education and Counseling Psychology

Dominican University of California

San Rafael, CA

April 2012

Acknowledgments

Table of Contents

Abstract

A key component of good writing is the use of critical thinking skills. Without deeper levels of reflection and thinking, writing becomes superficial, less interesting, and harder to follow. Too many essays do not reflect the use of critical thinking. This paper examines the effects of the Jane Schaffer method and the degree to which it has improved writing skills and critical thinking in my students. The sample consists of two classes of eighth grade students' written response to literature essays. In looking at this widely used method of teaching essay writing, the paper evaluates strengths and weaknesses of the different strategies of writing insofar as how they create better, reflective thinkers. The research sought to determine how well students were able to create a thesis for a paper, and if they could create three topic sentences that support their thesis. Results indicated that students need more practice writing and more instruction in using critical thinking skills.

Chapter 1 Introduction

In preparation for writing a thematic essay on a novel read in class, students in our eighth grade English class discussed the value of thinking about their writing. The goal was to instill in them that as thinking develops, it evolves into deeper levels of thought. Students must realize that writing is a recursive process and part of that process is to think about what they wish to convey before putting pen to paper. Once written, would it make sense to others? Are students reflecting on the writing? Is what they want to say only superficial thinking (I do/don't like this story) or is it on a deeper level?

Students were asked if they were better thinkers than third graders and of course, everyone agreed. The analogy of being able to add and multiply in our minds compared to third graders was used, but the focus was kept on writing. Class was also asked if seniors in high school were better thinkers than eighth graders. Most agreed seniors are capable of higher level thinking; however, others disagreed. This led to a short, albeit good, student-led discussion. Whether due to peer pressure or because they became convinced, the small minority changed their vote. It was interesting though, to hear them try to convince that last student that as we gain wisdom, understanding, education, and age, it is possible to think and reason at deeper levels, especially if we learn to reflect.

Statement of Problem

Of the four domains of English—reading, writing, speaking and listening—the hardest one for students to perform and for teachers to teach, is the art of writing.   In teaching essay writing, different teachers use different methods and strategies.   The question arises as to what

methods can be used to teach students to write better and to think more critically as they write. Year after year students grapple with writing essays. This is not unheard of as even the best writers struggle to find the best way to communicate their thoughts. The problem with the students observed is that the weaker essays often fail to make sense and the reader gets lost in trying to make sense of what is being conveyed.

Professional Observations

Writing involves thinking. All language is persuasive in nature; it must convince the reader to continue to listen to the speaker, whether the speaker is talking through speech orally or in writing. Writing, however, is persuasive in that the writer is constantly trying to persuade the reader to continue to read. Thus, it not only forces the writer to find precise words needed to get one's thoughts across, but the thoughts need to make sense to the reader.

The writing process begins long before pen is ever put to paper, from instruction of grammar and punctuation to teaching vocabulary and reading comprehension. If students are going to respond to literature, they must first be able to read and comprehend, as well as make inferences. The dual problem of not being able to read well or comprehend vocabulary may not seem like it has much to do with writing. However, in order to write a logical composition on literature, students need to understand the nuances and connotations of words. Indeed, writing is made of words put in logical order so the reader can make sense of it. Vocabulary can be especially challenging to English language learners (ELL). Thus, a suitable vocabulary is needed before creating new meaning from literature. For the purposes of this paper, it was assumed that students have at least an adequate vocabulary and reading comprehension skills for this class.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this paper is to explore methods used to create critical thinking skills in writing. In doing so, it seeks to examine various strategies which Jane Schaffer (1995) uses to develop critical thinking skills and explore how well they work. Strategies to teach thinking skills are examined.

Research Questions

How well does Jane Schaffer's formulaic method of teaching essay writing work in regard to improving critical thinking skills in eighth grade students? What is the effect of the Jane Schaffer method of teaching essay writing to improve student writing skills? Will students be able to write topic sentences that support a thesis using the Schaffer method?

Critical thinking can be defined in a number of ways, but even a broad definition has a number of meanings. While it is often referred to as reflective thinking or deep thinking, along with those partial definitions come a sense of problem solving. Indeed, multiple definitions of the term "critical thinking" exist. Most authors "stress the outcomes of such thinking" (Lipman, 2003, p.209). The outcomes "tend to be limited to *solutions* and *decisions*" (Lipman, 2003, p.209). While one person may define critical thinking as "mental processes, strategies and representations people use to solve problems, make decisions and learn new concepts" (Sternberg as cited by Lipman, 2003, p.209), another defines it as "reasonable reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe and do" (Ennis as cited by Lipman, 2003, p.209). If we are to give any definition of critical thinking—and there are many—then good judgment must be part of the definition. To sum up Lipman's explanation, he argues that *"critical thinking is*

thinking that (1) facilitates judgment because it (2) relies on criteria, (3) is self-correcting, and (4) is sensitive to context," (Lipman, 2003, p.211-212). This study takes Lipman's perspective on the definition of critical thinking.

Theoretical Rationale

When Dewey (1966) discussed reflective thinking, he argued that our educational system would not be satisfactory until students were converted to a process of inquiry. For much of the first half of the twentieth century, Dewey's progressive philosophy led the way in critical inquiry. In fact, Dewey's emphasis on reflective thinking was the forerunner for critical thinking today (Lipman, 2003).

It is absolutely essential that students learn to think and to write. According to the college report, *Statement on Competencies in English and Mathematics Expected of Entering Freshmen* (as cited by Olsen, 1983), it is "crucial that students develop the ability to 'understand, organize, synthesize, and communicate information, ideas and opinions' and be able to demonstrate those thinking skills by 'writing compositions, reports, terms papers, and essay examinations'" (p.18).

Assumptions

Often students produce essays which are hard to follow or offer no interesting insights to literature. It is assumed that those who practice reflective thinking and analysis produce refreshing writing that makes sense. Jane Schaffer's method of teaching the five paragraph essay acts as a useful tool for weak writers who need structure. It is also anticipated that those students who need structure the most are also the ones who tend to have a dislike or even apprehension of

writing. While Schaffer's method is useful to help students learn the basics of essay writing, it is believed that students' creative efforts appear to be somewhat stifled. Sometimes students who do not follow the formulaic approach create novel essays. The research has led me to believe that by focusing on strategies for critical thinking, students often show further insight in their writing. This does not necessarily mean there is no value to a formulaic approach. The framework of any essay lies in the thesis and the body paragraphs; taken together, they make up the foundation of an essay. If anything, it is the body paragraph that is a critical part of any essay; it "should be the center of composition" (Beswick, 2001, p.13). However, it is the thesis that is the road map of an essay and tells the reader where the writer is headed.

