

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: THE EFFECTS OF HONORS NINTH-GRADE STUDENTS' STRATEGIC, ANALYTICAL READING OF PERSUASIVE TEXT MODELS ON THE QUALITY OF THEIR PERSUASIVE WRITING

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The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of the analysis and imitation of persuasive text models on the persuasive writing quality of ninth-grade honors students. Two intact ninth-grade honors classes participated in an instructional treatment of thirteen lessons designed to teach persuasive writing strategies through explicit instruction and collaborative learning. The experimental group examined, analyzed, and imitated persuasive models as part of the instructional unit. The comparison group studied the same persuasive writing strategies through explicit instruction and collaborative learning, without the analysis of text models as part of their instruction.

Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected during the study. Pre- and posttest persuasive writing samples were compared using two persuasive writing

scoring instruments, the *NAEP Grade 12 Persuasive Scoring Guide*, and a researcher-designed persuasive trait analytic scale. Additionally, four purposefully selected students from each class were interviewed for the study, and their pre- and posttest writing samples were examined in conjunction with their interview responses.

An analysis of the scores on the pre- and posttest writing samples revealed that the mean score for each group increased on the holistic scale. The experimental group had a higher mean gain on the holistic scale than the comparison group, but the results were not statistically significant. Of the six persuasive strategies measured by the researcher-designed persuasive trait analytic scale, only the audience awareness category showed significant results. The students' attitudes toward persuasive writing instruction, as determined by the interviews, were overwhelmingly positive. One surprising finding was that students held misconceptions about the concept of text models and their use in writing instruction. The interviews also revealed that students found explicit instruction in persuasive strategies to be helpful to them as they completed persuasive writing tasks.

The findings from the present study indicate that the analysis and imitation of persuasive models has a significant positive impact on students' ability to appeal to an audience in their writing. The results of this study indicate that more research is needed on the use of writing models as an instructional tool for teaching persuasive writing at the secondary level.

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ANALYTICAL READING OF PERSUSASIVE TEXT MODELS
ON THE QUALITY OF THEIR PERSUASIVE WRITING

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*To my parents, John and Mary Ellen Beach,
for a lifetime of support,
and my husband, John Herring,
who makes it all worthwhile.*

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Chapter I

Introduction and Rationale

Statement of the Problem

High school students find persuasive writing to be a difficult genre to master. They may lack background knowledge of the conventions of this mode of writing, and they may have a limited argument schema to help them as they proceed through the writing process. Yet the ability to write persuasively and to recognize the conventions of persuasive writing in the work of others is an invaluable skill in the academic world, as well as in many fields of business.

National standardized tests show that students struggle with the persuasive form of writing. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Nation's Report Card: Writing 2002 (Persky, Daane, & Jin, 2003), which assessed approximately 276,000 American students' skill at narrative, informative, and descriptive writing in Grades 4, 8 and 12, only 17% of 12th graders were rated "skillful or better" on their responses to a persuasive writing prompt, and only 4% were rated "excellent." In narrative writing, 29% of students earned "skillful or better" ratings, and in informative writing, 17% were rated as skillful or better. Expressed another way, 82% of 12th grade students scored in the "uneven," "skillful," and, "excellent" ranges in persuasive writing, compared with 94% in narrative writing. These scores may mean that 18% of 12th

graders could not produce persuasive writing that was ranked “uneven,” and 83% of students did not achieve the skillful ranking.

This same disparity can be seen in the 2002 scores of 8th-grade writers. At the eighth-grade level, only 3% of students were rated “excellent” on the persuasive writing task, whereas only 18% earned “skillful” ratings. This indicates that 82% of 8th graders were rated below the “skillful” level in persuasive writing, a figure comparable to the 83% of 12th graders who scored below the “skillful” level in persuasive writing.

It is important to note that the NAEP writing assessment uses a focused holistic scoring rubric for persuasive writing which does not allow analysis of other factors that may contribute to the scores. For example, students may receive low scores because of factors unrelated to their knowledge of persuasive writing conventions, such as poor sentence structure, paragraphing skill, or organization. Additionally, the persuasive tasks and rubrics differ slightly for the 8th- and 12th-grade persuasive writing assessments, so a direct comparison of scores is not possible. However, the NAEP data is still useful as a basis for the present study. Students scored higher on the narrative and descriptive prompts in both 8th and 12th grades, indicating perhaps that knowledge of persuasive writing conventions is a contributing factor to the lower scores for the persuasive tasks.

The difficulty of persuasive writing for American students is not a new problem. The 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Writing Report Card (National Assessment Governing Board, 1999) showed that 37% of 12th graders could not produce persuasive writing at an acceptable level. At the 8th-grade level, 46% of 8th graders were rated below the “sufficient” level in persuasive writing. The 1992 NAEP assessment of persuasive writing skill in 4th-, 8th-, and 11th-grade students showed that

less than 3% of all students wrote responses that were rated as elaborated or highly elaborated, the two highest scoring categories used in this assessment (Mullis, Dossey, Campbell, Gentile, O'Sullivan & Latham, 1994). Mullis et al. noted that student performance on these writing tasks did not change significantly between 1984 and 1992. A report on the 1977 assessment of students' writing, which focused on persuasive and explanatory letter writing, noted that persuasive writing skills are complex and difficult to master and that "no 17-year-olds wrote appropriately formatted letters containing the essentials plus two or more strongly persuasive personal, educational or work-experience facts" (Educational Commission of the States, p. 17). Despite slight differences on the NAEP persuasive writing tasks at 8th and 12th grades, the fairly static achievement levels in persuasive writing on this large-scale assessment at both grade levels indicate that students are not improving much in their persuasive writing skills as they progress through high school.

In recent years, secondary writing textbooks have reflected a rising interest in persuasive writing instruction in high schools. McCann (1989) found that secondary writing textbooks usually begin to focus on argument in the 11th grade, whereas elementary school curricula do not typically focus on persuasive writing or argument. Since McCann's study of writing texts was completed, this trend has shifted, and units on argument or persuasive writing have begun to appear in writing texts at earlier grades. For example, in the widely used *Elements of Writing* series (Kinneavy & Warriner, 1998), a unit on persuasive writing is included beginning in the ninth-grade text. Two popular secondary composition textbook series, McDougal Littell's *Language Network* series and Holt, Rinehart and Winston's *Elements of Language* series, both include

chapters on persuasive writing at each level from 6th through 12th grade (Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 2007; McDougal Littel, 2001). Despite this upswing in the presence of persuasive writing in textbooks, Nystrand and Graff (2000) found that many secondary English teachers either are not teaching persuasive writing at all or are teaching a watered-down version. Scherff and Piazza's (2005) survey of the high school writing experiences of 1,739 Florida high school students contradicted Nystrand and Graff's earlier findings. Thirty percent of the students in Scherff and Piazza's study reported writing persuasive or expository essays once or twice a month, with another 28% reporting that they wrote in these two genres once or twice a quarter. Although Scherff and Piazza's findings indicate the possibility that students in Florida are being exposed to persuasive writing frequently, their findings are limited by the fact that the survey category combined expository and persuasive writing, making it difficult to determine the proportion of time the students spent on one genre or the other. Additionally, Scherff and Piazza note that the frequency of this type of writing in Florida may have stemmed from the Florida standardized writing testing program, which tested students in expository and persuasive writing in 9th or 10th grade, limiting the generalizability of their findings to Florida students. The lack of growth in persuasive skill over four years of secondary school on the NAEP, coupled with the suspected dearth of instruction in persuasive writing in the early years of high school, may indicate that students need more and/or better instruction in persuasive writing.

Persuasive and argumentative writing continues to be a staple of the post-secondary academic world (Connolly & Vilardi, 1986). According to Zeiger (1985), the most frequently taught form of writing in college writing classes is argumentation, and

Odell and Goswami (1986) documented its importance in the workplace. Persuasive writing is so important in the academic world that some colleges and universities, such as the University of Maryland, focus on teaching classical rhetoric in freshman composition courses to prepare students for the rigors of academic writing. A report by the Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates of the California Community Colleges, the California State University, and the University of California. (2002) described the academic literacies students should have to be ready for college. These included "... the various logical, emotional, and personal appeals used in argument." Additionally, the committee recommended that "Students should also have a fundamental understanding of audience, tone, language usage, and rhetorical strategies to navigate appropriately in various disciplines." In 2003, the National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges released their report, *The Neglected "R": The Need for a Writing Revolution*. This document called for increased attention to writing instruction across grade levels. The commission specifically recommended that high school programs include "reflective and persuasive essays of different lengths and levels of difficulty" (p. 34). As recently as March 2006, the College Board replaced the verbal section of the SAT with two separate sections, one focused on reading and one on writing; the writing section includes an essay in which students are asked to support one side of an issue. The results for the inaugural year of the SAT Writing test support the need for more and better persuasive writing instruction in secondary schools. Sathy, Barbuti, and Mattern (2006) reported that 1,465,744 students took this test in the first year, with a mean score of 497 out of 800 possible points. Clearly, persuasive writing is

an important skill that needs to be focused on early in secondary school in ways that will promote students' growth and achievement as persuasive writers.

According to Kellogg (1994) "quality writing cannot be achieved without quality thinking" (p. 16). Students must be able to think well in order to write well. Studies of cognition can help researchers to explore the cognitive processes involved in the act of writing, and they can help writing instructors to tailor instruction to the cognitive needs of students. If, as advocates of writing instruction have maintained, writing *shapes* thinking (Hughes, 2000; Kellogg, 1994; Langer & Applebee, 1989), then mastery of persuasive strategies may also help students to use higher order thinking processes as they deal with information in other academic fields and in life. According to the *Writing Framework and Specifications for the 1987 National Assessment of Educational Progress*, "Writing persuasively also requires the use of critical thinking skills such as analysis, inference, synthesis, and evaluation" (p. 17). Instruction in persuasion may give students a chance to expand their thinking skills as well as their writing skills. Learning to write well in the persuasive mode can have positive effects for students if instruction in persuasive writing is effective.

If persuasive writing is such a difficult task, then explicit instruction may be needed in secondary classrooms to introduce this form to students as they begin to attain the cognitive skill level to write in this mode. In Crammond's (1998) structural analysis of the argument features found in the persuasive writing of students across grade levels, she found that "the ability to produce a basic written argument is acquired at a relatively early age—at least by Grade 6." (p. 9), but that these sixth-grade students' arguments lacked advanced persuasive strategies and a sense of audience. By helping secondary students to

construct and internalize more advanced schemas of persuasion beginning in ninth grade, writing teachers may help them free cognitive resources to focus on the content and clarity of their writing.

Background and Rationale

As the pendulum swings back and forth in secondary writing instruction, from an emphasis on expressive, personal writing to a focus on the persuasive and expository writing favored in academia, many writing theorists have compared the cognitive difficulty levels of different types of writing. Kellogg (1991, 1994), Ransdell (1989), and Reed et al. (1985) all found that narrative writing requires less cognitive effort than persuasive and descriptive writing. Bruner (1986, in Kellogg, 1994) theorized that narrative thought, which makes sense of and organizes information in a chronological, story-like form, and logico-scientific thought, which arranges propositions in the form of arguments, reflect two differing types of cognition. These two types, he wrote, can be complementary to one another, but they are not the same and have different goals. Logico-scientific thought, which is similar to persuasive writing, seeks to establish truth, whereas narrative thought seeks to recreate life by achieving verisimilitude. Both types of thought and writing are valuable, but students in America have much greater skill at narrative writing than they do at persuasive writing (Matsushashi, 1980).

As Bruner, Kellogg and others have shown, persuasive writing is a difficult cognitive chore. According to Kellogg (1994), “Writing performance theoretically depends solely on the usage of knowledge. Fluent, effective writing emerges when knowledge of many types is available, accessible and applied inventively” (p. 24). One type of knowledge that expert writers rely on is discourse knowledge, which is the

knowledge schema they hold in long-term and working memory. This schema consists of the conventions of the type of document they are producing, their audience, and the procedures that should be used. This type of knowledge shapes the act of planning, according to Nystrand (1982, 1986, 1989, in Kellogg, 1994). For students to successfully persuade in writing, therefore, it makes sense that they need to develop a schema for persuasion and fit this schema into their overall discourse knowledge.

According to Kellogg (1994), the writing process in general is as difficult a cognitive task as playing expert-level chess. If writing is so difficult for everyone, and persuasive writing is the most difficult for secondary students, then explicit instruction in the strategies of persuasion could help ease part of this cognitive burden by providing students with schemata for persuasion as they write.

Recent research has focused on the efficacy of instructional strategies in helping students become stronger persuasive writers (Ampadu, 1999; Freedman, 1993; Grande, 2003; Lamm, 1994; Redd-Boyd & Slater, 1989; Standish, 2005; Yeh, 1998). Explicit strategies instruction is a promising area for the improvement of writing instruction, yet Freedman (1993) argued that explicit instruction in genre features is ineffective and unwise. Fahnestock (1993) and Williams and Colomb (1993) presented opposing views, arguing that instruction in genre features is a historically accepted and helpful strategy, especially for developing writers. The aim of this study is to examine the efficacy of an instructional unit designed to provide ninth-grade students with explicit instruction in persuasive writing strategies combined with the opportunity to analyze and integrate expert-level persuasive strategies into their own writing, so that these strategies can become part of their argument schema for future writing tasks.

One instructional strategy that has been used in greater and lesser degrees since classical times is the imitation of model writings. Quintilian (A.D. 94-95/1987) in Books One and Two of the *Institutio Oratoria*, set forth a complete sequence of instruction for rhetorical training that advocated the use of expert models in the teaching of grammar and writing. He presented a series of imitation exercises using these models that lead students through more and more difficult styles of writing. In present-day rhetorical studies, Ampadu (1999), Charney and Carlson (1995), and Lindemann (2001) also advocated the analysis and imitation of model texts as a way to help students learn about writing. Lindemann's use of models differs somewhat from the present study, in that she explained that they should be used only after students have completed a rough draft, to help students see how expert writers solve the problems the students are having in their own drafts.

Not all theorists have advocated the use of imitation. Although Corbett (1999) provided a set of model texts for students to use in imitation exercises, he warned, "Precepts and imitation can teach the student how to write, but it is only by writing that the student will learn how to write" (p. 339). Of course, Corbett's point that students learn to write by writing is a given, and the aim of the present study is not to suggest that students should use imitation of models *only* to learn to write, but rather that this is one instructional strategy that may also prove helpful to students in the cognitively difficult realm of persuasive writing.

In a meta-analysis of methods of instruction in composition, Hillocks (1986) found that the use of models had a mean effect size of .22, a respectable but not large number (p. 216). The types of models and the instructional purposes for using them varied widely

among the studies examined for this meta-analysis. Hillocks called the results for the use of models “mixed” (p. 155) but noted that models that were relatively brief and that were selected to illustrate specific writing features showed better results. Although the use of models is not unanimously supported for writing instruction, a well-designed unit of instruction, combining the analysis of carefully selected models with strategies of imitation, may have positive effects on students’ persuasive writing abilities.

The Present Study

This study examined the effects of the use of nonfiction models and imitation as instructional strategies on the persuasive writing of ninth-grade students. Students in an experimental group were introduced to historically accepted characteristics of quality persuasive writing using a variety of model nonfiction texts including essays, speeches, and advertisements. After analyzing the models to discover the strategies the authors used to persuade, the students engaged in imitation to practice with these strategies. This instruction was designed to help them reorganize their writing schemata to include knowledge of a range of persuasive strategies by learning to understand and emulate the strategies authors use as they create successful arguments. By gaining knowledge and experience in this area, the students’ ease in using persuasive writing strategies should improve, because they should be able to focus more cognitive resources on composing and less on hunting through memory for the conventions of persuasion. A comparison group of students was taught the same characteristics of persuasion, without the use of models and imitation as strategies. Instead, the classroom instruction for this group of students focused on asking students to learn about persuasion through their own writing, without seeing a model first. Students in both groups studied the same group of

strategies; instruction for the experimental group included imitation and models, while the comparison group instruction did not. The instructional plan for both groups was based on current theories of best practice in writing instruction, and included a process approach to writing, peer-group discussion and editing, and students writing in order to learn to write.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of an instructional unit using nonfiction models and imitation as instructional strategies to teach students to use the conventions of persuasion. The design of the unit was informed by social constructionist theory and cognitive apprenticeship models of instruction. Geist's (1996) description of the use of imitation and models with students provided the foundation for the use of models in the unit. Geist explicated her theory-based instructional methods on the successful use of models in writing instruction; the present study aims to extend Geist's use of models and imitation as a strategy and examine its efficacy, using a mixed-methodology design.

Research Questions

1. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts to learn the conventions of persuasive writing significantly improve the quality of ninth-grade honors students' persuasive writing on a holistic scoring scale?
2. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts to learn the conventions of persuasive writing significantly improve ninth-grade honors students' ability to use persuasive strategies in their writing?

Sub-questions for Research Question 2 included:

- A. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' ability to take and support a side?
- B. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' ability to use emotional appeals?
- C. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' ability to use ethical appeals?
- D. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' ability to use logical appeals?
- E. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' audience awareness?
- F. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' ability to refute opposing arguments?

Definitions of Key Terms

rhetoric – According to Woodson (1979), rhetoric is “in the classical tradition, the art of persuasion; in modern times extended to the art of using language in a way to produce a desired result in the audience” (p.50).

persuasive writing – Persuasive writing supports a position through the use of rhetorical strategies. According to Lindemann (2001), “persuasive discourse uses language to persuade the audience” with the primary aim of prompting a response in the reader (p. 58). In the present study, persuasive writing and persuasion are understood to be forms of argument.

persuasive strategies – Persuasive strategies include emotional, logical, and ethical appeals; the use of refutation, concession, and conciliation; and the use of the claim-warrant-evidence model (Toulmin, 1958).

narrative writing – Narrative writing tells a story in some form, describing experience.

descriptive writing – Descriptive writing is also called informative writing; it requires the ability to choose, condense, and describe information to an audience.

metacognition – Metacognition is the ability to think about one’s own thinking and learning processes.

models - In the context of this study, the term “models” will be used to describe print and non-print texts employed to teach students about persuasive strategies.

imitation – Imitation is the following of a model as a learning process. In Quintilian (94-95 A.D./1987), models are imitated by students until they internalize the expert strategies being used and can use them in their own writing.

writing process – The writing process was the foremost teaching strategy in writing instruction over the past two decades. The process approach to writing divides the stages of composing into three main parts: pre-writing (also called planning), writing, and revising. A number of theorists have proposed writing process models (Kellogg, 1994; Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Flower & Hayes, 1980; Perl, 1979) using various terms for each stage, but all agree that writing is a recursive process.

Limitations of the Study

Because this study involved intact classes, the sample of students was not randomly selected. I was not able to rule out any previous experience the students had with persuasive writing, nor was I able to control for cognitive ability or writing ability.

Honors-level classes were chosen for the study because students who choose to take these classes are often more motivated to do well on writing tasks. The choice of honors classes limits the generalizability of the results to similarly motivated students. Pragmatic considerations dictated that only a short length of time (5 to 6 weeks) be spent teaching the students the instructional unit on persuasion. The instructional units were taught to both the experimental group and the comparison group by an experienced ninth-grade teacher with a particular interest in writing instruction. This may have been a limitation if the instructor unknowingly seemed to favor one instructional method over the other when teaching. The one-shot nature of the assessments was also a limitation. Finally, because only eight purposefully selected students were interviewed for this study, the results of the interviews are limited in their generalizability.

Basic Assumptions

1. It was assumed that the teacher involved in the study was able to teach adequately a unit on persuasion in two forms, one using imitation and models as instructional strategies, and one that does not use imitation and models.
2. It was assumed that a basic instructional unit in persuasion could be taught adequately in 5 to 6 weeks.
3. It was assumed that students who were interviewed were able to think about their writing processes metacognitively, and that they were willing to share their thoughts during the interviews.
4. It was assumed that the NAEP focused holistic persuasive scoring guide and the persuasive trait analytic scale were appropriate tools for evaluating the quality of the persuasive writing of ninth-grade honors students.

Overview of the Method

Students from two ninth-grade, honors-level English classes were given one of two writing prompts and asked to write a persuasive essay. These initial essays were scored by raters using a 6-point focused holistic scoring rubric for persuasive writing developed for the NAEP persuasive writing assessment. A second group of raters scored the essays using a researcher-created analytic trait rubric. The students in each class then learned about persuasive writing strategies through a unit on persuasive writing. Classes were randomly assigned to one of the two treatments: the models or the non-models instructional unit. The models group learned to use the strategies of persuasion through a collaborative unit using models and imitation. The other group learned about persuasion through a similar collaborative unit, but without the use of models and imitation. Both classes learned through writing and discussing writing; the only difference in instruction was that the models group analyzed persuasive text models and imitated the strategies used by the authors, whereas the non-models group learned about the strategies by creating and analyzing their own written pieces, both in groups and individually, without seeing text models first.

After the unit, the students again wrote persuasive essays, this time to a second prompt, which were also scored using the NAEP 6-point rubric and the researcher-created primary trait rubric. The gain scores on the essays were compared to see if there was a significant increase in overall quality. Because the use of different prompts for each assessment could be a confounding variable, the two prompts were randomly assigned to the students for the first and second assessments, so that half of the students worked with Prompt A for the first writing sample, and the other half wrote on Prompt B.

The students wrote on the opposite prompts for the second writing sample. Both prompts were pilot tested during the spring of 2003 with two ninth-grade honors classes to ensure they would both be of interest to ninth-grade honors students and to balance the prompts in terms of difficulty. For both prompts, students were provided with a packet of information to guard against lack of background knowledge as a confounding variable.

To provide a richer picture of the students' experiences with persuasive writing and persuasive writing instruction, eight purposefully selected students were interviewed two times: once after they had written their first sample, but before the instructional unit began; and once after the study, to gauge their attitudes about using persuasive strategies in their writing and to see if they felt that their use of persuasive schema during planning increased as a result of the instructional unit. Four students from each class were chosen as informants for these structured, open-ended interviews. The informants were purposefully selected from a group of students who volunteered to be interviewed. With the aid of the classroom teacher, students who were motivated writers and high-achieving students, with the ability to speak metacognitively about their own writing and learning, were chosen to be interview subjects.