It is also assumed that those who are able to think critically are generally better writers. They reflect and mull over their writing and look at it with a critical eye. These writers know that good writing is recursive. Writers need to think. What will I write? Am I writing what I want to say? If it is true that better writers are critical thinkers, then it must follow that there are ways to teach these skills. By teaching these strategies and skills, it is expected that students become proficient writers whose essays allow readers to understand what the writers are trying to express.

Background and Need

The Jane Schaffer method was first taught to the researcher during his first year of teaching. Sent by his school to a conference given by Ms. Schaffer, he came away with a binder which laid out exactly how to teach an essay. As a new teacher, it fulfilled his need for a simple formula to teach writing. The Schaffer method is widely known and is used by many teachers

throughout the United States. The teacher interviewed for this research knows the Schaffer

method well.

Chapter 2 Review of the Literature

Introduction

An abundance of literature has been written to inform educators on ways to teach and improve students' writing. One pervasive theme in the literature includes the component of critical thinking. In examining literature on how to teach good writing, the theme of incorporating critical thinking continually arises as part of the writing process.

Most of the literature available describes ways to teach writing to students. There is less, however, that incorporate ways to create critical thinkers. The literature does show how exceptional research is carried out as opposed to weaker research based on opinion. The best articles consistently support what is said with other studies. The review is categorized as follows: Historical Context, Review of the Previous Literature, Statistical Information, Special Collections, and an Interview with an Expert.

Historical Context

One of the first American writers on the subject of logic was Royce (1881). He felt we must, "unravel the tangles of ambiguous speech in the statements of others" (Royce, 1881, p.13). Unfortunately, his exercises were "stuffy and musty" (Lipman, 2003, p.33), and consequently, not much use to help composition even though one must admire his work (Lipman, 2003).

The movement for the teaching of thinking has its more recent roots in the late 1970s and especially the 1980s. When William Bennett became Secretary of Education in 1985, he deplored its activities and vowed to demolish the department. He was a strong criticizer of the

educational system and deplored its low standards. Of course the educational system was quick

to throw the blame on others such as family and societal problems in general (Lipman, 2003).

It was during this same era that the Bay Area Writing Project began in 1974. This

organization had its roots in Berkeley at the University of California. The impetus for this

movement started with a group of colleagues whose desire was to see teachers-teaching-teachers

and sharing their best practices and knowledge of writing. In just two years it had grown to 14

locations in six states. Since then it has transformed into the National Writing Project and is now

in all fifty states at over 200 locations (National Writing Project, 2012).

Teaching for thinking became popular in the early 1980s. Journals such as *Educational*

Leadership, for example, became powerful influences. Many articles were published with the

theme of teaching thinking skills (Lipman, 2003). It was at this point that teaching for thinking

was not really enough and the streetcar turned the corner to teaching for *critical* thinking.

Meanwhile, Bloom (1994b) developed his Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. He saw

his taxonomy as a way to take new information—knowledge—and use it to solve problems.

Bloom put a hierarchy to learning, putting memory at the lowest rung. Bloom's original

hierarchy included, "knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and

evaluation" (Brown, 2004, p.78). The first two, knowledge and comprehension, refer to

"thinking that is convergent in nature", while the last four, according to Brown, are divergent,

"meaning that it differs or deviates from any pre-established point" (Brown, 2004, p.78). This is

where good writing comes in—with intellectual thinkers who not only create their own thesis,

but also support them with logical topic sentences.

Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives

New Version   **Old Version**
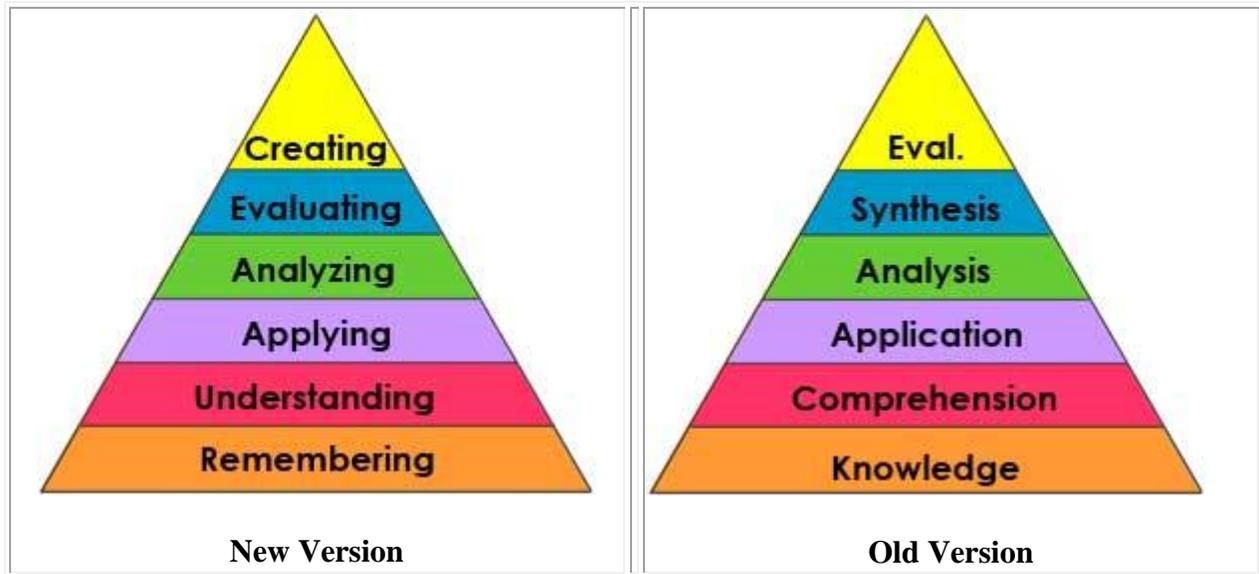
In 1956, Benjamin Bloom headed a group of educational psychologists who developed a classification of levels of intellectual behavior important in learning. During the 1990's a new group of cognitive psychologists, led by Lorin Anderson (a former student of Bloom), updated the taxonomy to reflect relevance to 21st century work. The two graphics show the revised and original Taxonomy. Note the change from Nouns to Verbs associated with each level.

(Overbaugh & Schultz, 2011, para.1)

The problem was that too much time was spent on teaching the lower rungs of Bloom's taxonomy. Indeed, "frequently as much as 90 percent of instructional time was spent at the level" (Bloom, 1994b, p.1) of knowledge. Knowledge is essential, for without knowledge, students cannot climb the hierarchy of Bloom's taxonomy. The creation of his taxonomy led teachers and educators to realize that there was, "very little time spent on the higher mental processes that would enable students to apply their knowledge creatively" (Bloom, 1994b, p.1). Bloom himself said it had "been labeled 'critical thinking' by some, 'reflective thinking' by Dewey and others, and 'problem solving by still others'" (Bloom, 1994a, p 16-17). However,

Bloom does not use the term "critical thinking" but rather "intellectual abilities and skills" (Bloom, 1994a, p.17) to refer to the various levels. Bloom (1994b) felt that the taxonomy, "filled a void; it met a previously unmet need for basic, fundamental planning in education" (p.1).

Of special interest are the changes made to Bloom's hierarchy during the 1990s. The fact that *creating* was put on top correlates directly to writing essays that "develop interpretations which exhibit careful reading and insight" as well as "draw supported inferences about the effects of a literary work on its audience" (California Dept. of Education, 2009, p.51). One final note is that all the nouns in the original taxonomy were changed to verbs. This is a logical step since we want students to be able to do something with their knowledge. This change to a verb connects directly to what teachers expect of students in creating essays which analyze and evaluate literature.

Previous Research

De La Paz and Graham (2007) researched the practice of explicitly teaching strategies, skills, and knowledge. Their focus was on writing instruction in middle school classrooms. This in-depth article details a case study done between two middle schools, both with extremely similar backgrounds, sizes, ethnicity, and so on. The study details the effectiveness of teaching students how to plan essays, using two key strategies. The article begins with the need for better writers and the possibilities of why students in middle schools do not write well. It also brings in the variety of cognitive skills needed to produce good writing. The major strategy used for the experimental group was the self-regulated strategy development model (SRSD). The authors back up their claims with other studies that this model produces better writers. The study

describes the methods used, including the setting, the teachers, and the students. They also use a number of charts and algebraic numbers which make it difficult for the reader to interpret. It was impressive to see how the authors appear to have taken every measure possible to assure study results are valid; however, they acknowledge that further studies are needed to confirm results.

       A meta-analysis of the research by Crenshaw, Hale, and Harper (2011), articulates one problem contributing to the literature of critical thinking, and that is the lack of an exact agreement on what constitutes critical thinking The authors feel the lack of an agreed upon definition actually "acts as a barrier" (p.13) to teaching critical thinking. They assert that it is taught in a variety of ways, while still acknowledging that the various definitions contain common threads. They also discuss the importance of critical thinking. There is no doubt that "critical thinking creates better decision makers" (Crenshaw et al., 2011, p.14). In fact, "when people apply critical thinking concepts and use constructive behaviors, they develop more ideas, make fewer mistakes and reach better decisions" (Crenshaw et al., 2011, p14). They believe it is up to educators to use words which encourage critical thinking; this not only aids in the organization of thoughts, but also helps people communicate those thoughts more clearly and succinctly (Crenshaw et al. 2011).   As human beings who reason, the article quotes a study by Paul and Elder (as cited in Crenshaw et al, 1995), explaining that, "the elements of thought are the basic building blocks of thinking" (p.15). The article goes on to use a model from *The Foundation for Critical Thinking* (Crenshaw et al, 2011, p.15) in as the vehicle for the remainder of the paper. It brings in a number of routinely used questions by people who think logically.

These people ask posing questions such as:

- What is the purpose of my thinking?

- What is the question at issue?

- Is the question clear and precisely stated?

- Within what point of view am I thinking?

- What information am I using and where did I obtain this information?

- What concepts or ideas are central to my interpretation?

- What assumptions am I making? Are they valid?

- What conclusions have I drawn? Are they logically sound?

- If I accept the conclusions, what are the implications?

(Paul & Elder as cited in Crenshaw et al., 2011, p.16).

These questions can be used as a rubric for higher level thinking. Crenshaw et al. (2011)

go into the standards used to evaluate thinking and the traits of intellectual thinkers. Interestingly

enough, it is teachers themselves are often barriers to the goal of thinking critically (Crenshaw et

al., 2011, p.17). Their article is mainly aimed at an audience of college and beyond, but the

implications can easily apply to teachers in both middle and high school levels. The article asks

the question of how we might teach the process of critical thinking, and identifies "four different

approaches: General, infusion, immersion, and mixed (Ennis as cited in Crenshaw et al 2011,

p.17). It then goes on to discuss each of the four approaches. It appears the authors focused

mostly on the general approach, not going as much in-depth into the other three methods. The

reader feels more needed to be said about the four approaches. It is almost as if most of the paper

led up to the approaches, but needed to tell more about the other three methods. One added

bonus in this paper is three appendices, two of which are excellent in showing what is needed in

critical thinkers and how to go about it.

Developing Writing Competence

Perhaps the best example of exceptional research is Graham and Perin's (2007) meta-

analysis of writing instruction for adolescent students. One major concern to educators is that a

majority of students do not develop the competence needed in writing in order to be successful

not only in school, but in the workplace and their personal lives (Graham & Perin, 2007). Sadly,

"two thirds or more of students' writing in 4th, 8th, and 12th grade, was below grade-level

proficiency" (Greenwald, Persky, Ambell, & Mazzeo, as cited in Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 445).

They concede one common explanation why youngsters do not write well is that schools do not

do a sufficient job of teaching this complex skill. This supports the findings of other reliable

sources such as The National Commission on Writing which found that, "Of the three R's

writing is clearly the most neglected" (The College Board, 2003, p. 3). In an effort to identify

effective instructional practices for teaching writing to adolescents, the authors Graham and

Perin (2007) conducted a meta-analysis of writing intervention literature, grades 4-12. They used

both "experimental and quasi-experimental studies that examined the effectiveness of learning-

to-write interventions" (Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 446).   They wanted to know, "What

instructional practices improve the quality of adolescent students' writing?" (Graham & Perin,

2007, p.446). Their in-depth study covered 123 documents looking at interventions and

"examined the effectiveness of teaching students strategies for planning, revising, and/or editing"

(Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 446). Their eleven interventions ranged from simple sentence

combining and grammar instruction to heavier activities such as summarization and the process

writing approach. After looking at 123 documents and 154 effect sizes, Harris and Graham (as cited in Graham & Perin, 2007), "reported that teaching such strategies by means of the self-regulated strategy development (SRSD) model to students in Grades 3-8 resulted in a large average unweighted effect size of 1.47 for writing quality" (p. 446). Since the self-regulated development model produced the best results, it is worth examining. Luke (2006) demonstrates six stages which are combined with four self-regulation strategies:

1. Develop and activate background knowledge (Class)

2. Discuss the strategy, including benefits and expectations (Class)

3. Model the strategy (Teacher)

4. Memorize the strategy (Student)

5. Support the strategy collaboratively (Teacher & Class)

6. Use the strategy by yourself, independently (Student)

In turn, these instructional stages are meshed with four general strategies that students are taught to use on their own, hence, the term self-regulation.

1. Goal setting

2. Self-instruction (e.g., talk-aloud)

3. Self-monitoring

4. Self-reinforcement   (p.6)

This SRSD method, along with direct explicit instruction, has been proven to help students' writing (Luke, 2006).