Significance of the Study

This study will extend our knowledge of how persuasive writing skills can be taught by using the analysis and imitation of model nonfiction arguments in a unit of instruction blending constructivist principles with explicit instruction. The results of the study will also provide information on the ways in which new discourse knowledge affects the composing processes of students. Because the purpose of this study was to describe the results of the use of a specific instructional strategy on the persuasive writing

quality of ninth graders, the findings will be of interest both to researchers in the field of composition studies and to writing teachers. The use of mixed methodologies in this study provides a picture of how students form new discourse schemata, how these schemata become part of students' planning and writing behaviors, and whether these schemata improve the students' writing performance.

Summary

This chapter presented a rationale for the teaching of persuasive strategies in ninth grade, followed by an overview of the methods used in the study. This study mixed quasi-experimental and interview methodologies to gain a deeper understanding of how the teaching of persuasion using model texts and imitation affected ninth-grade honors students' persuasive writing skills.

Chapter II will focus on the relevant theory and research in the field of persuasive writing instruction.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

In this chapter, I review theory and research on learning and writing as these fields relate to the teaching of persuasive writing through the use of models and imitation. Although there is a strong historical argument for the use of imitation in writing instruction, current thinking and research on imitation includes more theory and advice for composition instructors than research. In order to supplement this lack of research on imitation as an instructional strategy in writing, I turn to several related lines of inquiry, including research on (a) persuasive writing and instruction; (b) cognition and imitation, notably in the cognitive apprenticeship theoretical model; (c) effective instructional strategies in the teaching of writing; and (d) the characteristics of expert and novice writers. This chapter does not attempt to review all research on persuasion. For example, many researchers have studied audience as it relates to persuasion, but this aspect of persuasive writing is beyond the scope of this study. Instead, I will summarize and evaluate the aspects of persuasive writing and instructional research that are most relevant to the present study.

Research on Persuasive Writing

Necessity of Persuasive Writing Skill

The ability to express oneself clearly, in appropriate language, is crucial to academic success, and to success in many career paths as well. As Shaughnessy (1977)

wrote, "a person who does not control the dominant code of literacy in a society that generates more writing than any society in history is likely to be pitched against more obstacles than are apparent to those who have already mastered the code" (p. 13). In high school and college classrooms of all disciplines, instructors assess students through essays, term papers, reports, long-answer exam questions, and other written forms. Students must be able to convey knowledge through writing in order to succeed in school. Many of these tasks are forms of argument writing: stating a thesis and building an argument to support it in order to convince an audience of a point of view on a topic. Zeiger (1985) pointed out that the most frequently taught form of writing in college writing classes is argumentation. Sommers and Saltz (2004) also described the necessity of argumentative writing at the college level. Forms of argumentation are important in disciplinary writing in fields as disparate as science and literary criticism. Myers (1991) found examples of argument form in scientific journals articles. Fahnestock and Secor (1991) found that essays in literary criticism also showed a basic pattern of argumentation, including the use of claims, support, and attempts to gain the audience's "adherence" (p. 78). Clearly, college-bound students need a working knowledge of the strategies used to persuade in writing.

For secondary students, practice with argument writing is equally important. The persuasive mode of writing, a form of argument in which a writer attempts to convince an audience is to take a stand or take action on an issue, is required by national and state writing assessments, such as the SAT, the NAEP, the New York State Regents Exam, and Advanced Placement tests. The traditional high school English essay, in which students support a thesis about a work of literature by using examples, is also related to

persuasion. Beyond the world of school-based writing, the “mastery of persuasive writing is important because it empowers students—it enables them to produce, evaluate, and act on the professional, ethical, and political discourse that is central to our democratic society” (Crammond, 1998, p. 1). Many forms of workplace writing are based in the persuasive mode, with an emphasis on convincing an audience of the efficacy of a particular plan or course of action (Miller & Selzer, 1985; MacKinnon, 1993). In Rainey’s (1972) survey of business executives, skill in both persuasive letter writing and proposal writing was rated as the two most necessary writing skills by fifty executives from large manufacturing firms. In short, persuasive writing is a crucial skill for all students.

Students’ Skill Levels in Persuasive Writing

Persuasive writing has been found to require more cognitive effort from the writer than narrative and descriptive writing (Kellogg, 1991, 1994; Ransdell, 1989; Reed et al., 1985). Bruner (as cited in Kellogg, 1994) also theorized that narrative thought differs from what he called logico-scientific thought. Narrative thought seeks to establish verisimilitude, whereas logico-scientific thought attempts to establish truth. These categories can be compared with Bereiter and Scardamalia’s (1987) stages of “knowledge-telling” and “knowledge transforming.” Persuasive writing is cognitively challenging because it requires students to transform knowledge by putting facts and ideas into a written form for the purpose of convincing an audience to change their opinions or actions.

The cognitive challenge of persuasive writing is supported by assessment data and research. Matsuhashi (1981) found that American students have much greater skill at

narrative writing than they do at persuasive writing. Data from the 2002 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Writing Report Card (Persky, Daane & Jin, 2003) shows that persuasive writing remains a difficult form for American students when compared with narrative writing. For example, only 17% of 12th graders were rated “skillful or better” on their responses to a persuasive writing prompt, and only 4% were rated “excellent.” Scores on a narrative prompt resulted in 29% of students earning “skillful or better” ratings. NAEP data showed that in 2002, 18% of 12th graders could not produce persuasive writing that was ranked “uneven”, and 83% of students did not achieve the skillful ranking. At the 8th grade level, only 3% of students were rated “excellent” on the persuasive writing task, while only 18% earned “skillful” ratings.

This pattern of low achievement on NAEP persuasive writing tasks is not new. The 1992 NAEP assessment of persuasive writing skill in 4th, 8th, and 11th grade students showed that less than 3% of all students wrote responses that were rated as elaborated or highly elaborated, the two highest scoring categories used in this assessment (Mullis, Dossey, Campbell, Gentile, O’Sullivan & Latham, 1994). Applebee, Langer, Mullis, Latham, and Gentile (1994) found that only 1% of 12th graders could write an elaborated persuasive essay on the 1992 NAEP test. Applebee, Langer, and Mullis (1986) also analyzed trends in writing achievement on NAEP tests from 1974 to 1984. They found that, although there were some patterns of change in certain age groups on some writing tasks, overall, there was no real change in writing performance during this ten-year span (p. 6). Although students from ages 13 to 17 showed some improvement on persuasive writing tasks in the early 1980s, achievement was still low, with only 20% of 17-year-olds writing effective persuasive essays from 1979 to 1984 (p.

6). In their reflections on these trends, the authors recommended more systematic instruction across writing task types (p. 8). They noted that the students' reports "indicate that schools were giving more attention to writing instruction in 1984 than in 1974, but that the actual amount of writing students [did] remained the same" (p. 7). The writing process became a focus of school instruction, but Applebee, Langer, and Mullis contended that instruction needed to focus "more directly on the variety of different kinds of writing students need to learn to do" (p. 8).

In *The Writing Report Card, 1984-1988*, Applebee, Langer, Mullis, and Jenkins (1990) again found that student achievement levels on NAEP persuasive tasks were low. Only 20.5% of 11th graders scored at the adequate level or above on a task that required them to refute an opposing view (p. 32). On a task that asked students to convince others of a point of view, again scores were low, with only 26.9% of 11th graders scoring at the adequate level (p. 28). On the same task, 51.5% of the students scored at the minimal level, indicating that they were able "to understand the assignments and present their points of view," but were unable to adequately support their ideas (p. 28).

Crammond (1998) studied the argument features found in the persuasive writing of students across grade levels, and reported that students begin to use the Toulmin (1958) model of argument (Claim-Warrant-Evidence) by Grade 6. The 6th graders' writings, however, did not show evidence of higher level persuasive skills. Crammond's findings support the notion that secondary students are ready to begin learning to use more advanced persuasive techniques in their writing, and that persuasive writing, while difficult, should not be considered out of reach for secondary students, as long as they have the instructional scaffolding they need to begin writing fluently in this form.

Riley and Reedy (2005) studied 5- to 7-year-olds who were taught argument writing using writing frames and scaffolded support. They found that 5- and 6-year-old children in a Year 1 class in London were able to construct basic arguments and support their main points after participating in a carefully constructed sequence of lessons. Students in a Year 2 class (6- and 7-year-olds) were not only able to construct an argument, they were also able to anticipate and respond to an alternative point of view on a topic. Riley and Reedy theorized that the lessons on argument writing also helped to develop students' higher level thinking skills, specifically in terms of "the ability to appreciate both points of view to a question"(p. 31).

Although Riley and Reedy (2005) conducted a small-scale case study of intact classrooms, their findings suggest that elementary age students are able to improve the persuasiveness of their writing, supporting the notion that ninth-grade students are ready for an intensive study of persuasive writing.

Crowhurst (1983, 1987, 1988, 1996) studied persuasive writing across grade levels, and argued that students in the middle grades and up can and should learn about persuasion in writing. Crowhurst (1983) first studied the persuasive essays of 5th, 7th and 11th graders and found that the younger students were less skilled in the use of persuasive techniques than the 11th graders. Using a developmental model, she argued that the younger students' reliance on narrating, rather than on the generalizing, interpreting, and speculating necessary for persuasive writing, indicated that they were inexperienced with this form of writing. She suggested that her results do not show that students *cannot* write persuasively, but that they need more instruction in the form. Crowhurst based her ideas on studies of mature second-language learners, which showed

that they use narrative more often when writing in their new language than in their first language. From a social constructionist standpoint, Crowhurst's use of the writing development of adult second-language learners as the basis for her ideas may be a limitation because the adult writers may have differing cultural understandings of the argument genre, making a comparison of their writing experiences to those of younger native speakers inconclusive. Crowhurst's interpretation of her results does support Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1987) theories of knowledge telling versus knowledge transforming, and the assertions of Kellogg (1991, 1994), Ransdell (1989), and Reed et al. (1985) that narrative writing requires less cognitive effort than persuasive writing.

Crowhurst (1987) studied the use of cohesive devices in the argument and narrative writing of students in 9th, 10th and 12th grades. Students at each grade level were randomly assigned to write in either the narrative or argumentative mode. Both groups wrote in response to a picture of a performing whale. The students writing narratives were asked to compose a story for their teachers about the picture. The students writing in the argumentative mode were asked to take a stand on the treatment of the performing whale and write essays convincing their teachers that their opinions were correct. Crowhurst found that the overall use of cohesive devices did not increase significantly with age. Although the results of the study are not directly related to students' ability to write persuasively, one aspect of the findings is of interest. The students' use of synonyms and collocation did increase in the upper grades. Crowhurst attributed this increase to older students' increasing vocabularies and their more frequent use of elaboration in their essays (p. 192). This lack of elaboration at the 6th grade,

especially in the argumentative mode, resulted in essays that were repetitive, a finding which ties in with the NAEP data.

Crowhurst (1988) reviewed the terrain of persuasive writing studies and theories and concluded that opinion is “widespread, but not unanimous, that performance on persuasive writing tasks is unusually poor” (p. 12). She connected this finding to the discontinuity in writing instruction from elementary to high school, noting that elementary students are not exposed to persuasive writing tasks. Instead, they are asked to write stories (p. 31) because of beliefs that they are not cognitively ready for more complex forms or that expressive writing is more important for young children (p. 33). Young writers, she contended, use persuasion orally, although they have little chance to read it. She suggested that the teaching of persuasive writing and the reading of persuasive texts in the middle years would help students to access their persuasive abilities.

McCann (1989) also studied students at varying grade levels to determine what they knew about argument and how well they could produce it. Ninety-five students, at Grade 6, 9, and 12, and twenty adult writers participated in the study, which included both a reading and a writing task. First, the participants were given seven passages and asked to judge whether they were arguments. Of those determined to be arguments, participants used a Likert scale to rate their quality. The results of this section of the study showed little difference between the abilities of the students at each grade level and the adults in identifying arguments. In fact, in his discussion, McCann wrote that these results showed that students “already know a good deal about argument” (p. 71). The results of the second part of the study, in which participants were asked to write an

argument in response to a prompt, showed that though there were some significant differences in the ability of the students from each grade to produce written arguments, students at all three grade levels had trouble with a number of argument features, namely providing data and using warrants. Ninth and 12th graders scored significantly higher than 6th graders in the recognition and use of opposing arguments, but their scores were still in the low range of 1.00 on a 4-point scale (p. 70). Overall, the only argument skills that the students used consistently included making claims and stating propositions. This lack of elaboration supports the NAEP findings. In addition, McCann's finding that students can identify arguments but have trouble producing them supports Crowhurst's (1983) and Crammond's (1998) conclusions that students have the ability to learn about persuasion in upper elementary school, but that they need more instruction to use it in writing. The choice of writing prompt may have caused younger students to write less elaborated arguments. Students were asked to write a letter to the school principal to convince him that students should or should not be allowed to leave school grounds for lunch. Although most high school students can be presumed to have strong opinions about leaving school grounds, this topic seems a bit beyond the experience level of 6th graders. The 6th graders' lack of familiarity with the topic could confound the finding that they wrote less well in the argumentative mode than the older students.

The previous section presents some of the studies that show that students struggle with the persuasive form of writing. One theme across these studies is that students in elementary and middle school *can* learn about persuasive writing, and that all students have the ability to recognize arguments when they read. These two findings point to the need for (a) a greater focus on instructional methods for teaching persuasive writing, and

(b) the use of argument texts in students' reading assignments. Together, these two ideas lead to the possibility that the imitation of model arguments as an instructional strategy could be an effective way to improve students' ability to write persuasively.

The Teaching of Persuasive Writing: Recent Developments

Applebee (1981) studied writing instruction in two midwestern high schools. He found that most of the time devoted to writing instruction in class was not devoted to composing but to completing worksheets and similar exercises. Most essays assigned were designed to test learning in content areas. In just 29% of the classes studied, models were used to help students learn about new forms of writing. These results are limited because of the small sample of two high schools, but they do provide a basis for comparison with later studies that show how writing instruction has changed over the past few decades due to the standardized testing movement in the United States.

Scherff and Piazza (2005) surveyed 1,739 Florida high school students to determine what types of writing instruction were occurring in secondary schools. They found that persuasive writing instruction has increased due to standardized testing and the state standards movement. Thirty percent of the students in Scherff and Piazza's study reported writing persuasive or expository essays once or twice a month, with another 28% reporting that they wrote in these two genres once or twice a quarter. Of the students surveyed, 9th and 10th graders reported the most persuasive writing assignments. Scherff and Piazza connected this finding to the fact that the Florida state writing standardized testing program requires persuasive writing at these grade levels. This study did not attempt to examine the effectiveness of the students' persuasive writing, and is limited in

its generalizability to students in the state of Florida, but it does suggest that the amount of persuasive writing in schools may be rising due to standardized testing demands.

This connection between standardized testing and writing instruction may not be beneficial to students writing development, warned Hillocks (2002). He examined the benchmark papers used to illustrate rubrics for state writing assessments across five states and found that low levels of writing were sufficient to earn passing scores in many states. He also found that teachers were using these benchmark models as an instructional strategy for writing assessment preparation with great frequency, thus teaching students about writing using inferior models as exemplars. While Hillocks acknowledges that standardized testing has resulted in more writing instruction in schools in recent years, he questions the quality of writing instruction that students encounter: “It is obvious that students are receiving a diet of poor writing that cannot provide appropriate nourishment for their growth as writers” (Hillocks, 2004). Hillocks (2002) did find that in the five states he studied, 78% of the language arts teachers interviewed used models as an instructional strategy to help students improve their writing. Although Hillocks presented a bleak picture of the effects of standardized testing on expectations for student writing, his study did reveal that writing instruction, including the use of models, has increased in secondary schools in recent years.

Features of Student Persuasive Writing

Before turning to studies of the efficacy of instructional strategies in persuasive writing, it seems logical to look first at the text features student writers display in their persuasive writing.

Durst, Laine, Schultz, and Vilter (1990) studied the persuasive writing of 11th and 12th graders, focusing on linguistic and rhetorical features. A group of 1,026 students from one urban, midwestern school district wrote essays on the same topic in both their junior and senior years. From this group of writers, 99 were randomly selected for the study. The essays written in both 11th and 12th grades by these 99 students were rated on overall quality, coherence, evidence of five-paragraph structure, use of persuasive appeals, and mechanics. The authors noted that some of these measures overlapped; for example, grammar and mechanics were also assessed in the overall quality rating.

Because the authors found little change in the writing quality of the students' essays from the first year to the next, they collapsed the essays into one data set. In a stepwise regression analysis of each variable's contribution to the holistic scores, the authors found that the use of logical appeals was highly correlated (.73) with the holistic scores and counted for 53% of the variance. Both ethical and pathetic appeals showed a much weaker relationship to overall quality. The authors speculated on the higher correlation of logical appeals and writing quality, citing the circumstance that secondary English instruction focuses more on the use of logical appeals as convincing arguments than on emotional or credibility appeals. They pointed out that students are often warned against using the first person in academic essays, which means that they may be less experienced in emotional and credibility appeals, or afraid to use them in an assessment situation. The examples of the pathetic and ethical appeals used by students were much weaker than their use of logical appeals, prompting the authors to wonder about the difference in students' skillful use of these appeals in speaking, and their less skillful use of them in writing.

Durst, Laine, Schultz, and Vilter (1990) also found that the use of the five-paragraph essay format correlated strongly (.65, $p < .0001$) with overall quality. They noted that the five-paragraph essay is criticized by many composition specialists because of its rigid, formulaic structure. The high correlation of this structure with overall quality, they suggested, may have resulted from students' ability to use it easily under time constraints, freeing more time for developing ideas. They also found that shorter, one-paragraph essays, though judged coherent, were not given high-level scores because of lack of development. Again, the multi-paragraph, three-point structure of the five-paragraph essay may have encouraged students to develop more points and include more support for their arguments. The correlation of the five-paragraph essay form with high holistic scores may reveal a limitation of this study: the scoring procedures. The raters as a group may have preferred the five-paragraph essay form and rewarded students who followed this easily recognized organizational structure. According to White (1994), raters must form a community of assent in order to achieve interrater reliability. In this case, the raters may, as a community, have preferred the five-paragraph form, which could be a limitation of this study, if the raters focused on this particular organizational form to the extent that the successful use of persuasive strategies was less likely to be recognized in essays organized in other ways.

Instructional Strategies for Improving Students' Persuasive Writing

Although a small group of theorists question the usefulness of explicit instruction in genre writing strategies (Freedman, 1993; Gee, 1989; Petraglia, 1995), research and theory supporting explicit instruction in persuasive strategies has been widespread over the past three decades (Ampadu, 1999; Freedman, 1993; Grande, 2003; Lamm, 1994;

Redd-Boyd & Slater, 1989; Standish, 2005; Yeh, 1998). As Crowhurst (1983, 1988, 1991) pointed out after a series of studies on the topic, all students need exposure to persuasive writing instruction, not merely older and brighter students. Teachers using thoughtfully designed instruction should be able to help students gain persuasive knowledge as they grow as writers. Crowhurst (1988, 1991) advocated the reading of persuasive texts beginning in the upper elementary grades as one way for students to gain exposure to this genre of writing. A number of other studies explored the effectiveness of various instructional strategies in the teaching of persuasive writing. Studies dealing with the use of models or reading as instructional strategies will be presented here, as these are most closely related to the instructional unit of the present study.

In his meta-analysis of experimental treatment studies in writing instruction, Hillocks (1986) focused on models and the use of scales or sets of criteria applied to models as two methods by which writing instructors teach students what constitutes good writing. His analysis of studies in which models of writing were used as instructional strategies showed mixed results. Many of the studies (Caplan & Keech, 1980; Martin, 1981; Pinkham, 1969; Sponsler, 1971; West, 1977; all as cited in Hillocks, 1986) showed no significant result from the use of models. Hillocks referred to Hayes and Flower (1980) and Bereiter and Scardamalia (1982), who suggested that “writers may be guided by schemata of various kinds in developing a given piece of writing” (p. 227). Although Bereiter and Scardamalia’s words implied that models are an excellent way to teach these schemata, Hillocks’s meta-analysis found that models were not significantly effective. He responded to this seeming contradiction by suggesting that the complex, often literary, models used in these studies were so elaborated that the skeletal schema underlying their

formation was obscured. His finding that shorter models were more effective supported this conclusion as well. Some significant gains did occur when models were used to illustrate a few specific features of good writing strategies (Calhoun, 1971; Reedy, 1966; Rothstein, 1970; all as cited in Hillocks, 1986). Additionally, studies in which students examined models of writing using sets of criteria, which Hillocks called “scales” *did* show significant gains in student writing quality (Clifford, 1978, 1981; Cohen & Scardamalia, no date; Reedy, 1966; Rothstein, 1970; Sager, 1973a, 1973b; Wood, 1978; all as cited in Hillocks, 1986). These results may indicate that models can be an effective strategy if they are selected for specific features, and if teachers plan instruction that helps students engage in analytical reading of the models as part of their learning.

Hillocks presented an alternative view of model use as a focus of instruction, based on the work of Bereiter and Scardamalia (1982) and Hayes and Flower (1980, 1981b), which posited that writers need to generate ideas as part of composing, and models may interfere with this generative process. He concluded that the study of models may not have much of an impact on composing, but he acknowledged that we know “little about how various kinds of instruction affect composing processes” (p. 228). Although Hillocks’s meta-analysis does not present a hopeful view of the efficacy of the use of models for instruction, it should be noted that the studies focused on a wide variety of age groups and modes of writing, as well as an array of purposes for and types of writing. This range of writing types makes connecting Hillocks’s findings to one specific mode of writing difficult. Finally, the studies Hillocks analyzed all took place before the use of the process approach to writing instruction gained popularity in the 1980s. All of these factors limit the usefulness of Hillocks’s meta-analysis; however, his inference that

the use of models did not help students to become better writers because the models-based instruction in the studies focused on the identification of specific features (declarative knowledge) rather than on strategy instruction (procedural knowledge) provides a helpful direction for teachers interested in the effective use of models in writing instruction.

Knudson (1991, 1992) studied the effects of instruction on the persuasive writing of students in two separate studies using methods of instruction from Hillocks meta-analysis as treatments. These instructional treatments included (a) models; and (b) scales, questions, and criteria. Additionally, a third treatment combined the use of models with the use of scales, questions, and criteria. A control treatment involved only freewriting. In the first study, of fourth-, sixth-, and eighth-grade students, Knudson (1991) found that the eighth-grade students wrote better than the younger students. She did not find that any of the instructional treatments increased the students' content scores significantly, leading to her conclusion that her findings do not "explain whether the difficulty is due to a lack of logical thinking or to insufficient instruction. One problem with this study is that the writing samples were scored using six categories, including clarity, organization, coherence, punctuation, spelling and word choice. None of these categories specifically addresses persuasive writing strategies, making the students scores seem unrelated to their ability to use persuasion in writing.

In a second study, Knudson (1992) investigated the effectiveness of the same four treatment types in 10th- and 12th-grade students. In this study, Knudson used a focused holistic scoring scale that specified persuasiveness as a feature of overall quality. She also used a second scoring method, based on Toulmin's (1958) model of argument. This

analytic scale included separate scores for (a) claims, (b) data, (c) warrants, (d) propositions, (e) opposition, and (f) responses to opposition. Despite the use of more precise scoring instruments, again Knudson found no significant differences based on treatment group. Although Knudson's findings indicate that instructional treatment may not be effective in increasing students' ability to produce quality persuasive writing, the instructional packets she used with the students in each treatment group may be a factor owing to the individual rather than social nature of the work students were asked to do during the instructional treatments. Argument is a social cognitive process (Flowers, 1995). Knudson's individualized instruction did not allow students to use and make sense of persuasive strategies in collaborative learning settings, instead asking them to read and write in isolation. According to Flowers (1995), argument is a "situated social and cognitive practice" in which students must learn to "negotiate a body of competing goals, strategies, and resources" (p. 12). Knudson's lack of success with the two instructional strategies remind researchers and instructors alike that students must do more than read model persuasive texts. Because persuasive writing assumes the presence of an audience, students must be given opportunities to learn and practice persuasive strategies in collaborative settings.

Crowhurst (1991) based a study using persuasive text models as an instructional treatment on schema theory, hypothesizing that providing sixth graders with a schema for persuasive writing through the reading of models would help to improve both their writing and reading. Crowhurst compared four instructional treatments, including (a) the use of a persuasive models with writing instruction, (b) the use of a persuasive text model with reading instruction, (c) the writing of book reports after reading novels combined

with a single lesson on the persuasive model, and (d) the reading of novels and writing of book reports with no persuasive instruction or models. Pre- and posttest writings were scored holistically for overall writing quality and organization. Structural elements related to persuasive writing (reasons, elaboration, conclusions, and text markers) were counted for frequency of use. Crowhurst found that the students in the three treatment groups that received instruction in persuasive writing improved in overall writing quality. The two groups that received writing and reading instruction combined with models scored higher on organization and on all persuasive features than the two groups who read novels and wrote book reports. Although the groups exposed to models and persuasive instruction showed significant gains in writing scores, the use of models seemed to have no significant effect on reading scores. Crowhurst concluded from her findings that systematic instruction in persuasive writing, including the use of text models, can improve students' persuasive writing.

Crowhurst's (1991) findings support the explicit teaching of persuasion, but her conclusions are limited by the design of her study, in which the control group and the single-lesson group received little or no instruction in or exposure to persuasion as a mode of discourse. Although her conclusion that persuasive writing can be taught was clearly supported by the results of the study, her results do not provide compelling evidence that models instruction specifically is an effective strategy for teaching persuasive writing. Because the only instructional strategy used to teach persuasive writing was the use of models, and the students' only exposure to persuasive writing was through the models, an alternative explanation for her findings may be that *any* exposure to persuasive writing can help students to gain a schema for persuasion.

Geist (1996) provided an anecdotal description of success with models and imitation in writing instruction, and described classroom procedures, but did not empirically study the use of models to see if they made a significant difference in student persuasive writing quality. In fact, Geist noted that “my experience in using imitation [of models] is limited and I have not tried to prove the method in a scientific way” (p. 57). Asserting that we all “steal” when we write (p. 52) Geist wanted to make this imitation, or stealing, more deliberate and valuable in instruction to make use of students’ natural inclination to imitate. Using Piaget’s theories on imitation as a “tool for the adjustment of one’s own functioning to the way reality functions” (p. 53), Geist planned and presented a five-step instructional strategy for using imitation in the teaching of writing. The five steps included (a) the choice of argument texts and preparation of an analysis by the teacher; (b) observation of the texts by the students; (c) the rewriting of the texts by the students in groups, with an exaggerated focus on a specified feature; (d) a second rewriting of the text using a different specified feature; and (e) the combining and varying of specified features in another rewriting of the text. Geist was careful to note that imitation in this manner is meant to be a means to an end, not the end itself, a way for students to practice using specific features of argumentation. Geist’s instructional use of models, although not empirically proven to be successful, provides a helpful example of the ways models and imitation can be used in writing instruction, and some of these ideas will be adapted in the instructional section of the present study.

Yeh (1998) studied the effects of explicit instruction using two heuristics designed to help middle school students write arguments. In a quasi-experimental model, four classes of mostly minority, low socio-economic status middle school students were

divided into experimental and control groups by intact classes. Because classes taught by two teachers at two different schools were used for the study, one class from each teacher was designated as a comparison group and one as the experimental group. Although both teachers were recommended to Yeh as strong teachers of writing, he selected them purposefully because their backgrounds and teaching styles varied in a number of ways (years in the classroom, experience with the National Writing Project, ethnicity, level of strictness, and ability to hold the attention of students.) Yeh selected two very different teachers to examine the hypothesis that teacher background would influence the treatment effect. In this pre-test/post-test design, Yeh used two counter-balanced essay prompts that asked students to read a packet of background materials, take a stand on an issue, and write a letter for a specific audience. After completing the pretest, students also completed a self-report measure designed to assess their familiarity with the thesis-support form of argumentation in speaking. Next, students spent six weeks learning either the experimental or comparison curriculum. The curriculum was identical for all classes, including the immersion in argument through debate and the peer interaction and feedback recommended by Nystrand (1990) and Bizzell (1992). The exception was the explicit instruction of two pre-writing heuristics designed to help students generate supporting ideas and link them to the argument form that the experimental group received. Yeh found that the experimental group showed significantly higher gain scores than the comparison group in both voice and development in their essays, regardless of teacher background. He also found that the students from the experimental group used the heuristics flexibly, adapting them to the needs of their writing. In interviews with 36 students following the instructional unit, Yeh found that 78% of the comparison group

students who were interviewed didn't show any knowledge of argument criteria, instead focusing on spelling and punctuation when asked, "What really counts in writing a strong argument?" (p. 74). In contrast, 61% of the experimental group who were interviewed gave responses focusing on how their reasons supported their claims, showing knowledge of the criteria of a good argument. Yeh found that the use of heuristics helped minority students much more than it did White students. These results are not significant because of the low number of White students in the study; however, Yeh connected the success of explicit instruction using heuristics with minority students to Delpit's (1986, 1988, 1995) view that the dominant codes of discourse must be explicitly taught to minority students. Furthermore, Yeh cited Reyes (1992) who found that Hispanic students hold authority figures such as teachers in high regard and expect explicit instruction and guidance from them as further evidence that minority students especially can benefit from explicit instruction in heuristics.

Wollman-Bonilla (2004) found that younger students could successfully use argument strategies after explicit instruction. She studied third- and fourth-grade students engaged in a unit on persuasive letter writing in the context of a writing workshop. Students were asked to write three persuasive letters throughout the unit. The prompts for these writing assignments were designed by the classroom teachers to be engaging to the students. Each prompt included an audience known to the students (their teacher, a family member, and the school physical education teacher). Wollman-Bonilla found that after a unit comprised of mini-lessons on persuasive writing, which included group brainstorming, teacher modeling and the use of a newspaper article as a model, the

students' use rhetorical moves that showed evidence of audience awareness increased by an average of 2-3 more moves per letter.

The studies presented in this section, each of which attempted to improve students' persuasive writing ability through an instructional treatment, had varying levels of success. For the present study, an examination of the instructional planning within each study reveals that collaborative, fully realized lessons that engage students in working together to read, analyze, imitate, write and discuss are likely to have greater levels of success.

Imitation and the Teaching of Writing

A Historical Perspective on the Teaching of Writing Using Imitation

The history of classical rhetoric is beyond the scope of this chapter, but because its influence informed the present study and the instructional unit involving models and imitation, a brief mention of the roots of imitation and the use of models, as well as information on the teaching of classical rhetoric in modern composition classrooms, will be provided.

Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (c. 335 B.C.E./1991) has been called the "central work" from which all subsequent rhetorical theory flows (Gross & Walzer, 2000). Since the shift in the 1980s from a product-centered approach to writing instruction to the process approach still in vogue today, the ideas of classical rhetoric have gained popularity.

The Use of Imitation in Classical Rhetoric

In the fifth century B.C.E., imitation was an accepted form of instruction in rhetoric. The sophists taught the art of oratory through imitation, with little concern for theory or analysis. Isocrates compared their style of teaching through imitation to

teaching the alphabet. The students learned set passages and made speeches by combining them, just as children can make words once they have learned their letters and the rules of spelling. In *Against the Sophists*, Isocrates (c. 390 B.C.E./ 1982) criticized this technique because it did not give students knowledge of how to most effectively combine these passages or how to create their own meaningful speeches (Kennedy, 1980). Gorgias, a sophist famed for his use of style, also taught through imitation, by giving students models of his own speeches to imitate (Kennedy, 1980). According to Kennedy (1980), Gorgias was concerned primarily with the teaching of style. Plato (c. 405 B.C.E./1960) critiqued Gorgias in his dialogue, *Gorgias*, for teaching students to imitate his style with no instruction in theory, and Aristotle also saw Isocrates as too concerned with style. This strict type of imitation, with no sense of the theory underlying the models being imitated, is not the type of instructional strategy that was used in the present study.

Quintilian (94-95 C.E./1987) was one of the most famous teachers in Rome during the first century A.D. In the *Institutio Oratoria* he set forth a description of his teaching practices and philosophies. According to Murphy (2001) there is a close relationship between writing, speaking, and reading in Quintilian's system of education (vii). Quintilian used *imitatio* (imitation) to help students gain practice before branching out on their own. Some of the forms of *imitatio* included (a) *lectio* (reading aloud), (b) *praelectio* (the master's detailed analysis of a text), (c) memorization of models, (d) paraphrasing of models, (e) transliteration of models (i.e. verse to prose or Latin to Greek), (f) recitation of paraphrases or transliterations, and (g) correction of a paraphrase or transliteration. These exercises were arranged in a series that increased in difficulty

and aimed to provide students with *facilitas*, “the readiness to use language in any situation” (Book X). Although Quintilian’s plan of *imitatio* is very controlled and may stifle a modern student in the same way a five-paragraph essay might, some aspects of his plan do fit into the present study, including the paraphrasing of models. For example, the *praelectio* is a common feature of many writing classrooms today, in which a teacher models the analysis of a piece of writing for the students.

The Use of Imitation in Contemporary Writing Instruction

A number of writers have championed imitation as a way to teach writing (Foster, 1989; Gorrell, 1987; Gruber, 1977; Spencer, 1982; Walborn, 1987), but in all cases, these are opinion pieces, not research-based articles. The preponderance of composition anthologies that present students with a variety of models as examples of different modes of writing shows that the use of models in composition classrooms has never really died. There are, however, theorists who reject the use of imitation and models in writing instruction (Moffett, 1983; Murray, 1985; Shaughnessy, 1977). Moffett wrote, “Models don’t help writing and merely intimidate some students by implying a kind of competition in which they are bound to lose” (p. 108). Shaughnessy agreed, noting that the use of models robs students of the opportunity to gain insight into their own writing processes. Lindemann (“Symposium,” 1993) disagreed with the use of models and imitation because the models used are “inappropriate in terms of length, writing, technique and style” (p. 265), but later advocated their use as an aid to revision (2001). This view of imitation is only part of the picture; researchers and theorists continue to look to models and imitation as instructional strategies (Ampadu, 1999; Charney and Carlson, 1995; Crowhurst, 1991).

Corbett (1965) and Kinneavy (1971) wrote the two main works that brought classical rhetoric back into popularity. In a 1987 interview with Andrea Lunsford and Lisa Ede, Corbett recalled finding Hugh Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* in the library and becoming convinced that he had to "recover" the long tradition of the study of rhetoric that led up to Blair's work during the late eighteenth century. Corbett described Blair's work on rhetoric as valuable not just for its description of how to put things together in writing, but for its method of analyzing prose style, something that modern English teachers could find valuable, he noted. From his readings of Blair, Corbett began to explore the history of rhetorical studies, beginning with Aristotle. In his essay "The Usefulness of Classical Rhetoric" (1963), Corbett described the many facets of classical rhetoric that could be valuable for modern writing teachers. He mentioned the use of imitation as a method for teaching students about style, particularly style in sophisticated sentence patterns (p. 18). He pointed out that, although some critics claim that imitation is an attempt to "encourage students to acquire someone else's style" (p. 19), in fact this is a misunderstanding of the goal of imitation. Corbett defended the use of the disciplined system of classical rhetoric as a teaching tool in response to the criticism that it would blight students' self-expression: "What most of our students need, even the bright ones, is careful, systematized guidance at every step in the writing process. Classical rhetoric can provide that kind of positive guidance" (p. 20). Corbett also presented testimonies from famous writers as varied as Benjamin Franklin and Malcolm X on the ways imitation helped to improve their writing. Corbett also presented models for teaching through imitation of both passages and sentences. He advocated word-for-word imitation, as well as varying the wording of a sentence. The models are

merely one technique of writing instruction; in Corbett's words, "The ultimate goal of all imitation exercises, however, is eventually to cut the student loose from his own models, equipped with the competence and resources to go it on his own" (p. 538).

Corbett (1999) described Erasmus' method of asking students to imitate a model sentence in a variety of forms (p. 496). During the Renaissance, Erasmus gained fame for writing one sentence in 150 different ways by varying the syntax. His belief about style was not just that it could be taught, but that it should be taught by very specific methods. Like Quintilian before him and Corbett after him, he advocated the use of models and imitation. He lists a number of steps that students should take in learning style, beginning with memorizing the precepts of style, then practicing by imitating models, translating from Greek, transforming poetry into prose and prose into poetry, and even competing with other students in varying the style of one piece of writing in as many styles as possible. Erasmus advocated that students read the writing of good authors frequently, making note of their techniques and practicing these techniques through imitation, to ensure that students would then have these techniques available for use in their own writing.

This focus on sentence-level style instruction gained renewed popularity during the sentence combining movement of the 1960s and 1970s, spearheaded by the work of Frances Christensen (1963). In the late 1970s, Daiker, Morenberg, and Kerek wrote a breakthrough work, *The Writer's Options* (1979), on the use of sentence combining to teach sentence style and correctness. These three authors edited a later book, *Sentence Combining: A Rhetorical Perspective* (1985), which invited theorists from across the continuum of beliefs about sentence combining to contribute articles on the topic.

Ironically, this book was published in the mid-1980s, when the process and writing workshop approaches were ascending and sentence combining fell out of favor. Sentence combining has never regained its prominence, despite the fact that in George Hillocks's (1986) meta-analysis of writing instruction research studies, he found that 60% of the studies of sentence combining found significant improvement in students' syntactic maturity and/or overall writing quality. Morenberg and Sommers continued to advocate sentence combining as a way to teach sentence-level style and correctness with an 8th edition of *The Writer's Options* (2007). Modern sentence combining exercises can be traced to Erasmus' use of the imitation of a sentence as a way to teach style.

Knoblauch and Brannon (1984) criticized the use of the principles of classical rhetoric in the modern classroom, arguing that most writing teachers and writing textbooks rely on the philosophy of the classical tradition. This philosophy, they claimed, viewed writing as "largely a ceremonial activity" (p. 24) unconcerned with the creation of meaning. They called Corbett's book, *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, a clear and accurate description of classical rhetoric, but dispute his idea that the teachings of classical rhetoric are relevant in modern writing classes. Lindemann's (2001) work in *A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers* was flawed in their eyes because they believed she wrongly mingled the classical and modern traditions. They viewed the progression from classical to modern rhetoric as an epistemological shift. Writing teachers, they claimed, are mostly wedded to teaching philosophies and methods garnered from the classical model; even if teachers employ new strategies, such as prewriting, they use them for the same old writing forms. Knoblauch and Brannon advocated a whole new philosophy of writing instruction, based on modern rhetoric, which focuses on the creation of meaning,

not on form or correctness of discourse modes. Though Knoblauch and Brannon's warning against teaching that relies too heavily on lock-step formulas for writing is sound, the authors' opposition to the teaching of the features of different types of writing dismissed the very real need many students have to learn these types of writing to enter into specific discourse communities. It is interesting to note that their first example of writing that focuses on meaning, not form, is a personal essay written by one student as a reflection on his relationship with his sister. The authors seem to reject all teaching of form in their quest for meaning, labeling teaching that tries to combine classical and modern forms "smorgasbord" teaching. They called the division of writing into types, such as persuasive, expressive, literary, and referential (Kinneavy, 1971) "reductive" and "artificial" (p. 26). The authors argued for a new way of seeing writing and writing instruction. Although their ideas have relevance in the large scale discussion of what constitutes good writing and good writing instruction, for students who are asked to produce research papers for college classes, or for adults who want to write persuasive letters to their senators, a knowledge of the forms of writing and the generally accepted rules of each type of discourse are still necessary.

Research Related to Models and Imitation

Stolarek (1991) conducted three studies of "prose modeling," a technique very similar to imitation, in which students duplicated the defining characteristics of a model text using different content. First, she surveyed university-level English instructors to see if they used prose modeling in their classroom and found that 76% of instructors used prose modeling. However, when asked to describe how effective they thought the strategy was, most of the instructors answered with negative remarks, indicating that they

had little confidence in its efficacy. Stolarek next tested prose modeling as a way to teach an unfamiliar form of prose writing by comparing two groups of writers; a group of college faculty members comprised the expert writing group, and college freshmen made up the novice group. Each participant was given a packet containing various supporting documents. A complete packet contained a description of the new writing form, a model, and an analysis of the model, along with directions to write a modified version after reading the packet. Not all participants received the complete packet, however. Stolarek found that in all of the treatment groups the experts (the faculty members) wrote more formally modified samples than the students. She also found that across both the student and faculty groups, the more documents in the packets the participants received, the better their final writing samples were. She then used simulated recall methods with 30 of the participants, and again found that the faculty wrote more elaborated samples, particularly those who made the greatest number of references to the task demands as they wrote.

This study seems flawed in that it provided such a short instructional piece, which was guided only by an absent instructor. It does show that models need explication, and that students need guidance in figuring out which features of the models are significant, but the use of the packet, rather than a complete instructional unit, makes the results somewhat disappointing.

Smagorinsky (1992) analyzed research on models in writing instruction, and noted that in cases where models were not effective as an instructional strategy, the models were only available before writing; students did not have access to them during writing. This analysis of the failure of models as strategy suggests that the models

themselves serve as a tool for students to mimic for format or other features. The present study uses the analysis and imitation of models before writing as an instructional strategy to help students learn and internalize specific writing strategies. Smagorinsky, like Geist (1996), advocated limiting models to one or two key features to increase their efficacy. The present study also uses each model to help students learn specific strategies. Smagorinsky's findings, while not entirely positive, provide valuable insight into the reasons that models can fail as an instructional tool.

Charney and Carlson (1995) studied the effect of models on college students' ability to write a Method section for a psychology experiment and found mixed results. The research design included a number of treatment groups. These included (a) a control group that saw no models, (b) a group that received three strong models, (c) a group that received three models of varying quality (high, low, and average) but were not informed about which model fell into which category, and (d) a group that received three models of varying quality labeled with grades indicating quality levels. All of the students were asked to write a Method section, and groups with models reviewed the models. The students were told that although the models might help them, the models were not perfect. Students were able to keep the models to refer to while writing. All students watched video documentaries and received fact sheets to ensure that they had adequate factual knowledge to write a Method section. The fact sheets included irrelevant or inappropriate information that would not ordinarily appear in a Method section to determine whether the use of models helped students to make judgments about which information belonged this form of writing. The students' Method sections were scored

holistically on four scales: (a) inclusion of relevant information, (b) exclusion of irrelevant information, (c) organization, and (d) elaboration.

Charney and Carlson (1995) found significant results for the organization scale only, with students who received models of any quality level scoring significantly higher than students in the control group. Their findings suggest that models help students to master the organizational structure of a specific type of writing. They did not find that the quality level of the models had any effect in the four measured categories. They offered an alternative explanation for their findings, suggesting that the videos and fact-sheets provided to all students made the tasks of including relevant information, excluding irrelevant information, and elaborating easier for all students, regardless of whether they saw a model or not. Charney and Carlson suggested that their results highlight a need for more “fine-grained” study of how models can help students learn genre-specific writing strategies.

Although current secondary writing texts (McDougal Littel, 2001) provide model essays as an instructional tool, and the use of models in secondary writing instruction is widespread, there is little current research on the use of models. The present study seeks to help fill this gap by examining the use of models in persuasive writing instruction.

Effective Instruction In Language Arts Classrooms

Because the results of the present study hinge on the design of the instructional unit, it seems reasonable that recent findings on best practices and current theories in English education should inform the decisions made about how the unit should be taught.

Langer's High Literacy Instruction

Over a two-year period, Langer (2001) analyzed the instructional practices of 44 teachers in 25 schools that “beat the odds” in terms of student achievement in English to find characteristics of classrooms in which *high literacy* was successfully taught. Langer defined high literacy as “the literacy gained from a well developed middle and high school English curriculum“ (p. 838). This definition goes beyond basic skill in reading and writing, to “the ability to use language, content, and reasoning in ways that are appropriate for particular situations and disciplines” (p. 838). Langer identified the common features of the instructional practices and beliefs of the teachers who beat the odds, and of the teachers whose results were more “typically performing” (p. 845). The schools and teachers who were considered to have beaten the odds included those whose students showed significantly higher achievement levels in English when compared with schools with similar student bodies. Many of these schools were in poor and urban areas and included culturally diverse student bodies.

Langer found that the important features of instruction fell into six general categories: (a) approaches to skills instruction, (b) approaches to test preparation, (c) connected learning, (d) enabling strategies, (e) conceptions of learning, and (d) classroom organization. Langer’s findings on the strategies used by the highly successful teachers in each of these categories are significant to the present study in terms of the design of the instructional unit.