Post-it Notes

Another strategy to create writers who think critically is the use of Post-it Notes (O'Shaughnessy, 2001). When used correctly they can delve into the heart of making good, reflective writers. O'Shaughnessy (2001), a director of the National Writing Project, uses Post-it Notes to help students identify "powerlines," those lines which make good, powerful and original writers. "They may be similes, metaphors, or just good writing that is chock full of vivid images" (O'Shaughnessy, 2001, p.13).   Once students learn to identify these lines in good writing of others, the author has her students look for them in their own writing and even puts these powerlines on a bulletin board for all students to borrow for inspiration. This creative approach is a great way to inspire the students; they begin to take pride in having their lines "borrowed." Soon other students begin creating startling original writing of their own, such as, "My line zoomed out like a dog at a mailman" (O'Shaughnessy, 2001, p.14). Students need these models of what effective writing look like so that they can eventually develop their own, more powerful writing. "Post-its also provide a tool to help create proficient readers who interact with the text, predicting, evaluating, questioning, clarifying, and connecting" (O'Shaughnessy, 2001, p 15).

Also of great use are highlighters as a way to identify weak or strong writing (O'Shaughnessy, 2001). These are especially useful when students are able to mark their own papers. The proper use of highlighters can force students to make judgments about their writing. Two points come to mind: while the author focuses more on reading than writing, the interactions just mentioned are some hallmarks of critical thinkers. Just as the writer interacts with the reader, in O'Shaughnessy's class the reader interacts with the writer. It is a two way

street. All in all, O'Shaughnessy's (2001) article is useful in aiding teachers help students interact with text and with writing to become better critical readers and writers.

The Practice of Critical Thinking

Trevino (2008) explains that the education we provide for our children in school today is only a preparation for their actual lives tomorrow. During their adult lives they will experience the need for critical thinking skills. Trevino (2008) used her own life experience with a billing problem to prove her point. When a young customer service agent pounded on a computer, not producing the desired results, it did no good for the next agent to continue the same actions. The same actions produce the same results. It took a third agent to arrive, think about the problem, and question it, and solve her billing problem. In a short article on the National Writing Project website, Trevino (2008) discusses why it is important for young people to think critically. By making critical thinkers of students now, we enable "them to make informed decisions about social issues" (Trevino, 2008, para.14). Unfortunately, students are "more comfortable parroting information rather than constructing their own meaning" (Trevino, 2008, para.5).

Ulusoy and Dedeglu (2011) surveyed 104 teachers on sound practices of reading strategies. Results "revealed that active and purposeful reading, identifying important information, note taking, managing time, and critical listening/reading/thinking were the most frequently cited strategies" (p.2). Their study focused on four content areas: science, math, English, and social studies. These were chosen because "they frequently use reading and writing activities in their courses" (Ulusoy & Dedeglu, 2011, p.4). Students write from what they read and experience. Thus, if students are to be taught how to write essays that respond to literature,

the teaching of reading must also be an inherent part of the teaching of writing. Each one compliments the other.

California English Language Arts Writing Standards

Students in the eighth grade are expected to write, "clear, coherent, and focused essays" (California Department of Education (CDE), 2009, p. 51) that ask for insight and analysis. They are expected to write responses to literature that "develop interpretations which exhibit careful reading and insight" (CDE, 2009, p. 52). This is dual sided. On one side they must have reading and comprehension tools, and on the other side, they must be able to make new meanings from literature they have read and put it into writing. This involves taking a step up Bloom's ladder.

Interview with an Expert

To look at the connection between critical thinking and good writing, five questions were asked of a teacher, (anonymous, personal communication, December 10, 2011) known for her good teaching and the importance she places on critical thinking skills. She has been teaching for nine years and has experience teaching both seventh grade and eighth grade.

The question was asked as to why the teaching of writing is important at the middle school level. She believes the writing process forces students to slow down their thoughts as opposed to just saying the first things that come to mind. Writing forces students to communicate with others in a logical manner. The recursive process of writing and rewriting helps her students see there is not always just one right answer nor one way to express their thoughts. By teaching good writing skills, students can get their ideas across to others on a subject in ways their audience can understand. Students in her seventh grade class get their first exposure to essay

writing, whereas in earlier grades, they wrote book reports. The brain is still developing in

middle school and writing is especially important if we want students to become cognitively

aware of their thoughts and arguments.

She was asked her view of good writing strategies at the middle school level and the

response was that it varies by class and by class level. Her school has four levels of English

classes, from non-English speakers to advanced English.   Essay writing should not begin with

the essay itself, but rather many different types of prewriting. These can include taking notes

while reading, highlighting, doing journal writing, keeping reading logs, learning webs, and

constant practice writing paragraphs. She believes that before students can do higher level

thinking and better writing, they must first be able to do lower level thinking and writing. She

considers summary writing to be an important skill and does this frequently. By doing this,

students become cognitively aware of what they have read. Furthermore, it forces them to reflect

and analyze before putting thoughts on paper. She is also a firm believer in graphic organizers

which especially help visual learners. Using various graphic organizers help her students see

their essays take shape and thus make them easier to write while giving them better

understanding. Of course grammar and punctuation go along with good writing and are

constantly taught.

The methods that work best for her depend on what type of reading and writing her

students are doing, what each particular class level can support, and where they are on learning

how to write essays, as opposed to doing book reports. One method she likes is showing many

models of good writing. She gives writing assignments based on prompts that students can relate

to. She states that students can only write on what they have experienced. They build on what

they know, especially at the age of thirteen. Her students collaborate and edit each other's paper

in class. It is noteworthy that she does not like using the Jane Schaffer method; she finds it much too confusing for her students with all the initials, such as CD, CM, CS. Each initial has additional meanings and each one is different. Commentary (CM) can range from analysis to just opinions. She feels students need to understand what is being asked of them when a teacher asks for commentary. Even harder for students to grasp is Schaffer's use of concrete detail (CD). In discussing how to help students write topic sentences to support a thesis, she strongly feels the use of a web is absolutely necessary.

One last question asked as part of the interview was how she gets her writers to create their own thesis sentences, especially when the essay is based on a theme of a story. Her seventh grade advanced class has trouble writing a basic thesis, much less one based on a theme. She uses the school writing handbook created by the English department several years ago. It has diagrams and step by step instructions for building an essay. It also has models of good writing which show how to develop a thesis and how each topic sentence should support the thesis. She reinforced that showing models of good writing is essential. She has students look at sentence structure, asking them to see how the author narrows the thesis down. She wants her students to be as specific as possible. Positive reinforcement is necessary and she often reteaches key concepts and vocabulary. If students are to think, reflect, and analyze, they need the vocabulary which will support that process.   Lastly, she challenges her students to think, to be imaginative and creative, and often uses open-ended questions in eliciting discussions.

Ethical Standards

This research adheres to all ethical standards in the treatment of human subjects in research as articulated by the American Psychological Association (2010). Additionally, the

research proposal was reviewed by the Dominican University of California Institutional Review

Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS), approved, and assigned number 9019.