For the first category, approaches to skill instruction, Langer found that 67% of the exemplary teachers in typical schools and 73% of the teachers in “beating the odds” schools showed “systematic use of separated, simulated, and integrated skills instruction”

(p. 857). Teachers who were considered to be typical mostly used only one approach to skills instruction; in fact, only 17% of the typical teachers integrated the three approaches. The exemplary teachers were much more likely to plan separated instruction to highlight specific rules or skills, simulated instruction to give students the opportunity to apply and practice these skills, and integrated instruction in which students “were expected to use their skills and knowledge within the embedded context of a large and purposeful activity” (p. 857). This approach has a great deal in common with the cognitive apprenticeship model, in that it includes segments of instruction that loosely correspond to the observation, coaching, and practice of cognitive apprenticeship models. The instructional unit for the present study makes use of all three of Langer’s approaches to skills instruction. In both the models and the non-models units, separated instruction allows students to observe specific features of quality persuasive writing; simulated tasks, such as imitating an author’s argument in the models unit, will be used to help students practice these skills with coaching from their peers and the teacher; and integrated instruction will include a persuasive research project and a debate.

In the second category, approaches to test preparation, Langer found that 85% of the “beating the odds” teachers took an integrated approach to test preparation, and 15% of them used both integrated and separated instruction. In contrast, 75% of the typical teachers used separated instruction for test preparation, focusing on teaching only test-taking skills without any connection to curriculum content. Because of the reliance on NAEP data and use of the 1998 NAEP Twelfth Grade Persuasive Scoring Guide in this study, the instructional unit could be considered “teaching to the test.” The NAEP Scoring Guide is an instrument that does not encourage explicit “teaching to the test” in

the same way that some other standardized tests, such as Advanced Placement Exams, seem to. In fact, the NAEP instrument looks for effective use of persuasive writing skills, making it easy to integrate preparation for this test with good teaching practices. Langer found that exemplary teachers integrated test preparation by “carefully analyzing test demands and reformulating curriculum as necessary to be sure that students would, over time, develop the knowledge and skills necessary for accomplished performance” (p. 860). In the same way, this unit attempts to use reading strategies, imitation, and practice writing to help students learn to internalize the basic traits of quality persuasive writing, not to help them merely do well on one test.

Writing Instruction and the Zone of Proximal Development

Wertsch (1985) defined Vygotsky’s *Zone of Proximal Development* (ZPD) as “the distance between the child’s actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the higher level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance in collaboration with more capable peers” (pp. 67-68). According to Bruffee (as cited in Maimon, Nodine, & O’Connor, 1989), writing teachers must design tasks that fall into the Vygotskyian ZPD to help students learn to write well as part of a language community. These tasks must not be so simple that students can easily accomplish them on their own, but they must not be so difficult that a group of students working together will be frustrated and unable to manage without the teacher’s help. Instead, tasks should be designed so that students can be successful by working collaboratively with one another as their teacher provides scaffolding.

Scaffolding Student Learning

According to Hogan and Pressley (1997), teachers who use scaffolding can “give their students authentic experiences in the disciplines they study in school” and can “help them to talk like scientists or writers or historians” (p. 1). The scaffolding metaphor comes from the realm of building, and fits well within the constructivist classroom. Much of the research on scaffolding focuses on parent–child interactions (Hall, 1991; Pratt, Green, MacVicar, & Boutrogianni, 1992) or on one-on-one tutoring (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976), but in all scaffolding situations, the basic premise is that the expert or teacher will provide supports for the learner as he or she moves into more difficult material, gradually removing these supports as the learner is able to function independently. According to Hogan and Pressley, this should not be a situation where the teacher holds complete control; instead, an interactive dialogue between the teacher and the learner should help them move fluidly from one skill level to the next. Hogan and Pressley first presented a list of the essential elements of scaffolding that they adapted from the work of other researchers. The first element of scaffolding is *pre-engagement*, in which the teacher anticipates the needs of the students and selects appropriate curricular tasks for the learner to attempt. The next element is the *establishing of a shared goal*. According to Hogan and Pressley, it is crucial that students “own” the goals so that students will be motivated to succeed; otherwise, scaffolding can become coercive. Third, the teacher must *actively diagnose the understandings and needs of the learner* in terms of the content area standards to measure the student’s growth against external measures. According to Hogan and Pressley, “Since scaffolding hones students’ thinking abilities, assessments of thinking processes, not just products, should be done in order to document

and provide feedback on the effects of scaffolding” (pp. 86-87). Fourth, the teacher *provides tailored assistance*. This can include questioning, prompting, modeling, and direct instruction, but should be adjusted to the needs of the student. Next, the teacher must *maintain pursuit of the goal* by keeping students focused and motivated through praise, questions, and requests for clarification. The sixth element is *giving feedback*, in which the teacher summarizes the progress made by the student and helps the student to see how he or she compares with the ideal performance. In this stage it is important to focus on what has been successful so that students can see how they have improved and why. In the seventh element, *controlling for frustration and risk*, the teacher must create a learning environment in which students see mistakes and frustration as part of the learning process, not as roadblocks. Finally, the teacher must *assist internalization, independence, and generalization* as support is withdrawn. In this final stage it is important to make students aware of the cues that help them approach new problems and the need to transfer their skills to new contexts. Students should have the opportunity to practice using their new skills in novel problem situations.

Hogan and Pressley (1997) explored the ways that dialogue can serve as scaffolding in science classes. They found that scaffolding could be a problem in whole class settings because teachers have limited time to work with individual students and their multiple Zones of Proximal Development. Their suggestion for managing scaffolding in whole class settings was to use student groups; instead of scaffolding individual students, the teacher then scaffolds each group. This is problematic because it is unlikely that every group member will have quality interactions with the teacher. An additional strategy is the use of cue cards, question stems, and other strategies that

promote self-regulated learning. Hogan and Pressley also recommended that teachers plan scaffolding that fosters a culture of scientific discourse for whole class instruction; instead of scaffolding individual students, teachers should plan scaffolding strategies that help to induct the students into the protocols of a community of inquiry.

King (1989, 1990) and King and Rosenshine (1993) studied guided cooperative questioning, a scaffolding technique in which students worked in pairs of small groups, using pre-made question stems, such as “what are the strengths and weaknesses of...?” and “why is ... important?” to generate their own questions about the material being studied. The format of the questions seemed to lead the students to use the same type of thinking when they worked independently (e.g., cause and effect, evaluating ideas, noting strengths and weaknesses, and comparing and contrasting). This helped them to build these kinds of links to the material in their minds, leading to “highly elaborated and richly integrated mental representations” of the material (King & Rosenshine, 1993).

Roehler and Cantlon (1997) studied the literacy cycle in two elementary classrooms to determine how scaffolding is used in social constructivist classrooms because “Scaffolding—developed to help students internalize information—best occurs in learning situations where the learners have opportunities to communicate their thoughts” (p. 10). They found that five types of scaffolding occurred in the two social constructivist classrooms they observed. These included (a) teachers offering explanations; (b) teachers inviting student participation; (c) teachers verifying and clarifying students’ understandings; (d) teachers modeling desired behaviors, including making thought patterns visible through think-alouds; and (e) teachers inviting students

to contribute clues in problem solving. Based on their observations, they recommended that teachers should create “contextualized learning opportunities” (p. 37).

Theories on the Social Nature of Writing and Learning

Social Cognition Theory

Social Cognition theory informs the study of persuasive writing development in students because of the audience awareness needed to write successfully in the persuasive genre. Although audience awareness was first mentioned by Aristotle, it is only since the 1970s that social cognition and writing have been studied extensively as interrelated. Flavell (1985, p. 120) defined social cognition as “a person’s inferences, beliefs, or conceptions about the inner psychological processes or attributes of other human beings.”

Social Constructionist Theory

According to Bruffee (as cited in Maimon, Nodine, & O’Connor, 1989), “good writing requires us to be able to talk about writing in ways agreed upon by the conversational community we are members of” (p. 216). Teachers, he continued, are charged with helping students to become a part of this community. One way that they can aid students in their transition to this new community of writers is by helping them to form temporary communities of people in the same transitional situation. According to Bruffee, this type of transitional community is supportive because it uses the language and ideals of both the new community and the old, while also “acknowledging the stress of change” (p. 217). As students work in these support communities, teachers help them to internalize the language and ideas of the new community, in this case the community of writers. Teachers do this by setting up situations in which students can translate and

use this new language and way of thinking, not by talking with the teacher, but by talking with their peers.

This type of instruction assumes a social constructionist stance, including the belief that skill in reasoning is not a universal given, but rather an internalization of the language and symbol structures of a community. “What appear to be inherent structure and laws of thought originate, generally speaking, in social processes and arrangements of a sort that we often call conversation, among people who ‘speak the same language’” (1989, Bruffee, in Maimon, Nodine, & O’Connor). This social constructionist view, when applied to writing, becomes a two-way process. First, we internalize the conventions of effective language use agreed upon by our community (in our case the Western European-American literate community). These conventions then shape our writing, as well as our ability to speak and think about writing as a social process.

Although writing is a personal and private process, much writing, especially persuasive writing, is composed for public, not private use. It is social in nature, meant to communicate with others. This public arena is a community with specific ideas about what constitutes effective communication. In Bruffee’s social constructionist view of writing, it seems imperative that students are taught to enter into this world of public discourse so that they can become a part of the literate community of our culture. For example, effective persuasive writing, in our culture, uses certain techniques to appeal to readers. An instructional unit informed by social constructionist theories should offer students the chance to internalize these persuasive techniques by speaking about them, using them, and translating them in transitional, collaborative peer groups. Using the cognitive apprenticeship model for instructional design allows teachers of writing to

build on and support the social elements of learning and the public nature of the discourse community.

The Cognitive Apprenticeship Model of Learning

The cognitive apprenticeship model has been studied for its effectiveness in a variety of professional learning situations, from teacher education to engineering (Beck, 2004; de Jager, Reezigt, & Creemers, 2002; Duncan, 1996; Noble, 2003; Osana & Seymour, 2003). Collins et al. (1987) used Lave's (1994) work on apprenticeship practices among West African tailors as a basis for the creation of a model of cognitive apprenticeship in schooling. Traditional workplace apprenticeship was a widespread, historical method of educating the young by emphasizing the continuous use of specialized skills in meaningful tasks. Apprenticeship "embeds the learning of skills and knowledge in the social and functional context of their use" (p. 1). In contrast, the modern formalized schooling of industrialized nations makes important knowledge and skills abstract and inauthentic, according to Collins. Graduate level schooling, however, does make wide use of apprenticeship models because graduate students gradually learn to extend their textbook knowledge to solve complex problems as they become part of communities of specialized knowledge and practice. The authors argued that it is important to use a similar form of instruction in elementary domains of reading, writing, and mathematics because they represent important foundational knowledge and skills, and they are well-suited to this type of instruction. Collins et al. (1987) proposed an instructional model that attempts to teach students expert strategies by adapting features of traditional apprenticeship to academic contexts. The cognitive apprenticeship model has important implications for the design of writing instruction, so it will be briefly

outlined here to provide a context for further discussions of cognitive strategies instruction in writing.

Collins et al. (1987) advocated a need for understanding of expert practice in instruction, which they believed can be effectively taught using a cognitive apprenticeship model. By expert practice, they meant the cognitive and metacognitive strategies and processes experts use to complete tasks and solve domain-specific problems. Unlike traditional apprenticeship models, in which skills are often visible, physical behaviors, such as sewing a pocket in the Lave study of apprentice tailors, the cognitive apprenticeship model seeks to make invisible mental processes and skills visible for students. All apprenticeship models teach skills to learners in three ways: through observation, coaching, or practice. In the world of academic instruction, these stages are often called modeling, coaching, and fading. This three-part model is closely akin to the concept of scaffolding during instruction, as the teacher gradually gives up control as the learner becomes more skilled.

After an examination of three successful models of instruction that use apprenticeship principles, Collins et al. set forth a framework for designing learning environments within a cognitive apprenticeship model. The framework described four parts of the learning environment: content, method, sequence, and sociology.

Content

The cognitive apprenticeship model of instruction included four categories of expert knowledge: (1) domain knowledge, (2) problem-solving strategies and heuristics, (3) control strategies (strategies which control the process of carrying out a task; for example, deciding that a specific heuristic would be appropriate for a given task), and (4)

learning strategies. The authors noted that only one of these categories, domain knowledge, was the focus of most school instruction, but they provided no evidence of this focus in classrooms. Although many teachers would probably agree that they feel pressure to “cover” specific factual material, especially in this age of high-stakes standardized tests that often focus exclusively on domain knowledge, the teaching of other strategies, especially learning strategies and heuristics, has become more widespread than it was in the 1980s. In order to teach for expertise, learning environments should ideally focus on all four types of knowledge, so that learners gain factual, procedural, and strategic knowledge.

Method

Collins et al. (1987) described six teaching methods that addressed the complex relationship of expert strategies, domain specific knowledge, and problem-solving tasks. The three core methods of cognitive apprenticeship, as mentioned earlier, are modeling, coaching, and scaffolding. The fourth method, articulation, includes methods such as inquiry teaching, in which students articulate their own knowledge, reasoning or problem-solving processes. The fifth method, reflection, encourages students to “compare their own problem-solving processes with that of an expert, other students, and ultimately, an internal cognitive model of expertise” (p. 17). The final method is exploration, in which students are encouraged not only to solve problems independently, but also to discover and set their own problems independently. These six methods are designed to give students the opportunity to “observe, engage in, and invent or discover expert strategies in context” (p. 16).

Sequencing

The sequencing of learning activities is also important, because learners have changing needs at different stages of skills acquisition. It is especially important that cognitive apprenticeship instruction be designed not only to help students learn and integrate knowledge and skills, but also to teach them to generalize and use skills and strategies in diverse and complex contexts.

According to Lave (as cited in Collins et al., 1987), the initial observation stage is a key step in apprenticeship because it allows the learner to develop a *conceptual model* of the entire task before attempting it independently. Like an advanced organizer in education, a complete conceptual model helps the apprentice to internalize a guide for his or her own practice and move toward this ideal; it also provides an overall interpretive structure of the task that allows the apprentice to make sense of feedback received from the expert during early attempts to complete the task. This view of the conceptual model as a way to encourage apprentices to self-monitor their progress by comparing their attempts to the expert model is in line with the use of models in the writing classroom. Reading and analyzing model texts helps students gain conceptual models of particular text forms before they attempt to write in these forms. However, it is important that students be exposed to a number of models, so that they can see how the text features of a particular form can be used in different, but equally effective, ways by different authors. In Lave's study of West African tailors, the community of tailors provided the apprentices with access to a number of human models so that they could see experts using strategies and solving problems in a variety of ways.

Similarly, Bandura (1977, 1986) discussed learning and cognition in terms of imitation and observation, stressing the importance of conceptual models. He theorized that observation and imitation are the main ways that humans learn behaviors, rather than from direct instruction. He used the term “observational learning” for a type of modeling in which completely new behavior must be observed and acquired (Couzjin & Rijlaarsdaam, 1996, p. 256). In Bandura’s theory, a student observes a model, constructs a mental representation of the model and stores it in memory as a basis for his or her own behavior.

Sociology

The social context of apprenticeship learning should be designed to encourage students to develop “productive beliefs” about the nature of learning and expertise (Collins et al., 1987, p. 20). First, the concept of situated learning is critical in cognitive apprenticeship. Students should solve problems in situations that reflect the multiple uses of the knowledge and skills they are gaining. The purpose of situated learning is to foster the abstraction of knowledge; students will be more likely to transfer knowledge to new domains and problems if they see that skills and knowledge are not specific to only one context. A second important social aspect of cognitive apprenticeship is the creation of a culture of expert practice, in which students not only see experts as models, but also are drawn into the expert culture as they are taught to “think like experts” (p. 21). A third key to creating a successful social context for apprenticeship is a focus on intrinsic motivation. Traditional external motivators in school situations, such as getting good grades or pleasing the teacher, do not encourage students to act like experts. Interesting and realistic problem-solving contexts encourage intrinsic motivation,

according to the authors, which in turn help students to integrate the skills they are learning in pursuit of a unified goal or task. Finally, the learning environment should carefully balance cooperation and competition among students. Cooperative problem solving encourages students to assume roles of both producer and critic, while also helping them to gain new abilities to use skills and knowledge as they observe the ways other students address problems.

Collins et al. (1987) acknowledged that competition is a “thorny” issue for educators, but explained that they believe that an emphasis not on errors and products, but on comparing processes, can help students in their efforts to improve as they examine the strengths and weaknesses of their performances and the performances of their peers (p. 22). Competition is, as the authors explained, an emotionally difficult issue for some students, but a powerful motivator for others. The focus on “exploiting competition” can be seen as an attempt to encourage intrinsic motivation in students, although comparison with an outside source suggests external motivation. One method for tempering the difficulties of competition between students is the team problem-solving approach. By using cooperative learning to enhance competition, teachers give students an opportunity to view the ways that other students use the strategies and skills they are learning in a less intimidating setting. Although some students may still feel that they are competing when they work in groups, the team problem-solving approach may serve to lessen the negative effects of competition, while allowing for the benefits.

The overall importance of the social context in which learning takes place in the cognitive apprenticeship model is undeniable. In the model, apprentices become part of a culture with its own jargon, problem sets, and solutions. They are exposed to experts

and other apprentices at various stages of learning, enabling them to see how experts use the strategies and knowledge of their profession to approach and solve problems in an authentic, meaningful context. Cognitive apprenticeship also encourages the observation and analysis of the performances of experts and other apprentices. Whether in a cooperative or competitive setting, reflection on the differences between expert and novice performances can help learners to evaluate and adjust their own performances. Collins and Brown (1989) advocated “abstracted replay,” which is the shifting back and forth between the expert models and the learner’s own novice efforts, as a means of sensitizing students to the adjustments they need to make in their own performance to bring it the expert level. Cognitive apprenticeship provides a theoretical model for the instructional use of models and imitation in the present study. The students’ interaction with model texts asks them to take on the role of active apprentice in a discourse community, then begin to position themselves as experts as they analyze and critique the use of persuasive writing strategies in each model, comparing the models with their own performances and those of their peers. The students use group problem solving, discussion, and the alternation of teacher and student roles as they internalize the characteristics of persuasive writing. Lunsford (2002) agreed, “For classroom contexts, this theory argues for viewing students as active shapers of and contributors to, rather than passive recipients of, instruction” (p. 122). Kirschner, Sweller, and Clark (2006) argued that instructional approaches that include minimal guidance, known as constructivist learning or inquiry learning, are ineffective, and that human cognitive architecture is not structured in a way that supports constructivist instruction. They cited recent studies that support their belief that direct instructional guidance is needed

(Brown & Campione, 1994; Moreno, 2004). The cognitive apprenticeship model provides more guidance than the experiential learning examples offered by Kirschner, Sweller, and Clark, with direct instruction and guidance by an expert. In the present study, cooperative learning is combined with explicit instruction to ensure that the lessons meet the learning styles of all the participating students within the cognitive apprenticeship model.

Cognitive Apprenticeship and Writing Instruction

Collins et al. (1987) discussed the use of their cognitive apprenticeship model in a number of realms, including a study of writing instruction. It is important to note that Collins et al. developed their model of cognitive apprenticeship in writing in the late 1980s, when recommendations about the authenticity of writing tasks and the social nature of composing were just beginning to be heard in secondary writing classrooms. Although abstract and inauthentic assignments are still found in individual writing classes, the belief that students should learn to write for authentic reasons, for a variety of purposes and a variety of audiences, informs most writing research and theory today. This focus on authentic tasks and the social nature of writing is even apparent in state and national standards for writing instruction. For example, the National Council of Teachers of English *Standards for the English Language Arts* (1996) recommended that students be taught to write for a variety of purposes and audiences, through assignments that interest them. Similarly, a goal of the cognitive apprenticeship model for instruction is that students will learn the processes that experts use to *acquire* and *use* knowledge in “carrying out complex or realistic tasks” (p. 2). According to Collins et al., when learning processes are taught in most traditional classrooms, they are broken down into formulaic

and low-level sub-skills and taught in isolation, which prevents students from gaining an expert ability to choose and adapt processes flexibly in realistic situations. They cited Shoenfeld (1985), who found that students relied on textbook patterns of problem solving when faced with new math problems, instead of choosing and adapting a problem-solving strategy based on the demands of the problem.

In the writing realm, Collins et al. (1987) noted that “students are unable to make use of potential models of good writing acquired through reading because they have no understanding of the strategies and processes required to produce such text” (p. 2). Hillocks’s (1986) discussion of the procedural knowledge writers need to produce specific text forms reached a similar conclusion about the use of models in writing instruction. In Hillocks’s view, when teachers show students an expert model, teach them to find specific text features within the model, then expect them to be able to write in the modeled form, they are merely conveying declarative knowledge of the text form to the students. Students may memorize the features of a particular form, but be unable to use them independently in new writing situations. Hillocks advocated instruction stressing specific processes used by experts in addition to the use of models to teach about the text features. In one study on the writing of definitions, Hillocks, Kahn, and Johannessen (1983) used instructional procedures designed to allow students to practice using expert processes. Students discussed different situations and decided whether they fit as criteria for the concept being defined or not. The teacher then led the class in creating a model of a definition using these criteria. This strategy led to significant gains on a post test, which the authors attributed to the practice with the procedures of defining engaged in by the students, leading them to internalize an expert procedural strategy.

Scardamalia (1984) described expert writers as employing self-regulatory strategies for managing their own cognitive behavior as they wrote. This type of executive structure does not seem to be used by novice writers (p. 7), who generally use a dominant procedure driven by the goal of generating text. Expert writers also are able to mentally represent their texts on many levels, including high-level representations, such as main point and purpose. Novice writers do not use these higher level skills.

Baer, Hollenstein, Hofstetter, Fuchs, and Reber-Wyss (1994) found that the metacognitive writing strategies of 15-year-olds were more similar to those displayed by 11-year-olds than to those shown by adults. They studied three groups of 12 subjects each, with six "good" writers and six "poor" writers in each age-level group. Using a "turku" table to videotape both the subject and the writing simultaneously, they had each subject act as a tutor, helping another student to write an essay on an artist about whom they had just seen a film. Using this tutoring technique, they hoped to make the metacognitive skills of the subjects visible to the researcher. The researchers transcribed the tapes and analyzed the statements made by the tutors in order to fit them into a 32-category system of metacognitive strategies. Their findings point to age, not ability level, as the dominant factor in facility with metacognitive strategies. Even among the adult group, where they expected to find variation based on writing ability level, they found that ability mattered much less than age. These findings suggest a developmental factor in the use of metacognitive strategies in writing. The fact that the adult subjects were all high school teachers could have a modifying effect on these results, because teachers could be expected to spend more time thinking about learning strategies and cognition.

Scardamalia (1984) criticized the trends toward personal and narrative writing, and toward the peer interaction processes of writing workshops, because she viewed these as strategies that condemn novice writers to continuous knowledge telling by subverting the need for metacognitive strategies. By assigning personal narratives, she argued, teachers allow students to use knowledge already stored in memory on discourse forms that will "likely lead to literary texts" (p. 7). Matsuhashi's (1981) findings on pause length support this point of view, because students spent longer generating sentences when writing in forms that required argumentation than they did when writing personal narratives. Scardamalia also found that the social, peer-interaction elements of writing instruction (peer editing circles and the like) encouraged knowledge telling by bringing the writing process closer to a conversational model. Scardamalia advocated the use of procedural facilitation, in which students were explicitly taught the operations of the self-regulatory function, to teach novice writers to learn to do for themselves in writing that which the "supportive school writing environment now does for them" (p. 10). In follow-up interviews after this procedure was taught to them, many students referred to the session as teaching them how to think, rather than remembering it as a writing activity.

Characteristics of Expert and Novice Writers

Because cognitive apprenticeship models are designed to help novices learn to think and act like experts in a given field, it makes sense to explore the differences between expert and novice writing behaviors, strategies, and skills. Knowledge of the differences between the writing behaviors of expert and novice writers can provide insight into the ways that writers grow and learn to use the strategies of experts. The instruction in the present study was planned with this knowledge of novice and expert

writers in mind. This section will first present a brief historical summary of recent theories in writing instruction that give important context for the studies of expert and novice practice that will follow.

A Historical Perspective on the Instruction of Novice Writers

The early 1970s was a time in which minimum competency requirements, usually in reading, writing, and math, were adopted in many states, as the push for accountability in education grew (Cooper, 1981). This trend has continued, with most states requiring certain levels of writing proficiency from students. During the late 1960s and the 1970s, many colleges were opening their doors to new populations: nonnative speakers of English, children of working class and low-income families, and students lacking the academic preparation to succeed in college-level work. With the arrival of these new students, many colleges developed basic or remedial writing programs designed to bring the skill levels of these students up to the level demanded by college courses. In both secondary education and on college campuses, the necessity of instruction that would help students to communicate clearly in writing was made apparent.

The idea of a process, rather than product-centered model of writing, came into being (Bruner, 1960) with stages of pre-writing, writing, and revising. As the process approach gained strength, Peter Elbow (1973, 1981), Lucy Calkins (1986), Nancie Atwell (1998) and other advocates of best practice supported the concept of a student-centered writing classroom, in which students wrote to discover their ideas and express themselves. For many teachers of high school composition, the student-centered classroom became a place in which writing assignments focused on self-expression and personal writing. This personal writing often took the form of narrative writing, with

traditional forms, such as persuasion and thesis-support argument essays, viewed as restrictive. This is fallacious thinking, however, because persuasive writing instruction can and should be student centered as well. During this era, research into the nature of composition began to include case-study and other methods as alternatives to error analysis counts (Hillocks, 1986), while cognitive psychology began to use methods of experimentation and model-building to investigate the problems of writing (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987).

The studies of cognitive psychologists, the observations of teacher-researchers, and the findings from error analysis can all help to clarify the characteristics of novice writers, and provide direction for studies of how to teach students to write like experts.

The Writing Process

A number of researchers and theorists have described models of the writing processes of both expert and novice writers. A review of relevant theories on the ways that expert and novice writers differ as they write can help writing instructors plan strategies to help novice writers learn to write like experts. These theories are important for the present study because the instructional strategies using models and imitation are designed to help novice writers actually see and use expert-level writing strategies. In this section, some relevant theories on the differences between the writing processes of expert and novice writers will be explored in general, then more specific aspects of the writing process, such as pre-writing, composing, and editing, will be discussed in more detail.

Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) proposed two different models of the writing process, one for novice writers and one for expert writers. They described novice writers as knowledge-tellers who depend on knowledge they already have assembled in their

memories for their writing tasks, whereas expert writers are able to transform knowledge rather than merely reproducing it as they write. In Bereiter and Scardamalia's view, experts and novices are working with "distinctly different strategies" and "different kinds of thinking as they write" (p. xiv).

Novice writers begin by moving from the conversational mode, in which discourse is produced in response to an *audience*, a conversational partner who asks questions, responds, and generally provides support. Initially, as students move from conversation to independent writing, they write from their personal feelings and experiences, because this provides an easily accessed font of ideas and facts. Novice writers can use three sources for cues to stimulate writing: the topic itself, their existing discourse schemas, and the text they have already produced. This knowledge-telling method, according to Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987), enables novice writers to produce text content rapidly and without external support. The authors note that good writing *can* be produced using this method, with some writers using complex discourse schemas and large stores of background knowledge to generate ideas. Many writers continue to use this process into adulthood without ever progressing to the use of expert-level writing strategies, such as formulating goals, problem solving, and transforming knowledge.

As writers begin to use knowledge-transforming strategies while writing, they move into the realm of what Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) called "expert" writing. The authors are careful to point out that they do not mean expert writers in the generally accepted sense of professionals or writing teachers, but rather people who use expert-level thinking skills to produce writing. The writing they produce might be considered inferior by literary standards, but they have used knowledge-transforming strategies to

produce it. This model of writing is more complex than knowledge telling, and involves an interaction between text processing and knowledge processing, because the writer formulates and solves both content and discourse problems.

Shaughnessy (1977) described the composing process of expert writers as one in which pattern and product develop together. This interaction of discourse form and content during the composing stage is very similar to Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1987) model. In Shaughnessy's model, expert writers use "retrospective maps" (p. 224) to control the direction and organization of their writing, and are able to hold large chunks of discourse in their minds as they move between abstract and concrete examples. Basic writers, on the other hand, come to closure on a point in one or two sentences, so that there is less elaboration present in their writing. They generate ideas as they write, which then simply become their essays; expert writers, in contrast, generate and examine ideas in a pre-writing stage. In addition, basic writers use conversational fillers (indicating the early, conversational stage of development in Bereiter and Scardamalia's model) and rely on cliché-driven conventional wisdom and personal experiences and feelings for ideas. Shaughnessy described basic-level college writers as egocentric, believing that readers will understand what they are trying to say, or what is going on in their minds when they write, even though they have included incomplete detail on the page.

Similarly, Graves (as cited in Hillocks, 1986) described the development of writers as moving from external to internal and egocentric to socio-centric. In his model, writers in the early stages of development speak aloud about their writing as they do it, gradually internalizing the process as they also shift from concerns about spelling and penmanship to concerns about topics and information. Writers begin in an egocentric

stage, in which they see writing as a play activity. They concentrate on what they think and want and are confident that whatever they write will be meaningful to others. As the writers move to the socio-centric stage, they begin to understand that writing should be able to communicate with the reader, even when the writer is not there to explain it. At this stage, writers become more concerned with product and audience.

Flowers (1979) described the process of writing development as one in which novice or unsuccessful writers prepared “writer-based prose,” a form defined as “ a verbal expression by a writer to himself or for himself” (p. 19). Writer-based prose often takes a narrative or list-like structure and reflects the thinking process of the writer, without any attention given to preparing the text for a reader. This can be compared to Graves’s (as cited in Hillocks, 1986) idea of an egocentric stage of writing development. Flower contended that expert writers produce “reader-based prose,” writing with an audience in mind. Although Flower noted that reader-based prose is the goal of composition instruction, she pointed out that writer-based prose production can be a natural step in the writing process. For example, some expert writers rely on writer-based prose during early drafts, later transforming their drafts to reader-based prose.

Flower’s model of writing development is important for persuasive writing instruction in terms of her observation that students’ essays are often dictated by their information on a topic, resulting in writing that merely lists facts without transforming them so that they support an original idea or thesis. Students must be taught to synthesize and transform information with an audience in mind to generate successful persuasive writing. Flower’s concept of reader-based prose is an important one for understanding how this transformation process can be aided through instruction.

Prewriting

In a study in which they asked expert and novice writers to make notes before writing, Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) found that graduate students planned their stories by writing and rejecting ideas, building and rejecting possible structures, and including abstract ideas. Fourth-grade writers merely listed ideas; these lists became their first drafts with only a bit of editing, and with no changes in order, structure, or depth of elaboration. In think-aloud procedures, Bereiter and Scardamalia likewise found that graduate student writers used expert knowledge-transforming strategies that showed movement from concrete to abstract thought, problem-solving strategies, and goal setting, whereas novice writers rehearsed their ideas at the same level of concreteness they used in the actual writing task.

Matsuhashi (1981) studied the planning processes of competent high school writers by videotaping both a writer and the writing being produced concurrently. Using split screen technology, Matsuhashi was able to connect pauses, indicating planning by the writer, with the writing generated after the pauses. Matsuhashi found that when writing personal narratives, the students felt no need to plan and moved confidently into writing in a reporting mode. When writing essays requiring argument or generalization, the writers seemed to lack a schema, and spent more time pausing to plan, indicating that these discourse forms were more difficult for the students.

Perl (1979) found that basic-level college writers paused more often between ideas while writing and spent only 1.50 to 7.00 minutes on pre-writing, a conclusion that differs from Hillocks's view that expert writers are more likely to spend time pausing to plan while writing. Perhaps these students, because of their age, were attempting to move

beyond Bereiter and Scardamalia's rapid, knowledge-telling phase of composing. Because of their difficulties with grammar and syntax, and because of their tendency to focus on micro-level editing while writing, these students may have short-circuited their planning time, spending it on low level editing, rather than higher order processing of content and organization, so that although they paused to plan as often as the expert writers in Hillocks's study, they spent this time less efficiently.

Rate of Composing

Pianko (1979) and Stallard (1974) also compared the rates of composing of different level writers. Pianko found that both basic and non-basic writers composed at a rate of 9.0 words per minute. Stallard found that good writers composed nine words per minute, whereas average writers composed 13.5 words per minute. This fairly rapid rate of composing suggests that the writers either have ideas and discourse forms already present in their minds as they write, or it could suggest that they are merely following Bereiter and Scardamalia's novice strategy of asking "What next?" at the end of each sentence and continuing to generate text quickly but with no plan in mind.

Revising and Proofreading

Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) described expert writers as those who revise by checking the content they produce against their goals, and then altering this content when it does not meet their goals. Novice writers concentrate only on proofreading for spelling, grammar, and word choice, but do not revise substantively. Bereiter and Scardamalia theorized that the egocentric nature of novice writers may make it difficult for them to separate themselves enough from their work to evaluate it. They also found that when students revised the work of others, instead of becoming more skilled at revision because

of the distance from their own work, they improved only in the number of spelling errors they found.

Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) used a system called the Alternating Procedure to extend children's revising capabilities. This procedure shoulders the executive responsibilities by mimicking the CDO (Compare/Diagnose/Operate) process involved in revision, asking children to alternate text production with revision after each sentence. The authors found that children unanimously found the procedure to be helpful to them in their writing and revising process, and it encouraged them to make more frequent positive changes in their writing. However, these changes did not improve the overall quality of their essays. Bereiter and Scardamalia accounted for this paradox in two ways. First, during the study, the children rarely used the two evaluative phrases, "I'm getting away from the main point" and "Even I'm confused about what I'm trying to say," that related to overall text concerns. Second, they made nearly as many changes for the worse as they did for the better when they were revising.

By contrasting the decisions made by the students in this study with those of a semi-professional writer, the authors found that the students' choices of evaluative statements closely matched those chosen by the adult writer. It was at the next stage, diagnosis, that the adult writer and the children diverged, except at the eighth-grade level, where the students more frequently chose strategies judged to be appropriate by the adult writer. The children focused on specific, sentence-level details, such as changing a word, whereas the adult concentrated on text-level problems of meaning and intention. This study found that children could successfully judge the effectiveness of their writing but could not identify problems or sections that needed to be changed. The researchers

surmised that this weakness in revision was caused by imperfectly developed mental representations of actual and intended texts. The children had developed to the point where they detected that problems existed, but they were not yet able to identify the problems accurately. Another explanation offered by Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) is that students' attempts at revision were "short-circuited" because of a "prior history of failed attempts at remediation" (p. 287). In terms of the present study, the novice writers' inability to diagnose text-level problems could indicate a need for instruction in text features.

Shaughnessy (1977) found a similar phenomenon of short-circuiting among college-level basic writers, who she described as obsessed with being "right," not "good." She found that during the revision process basic students often tried so hard to improve their writing that their sentences became increasingly unclear. Shaughnessy attributed this to their knowledge of the existence of a "code" of writing and grammar, of which they had incomplete mastery, but which they attempted to use in an effort to avoid embarrassment. This finding showed that by teaching less skilled writers the strategies used by expert writers, instructors can help to unlock this "code" for students.

Perl (1979) studied basic college writers, and found that they began editing "almost from the moment they began writing" (p. 26). Although she found that these basic writers had sophisticated concerns about their papers, changes in form occurred with much greater frequency than changes in content. Spelling, a low-level problem, was the most frequently edited aspect of students' work, but they neglected to work on verb forms, a more serious problem for basic writers. All of the students proofread their papers for standard English and style, yet specific types of mistakes remained. Perl looked at

these unedited mistakes to gain insight into the writing and revision processes of basic writers. She found that form problems included errors in syntax, punctuation, spelling, word choice, and sentence structure. Problems of content "concerned speaker-audience relationships, coherence, and the establishment of logical, consistent relations" (p. 27). Like Shaughnessy (1977), Perl surmised that the basic writers had internalized an incomplete set of rules for editing their own writing, and that they produced syntactic structures that were too grammatically complex for them to handle. Because they lacked knowledge of exceptions to rules, or possessed only an incomplete understanding of the rules, they often produced corrections that made their writing worse than it was originally. Additionally, the amount of time spent on editing intruded into the thinking of these students, disrupting the flow of ideas. Because they began to edit early in the composing process, the basic writers tended to lose track of their ideas before they were able to get them down on paper.

Hillocks (1986) found that less skilled writers spent less time examining what they had written and were less recursive in their writing. When revising, the more skilled writers paid attention to content and organization, whereas less skilled writers focused on mechanics, especially spelling. Studies by Stallard (1974), Pianko (1979) and Bridwell (1980) also found that unskilled writers revised at the sentence level only, with few text-level revisions.

In a comparison study of seventh-grade students of low, middle, and high skill levels, Mardean and McCutchen (1994) found that writers with lower skills had trouble revising globally at the text level, and focused only on sentence and paragraph level revising. Higher ability students were able to revise globally, yet could also segment the

texts into sentences for sentence-level revising. Middle-ability students revised more like high-ability students when texts were marked with a highlighter to indicate areas in need of revision, but revised like lower-ability writers when texts were unmarked. Higher ability students were more confident in their revising skills, while lower-ability students were less confident about revising, possibly due to their difficulties with making the actual corrections. Mardean and McCutchen suggested that this study implied that students with low-level skills would benefit from instruction in comprehending texts as a whole, followed by instruction in making sentence-level changes and seeing the effects of these changes on the text as a whole. This study indicates that instruction using models and imitation could help students revise more effectively, in a more expert way.

Revising at the level of full text for meaning is problematic for unskilled writers, indicating that they need strategies to help them see each text as a whole entity. From these insights into the writing behaviors of novice writers, it seems reasonable to surmise that, because novice writers have incomplete knowledge of grammar and mechanics, as well as less experience with the expectations of more sophisticated discourse forms such as persuasion, they spend more time on revising at the sentence level, leaving them either too discouraged, or too tired, to concentrate on content and organization. Writing instruction needs to focus on teaching students strategies to help them write and revise more like experts.

Syntax

Hunt (as cited in Hillocks, 1986) found that t-units could be used to measure syntactic maturity. Compounding of t-units and stringing t-units together with the word "and" indicated immaturity in writers. This practice of linking ideas with the word "and"

ties in with Bereiter and Scardamalia's theory of knowledge-telling as a characteristic of novice writers. The linking of ideas with the word "and" shows the flow of the writer's ideas, as each idea generates another idea. By linking ideas with "and," a writer positions them as related, sequential ideas. Kellogg (1991) found that the number of adjective clauses used by "superior" adult writers was five times that used by 4th graders, and mature writers also showed increases in nominals, adjective modifiers, and prepositional phrases. This increase in modifiers lengthens t-units and consolidates clauses, resulting in longer t-units, longer clauses, and more complex nominals as characteristics of mature syntax.

Two other researchers found that t-unit length was related to syntactic maturity. Morris (as cited in Hillocks, 1986) found that students with learning disabilities had lower levels of syntactic maturity than average students. Raiser (as cited in Hillocks, 1986) found that the average t-unit lengths of 8th-grade learning disabled students were comparable to those of average 4th graders.

Other researchers have disproved this idea. In a comparison of remedial versus regular college freshmen, House and House (1980) found no significant differences in number of errors, length of t-units, or clauses per t-unit. Hillocks pointed out the paradox of the low correlation between t-unit length and overall quality ratings of essays. This phenomenon may be explained by Shaughnessy's (1977) observations on the syntactic problems associated with basic writers.

Shaughnessy (1977) found that the syntax used by basic writers was often more immature than the level of thought they are trying to convey. But she observed that basic writers often attempted to mimic the style of formal, academic writing, without a clear

understanding its goals or of syntactic relationships. This lack of understanding made their sentences more confusing, and thus less likely to receive quality ratings than if they had merely conveyed their ideas in the language style with which they were comfortable. In this case, longer t-units certainly would not result in higher ratings of overall quality, but would instead cause confusion for readers, and obscure the writers' meanings.

Shaughnessy (1977) analyzed the writing of 4000 basic college writing students ranked in the bottom quarter of their freshmen class. She found that the syntactic errors of basic writers could be categorized into a number of specific categories. Shaughnessy's first category was accidental errors. For basic writers, these were often word substitutions or omissions. She described the egocentric nature of basic writers as a major obstacle to overcoming these problems because during revision these writers tended to see what they meant and not what they actually wrote. Another type of error was the blurred pattern, in which phrases were used incorrectly. Consolidation errors are those in which students put more ideas into one sentence than they can grammatically control, in an effort to make their syntax sound more mature. These can include coordination, subordination, and juxtaposition errors. Shaughnessy analyzed each problem and gave both advice and exercises designed to help teachers of basic writing students analyze these errors and aid students in moving beyond them.

Mode of Discourse

Perl (1979) found that basic writing students were more fluent in personal, reflexive writing, and were more pleased with the results of their writing. In the extensive, or expository mode, writers hesitated more often, and wrote one sentence or less at a time instead of generating longer chunks of writing. She theorized that these

students may have needed the "personal wedge" into the topic that reflexive writing provides in order for them to write smoothly on the topic. This view is opposite to Scardamalia's (1984) view that personal writing, because it encourages knowledge-telling processes, actually makes students less fluent in extensive writing in the long run. In terms of the present study, the finding that personal writing can provide students with a "wedge" into writing addresses a common divide in the world of secondary writing instruction between instruction that focuses on personally meaningful writing and instruction that focuses on teaching students to write in specific forms. The research on students' difficulty in writing in the persuasive mode shows that instruction about specific forms of writing is critical in writing classrooms, but this does not mean that personal interests cannot be addressed by authentic assignments that provide students with the "wedge" they may need while still helping them to gain practice using persuasive strategies.

Novices Becoming Experts

Beaufort (2000) and Sommers and Saltz (2004) studied the induction of novices into writing communities. Beaufort's ethnographic study of writing in a nonprofit organization examined the socialization of two writers into that particular discourse community, with an emphasis on the social roles within the community, the status of writing tasks within the community, and the methods of socialization used in the community. Beaufort called this a social apprenticeship model, closely based on models of cognitive apprenticeship. She found that workplace environments can be either helpful or hostile to novice writers. In the nonprofit she studied, the goal of learning was to take action and further the aims of the enterprise as a whole, not to develop writing

skills merely for the sake of expression. She also found that workers who accepted their role as novices and were willing to take direction, ask questions, and change their behaviors, were most successful in becoming experts within the discourse community.

Similarly, Sommers and Saltz (2004) found that college students grew as writers and developed into expert members of their discourse communities only by embracing the role of novice writer during their freshman year. Sommers and Saltz studied 400 Harvard freshmen as part of the Harvard Study of Undergraduate Writing. They found that first-year college students were caught in a paradoxical situation, in which they were expected to develop (and write from) a position of authority and expertise in new subject areas, while also being placed in the role of novice writers at the college level. The students who accepted their role as novices while still attempting to write from an expert position of authority in their essays were eventually able to write themselves “into expertise” (p. 134). Those students who resisted the novice role, clinging to high school modes of writing, had a much more difficult time adjusting to college writing. These students seemed to see academic writing as a chore, while students who accepted their role as novices saw college writing as the route to mastery of knowledge in their courses. One student commented, “Without writing you don’t really belong to a course and don’t make it your own” (p. 130). Sommers and Saltz found that successful students made a paradigm shift during their first year of college by moving from a view of writing as an isolated exercise for a grade to a view of writing as a way to engage with and gain understanding of new material. They also found that students were more likely to make this paradigm shift if they encountered faculty members who treated them as “apprentice scholars, giving them real intellectual tasks” (p. 140). Although Sommers

and Saltz made generalizations about the type of writing required of high school students as they examine first year college students new status as novice writers, their work provides valuable insights into the cognitive apprenticeship model and the roles and practices of novice writers as they move toward expertise.

Summary

This review has provided an overview of the major theory and research on writing instruction as it pertains to persuasion and the use of imitation and models. Although there is a great deal of research on students' skill levels and on instructional strategies in persuasive writing, there is little research on the effectiveness of the use of models and imitation within an instructional unit on persuasive writing to teach persuasive strategies. This disparity shows the need for research into the efficacy of models and imitation in persuasive writing instruction. The theoretical underpinnings of the present study, most notably cognitive apprenticeship, point to the use of imitation as a general learning tool, so the use of imitation in writing instruction seems promising. The knowledge gained from the sections on effective instructional practices and expert and novice characteristics was used to plan and implement a sound instructional unit in persuasive writing for the present study.