Chapter 3 Method

Introduction

This research examines the successes and drawbacks of the Jane Schaffer method. It describes to what degree her approach works in creating writing that incorporates critical thinking. The research takes an empirical approach. While the overall focus is to analyze why students have a difficult time writing, the specific focus is analyze why their writing often does not seem to reflect logical thinking between the thesis and the topic sentences. It specifically looks at this connection between thesis and topics. The research is non-experimental in nature; although two separate classes are taught, both are taught the same way each day. Data has been gathered and examined.

Many students, as evidenced through their writing, do not have the critical thinking abilities to reflect upon and analyze literature and then apply those thoughts to essays expected of them in eighth grade. The lack of ability to respond to literature with deeper understanding affects the quality of papers being written. Many students are only able to write plot with little thought analysis which reflect a deeper understanding of previously read literature. This appears to be more of a critical thinking problem than a writing problem.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this paper is to examine the various strategies used to develop critical thinking skills for writing essays using the Jane Schaffer method. The paper seeks to look at the connection between critical thinking skills and the ability to write papers as expected at the middle school level.

The research examines whether students are able to master writing thesis sentences using the theme of a story with three supporting topic sentences using the Schaffer approach. The research seeks to know how much success students have both in writing a thesis which uses theme and if students can write topic sentences that support the thesis (Schaffer, 1995, p.14).

Sample and Site

This California middle school is in a medium-sized suburban city. The school consists of both seventh and eighth grades with a total enrollment of 629 students. These numbers reflect the latest data for the 2010-2011 school year. Hispanic or Latino are the largest group with 46% and White not Hispanic are the next largest with 39%. African American make up 2.9%, Asian 2.5%, Filipino 1%, Pacific Islander .8% and two or more races 6%. Almost 18% of the school is English Language Learners while 26% of the school is designated as Fluent-English Proficient Students (California Department of Education, 2012).

Also of note is that of the 583 students tested last year (2010-2011) on the California Standardized Testing and Reporting, 58% of the school population achieved Proficient or above and 82% Basic or above in English. Students labeled by the State of California to be Below Basic or Far Below Basic were removed from the class the during the second week of school. Those removed were typically English language learners or English speaking students in considerable need of remediation. All these were put into other classes, depending on individual need (California Department of Education, 2011). This left the study with students who were mostly rated as Basic or Proficient, although some were rated at the high end of Below Basic and some at the low end of Advanced.

The State of California has deemed 58% of this school's students in 2010-2011 as proficient in English Language Arts. This represents a growth of 10% in the last three years at this school. This compares with the state average of 54% in the same timeframe, a growth of 8% in the last three years (California Department of Education, 2012).

Participants

The participants in the sample were an intact group, being members of two eighth grade English classes. One class had 31 students and the other had 29 students, for a total of 60 students. It should be noted that the same teaching lesson—concepts, grammar, exercises, and so on—was used daily in each class. In order to preserve anonymity for purposes of grades, students turned in their essays using their school ID number. After grading, student names were identified and grades put to names. The majority of students were 13 years old, although there were a number of 12 year olds. There were 29 males and 31 females.

Access and Permissions

A discussion was held with the principal informing her of this study and the area of research examined. We discussed the research process and she was assured that only those teaching strategies that are normally used each year would be used.   There would be no differentiation of teaching between the two classes and that no experimentation would occur. It was determined that neither the school nor any student would be identified. Also mentioned was that the proposed research observes all ethical standards in treating human subjects. The principal was also informed of the approval by the Dominican University of California Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, approved and assigned number

9019.   It was deemed by both principal and supervising professor that no parental permissions are necessary for this research.

Teaching Procedure: Jane Schaffer

Jane Schaffer gives presentations to teachers throughout the United States, promoting her method of teaching students how to write essays.   She approaches essay writing by saying that teachers need to "standardize the terminology" (Schaffer, 1995, p.12). This includes terms for students to learn, complete with definitions and even a test on definitions. Terms include not only the parts of the essay, but also terms for each type of sentence. She outlines a nine week to teach the multiparagraph essay. Her introduction ends discussing the flexibility of the unit and how teachers can adapt it to their own teaching styles (Schaffer, 1995, p.7).

The Schaffer method has an exact order for each type of sentence within a body paragraph. They must be—in this order--topic sentence (TS), concrete detail (CD), which is the supporting evidence, comment (CM), and an additional comment (also CM). As students master the basic four sentence paragraph, they are to add more concrete details and always use the ratio of two comments for each concrete detail She says that "students must use two or more points of commentary (CM) for every point of concrete detail (CD) in a body paragraph" (Schaffer, 1995, p.39). Later students also add a concluding sentence.

Schaffer (1995) has a label for each sentence within a body paragraph. These are: TS, the topic sentence; CD, the concrete detail; CM, the commentary on the concrete detail; CS, the concluding sentence. As the year progresses, students are expected to add another of each of these to each paragraph. The first four below would make one paragraph while all eight lines below would make an expanded paragraph.

TS	Topic Sentence
CD	Concrete Detail
CM	Comment
CM	Comment
CD	Concrete Detail
CM	Comment
CM	Comment
CS	Concluding Sentence

Once terminology is mastered, Schaffer (1995) moves directly on how to write a thesis. Handouts are simple and approachable. A basic subject plus opinion become the focus statement (thesis). Five methods to outline essays are taught: spider diagrams, bubble clusters, outlining, line clustering, and columns. All five ways accomplish the same result, but students are able to select the approach which works best for them. Using one of these methods, such as a web, students are able to move on to the topic sentences.

The topic sentence of an essay should support the thesis. While Schaffer makes a distinction between commentary and topic sentence, she does agree that topic sentences come from thinking and from the head. It can be argued that topic sentences are a form of commentary, since they offer connections to the thesis and each topic sentence must have an opinion. Thus, with each topic sentence, the reader gets a sneak preview of the writer's thoughts on the thesis subject and opinion.

The next area, commentary, is difficult for many students. Schaffer (1995) admits, "Students will be afraid to write commentary" and that "students have told us how difficult it is to think of their own commentary" (p.40). She is correct, in that over nine synonyms are

provided for commentary, ranging from simple words like *opinion, personal response,* and *reflection*, to higher level commentary words such as *analysis, inference,* and *explication* (Schaffer, 1995, p.14).

Models are provided with and without commentary and teachers are encouraged to provide multiple writing opportunities for students to practice. Commentary is what makes up the core of an essay. The importance of commentary cannot be understated, for it is the window that allows teachers to understand what students take away from a piece of literature.

One item that should not be overlooked is her use of the phrases, "this shows that" and "this also shows that" (Schaffer, 1995, p. 41), both of which are meant to help students who have trouble writing commentary. These two sentence starters are used as crutches which enable the writers to back up their supporting evidence. This has been a useful strategy for working with writers who have trouble beginning commentary.