This chapter began by examining the research on persuasive writing, including students' skill levels in persuasive writing and instructional strategies for improving students' persuasive writing. Next, the chapter reviewed the theory and research on the use of imitation in writing instruction. The chapter then discussed instructional methods as they relate to the teaching of persuasive writing, including concepts of scaffolding, cognitive apprenticeship models, and social cognition and social constructionist theories.

Finally, the chapter reviewed research and theory on the characteristics of expert and novice writers.

The present study was designed to examine the efficacy of an instructional unit using the analysis and imitation of non-fiction models as instructional strategies to teach 9th grade honors students to use the conventions of persuasion in their writing. The instructional design was informed by social constructionist theories of composition instruction and cognitive apprenticeship models of learning.

The research questions for the study were:

1. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts to learn the conventions of persuasive writing significantly improve the quality of ninth-grade honors students' persuasive writing on a holistic scoring scale?
2. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts to learn the conventions of persuasive writing significantly improve ninth-grade honors students' ability to use persuasive strategies in their writing?

Sub-questions for Research Question 2 included:

- A. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' ability to take and support a side?
- B. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' ability to use emotional appeals?
- C. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' ability to use ethical appeals?
- D. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' ability to use logical appeals?

- E. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' audience awareness?
- F. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' ability to refute opposing arguments?

The next chapter will provide a description of the methods that were used to complete the study.

Chapter III

Method

Introduction

I compared persuasive writing samples completed by two groups of ninth-grade students before and after a unit on persuasive writing. Both groups of students took part in a 6-week unit on persuasive writing during the spring semester of 2004. The instruction was the same for both groups with one exception: The unit taught to one group of students included the analysis and imitation of nonfiction models as an instructional strategy. The second group of students completed the same unit on persuasion, but they did not analyze or imitate models. I collected quantitative data in the form of pre- and posttest writing samples. I also collected qualitative data obtained from interviews with eight of the students during two rounds of interviewing. This mix of methodologies allowed me to see the effects of the instructional unit in two ways, providing a more rounded view of the efficacy of the treatment in improving the persuasive writing skills of ninth graders.

In this chapter, I will describe the instructor, the students, and the raters who participated in the study, as well as the setting, materials, and procedures used for the study. I will also discuss the research methodologies, research questions, and threats to reliability and validity.

Participants

The 39 participants for the quantitative portion of this study were taken from two intact ninth-grade honors-level English classes. The two classes used for this study were designated as honors level, which is open enrollment in this school system. Honors sections were chosen over regular English 9 classes because the honors classes usually attract more homogeneous groups of motivated students. The regular English 9 classes were more likely to include unequal numbers of students with learning disabilities or students who are nonnative English speakers per section, based on the scheduling of other classes, such as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) or Basic Skills.

The two classes together included one student classified as emotionally disabled, and no students who were classified as learning disabled. Two students were African American, three were Middle Eastern/South Asian, and five were Asian. The remaining students were Caucasian. Twenty-two of the students were female and 17 were male. One hundred percent of the students identified themselves as college bound. The school system refused to release information on whether the students participating in the study were eligible for free or reduced lunch, a common indicator of low socioeconomic status in public schools. Of the entire school population, 8.72% of students were eligible for free or reduced-cost lunch during the school year in which the study occurred.

The eight students interviewed for the qualitative portion of this study were selected from the 39 students described earlier. All students involved in the study were eligible to volunteer. From the list of volunteer candidates, two male and two female students were purposefully selected from each class with the aid of the teacher. Purposeful sampling was used to ensure that all of the students selected for the interviews

were highly verbal and able to think and speak metacognitively about their writing and learning processes.

Before the first round of interviews, the students were asked to choose pseudonyms to protect their identities. They were listed only by their pseudonyms throughout the interviews and the data analysis process. Then, the students were asked to self-report age, race, and experience with honors or Gifted and Talented (GT) classes. Table 1 shows background information for each of the students who participated in the interviews.

Table 1

Interview Participants: Demographic and Background Information

	Age	Sex	Race	Honors English Background
Models Group				
Bob	14	Male	White	First time in honors English
Jamie	14	Female	White	First time in honors English
Yoshi	14	Male	White	First time in honors English
Shu	14	Female	White	First time in honors English
Non-Models Group				
Faye	15	Female	White	GT Center since middle school
Jack	15	Male	White	First time in honors English
Steve	15	Male	White	GT Center since third grade
Riley	14	Female	White	GT Center since third grade

Note. All names are pseudonyms chosen by the students.

Setting

The setting for this study was a suburban public high school in the mid-Atlantic region with an enrollment of approximately 2200 students in Grades 9 through 12. This school had a dropout rate of 0.004% at the time of the study. The school is accredited, and scores on state assessments were in the passing range for all subjects during the 2003/2004 school year. This school has had pass rates above 90% for the past three years on state writing and reading tests. Of the total school population, 8.72% of students were eligible for free or reduced-cost lunch during the year in which the study took place. Table 2 lists the demographic of the student body during the year of the study.

Table 2

School Demographics: Ethnicity, English Proficiency, and Special Education Participation

Demographic Category	Percentage of Student Body in this Category
Ethnicity	
Asian	17.52%
Black (Not of Hispanic Origin)	6.54%
Hispanic	8.76%
White (Not of Hispanic Origin)	63.69%
Other	3.5%
Eligible for Special Education Services	12.62%
Enrolled in English for Speakers of Other Languages	3.68%
Limited English Proficiency	7.13%

Honors and Advanced Placement Programs

Because honors students are being studied, I will briefly describe the school's advanced academic programs in this section to provide further information about the honors program at the school and the students who are enrolled in honors English.

Approximately six years ago, the school system that administers this school allowed school communities to decide whether to adopt the International Baccalaureate program or continue to offer Advanced Placement (AP) courses. The parents, teachers, and administrators of this school opted to continue with the Advanced Placement program. During the year of the study, 24% of the students in grades eleven and twelve took at least one AP course. The school system was one of the first in the nation to begin open enrollment in all honors and AP courses. Students self-select these rigorous courses with the guidance of their parents, teachers, and counselors. One reason for this change was to encourage underserved minority populations to enroll in academically challenging honors and AP courses. During the year of the study, 32.88% of the students in AP courses were from minority ethnic groups.

The honors English program at the school offers English 9 Honors and English 10 Honors, leading to AP English courses in 11th and 12th grade. In the 11th grade, students take AP Language and Composition as their honors option, and in the 12th grade they take AP Literature and Composition as the honors option. There is no "middle" track of honors classes at the 11th and 12th grades at this school. According to the English department chair at the school, this policy provoked controversy among parents and teachers when it was implemented, but was quickly embraced as AP scores remained strong.

The two sections of English 9 Honors used for the present study had a lower percentage of minority students enrolled in them than in AP courses, with only 24.5% of the class comprised of minority students. According to anecdotal reports from the instructor, 9th-grade honors classes at the school often have lower numbers of minority students, with the percentage of minority students on the honors track rising as they move to AP courses in the 11th and 12th grades. Ninth grade is the first year that students in the school system may self-enroll for honors classes. In elementary and middle school students are placed into either regular education classes or Gifted and Talented (GT) classes. Some schools in the system use a GT Center model, in which students attend a special program within their base school from third through 8th grade. One possibility for the low minority enrollment in 9th-grade honors courses is that these populations are underrepresented in GT programs in earlier grades, possibly making minority families less likely to enroll their children in honors-track courses when they first begin high school. The school has programs in place to invite and encourage minority students to participate in honors courses, which may also explain the rise in numbers of minority students in honors classes after 9th grade. The low numbers of minority students in the 9th-grade classes used for the study may have accounted for the fact that no minority students volunteered to be interviewed. An alternative explanation may be that the minority students in the classes did not feel confident about their writing abilities, and were hesitant to volunteer. The result was that only white students volunteered to be interviewed, limiting the generalizability of the interview results.

Instructor and Raters

The instructor for the instructional unit was the regular classroom teacher of the two sections of honors ninth-grade English. The instructor had 6 years of full-time teaching experience in secondary English at the time of the study, plus 1 year of experience as a teaching intern. She held a master's degree in Education and a bachelor's degree in English. She was a teacher-leader in the school system, working on a new teacher induction program and on district-wide English curriculum projects.

Two groups of raters scored essays for the study. The first group scored the essays using the *NAEP Grade 12 Persuasive Scoring Guide*. This group of raters was composed of teachers from the one English department. Each rater had between 3 and 7 years of teaching experience at the time of the study. All four were described as strong teachers of writing by their department chairperson. The raters were all somewhat experienced with the use of scoring rubrics, including the rubrics used for state standardized tests and Advanced Placement rubrics. The second group of raters worked with the persuasive trait analytic scale. These two raters both had over 15 years of experience teaching secondary English. Both raters in this group were from the same English department, where both taught Advanced Placement Language and Composition. Both were experienced with the use of scoring rubrics and were described as strong teachers of writing. The raters were chosen based on Cooper's (1977) advice that raters from similar backgrounds trained to use a holistic scoring guide can high achieve interrater reliability.

Materials

The materials for the study consisted of (a) two writing prompts (Appendixes A and B), (b) a focused holistic scoring guide (Appendix C), (c) a researcher-designed

persuasive trait scoring guide (Appendix D), (d) initial and follow up open-ended interview scripts (Appendixes E and F), and, (e) parental consent and student assent forms (Appendixes G and H).

The Writing Prompts

Prior to the study, the two writing prompts that were to be used for the pre- and posttest writings were reviewed by the dissertation committee, who suggested that the content of one of the prompts, which asked whether Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* should be banned in the school system, seemed inappropriately challenging for ninth-grade students who would likely be unfamiliar with the novel.

To ensure that both writing prompts were fair, engaging, and appropriate for ninth-grade honors students, the two original prompts were pilot tested with two intact classes of ninth-grade honors students in the spring of 2003. After completing a brainstorming activity in which they were asked to come up with a list of ideas that they might write about for each topic, the students were asked to comment on how engaging they felt each topic was and how comfortable they felt writing about each topic. The majority of the students agreed with the committee that the prompt on raising the driving age was very engaging, and they responded that they felt comfortable writing on the topic (an issue that was under discussion in their state at the time of the study and the pilot testing of the prompts). They also agreed with the dissertation committee that the prompt on the banning of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was too difficult for them to write about without more background knowledge on the novel and the history of the controversy over the novel in the school system.

These same two classes of students were asked to generate lists of topics that they felt would be (a) appropriate to replace the book banning prompt, and (b) similar in scope and challenge to the writing prompt on raising the driving age. Both classes came to consensus that a prompt on mandatory uniforms in public schools would be engaging for them as writers, and that they had the background knowledge to write successfully on this topic. Because this new topic also matched the prompt on the driving age in that it concerned a current policy issue that could directly affect the students, this prompt was chosen to replace the prompt on book banning.

Background information and an imaginary audience were included in both writing prompts in order to increase the validity and reliability of the pre- and posttest writing samples. The two writing prompts were based on real-world issues that the students at this school had been exposed to during their time as students. However, to ensure that background knowledge or the lack thereof did not become a factor in the quality of the essays students produced, a packet of materials on each topic was provided with each prompt (Appendixes I and J). According to McCutcheon (1986), “common sense tells us that knowledge about our topic is important if we are to write well” (p. 431). Other researchers agree that background or content knowledge of a topic is important (Flower & Hayes, 1981, 1984; Kellogg, 1994; Langer, 1984). So that students’ opinions on the topics would not be influenced by the information presented in the packets, I attempted to provide balanced factual information to support either side of each issue. Two volunteer readers, one college student and one secondary English teacher, examined the information to confirm that it was balanced.

Because the instructional unit included a focus on audience awareness as part of persuasion, and the persuasive trait analytic scale included audience adaptation as a persuasive strategy being measured, an imagined audience was also included on the writing prompts. Assigning an audience has been found to increase motivation, improve persuasiveness, and elicit more audience-directed strategies in writing (Redd-Boyd & Slater, 1989). Black (1989) also found that writers may benefit from information about their audience. Both prompts included the same imagined audience, the readers of a local newspaper, to maintain the equivalence of the two writing prompts. Because the local community newspaper readers would be members of the students' community, it was thought that they would have enough background knowledge about this audience to easily imagine it. During pilot testing of the writing prompts, students agreed that this was an easily imagined audience for them.

The Focused Holistic Persuasive Scoring Guide

The *NAEP Grade 12 Persuasive Scoring Guide* was developed and reviewed by expert panels, including specialists from the NAEP staff and from the National Center for Education Statistics, the National Assessment Governing Board and the Education Testing Service (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). The NAEP scoring guide was chosen for this study of 9th graders' persuasive writing, despite the fact that it was developed for slightly older students, based on the fact that it is extremely similar to the *NAEP Grade Eight Persuasive Scoring Guide*. The use of a NAEP-released scoring guide made sense for the present study, as NAEP data provided the rationale for the need for a study of instruction in persuasive writing. This instrument is a *focused holistic* scoring guide. Unlike true holistic scoring guides, the NAEP instrument embeds characteristics of

quality persuasive writing into the score points. The descriptors it includes for quality persuasive writing make it an excellent instrument for this study. The raters were trained to use the scoring guide with anchor papers written by honors-level 9th graders, so their ideas of how a paper from each of the six levels should look were based on 9th-grade capabilities in writing. The aim of the present study was to help students begin learning about and using persuasive strategies while in the 9th grade, with the idea that they would continue to master them over the course of high school, thus becoming capable of much higher achievement levels on the 12th-grade NAEP assessment.

The Persuasive Trait Analytic Scale

An analytic scale is a holistic device that lists the characteristics of a particular mode of writing, with “high-mid-low points identified and described along a scoring line for each feature”(Cooper & Odell, 1977, p. 7). I developed the persuasive trait analytic scale used in this study based on six specific traits the students in both groups worked with during the course of the unit. It was reviewed by the instructor of the two ninth-grade honors classes for adherence to the persuasive strategies focused on within the instructional unit for both classes. The persuasive trait analytic scale was also reviewed by an expert panel consisting of four experienced secondary writing teachers and the dissertation advisor. Additionally, the scale conforms to Cooper’s (1999) recommendations for genre-specific criteria to be used with novice writers attempting to take a position on an issue. Before this scale was finalized, the two raters completed the Rater Preference Open-Ended Response Instrument (Appendix K). This instrument was developed for the present study to determine whether the raters were more comfortable working with an even number of score points (6) on a rubric or whether they preferred a

rubric with an odd number (5) of score points. Both raters indicated that as experienced Advanced Placement (AP) Language and Composition teachers, they preferred to work with an odd number of score points, similar to the AP scoring rubrics.

The Initial and Follow-Up Open-Ended Interview Scripts

To strengthen the validity and reliability of the interview questions, members of the dissertation committee, the teacher of the two classes involved in the study and two other experienced teachers of writing reviewed them. Additionally, the original set of interview questions was pilot tested with four ninth-grade honors students during the spring of 2003. These students answered the questions, and then discussed how clear they felt the questions were. Changes in wording were made before the operational study based on their recommendations. The use of open-ended interview protocols ensured that students' responses were not influenced by my views or by limiting questions.

Procedures

Parental Consent Forms and Student Assent Forms

Before the study began, I visited both ninth-grade classes to explain the purpose and method of the study. Each student was given a parental consent form and explanatory letter, and a student assent form. When these were returned, the study began. Of two intact classes of 47 students total, five students did not return the consent and assent forms. Their work was not included in the writing samples, nor were they selected for interviews. Three students agreed to participate but did not participate in the full study due to attrition. One student did participate but missed the final week of the instructional unit owing to illness and was unable to complete the post-test writing sample.

Pretest Administration

Both the teacher and I were present for the administration of the pretest writing task. I read from the Writing Assessment Administration Script (Appendix L), giving the students directions about the task they were to complete. The same directions were read to both groups.

Students had 50 minutes to compose a writing sample. They randomly received one of the two prompts being used. Students composed their essays in a computer writing lab. They were instructed to print their completed essays with their names included. According to the instructor, the students in both classes used the computer writing lab frequently to compose essays, and the students were all comfortable with the word-processing program. Code numbers were affixed over their names with adhesive labels. A coding chart was kept to keep track of which student wrote which essay, and whether each essay was a pre- or posttest writing sample.

First-Round Interviews

First-round interviews were conducted during the week after the pretest administration.

Posttest

After the instructional unit was completed, the posttest was administered. The classroom teacher read from the Writing Assessment Administration Script, giving the students directions about the task they were to complete. The same instructions were used for both the pre- and posttest.

As in the pretest, the students had 50 minutes to compose a writing sample in a computer writing lab. They received the prompt that they did not write on for the pretest. They were again instructed to print and code their essays as they did for the pretest.

Second-Round Interviews

Second-round interviews were conducted shortly after the posttest administration.

Instructional Unit

The instructional units (Appendix M) for both the models and non-models groups were planned to last for 13 class sessions. The school where the study took place used a blocked schedule, in which classes met every other day for 90 minutes. The instructor focused on the persuasive writing lessons for part of each class period, but was also teaching a literature unit on *The Bean Trees* (Kingsolver, 1989) during the weeks of the instructional unit. The instructor and I agreed that this novel, which includes controversial issues of social justice, would be a good pairing with the persuasive writing unit. Students completed the novel near the end of the persuasive writing unit, just before beginning their social justice research papers. The instructional units took longer than anticipated, between 6 and 7 weeks total. Each lesson in the instructional unit was tested and refined in either 9th or 12th grade classrooms over the course of a 4-year period prior to the study, from 2000 to 2003.

Common Features

Both groups took part in instruction that was based on theories of cognitive apprenticeship and social constructionism. Students in both groups wrote, analyzed, and discussed writing in order to learn about persuasive writing strategies. Both groups were instructed in the same core list of strategies, including (a) the three rhetorical appeals, (b)

exigence, (c) audience awareness and analysis, (d) parts of an argument, (e) refuting the opposition, (f) concessions, and (g) the Toulmin (1958) model of argument. Students in both groups researched and wrote a persuasive essay on a human rights issue of their choice, focusing on using persuasive strategies to appeal to an audience of their peers. Additionally, state standards were addressed through the research paper with a focus on selection and evaluation of research sources. Both groups presented their research papers first as persuasive speeches, with their classmates acting as critics. Each lesson had the same instructional focus for both groups, and all instruction was designed to be the same with the exception of the analysis and imitation of model texts.

Differences

The models group analyzed and imitated nonfiction persuasive models (Appendix N) during 10 of the 13 lessons in the unit. Much of their imitation and analysis was completed in cooperative learning groups, following the social constructionist theories underlying the development of the study. The non-models group differed from the models group in that in place of the collaborative analysis and imitation of nonfiction model texts to learn each strategy, they instead worked collaboratively to create texts of various types as a way to practice using the strategies. These group products were presented to and critiqued by their classmates during each lesson.

Selection of Model Texts

Model texts were selected to be engaging and accessible to students following Lindemann's (2001) advice that a variety of written forms beyond expository essays should serve as models. Additionally, many of the models selected for the instructional unit were written by high school students for high school newspapers, also following

Lindemann's advice that good student writing should serve as a model because it allows students to see the strategies used in ways similar to what they will likely produce. These student-produced models were also chosen because the topics were all current and of high interest to high school students. The choice of models also followed Geist's (1996) advice that models used with student writers should be short and should be chosen carefully to ensure that the writing strategies being taught are key features in each model.

Research Design and Analysis

I used both quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate the effects of the use of models and imitation as an instructional strategy on the persuasive writing of ninth graders. For the quantitative portion I used a pretest/posttest, comparison group design. According to Huck and Cormier (1996), this design falls into the quasi-experimental design family because it lacks random assignment of subjects to the two groups. However, "the availability of pretest data makes this design better than the static-group comparison" (p. 615). Because the groups are not randomly assigned, Huck and Cormier noted, the researcher "must be on guard for the possible rival and plausible hypotheses that might weaken any quasi-experimental study" (p. 615). Because each group received a treatment, a diagram of the design looks like this:

$$\begin{array}{c} O X O \\ O Y O \end{array}$$

In this design, O represents the pre- and posttest data collection, X represents the instructional treatment received by the experimental group, and Y represents the instructional treatment received by the comparison group. The data gathered for this portion of the study included holistic and primary trait scores on persuasive writing samples. The qualitative portion of the study included two rounds of interviews with

eight purposefully selected students as well as an examination of their essay samples.

Krathwohl (1998) recommended the multiple-method approach as useful, especially for applied research. The qualitative and quantitative portions of the present study are designed to address the following research questions:

1. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts to learn the conventions of persuasive writing significantly improve the quality of ninth-grade honors students' persuasive writing on a holistic scoring scale?
2. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts to learn the conventions of persuasive writing significantly improve ninth-grade honors students' ability to use persuasive strategies in their writing?

Sub-questions for Research Question 2 included:

- A. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' ability to take and support a side?
- B. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' ability to use emotional appeals?
- C. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' ability to use ethical appeals?
- D. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' ability to use logical appeals?
- E. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' audience awareness?
- F. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' ability to refute opposing arguments?

Variables

The independent variable in this study was the treatment factor (the instructional units). The dependent variables were the holistic and analytical trait scores on the pretest and posttest writing samples.

Validity and Reliability

Huck and Cormier noted that the nonrandomized, pretest/posttest comparison group design presents lower internal validity than a true experimental design using randomization (p. 615). According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) these threats can include maturation, testing, instrumentation, and history. Because the real-life setting of a high school does not lend itself to randomized grouping, I had to control for these threats to internal validity in my quasi-experimental study. I attempted to control for these threats in the following ways. First, the relatively short length of the treatment, 6 weeks, helped to control for the maturation threat. Second, the use of the same instruments for all writing samples, and blind scoring (so that raters did not know which writing samples were from the pretest and which were from the posttest) helped to control for instrumentation threats. Because the students wrote to randomly assigned, counterbalanced prompts, the testing threat was somewhat negated.

Validity was also addressed by collecting evidence from more than one source: the writing samples and the interviews. According to Krathwohl (1998), multiple methods “can be used to investigate different aspects of phenomena” (p. 621). In this study the quantitative piece addressed the product: the writing samples. The qualitative interviews addressed the process: how the students used the treatment in their writing processes. The interviews also allowed me to see more clearly what students brought to

the unit in terms of persuasive schemas. Additionally, by selecting honors-level students with high writing ability, who seemed likely to have a good metacognitive awareness of their writing processes and thinking, I was able to shed light on how this type of student made use of the new discourse knowledge they gained from the instructional unit in their planning and composing. The use of more than one case for the qualitative portion of the study also helped to increase external validity. Overall, the triangulation of data inherent in mixed-methodology studies helped to protect against threats to validity and reliability. During the study, the two writing prompts were counterbalanced to ensure equivalence reliability (Krathwohl, 1998, p.437). Murphy and Ruth (in Williamson & Huot, 1993) recommended comparing the mean scores for each writing prompt when scores on differing prompts are compared to assess writing skill. The mean scores for the two prompts were 3.71 for the prompt on school uniforms and 3.73 for the prompt on the driving age. Because the mean scores were very close, it was assumed that the prompts were equivalent in difficulty and were equally engaging for students.

Analysis

All of the following statistical procedures were conducted using SPSS Version 14. To determine whether the students' persuasive writing quality improved after the instructional unit, based on focused holistic scores on the *NAEP Grade 12 Persuasive Scoring Guide*, the pre- and posttest writing improvement scores were analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis to determine the means and standard deviations for both the models and the non-models groups. The gain scores were then compared using a one-way ANOVA procedure. To examine whether students' use of the six persuasive

features improved, the scores from the researcher-designed persuasive trait analytic scale for each feature were analyzed individually using one-way ANOVA procedures.

Qualitative data from the initial and second-round interviews was analyzed using open coding procedures (Schensul S.L., Schensul, J.J. & LeCompte, 1999; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). After initial coding, the pre- and posttest essays and scores on the holistic and trait scales for each student interviewed were examined before tentative categories were drawn to add further information to the analysis of the interview data. During the coding process an “audit trail” of memos was maintained (Krathwohl, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994) to ensure internal validity. Additionally, peer checking by a graduate student who was also a secondary English teacher was completed to further ensure internal validity.

Scoring

Coding Procedures for Blind Scoring

The students typed and coded all writing samples in a computer lab setting so that raters and the researcher were unaware of whether the writing samples were from the pretest or the posttest. All students, both those who had chosen to participate in the study and those who did not, printed out copies of their essays labeled with their names to hand in to the instructor for a grade. The students who were participating in the study were also given a randomly assigned number in a sealed envelope. (Numbers were generated and assigned by a neutral adult assistant.) Each participating student printed a second copy of his or her essay coded with the number instead a name. The neutral adult assistant separated the number-coded essays from the essays with student names on them. By having the students send their essays straight to the printer, students who participated and

students who chose not to participate in the study were indistinguishable, guarding against risks of peer pressure to participate. The assistant then listed these codes on a coding table, and each code number was then given a second, randomly selected alphabetical code. This second, totally random code replaced the code numbers when the assistant photocopied the writing samples for scoring. The purpose of this second coding was to prevent raters from figuring out the codes assigned to pretest and posttest writing samples, or the student numbers. This coding method kept the scoring entirely blind.

Round One Scoring Using the NAEP Grade 12 Persuasive Scoring Guide

Training of Raters

Raters were trained to use the *NAEP Grade 12 Persuasive Scoring Guide* during a 2-hour session. Raters first read and discussed the prompts and stimulus materials. Next, I explained the persuasive features as they had been taught to the students, to ensure that raters had the same understanding of definitions of persuasive traits as used in the study. After reading and discussing the score points of the rubric, raters scored and annotated a set of benchmark papers drawn from the research sample. After scoring the training essays, the raters discussed their scores as they attempted to come to agreement on their working understanding of each score point. This portion of the scoring training followed White's (1994) advice that scoring trainers not "ignore the need for a community of assent, which is what a holistic reading must become if it is to function responsibly" (p. 214).

After the raters gained comfort with the scoring rubric, they completed a short free-writing exercise in which they attempted to identify their own biases during scoring. Raters discussed their biases and created trigger lists on red paper that they kept at their

tables throughout the scoring sessions to help them remember not to allow their biases to unfairly influence their scores. Biases ranged from specific grammar or usage mistakes that a rater called “irritating,” to a preference for five-paragraph essay structure from another rater. The bias check helped to identify hidden ideas about writing that may have interacted with the rubric during scoring.

From the bias check discussion, the topic arose of how to deal with papers that seemed to be written by students for whom English was not their first language. In the school system where the study took place, many students who do not speak English as their first language choose to self-exit from the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program before completion. This trend means that second-language speakers who are not officially identified at the school level as ESOL may be in the general population. Despite the fact that they are not identified as ESOL students, language issues can be seen in their writing. Although there was no indication on the essays that the writers were nonnative speakers, the teachers in the scoring group all felt that they could identify the writing characteristics of these students during blind scoring. The group of raters came to agreement over how to score these essays, deciding that they would ignore their first instinct to “go easy on” the writer, instead scoring these essays with the same rigor they would apply to any essay in the sample. Each rater added a reminder about this decision to their trigger lists.

Next, the raters began simulated live scoring in which they were asked to read and score each paper quickly. During this portion of the training, the flash card method was used (McLean, 1992), with raters lifting a card to show the score for each paper. This method enabled me to see if the raters were scoring on target, and the raters found it good

practice in making a quick and accurate scoring choice. This method also helped raters to raise their interrater reliability and gain confidence.

Live Scoring Procedures

Once scoring training was complete, raters began live scoring. Each essay was photocopied with a scoring cover sheet attached. Essays were distributed evenly into packets for each rater. Raters wrote holistic scores and their initials on the cover sheet for each essay. Because there were two copies made of each essay, there was no need to conceal scores to maintain the independence of each score (White, 1994, pp. 211-212). Scored essays were frequently collected, and scores were recorded on a scoring table. This allowed me to monitor the scores for discrepancies. Live scoring took place over three afternoon sessions, with recalibration of raters occurring at the start of each session. A final scoring session was held to discuss essays that needed to be rescored because of disagreement among raters.

Interrater Reliability

Interrater reliability, measured as a percentage of exact agreement between two raters, reached a high level of agreement (92.7%). Each essay was scored by two raters. Essays for which scores varied by more than one point were scored by a third rater. If the third score did not agree with either of the original scores, the essay was held for further discussion by the entire group of raters. These essays were scored by consensus in a separate scoring session.

Round Two Scoring Using the Persuasive Trait Analytic Scale

Training of Raters

A separate set of raters was trained to use the persuasive trait analytic scale. Training procedures followed those used for the holistic scoring, with two exceptions. First, the raters discussed the benefits of using a 5- or 6-point rubric. Because the rubric was created for the present study, the raters' preferences could be incorporated in the design. After a discussion of the merits of odd or even numbers of score points, the raters completed the Rater Preference Open-Ended Response Instrument. Both raters agreed to the use of an odd number of score points on the rubric. A second difference between training for the second round of scoring and the first round was that raters scored and discussed benchmark essays using one trait from the scale at a time to establish their working definitions of each trait and each score point for these traits. Next the raters practiced scoring the essays for all traits simultaneously. After discussion, the raters agreed that they were most comfortable scoring in this manner. Because of these two variations from the first round of scoring, training for the second round took approximately 3 hours.

Live Scoring Procedures

Live scoring procedures followed those used during the first round of scoring. Scoring for the second round took place over three sessions, with frequent recalibration.

Interrater Reliability

Interrater reliability on the persuasive trait scale ranged from 35% to 51% when measured as the percent of exact agreement between two raters. Reliability was much higher when adjacent scores were accepted, with a range from 80% to 96%, with

interrater reliability for all traits above 90% with the exception of the category Use of Emotional Appeals for which raters only reached 80% agreement with adjacent scores accepted (see Table 3). Because adjacent scores were accepted, the scores were summed to arrive at a final score. For any scores that differed by more than one point, a discussion and consensus session was held.

Table 3

Interrater Reliabilities for the Persuasive Trait Analytic Scale

Persuasive Trait	Interrater Reliability
Take and support a side	96%
Use of emotional appeals	80%
Use of logical appeals	90%
Use of ethical appeals	92%
Audience Awareness	94%
Refute opposing arguments	93%

Note. Adjacent summed scores were used to determine total scores and reliability.

Summary

Using mixed methodologies, the present study examined the efficacy of an instructional strategy using models and imitation to teach persuasive writing to ninth-grade honors students.

Chapter IV will describe the findings of the study, including the students' scores on the pretest and posttest writing samples and the interview responses.

Chapter IV

Results

In this chapter, I present the results of the present study in which I examined pre- and posttest writing samples and interview responses to determine whether the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improved the persuasive writing skills of ninth-grade honors students. The research questions for the study were:

1. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts to learn the conventions of persuasive writing significantly improve the quality of ninth-grade honors students' persuasive writing on a holistic scoring scale?
2. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts to learn the conventions of persuasive writing significantly improve ninth-grade honors students' ability to use persuasive strategies in their writing?

Sub-questions for Research Question 2 included the following:

- A. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' ability to take and support a side?
- B. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' ability to use emotional appeals?
- C. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' ability to use ethical appeals?

- D. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' ability to use logical appeals?
- E. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' audience awareness?
- F. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' ability to refute opposing arguments?

Quantitative Results

Question 1: Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts to learn the conventions of persuasive writing significantly improve the quality of ninth-grade honors students' persuasive writing on a holistic scoring scale?

To address this question, pre- and posttest holistic scores for the two groups, models and non-models, were compared. Each pre- and posttest writing sample was independently scored by at least two raters using the *NAEP Grade 12 Persuasive Scoring Guide*. Scores ranged from 1 to 6. Descriptive statistical analysis determined the means and standard deviations for both the models and the non-models groups. The gain scores were then compared using a one-way ANOVA procedure.

Table 4 shows that the models group had a higher mean gain (+0.76) than the non-models group (+0.16). The non-models group showed a higher mean score on the pretest (3.79) than the models group (3.39), but the non-models groups' mean score on the posttest rose only slightly, while the models group made a greater gain.

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations for Pretest, Posttest, and Gains: Holistic Scores

Group	N	Pretest		Posttest		Gains	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean Gain	SD
Non-Models	19	3.79	.83	3.95	.94	.16	1.068
Models	17	3.39	.89	4.11	1.15	.76	1.033

Note. Maximum score of 6.

As shown in Table 5, a one-way ANOVA revealed that there was no statistically significant difference in the mean gains made by the models and non-models groups on the holistic scale at the $p < 0.05$ level. The F-prob statistic revealed that the gains made by the models group would have been significant at the 0.093 level. The lack of a statistically significant difference at the $p < 0.05$ level may be due to the small sample size in this study.

Table 5

One-Way Analysis of Variance for Holistic Scores

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F ratio	F prob.
Between Groups	1	3.304	3.304	2.989	.093
Within Groups	34	37.585	1.105		
Total	35	40.889			

Question 2- Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts to learn the conventions of persuasive writing significantly improve ninth-grade honors students' ability to use persuasive strategies in their writing?

Students' essays were scored by two trained raters using the persuasive trait analytic scale to determine the effectiveness of the use of six persuasive writing strategies in each essay. Scores ranged from 1 to 10 on this scale. Scores from the persuasive trait analytic scale for each feature were analyzed collectively and individually using ANOVA procedures. A multiple ANOVA with the use of models as the independent variable and the six persuasive strategies (taking and supporting a side, emotional appeals, ethical appeals, logical appeals, appeals to audience, and refuting opposing arguments) as a collective dependent variable showed that at the $p < 0.05$ significance level, $F = 1.379$. This revealed that there was no significant difference between the models and non-models groups in their overall ability to use persuasive strategies in their writing. Scores for each persuasive trait were then analyzed separately using one-way ANOVA procedures to answer the sub questions for research question 2.

A. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' ability to take and support a side?

The results of a one-way ANOVA (Table 6) showed that at the $p < 0.05$ level there was no significant difference between the models and non-models groups' ability to take and support a side in their writing.

Table 6

One-Way Analysis of Variance for Taking and Supporting a Side

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F ratio	F prob.
Between Groups	1	.289	.289	.062	.805
Within Groups	34	158.266	4.655		
Total	35	158.556			

B. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' ability to use emotional appeals?

As shown in Table 7, there was no significant difference between the models and non-models groups in the effectiveness of their use of emotional appeals in their persuasive writing at the $p < 0.05$ level.

Table 7

One-Way Analysis of Variance Use of Appeals to Emotion

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F ratio	F prob.
Between Groups	1	.375	.375	.063	.804
Within Groups	34	202.625	5.960		
Total	35	203.000			

C. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' ability to use ethical appeals?

As shown in Table 8, at the $p < 0.05$ level, there was no significant difference in the ability of the models group to use ethical appeals in their persuasive writing.

Table 8

One-Way Analysis of Variance for Use of Appeals to Ethics

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F ratio	F prob.
Between Groups	1	1.59	1.59	.227	.637
Within Groups	34	238.632	7.019		
Total	35	240.222			

D. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' ability to use logical appeals?

As shown in Table 9, there was no significant difference at the $p < 0.05$ level between the models and non-models groups in their ability to use logical appeals in their writing.

Table 9

One-Way Analysis of Variance for Use of Appeals to Logic

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F ratio	F prob.
Between Groups	1	3.975	3.975	.653	.425
Within Groups	34	206.997	6.088		
Total	35	210.972			

E. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' audience awareness?

The models group showed significant improvement over the non-models group in their ability to appeal to an audience. Table 10 revealed that $F = 8.340$ at the $p < 0.01$ level, indicating a significant difference between the models and non-models groups.

Table 10

One-Way Analysis of Variance for Audience Awareness

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F ratio	F prob.
Between Groups	1	31.270	31.270	8.340	.007
Within Groups	34	127.4806	3.749		
Total	35	158.750			

F. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' ability to refute opposing arguments?

As shown in Table 11, at the $p < 0.05$ level, there was no significant difference in the models and non-models groups' ability to refute opposing arguments in their writing.

Table 11

One-Way Analysis of Variance for Refuting Opposing Arguments

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F ratio	F prob.
Between Groups	1	.537	.537	.058	.811
Within Groups	34	315.102	9.268		
Total	35	315.639			

Interpretation of Quantitative Results

Although the models group did not show significant holistic gains at the $p < 0.05$ level, it is probable that their mean gain of +0.76 on the six-point holistic scale would be significant at the 0.093 level. The greater mean gain of the models group on the holistic scale may be attributed to their significantly higher mean score for the use of audience appeals on the persuasive trait instrument. The possible connection between holistic scores and audience appeals is an interesting result, which may indicate that audience awareness and the ability to appeal to an imagined audience in writing result in higher holistic writing scores. The models group analyzed model essays as part of their instructional unit, thereby gaining the experience of being the audience of a piece of writing. Although the non-models group also critiqued their own and their classmates' writings, allowing them to act as an audience for one another, they did not have the same success with the use of the audience appeal in their essays. Both the models and the non-models groups had experience acting as an audience for their classmates' writings, but only the models group acted as an audience for the writing of professional writers and student writers who were not a part of their class. One possible explanation for this difference is that the models group gained more valuable practice as an audience because the absence of the authors of the model texts allowed them to be genuinely critical in their analysis of the models.

Sample size is another factor in these findings. The state in which this study took place limits high school English classes to 24 students. In both of the classes studied, a few students did not consent to participate in the study, resulting in an "n" of 39. A larger sample size may have revealed additional statistically significant differences.

Qualitative Results

In this section I present the results of the initial and follow-up open-ended interview sessions with eight purposefully selected students. Interviews were conducted to address research question two: Does the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts to learn the conventions of persuasive writing significantly improve ninth-grade honors students' ability to use persuasive strategies in their writing?

First, I will present the results for each question. Next, I will present the results of an examination of the essays written by the eight interview participants, interwoven with relevant remarks from their interview responses. Finally, I will discuss themes that emerged from the qualitative portion of the study.

Initial Open-Ended Interview Results

Question 1: Describe your thoughts and actions when you are assigned to write a paper for school.

Of the eight students interviewed, four described a writing assignment as a “chore.” For example, Bob said, “It’s homework, so it has to be done.” Faye responded that her first thought would be, “Aw, here we go again. It’s a chore.” Three other students had an opposite reaction. They all used the phrase, “I like to write” in their responses, and gave no indication that they considered writing assignments to be simply “chores,” or tasks to be completed. One student, Jack, felt both reactions to a writing assignment, explaining that, “If it’s something I like, I really enjoy writing papers, but if it’s something I don’t support I might not like it...” Jack’s response highlights two issues that emerged from an examination of the students’ responses to this question: the

influences of assigned topic and writing form on the students' feelings about being asked to complete a writing assignment.

Half of the students mentioned the "topic" as an important determinant of their feelings about being asked to write. Jamie, one of the students who described herself as someone who liked to write, said that, "The topic makes the most difference." The other students who mentioned the importance of the topic each described writing as a chore. From their descriptions of their reactions to writing assignments, it seemed that topic was an important mediating factor for students who were less enthusiastic about writing. The freedom to choose their own topic, or being assigned a topic that interested them, could make these students react much more positively to a writing assignment.

Four of the students described the type of writing assignment as an important factor in their feelings about writing. One student, Steve, noted that, "I like to write, especially persuasion because it helps with everyday stuff." Steve's response may be an example of the threat to validity of Hypothesis Guessing (Kratwhol, 1998, p. 520.) Throughout all of his interview responses, Steve showed a pattern of being extremely positive about writing and writing instruction, specifically mentioning persuasive writing as a favorite form. An alternate explanation for Steve's responses might have been the fact that he had just joined the speech and debate team that year, and was having great success in competitions. The remaining three students who described the type of assignment as a factor were all students who called writing a chore. Two of these students mentioned creative writing as a form that they felt more positive about, perhaps due to the ease of narrative writing for novice writers (Kellogg, 1991) or the freedom of this type of writing. Shu described writing as a chore, except "when it's free writing. I can

kind of go where I want and do what I want.” Jack described anything involving research as “a chore.” This view of writing requiring research or information gathering as a more onerous task may account for the students’ preference for creative and free writing.

Although the students were split between those who were positive about writing and those who considered it a chore, all of the students were similar in that they did not seem able to describe their actions when asked to write a paper. All of them spoke freely and articulately about their feelings and preferences, but none of them discussed what they would specifically do to get started on a writing assignment, even when prompted. A possible explanation for this is that, as ninth graders in a school that focuses on in-class pre-writing exercises to begin each writing assignment, they are accustomed to waiting for a teacher to tell them how to tackle each assignment. An alternative explanation may be that they simply are not able to think metacognitively about their own writing processes at a time removed from actual writing.

Question 2: Does the type of writing assignment make a difference in your ability to write the paper?

The second open-ended interview question asked students whether the type of writing assigned made a difference in their ability to write the paper. Of the eight students interviewed, six of them said that type made a difference in their ability to write an essay. According to Jack, “Depending on what kind of type it is might make it easier or harder.” Five of the six students who said that type mattered discussed the difficulty level of expository writing. Of the five students who said that type made writing more difficult for them, four went on to discuss the difficulty of expository assignments in

terms of researching or gathering information. Riley said, “I don’t like expository much. It’s more based on information.” Yoshi said, “...but then expository...it can be challenging sometimes for me, especially if it’s history. I’ll have to research it and get some good knowledge...” Yoshi’s remarks reflect the emerging theme that information gathering and organization are what students find difficult or challenging. Jamie’s remarks on expository writing and research seem to indicate that the difficulty may be minor, or perhaps more defined by workload than cognitive difficulty for her. She said, “But with expository, I have to do research, and I don’t like research, so it’s kind of annoying.”

Of the two students who did not say that type mattered to them, one seemed to focus on discourse knowledge. Bob said, “Type doesn’t matter. As long as I understand it I can write about it. If it’s persuasive or expository it doesn’t matter as long as I know what I’m doing.” Steve offered a different viewpoint, in which topic mattered more than writing type: “It usually depends on *what* we write about. It’s fun to write in the different styles but the topic makes the most difference.” Faye, who did say that type mattered, touched on the theme of fun as well: “Depending on the type of writing, some are a lot more fun than others.”

This theme of writing as fun related to another theme that emerged in the responses of five of the students. Each of these students spoke of creative writing as preferable to other types. Three of the five used the same wording, describing assignments where they can “make something up” (Shu) or “make things up” (Jamie) or “make up anything I want” (Yoshi). Riley described being able to do “more what you want” as preferable to structured writing assignments. Each of these students also

discussed the difficulty of expository text, perhaps again underscoring the challenge for novice writers in moving from narrative to nonnarrative writing styles.

Question 3: Describe your background with persuasion. What type of experience have you had with convincing someone to think or do something?

All eight of the students mentioned learning something about persuasion in earlier grades, although responses varied in enthusiasm and detail. Two of the eight specifically remembered writing persuasive letters, and two students recalled doing debates in school. Of the eight students, only two shared detailed memories of persuasive writing instruction or assignments in school. Jack remembered learning to use persuasive verbs and adjectives in elementary school and doing a debate on genetics in seventh grade. Shu remembered writing persuasive letters to King George as part of a sixth-grade Revolutionary War unit. Steve was enthusiastic about how persuasive instruction over the years has helped them “get better and better as we went along,” continuing his pattern of answering questions with extreme enthusiasm and possible hypothesis guessing.

Three of the students also described their background with persuasion outside of school. Bob described persuading people to buy things during door-to-door sales as his significant experience with persuasion. Although Bob also mentioned writing persuasively in school, he did not seem to find these school experiences memorable, commenting, “Every year it seems like I do one.” Two other students mentioned using persuasion in a family setting. Faye described her family as “very opinionated, so there’s always some sort of arguing going on.” Jamie described using persuasion to convince her parents to let her go places or buy things.

Two interesting themes emerged from the participants' responses to this question. The first is that the students readily identified persuasion with both writing and speaking, offering examples of both in their responses. The second theme that emerged involved thesis-based writing. The participants did not seem to equate persuasion with argument writing in the form of thesis-support papers they had already done in ninth-grade English and in social studies, although they mentioned the social studies essays at other times. One possible explanation for this may be the audience-focused nature of persuasive writing. When describing their own experiences with persuasion, the students mentioned letters, debates, door-to-door sales, and other forms of writing and speaking, all of which include the goal of convincing an audience to take action or change their opinion. This is an important theme for teachers in that it may indicate that students do not see that persuasion is a form of argumentation, or that the thesis-support essays they regularly write in school are, in fact, argumentation. Additionally, this theme may connect to the quantitative portion of this study, in which students in the models group did show significant improvement in their ability to use audience appeals in their persuasive writing.