Some have argued that formulaic writing of this kind "stifles ongoing exploration" (Wiley, 2000, p.64). Others have argued that the weaker writers need the structure this method provides, and this is true to a point. Pirie, (as cited in Wiley, 2000) brings up an excellent point saying that students receive "a perversely mixed message" when we emphasize the all-importance of structure" as opposed to content. Schaffer herself admits that unless teachers "monitor the use of *This shows that…* the phrase can take over" the essay (Schaffer, 1995, p. 42). Thus, she views the phrase as a temporary crutch until students can make their own transitions. In practice, however, students appear to have a difficult time making that transition.

Data Gathering Strategies

The practice of empirical observation was used in collecting data. Strategies used in previous years were repeated, but with a focus of increasing critical thinking through the use of open-ended questions, allowing more think time, and increasing the use of the think, pair, share technique. This empirical approach also involved more scrutinizing of students' essays in the area of deeper thought and logic. Tests were given to measure ability to understand key words and concepts. For instance, students need to know the parts of an essay and the function of each part. Empirical observations year after year show that many students are unable to define terms such as *essay* or *paragraph*, so Schaffer's terms were part of the data gathering after teaching.

The main strategy used to gather data was having students write response to literature essays. The objective was twofold: could students write their own thesis after being taught, and could students write topic sentences that would logically support their thesis sentence? Students wrote essays and the results were kept as to whether each topic sentence logically supported the thesis. This quantitative research allowed for a statistical analysis of the results.

Other strategies included tests on the meaning of essential words such as "theme, thesis, topic sentence" and the meanings of the initials that Schaffer (1995) uses. Other quizzes involved the placement of types of sentences as Schaffer requires. For example, each paragraph must start with a topic sentence and be followed by some type of proof to support the topic opinion. It was critical that students were taught the exact placement of the thesis sentence at the end of the introductory paragraph. Graphic organizers were also used.

Essay Preparation

In order for teachers to prepare students to write their thematic essay, a number of skills must be taught. While reading, the use of questioning, predicting, summarizing, clarifying, and visualizing were taught and emphasized. Vocabulary deemed essential to aid understanding of fictional reading was included, such as the elements of fiction. Later vocabulary included terminology from Jane Schaffer, such as the various parts of an essay. Items especially focused on were words like theme, thesis, topic sentence, supporting detail and words that go along with Schaffer's acronyms. Grammar instruction included daily practice in editing. Since the essay came from the story, the teacher and students together rad the first five chapters aloud, to ensure understanding of plot and characters. Students were taught how to create reading logs and participated in class discussions. Later, some reading homework was assigned, although most of class did not complete the reading assignments.   Quizzes were given to check for student understanding of the literature.

Writing was also constant in that short writing exercises were done in class, such as: what character do you like/dislike? Explain why.   Most writing instruction began from the simplest forms, such as determining what makes a complete sentence as opposed to fragments.   Topic sentences and paragraph writing were taught and practiced. Students produced other writing exercises, such as a Who I Am essay and a letter to me.

Data Analysis Approach

Essays were examined for evidence of both a thesis and three topic sentences. In the basic five paragraph essay, students were taught that each topic sentence must support the thesis

sentence. Thus, if a thesis were to say that war is bad, the topic sentence, according to the Jane

Schaffer method, is to have a topic sentence that tells why war is bad. It may discuss death for

example.

Chapter 4 Findings

Data From Student Work

Forty-eight essays were written by students using the Jane Schaffer method. The thesis reflected the main theme of the novel just read titled, <u>The Light in the Forest</u>. One theme of the novel is that changing cultures is difficult. This theme was to be used as the thesis and students were encouraged to explore and write their themes in numerous ways.

The data reveals that of the 48 essays submitted, 34 had a thesis with a subject and an opinion, and 14 did not. Nine essays had a thesis subject but not an opinion which presented a problem for those essays since they had no road map to guide their essays. The 9 essays with a thesis subject tended to retell plot rather than give an opinion. Of the 14 that had no thesis in the introduction, 5 did have a thesis buried somewhere in the first body paragraph. In fact, 3 of them had used the thesis as the topic sentence in the first body paragraph. One essay had the thesis located in the second body paragraph. The data reveals a 71% success rate with 34 of the 48 essays having a thesis in the first body paragraph.   At the same time, it can be viewed as a 29% failure rate.

In looking at the topic sentences, the goal was to write a simple sentence with a subject and opinion that would support the thesis. Thus, if a thesis said changing cultures (subject) is hard (opinion), then each topic sentence needed to answer the question of why or how changing cultures is hard. Class had previously brainstormed a list of reasons which was put on the board. Students were encouraged to copy this list of reasons. It should also be kept in mind that when essays were written at the start of November, school had been in session for ten weeks.

The research shows that students had trouble with topic sentences. Only 19 of the 48 essays had all three topic sentences for the three body paragraphs. This equates to roughly a 40% success rate. Eleven more essays had two topic sentences that would support the thesis. If this were added to the other 19 essays, it would bring the success rate to 62%. What is considered success? The researcher as teacher feels having a thesis and two of three topic sentences constitute success at that point of the year. However, it also pointed out the need to reteach and give individual support to the 12 students whose essays contained only one topic sentence and especially the other 6 students whose essays did not contain a topic sentence or some topic sentence that did not support the thesis.

Essay Data

	Thesis	TS 1	TS 2	TS 3	Comments
1	yes	no	no	yes	too much plot
2	yes	yes	no	yes	too much plot
3	yes	yes	yes	yes	good/too much plot
4	yes	yes	yes	yes	excellent essay
5	yes-weak	yes	yes	no	too much plot
6	yes	no	yes	yes	too much plot
7	yes	yes	yes	yes	we did entire essay together
8	yes	yes	yes	yes	good; to much CD
9	yes	yes	yes	yes	strong essay
10	no thesis	no	no	missing	too much plot
11	yes	yes	yes	yes	basic too much plot
12	yes, vague	no	no	no	too much plot
13	yes	yes	yes	yes	good, but needs more CM
14	yes-weak	no	yes	repeats	too much plot
15	misplaced	yes	yes	yes	good writing
16	misplaced	yes	yes	yes	no thesis
17	yes, vague	yes	yes	yes	strong support
18	missing	yes	yes	yes	too much plot
19	yes	yes	yes	yes	good essay
20	yes-weak	yes	yes	yes	okay essay; needs CM
21	ok	yes	yes	yes	needs CM; too much plot
22	no	yes	no	no	very weak; needs help
23	no	no	yes	no	very weak essay
24	yes	yes	yes	yes	strong essay
25	yes	yes	yes	no	okay essay, basic
26	yes	yes	yes	yes	Good CMs
27	no	yes	no	no	too much plot
28	yes	yes	missing	missing	incomplete essay
29	no	no	no	missing	all plot
30	yes	no	yes	yes	Good
31	yes	yes	yes	yes	very good
32	yes, vague	no	no	yes	weak, illogical
33	no	thesis here	yes	no	very weak essay
34	yes	yes	yes	yes	excellent thesis
35	yes	yes	no	yes	Fair
36	yes	yes	missing	missing	too much plot
37	yes	yes	yes	yes	Good
38	yes, weak	no	no	yes	very basic
39	no	thesis here	no	no	Did he read novel?
40	yes	yes	no	yes	fair, needs more CD
41	yes	yes	yes	yes	great essay
42	no	thesis here	no	no	serious writing problems
43	yes	no	no	yes	too much plot
44	no	no	yes	no	very illogical
45	yes	yes	no	yes	overall good essay
46	yes	no	no	no	too much plot
47	yes	no	no	no	too much plot
48	yes	yes	no	yes	decent essay

The judgment of another's writing is subjective. Every teacher as well as researcher has an obligation to be fair in judgment. It was a great benefit to participate in three different committees during the past decade which judged essays similar to these. It provided opportunities to see other middle school teachers' perspectives and expectations, discuss techniques, and refine classroom practices.

One finding is that many students still want to retell the plot believing they are analyzing. This was a problem specifically with those essays which lacked either a thesis or topic sentences. In talking with students on an individual basis, it became evident that many still did not understand what is meant by a response to literature essay. The data suggests that explicit direct instruction is needed as well as more practice.

Chapter 5 Discussion

Experience has shown that many students have a difficult time with their writing when it comes to reflecting on literature. It is believed that part of the problem lies within the literature itself. Two thoughts come to mind. First, students need to be invested in the literature they are reading. By being invested, students have something to say about the literature. They are more interested in it. The second thought is that as eighth graders, they need literature that is manageable. The novel used in the story has almost 200 pages. It would have been better to begin with a story which students could refer back to. For example, the story, "Thank You, M'am" by Langston Hughes, not only captures the interest of students and is something they can relate to, but is short enough to return to any point when looking for ideas or proof to support an opinion. A novel with almost 200 pages is much harder for a student, especially when considering that 26% of the school population is designated as Fluent- English Proficient by the state of California. The researcher also believes that putting response to literature essays later in the year would make a difference. This can be a simple rearranging of what to teach first in the year, such as narrative writing

Students have trouble thinking critically. While today's technologically savvy students seem to have no fear of texting, the blank piece of paper seems appear to produce apprehension. It is almost as if the students are thinking, "What does the teacher want me to write? How can I write when I don't know what to write? Where do I begin?"   A similar experience came with an assignment to write at least one page on the word "words." Students were to use the hot pen technique in which the pen is never allowed to stop moving. If the writer is not able to think of anything to write, he or she was to write the word "words" over and over. It was amazing to see

how it went from writing one word repeatedly to eventually a rough mini-essay on how we use words for communication. The point? The strategy forced class to think critically.

The lack of ability to respond to literature with deeper understanding affects the quality of written papers. Many are only able to retell the plot with little thought analysis which reflects deep understanding. Some students believe that the retelling of plot is responding to literature. This appears to be more of a critical thinking problem than a writing problem.

When students write, they are also problem solving. Writing forces them to make a number of decisions which requires deep thinking. It often affects the reader's ability to make sense of what is being said. It is essential that we teach our youth not only to write using critical thinking skills, but to use critical thinking in all aspects of their lives.

Summary of Major Findings

The research sought to discover how much success students have both in writing a thesis which uses theme and how well they can write topic sentences that support their thesis. Thesis, as Schaffer teaches, is subject plus opinion. Schaffer uses *Of Mice and Men* as a teaching model, to which the research adhered, but since most students in this research study had not read *Of Mice and Men,* the research for this paper also used the story *The Three Little Pigs* since just about everyone is familiar with the story. Schaffer's example using *Of Mice and Men* is a story about "loneliness, the importance of family, longing, innocence, loyalty, friendship" (Schaffer, 1995, p. 93). In the same way, students in this research brainstormed a list for *The Three Little Pigs* saying it was a story about independence, relying on family, doing one's best, or good vs. evil. This allowed students to come up with more examples for stories we had read in class. They also realized there is more than one right answer, and thus were now less afraid of raising

their hands and offering suggestions as to what a story could be about. Students who never raised their hand began offering suggestions. By the time class had completed this exercise with Schaffer's example and *The Three Little Pigs*, they were able to come up with subjects for the novel we were reading. The next step was teaching students how to use the newly found theme as the subject for the thesis and to add opinion. Schaffer (1995) has a one page teaching handout on the difference between fact and opinion, with some true/false sentences. It is presumed that students will then be able to write a thesis subject, along with some modeling by the teacher.

One technique familiar to many is the "I do, we do, you do" technique which we used. Usually this is done more than once, just as all good teaching is taught and retaught to reinforce learning for long term knowledge.   She also teaches use of the webbing to help organize thoughts.

Students need more practice writing. The study focused on only one type of writing, but students need to master one type before moving on to another.

Vocabulary was a major stumbling block to the writing of essays. Words the teacher/researcher believed students understood were found to be misunderstood or unknown by numerous students. These included words such as conflict, mood, climax, and Schaffer's words such as *analysis, interpretation, inference, evaluation,* or *personal response*. The words *theme* and *thesis* were taught and retaught, with much time devoted to these words; surprisingly however, they gave trouble to the students.

 More modeling by teachers is needed as well as examples of what is expected in a response to literature essay. Students need not only good models of writing, but sometimes non-models can also be of use.

The development of thesis and topic sentences are not considered deep thinking, yet students need to practice reflective thinking in order to read a piece of literature, develop a theme, turn it into a subject, add and opinion It is a multiple step process. Students need to be able to not only read the literature, but also be able to draw inferences from it.   To do this, they need to expand their comprehension skills: they must be able to identify a theme, then turn the theme into a thesis. This is a two part process, since thesis is subject plus opinion. They must be able to ask the how or why regarding their thesis. Only then can students move on to develop topics which will support a thesis.

Wiley (2000), has criticism for Schaffer's approach and explains why we need to avoid it. He believes it "stifles ongoing exploration" (Wiley, 2000, p.64). He states that once students have mastered the formula, there is no strategy to move beyond. He says, "unfortunately, there is no *next* in the Schaffer approach" (Wiley, 2000, p. 63).   In fact, Beswick (2001) came to the same conclusion when she mentions the claim, the data, and the warrant. She says critical thinking is "the *next* not found in Schaffer's approach" (Beswick, 2001, p.13).

Notice, too, that Beswick uses different terminology than does Schaffer. It does support Schaffer's claim that students need a common lexicon. Her first step was "to standardize the terminology" (Schaffer, 1996, p.12). It can be confusing when students when students change teachers and they use different words but wanting the same thing as a previous teacher. For example, what is commentary? Schaffer uses the synonyms, "analysis, interpretation, explication, insight, inference, personal reaction, feelings…evaluation, and reflection" (Schaffer, 1996, p.12). Of course each word carries its own meaning and connotation. Students "appreciate the consistency" (Schaffer, 1996, p.12). However, it was difficult for students to

understand how to put commentary into words. The need for a common essay lexicon is especially applicable today as students take more and more online courses.

If anything, the importance of the research shows that students need to do more writing. Students in the eighth grade are still used to doing book reports and it is believed that is the primary reason so many essays told the plot rather than analyze the plot. Students are still learning vocabulary and may not know what analyze means. It is also important that teachers use the same language and have the same expectations. For instance, some students in the school put their names on the top right on their binder paper while others put it on the top left. After speaking with the high school, it was decided to use their Modern Language Association format in middle school. This caused much confusion and disagreement among teachers at the school.

The more writing students do the better the writing will become. Students are asked to become proficient in a variety of writing styles during the year. If students are to become adept writers who can think critically, more time is needed to practice each style of writing before moving on to another in order to cover the California Standards.

Limitations/Gaps in the Study

The foremost limitation is that the study is a sample of convenience. Since the research sample is small and deals with the teaching ability of only one teacher, it is therefore difficult to infer that results can apply to students at large, much less to all eighth grade students in the school. This sample of convenience is biased against all other eighth graders. To be less biased, studies would need to be done at multiple schools, all in the eighth grade. It would also have been better to have before and after results. An essay could have been done the second week of school, thus giving something to compare this study's results with. Demographics would also

need to be considered since different demographic data would produce different results. A more accurate picture could be obtained by comparing schools that have similar demographics. It would be of benefit to compare groups that use the Jane Schaffer method to those that do not.

Implications for Future Research

The author would like to put into practice strategies not presently in use. The most intriguing strategy is the SRSD method which produced the best results. By doing so, he could compare results against the results found in this paper.

Numerous websites were found during the course of this paper that would be of great use in the classroom to improve students' critical thinking abilities. Also discovered were some strategies not previously used that the researcher seeks to implement. The National Writing Project has a wealth of information, including a number of websites available for teacher-to-teacher dialogue.

About the Author

The author graduated from Sonoma State University in 1984. He received his teaching credential from Dominican University in 1997 and has been teaching English for the past 14 years. He was originally taught the Jane Schaffer model and is seeking ways to improve his students' writing by examining the model's connection to critical thinking. He feels critical thinking is the missing component to his students' writing. The paper has reinforced his desire for students to think and write with more reflection, insight, and analysis into the literature they read.

References

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Beswick, L. (2001). One more writing formula. *The English Journal, 90*(3, The Lure of Young Adult Literature), 13. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/821295

Bloom, B. (1994a). Excerpts from the taxonomy of educational objectives. In L. W. Anderson, L. A. Sosniak, B. S. Bloom & National Society for the Study of Education. (Eds.), *Bloom's taxonomy : A forty-year retrospective* (pp. 9-27). Chicago: NSSE: Distributed by the University of Chicago Press.

Bloom, B. (1994b). Reflections on the development and use of the taxonomy. In L. W. Anderson, L. A. Sosniak, B. S. Bloom & National Society for the Study of Education. (Eds.), *Bloom's taxonomy : A forty-year retrospective* (pp. 1-8). Chicago: NSSE: Distributed by the University of Chicago Press.

Brown, T. (2004). Bloom's taxonomy. In D. K. Weil , & J. L. Kincheloe (Eds.), *Critical thinking and learning : An encyclopedia for parents and teachers* (pp. 77-82). Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press.

California Department of Education. (2009). *English–Language arts content standards for California public schools: Kindergarten through grade twelve.* Retrieved March 1, 2012, from http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/elacontentstnds.pdf

California Department of Education. (2012). School summary data. *Data quest*. Retrieved April

    2, 2012, from http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/

Crenshaw, P., Hale, E., & Harper, S. L. (2011). Producing intellectual labor in the classroom:

    The utilization of A critical thinking model to help students take command of their thinking.

    Journal of College Teaching & Learning, 8(7), 13-26. Retrieved from

    http://search.ebscohost.com/

De La Paz, S., & Graham, S. (2002). Explicitly teaching strategies, skills, and knowledge:

    Writing instruction in middle school classrooms. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 94*(4),

    687-698. doi:10.1037/0022-0663.94.4.687

Dewey, J. (1966). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education.*

    New York: Collier-Macmillan.

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

Lipman, M. (2003). *Thinking in education*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Luke, S. (2006). The power of strategy instruction. *Evidence for Education, 1*(1), 1-12. Retrieved

    from http://nichcy.org/wp-content/uploads/docs/eestrategy.pdf

National Writing Project. (2012). *History of National Writing Project.* Retrieved March 13,

    2012, from http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/doc/about/history.csp

Olson, C. B. (1983). What we did last summer or the process of collaborating on a product. *The*

   Quarterly, 5(2), 18-20. Retrieved February 25, 2012, from

   http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/download/nwp_file/1953/What_We_Did_Last_Summer_or_t

   he_Process_of_Collaborating_on_a_Product.pdf?x-r=pcfile_d

O'Shaughnessy, K. (2001). Everything I know about teaching language arts I learned at the office

   supply store. *The Quarterly, 23*(2), 13-18. Retrieved from

   http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource/147

Overbaugh, R.C. & Schultz, L. (2011). Bloom's taxonomy. Darden College of Education. *Old*

   Dominion University. Retrieved October 10, 2011, from

   http://www.odu.edu/educ/roverbau/Bloom/blooms_taxonomy.htm

Royce, J.,. (1881). *Primer of logical analysis: For the use of composition students.* San

   Francisco: A.L. Bancroft. Retrieved from

   http://books.google.com/books/reader?id=uS14tfzV-

   lQC&printsec=frontcover&output=reader&source=gbs_atb_hover&pg=GBS.PA12

Schaffer, J. C. (1995). *Teaching the multiparagraphy essay: A sequential nine-week unit*. San

   Diego, Calif.: Jane Schaffer Publications.

The College Board. (2003). *Report of the national commission on writing in America's schools*

   and college: The neglected "R": The need for a writing revolution. Retrieved March 10,

   2012, from http://www.collegeboard.com/prod-downloads/writingcom/neglectedr.pdf

Trevino, E. (2008, September 13). It's critical to learn how to be critical thinkers. *El Paso Times,*

    Retrieved from http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource/2821

Ulusoy, M., & Dedeoglu, H. (2011). Content area reading and writing: Practices and beliefs.

    Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 36(4), 1-17. Retrieved from

    http://search.ebscohost.com

Wiley, M. (2000). The popularity of formulaic writing (and why we need to resist). *The English*

    Journal, 90(1, Teaching Writing in the Twenty-First Century), 61-67. Retrieved from

    http://www.jstor.org/stable/821733