Question 4: Do you feel confident about your ability to persuade in writing? Why or why not?

Four of the students responded that they felt confident about their ability to persuade in writing. Of these four, two mentioned classroom instruction in relation to their confidence. Jack noted that he has "had really good teachers so far." Steve remarked, "My teachers taught me really well." The other two students who felt confident mentioned different reasons for their confidence. Faye explained that she was

confident because she is able to persuade when speaking, and writing is easier because “you can rewrite.” Steve also made this connection between skill in spoken persuasion and confidence in his ability to write persuasively. An interesting view of persuasive writing was revealed by Bob’s comment: “I feel confident that I can persuade because I’m not, like, lying. I’m just telling them the truth.” Bob’s confidence seemed to relate persuasive writing to truth-telling, perhaps indicating that he believed that persuasion relates to being ‘right’ about a topic.

The other participants showed various levels of confidence. Background knowledge emerged as a theme among the students who described themselves as less confident. Jamie described herself as lacking confidence based on her possible lack of background knowledge about whatever topic she might have to write about. Jamie was interviewed directly after the pretest writing samples were completed, and remarked on the background information provided with the prompt: “I liked that because I could plan it out and put it in a format to persuade people.” Riley and Shu also mentioned lacking confidence because of possible unfamiliarity with the topic.

Question 5: Do you believe that classroom instruction in writing can help you to become a better writer? Why or why not?

All of the students agreed to some extent that classroom instruction in writing helps students improve as writers. Six of the students responded affirmatively, while two indicated basic agreement with qualifiers. Of the six who agreed that instruction is helpful, four students mentioned instruction in various forms of writing as an important aspect of instruction. For example, Yoshi said, “Yes, because it teaches you all these different ways of writing.” Jamie explained, “Yeah, it does help because you sometimes

just don't know formats of writing and mentors and teachers can help you sort out your thoughts and ideas...they can give you certain ideas of formats of writing." Jamie took this idea further, including models in her answer: "Also, too, you see many different varieties and examples of writing, like by different authors, and see the different writing that's out there and that can give you different examples to help form your own writing." Jamie did end up being part of the group who analyzed models as part of their instructional unit, but she gave this reply before the unit began, so she had no knowledge that she would be seeing models as part of the study. Two students discussed teacher quality as a key element in writing instruction. According to Jack, "For the most part, if it's a good teacher, it would definitely impact the students." Jamie said, "It depends on the teacher."

Another theme that emerged was that of practice, with two students seeming to define instruction as prompting students to practice their writing to become better writers. In both of these cases, there seemed to be an underlying belief that good writers are born, not made, and that good writers will get better through school practice, not that instruction *changes* students into good writers. For example, Shu said, "It doesn't really help you become a better writer but the guidance helps you go in the right direction and you become better from there." Steve qualified his response by stating that teachers should allow freedom for writers to develop: "You don't actually start off knowing; you have to get the instruction from somewhere, but you [teachers] can't be strict because we're not going to like it. Some things we learn from the world. You have to have leniency because that gives us the freedom."

Overall, the students' responses all focused on students in general, not on their own writing specifically. Although the question asked them if classroom instruction can help "you become a better writer," all of the students discussed the ways that they believed instruction would affect all or most students, even using words such as, "high school students" (Bob), "kids" (Faye), "impact the students" (Jack), and "we learn" and "us" (Steve).

Question 6: Do you find it easier to write a paper if you have a model to guide you or do you prefer total freedom? Explain.

This question asked the students about their opinions on the use of models in writing instruction. The students were all interviewed for the first round, and asked this question before the instructional unit began, and before any students saw a model in class. One theme that emerged strongly was that all of the students seemed to equate the word *model* with an outline or template, not a text model. They frequently used the word *guideline* to mean *model*, and their comments revealed that by *guideline* they meant something to be filled in or followed rather than a text model to read and analyze. Four of the students were very enthusiastic about models in the context described above. Jack explained, "I would prefer a model almost like an outline or specific format to follow because that way I know how to structure my paper... It would help me think more clearly to have some kind of an outline or format." Jamie agreed, "Usually models do help a lot because they show me how I'm supposed to organize everything and I can just use my own thoughts in the organization." Both of these statements seemed to support the idea that a model helps students to expend less cognitive effort on the conventions of

a specific form of writing, instead focusing more of their energy on making meaning in their writing.

The students who were less positive about models as an instructional strategy also seemed to interpret the term *model* to mean “guideline,” but they varied in their comments. Shu and Faye both said that the helpfulness of a model depended on the type of writing that was assigned. They both noted that the “guideline” made it “easier to organize everything” (Shu) because “it’s like fill in the blanks” (Faye). Faye said that if she was trying to convince someone of something she would not like a model/guideline, while Shu mentioned that she would like more freedom if she was asked to write creatively. Steve also made comments related to the theme of freedom and creativity: “Total freedom gives more imagination. If you have a guideline you are going to follow that and you won’t have the creativity.” He went on to comment that, “a guideline usually is a bad thing unless you are just starting out, but as you progress you need to do it on your own.” Overall, Steve was the least positive about models (guidelines). It is interesting that throughout the interview sessions he was also always the most confident about his abilities as a writer.

The students’ definition of the term *model* in writing instruction may stem from their school’s focus on organization in writing in the ninth grade in both English and Social Studies classes. Although the school has had success in raising test scores by teaching specific organizational methods for writing, including five-paragraph essays, the students’ discussion may have important implications for teachers in schools where organization is highly valued. The emphasis on guidelines or formats for writing seemed to leave students unaware of why they would examine text models of good writing as a

learning experience. Instead, they seemed to focus on format and organization only, and not on other aspects of strong writing or arguments. This finding has important implications for teachers about the use of educational jargon: students come to class with differing definitions of terms based on their background knowledge and experiences. Their shifting and developing definitions of these terms can be influenced by class instruction, so teachers should be careful to plan instruction that allows students to process both context and meaning, while acknowledging the different ways a term like model can be defined and used.

Follow-Up Open-Ended Interview Results

After the instructional units were completed, I interviewed each student a second time. During this interview cycle, the first four questions were answered by all eight students. The final question varied depending on whether the student was in the models or non-models group.

Question 1: Do you feel more confident about your ability to persuade in writing now that the persuasive writing unit is complete? Why or why not?

All eight students offered positive responses to this question, stating that they felt greater confidence in their ability to persuade in writing at the conclusion of the instructional unit. Seven of the students noted that instruction in persuasive strategies helped to build their confidence or skill. Of these seven students, three mentioned strategies in general. For example, Faye answered, “there were a lot of different techniques that were gone through.” Four of the students mentioned the three rhetorical strategies specifically: “Now I feel as if I understand the process a lot better after Ms. K. explained pathos, ethos, and logos,” said Shu. It is interesting that Shu, who was in the

models group, mentions the teacher's explanation only, and not the analysis of models for the rhetorical appeals or the use of the appeals in cooperative assignments. In fact, none of the students from the models group made any specific reference to the analysis of models that was part of their instruction. One of the students from the models group may be describing indirectly the use of models in her response. Jamie spoke of "different kinds of persuasive things," and listed various persuasive forms. Shu's earlier response also noted that learning the process was helpful. Shu did not seem to be referring to the writing process as commonly defined in writing instruction (pre-writing, writing, editing) but to the ways that authors build persuasive arguments. Her response can be inferred to connect to the use of models, as the analysis of models focused on how the authors used strategies to persuade the reader. However, the fact that the four students from the models group did not mention the models may indicate that this instructional strategy was not that interesting to the students, despite the attempt to choose real-world models that would appeal to students. Alternatively, their responses may show that they all defined instruction as situations where the teacher was actively conveying information, as in lecture, discussion, or question-and-answer sessions. In the models lessons, much of the examination and analysis of models was done in cooperative groups, with students taking the lead. Perhaps the students did not view this as instruction because it was not teacher-centered.

The students from the non-models group all mentioned the instruction in strategies. Jack mentioned learning to "apply to real life situations." Because the instructional unit asked students to practice using the strategies by writing about real-life

situations, as did the sample writing prompts, his response seemed to reveal a good understanding of the instructional unit.

One interesting omission from both groups is any mention of instruction on audience analysis or appealing to an audience. Although their remarks about strategies may be assumed to include the concept of writing for an audience, as the three rhetorical appeals were taught to the students as audience-related strategies, no student directly mentioned audience, despite the fact that the models group had a statistically significant gain in audience scores on the analytical scoring, and students were asked to consider audience at each step of instruction.

Question 2: Describe the part or parts of the unit that you believe helped you improve your persuasive writing the MOST.

All eight students described strategies instruction as the most helpful part of the unit, with three of the students mentioning the three rhetorical appeals. Two of these students, Riley and Steve, also mentioned the three rhetorical appeals in their responses to the previous question. Because both of these students were in the non-models group, this may indicate that they found the strategies to be the most helpful aspect of the instructional unit.

Despite a number of responses in the first-round interviews in which students claimed to dislike research assignments, three of the students described the persuasive research project as the most helpful learning experience from the unit, including Jamie, who said, “I don’t like research, so it’s kind of annoying,” during the first round of interviews, but here offered that the research paper and the requirement to “spend time on it” helped her most. Two students specifically mentioned one aspect of the research

project as very helpful. Both Bob and Steve noted that the class critique, an instructional strategy in which the class anonymously critiqued each student's persuasive speech at the rough draft stage, was helpful. Bob explained, "Draft—I really did poorly on that and then I got the critique sheets back and my final was a lot better. Not hurtful, but to help you—constructive criticism." The class critiques fit in with a related theme that emerged from other students in response to this question, the helpfulness of audience analysis strategies. Because the class critiques functioned as feedback from a real, instead of an imagined, audience, they may have helped students to see more clearly how audience analysis is related to successful persuasion. Additionally, the focus on the class critiques may reveal that the students were more knowledgeable about persuasive strategies at this final stage of the instructional unit, and so were better able to provide helpful criticism to their peers.

Question 3: Describe the part or parts of the unit that you believe helped you to improve your persuasive writing the LEAST.

Two students responded that all parts of the unit were helpful, one from the models group and one from the non-models group. It is possible that these students were hesitant to critique the unit during the interviews. Two students found the pre- and posttest writing assessments, called timed writings at this school, to be the least helpful. Faye's comment, "Timed writings are a pain!" may indicate that students do not have a clear understanding of the instructional purposes behind the timed writings, or she may just dislike writing under time constraints. This finding is important for the English teachers at this school, because they ask students to complete timed writings across grade

levels in preparation for standardized tests, including the state writing assessment and the AP Language and Literature exams.

Only one instructional strategy was mentioned by more than two students in response to this question: the Toulmin model. Bob was tentative in his criticism of this strategy, stating that the Toulmin model was “maybe” not helpful but “good for rough drafts,” whereas Steve and Riley were much more definite in their criticism. Riley said that the Toulmin model was “not very helpful.” Steve said, “The Toulmin model didn’t help,” and described it as “very restricting.” The Toulmin model was covered in only one lesson, and it may have been more helpful for the students if the unit had allowed them more time to work with the model. Both Bob and Steve’s remarks seem to indicate that they viewed Toulmin less as a model of argument structure and more as a template to follow in writing. Steve showed his dislike of any type of imposed structure in writing instruction across a number of questions, so his comments on the Toulmin model fit in with his beliefs, if, as indicated, the students had a mistaken impression of the use of the Toulmin model. This is an important theme for planning future instruction: Students in ninth grade may need more time to work with the model to understand it, and they may need a clearer explanation of why it is being taught. It is interesting that only one of the students in the models group mentioned the Toulmin model, and that was Bob, who was the least critical. The models group used the Toulmin model as a way of discussing persuasive articles written by other high school students in local school newspapers. In this case there is the possibility that by analyzing real-world text models using the Toulmin model, students were able to come to a better understanding of its use. The two

students who were most critical of the model were in the non-models group, and may have seen the Toulmin model as repressive because they saw it in isolation.

Shu, a student in the models group, said that reading “other persuasive pieces” was the least helpful part of the unit because specifically pointing out other writing styles was not helpful to her writing. Later, when asked specifically about whether the models helped her or not, she answered that they were helpful, so her answers showed opposing opinions. Of course, the language of the question asks which part of the unit helped them improve least, but does not specifically say that the parts they named should not have helped at all. Perhaps Shu found everything helpful, but found models to be least helpful. Another alternative for this anomaly is that Shu was unsure exactly what was meant by the word *model*.

In general, the students’ responses to this question were very positive, without much criticism of any part of the instructional unit. This may be due to the face-to-face nature of the interviews. The students may have been afraid to be too critical in this setting, while speaking directly to me, despite assurances that they should be honest. An alternative explanation for their mostly positive views may be that the students who volunteered to be interviewed were all the type of student who likes school and enjoys learning. Less engaged students may have offered more criticism. The classroom teacher reported that the students enjoyed the persuasive writing unit in general. This may have stemmed from the fact that it was a change from the literary focus of the Honors English 9 curriculum to real-world issues.

Question 4: Do you think that your participation in the initial interview affected your attitude or behavior during the unit in any way?

When asked if their participation in the initial interview affected their attitudes or behavior throughout the unit, four students answered no: two students from the models group and two students from the non-models group. All four seemed very definite about their answers, with three of them giving some type of qualification or explanation. Bob explained, “The interview was just for your work.” Shu admitted that she “actually forgot” about being interviewed, and Steve said, “I try to learn in class” perhaps to show that participation in the study would not change his ordinary behavior as a student.

The other four students stated that being interviewed did have an effect on them. All four mentioned that being interviewed helped them to focus on their learning and pay closer attention. As Jamie responded to the question she asked herself, “Was it a positive effect?” and replied, “I think it was.” Yoshi said that the interview “helped me get into it and focus my attitude on it. If I hadn’t been interviewed I wouldn’t have taken it as seriously.” Faye was more hesitant in her answer, stating that it influenced her “a little bit,” but also noting that it “made me pay attention more and made it stick in my mind.” Jack was also hesitant, noting that the interview affected him “not too much” but that he “maybe concentrated more and got into it more.”

Question 5: Students were asked what they thought of their instructional method-models or non models.

For their final question, students were asked to discuss their opinions of the instructional treatment to which they were assigned, models or non-models. Each of the four students in the models group answered that the models helped them learn. Their responses varied in terms of their view of models. One theme that emerged from their answers was that models helped them to “see” or “hear” how to write. Three students

used language related to vision/seeing to describe their views on models. Bob said, “Models showed you how to write, seeing what it was supposed to be.” Jamie agreed, “Models helped with learning what pathos, ethos, etc. actually were—seeing it.” Yoshi said, “different ads and articles helped me see what different kinds of audiences there are.” The fourth student, Shu, used hearing imagery to describe how models helped her: “For my own self, drilled into my head how it should sound.” Bob used the term “showed” three times in his responses (“showed what you’re supposed to do,” “showed what an essay was,” “showed you how to write”), perhaps suggesting that models were helpful to him because they showed rather than told. Jamie was the only one of the four to qualify her statement on models, noting that though they helped with seeing how to use strategies, they were not helpful “with actual writing. We all had different ways of persuasion.”

The non-models group was more divided. Two students, Steve and Riley, were positive about not having models. Riley, “liked how we did it because if you had the other (models) you might do what they did.” Steve said that not having models “made your writing more original.” Throughout all of the questions, Steve showed a preference for little teacher-imposed structure in writing assignments, making his final answer logical in terms of his emerging beliefs about writing. Both Steve and Riley were enthusiastic writers, who seemed to enjoy their own writing abilities. This interest in writing may be connected to their lack of enthusiasm for models.

Faye was positive about the non-models instruction, but mused on the benefits of both sides in her response:

I found it helpful because it helped me a lot. You think about it more. They (models) end up in binders. Some parts you needed examples, like for citing work-it's always good to have an example. You really do need both sides; it depends on what I'm writing. It helps to have background, but something that says how you have to write it, that's too much.

Faye's response showed a theme that was present throughout the initial interview responses: the students' misconception of what a model was or how it functioned in writing instruction. During the second round of interviews, the models group showed clear knowledge of how the term *model* was defined in the study in their responses, likely because of the models used in their instruction, and the term *model* being used repeatedly in conjunction with their use. The non-models group, which did not have this experience, continued to indicate that they viewed models as strict guidelines for writing rather than examples to analyze as part of learning.

The fourth student in the non-models group, Jack, seemed to hold this definition as well, although his response was in favor of models. He said that he did not like the non-models method of instruction, "because I like structure a lot; it's easier for me to model." Jack's use of the term model as a verb indicates that he may hold the same mistaken impression of models, believing that he would copy ("model") their structure in his writing.

Examination of the Interview Subjects' Essays

In this section, I will present the scores on the holistic and analytical scales for the pre- and posttest essays written by the eight students who were interviewed for the study. I will then discuss these results, in terms of an examination of the strengths and weaknesses of the students' essays. Finally, I will examine the scores and the essays in terms of each student's interview responses to find emerging themes or surprising contradictions.

Table 12 shows scores on the holistic scale, the *NAEP Grade 12 Persuasive Scoring Guide*, broken down into models and non-models groups. The scores on the holistic scale ranged from 1 to 6. In both the models and the non-models groups, three of the four students who were interviewed showed a gain of one point on the holistic scale. The interview participants from the models group had a lower mean score (3.25) on the pretest by one full score point than the non-models group of interview participants (4.25), although the models group showed a higher mean gain on the posttest (.75) than the non-models group (.25). In both of the groups, one student did not show improvement on the posttest. In the models group, Shu scored a 5 on both essays, and in the non-models group Faye dropped from a 5 to a 3. Perhaps the fact that both of these students started with high pretest scores made it more difficult for them to show improvement.

Table 12

Pre- and Posttest Holistic Scores: Interview Participants

Group	Pretest	Posttest	Gain
Models			
Bob	2	3	1
Jamie	3	4	1
Yoshi	3	4	1
Shu	5	5	0
Mean	3.25	4	.75
Non-Models			
Faye	5	3	-2
Jack	3	4	1
Steve	4	5	1
Riley	5	6	1
Mean	4.25	4.5	.25

Tables 13 and 14 show the interview participants' scores on the persuasive trait scale. Scores on this scale ranged between 1 and 10. Although the interview participants from the models group showed a greater group gain on the holistic scale, they did not perform as well on the persuasive trait scale, with a group gain on only one trait, the ability to take and support a side. The non-models students who participated in the interviews showed gains in all traits. It should be noted that the eight students who

were interviewed comprised a much smaller sample size than the entire sample; results for the entire models and non-models groups showed very different results.

Table 13

Pre- and Posttest Persuasive Trait Scores for Emotional, Logical, and Ethical Appeals: Interview Participants

Group	Emotional			Logical			Ethical		
	pre	post	gain	pre	post	gain	pre	post	gain
Models									
Bob	5	6	1	5	6	1	5	6	1
Jamie	10	4	-6	9	6	-3	9	2	-7
Yoshi	6	9	3	8	7	-1	8	7	-1
Shu	8	8	0	7	10	3	7	10	3
Mean	7.25	6.75	-0.5	7.25	7.25	0	7.25	6.25	-1
Non-Models									
Faye	6	8	2	8	7	-1	6	7	1
Jack	10	8	-2	8	6	-2	8	5	-3
Steve	7	9	1	6	10	4	4	10	6
Riley	8	10	2	8	10	4	9	10	1
Mean	7.75	8.75	1	7.5	8.25	0.75	6.75	8	1.25

Table 14

Pre- and Posttest Persuasive Trait Scores for Taking a Side, Audience Awareness, and Refutation of Opposing Viewpoints: Interview Participants

Group	Side			Audience			Opposition		
	pre	post	gain	pre	post	gain	pre	post	gain
Models									
Bob	6	8	2	6	6	0	5	6	1
Jamie	9	6	-3	9	4	-5	9	4	-5
Yoshi	8	9	1	8	9	1	5	4	-1
Shu	9	10	1	9	10	1	9	8	-1
Mean	8	8.25	0.25	8	7.25	-0.75	7	5.5	-1.5
Non-Models									
Faye	7	9	2	7	7	1	7	9	2
Jack	9	7	-2	7	6	-1	6	5	-1
Steve	7	9	2	6	10	4	3	9	6
Riley	7	10	3	7	10	3	7	10	3
Mean	7.5	8.75	1.25	6.75	8.25	1.5	5.75	8.25	2.5

Models Group Essays

Overall, the students in the models group who were interviewed showed improvement on the holistic scale, despite drops in their scores in all categories but one on the persuasive trait scale.

Bob.

Bob gained one point on the holistic scale between the pretest to the posttest, moving from a score of 2 to a score of 3. In each category on the persuasive trait scale he

increased his score by one or two points, with the exception of the audience category, on which his score did not improve but remained a 6. Bob's pretest essay (score: 2) was a response to the uniform prompt. This essay attempted a conversational tone, but was marked by immature writing for the 9th grade level: "None of the kids will enjoy having to wear uniforms...." The essay included many grammar and usage mistakes, including a number of comma splices. The overall argument was vague and included many unsupported points based on personal ideas: "This is just one of those things that does not matter that much but the education board stretches it and makes it seem like a big deal." Bob offered many generalized statements about how students would react, such as: "Students like being able to wear whatever their parents let them." There was little attempt to offer logical appeals, but Bob did attempt to appeal to the audience in a limited way with a rhetorical question: "When you think of this what comes to mind?" Bob's highest scores on the persuasive trait scale fell in the categories of audience awareness and taking a side, both of which he clearly attempts to do in his essay.

Bob's second essay, in response to the driving age prompt, showed better organization and clearer supporting points. This essay was weak in the use of factual evidence or logical supports, despite the information packet provided for the students; however, Bob did offer a number of distinct reasons why the driving age should not be raised. Bob improved somewhat in his ability to use persuasive strategies, especially taking and supporting a side, but his overall ability to appeal to an audience remained stagnant, despite the fact that Bob even offered two concessions, one suggesting stricter cell phone usage laws for teen drivers and another suggesting that the driving test for teens be made much more difficult. Bob's second essay showed improvement, as

reflected in his increase from a 2 to a 3 on the holistic scale, but the continued use of an immature writing style coupled with frequent grammar and spelling mistakes may have influenced raters in their scoring of this essay.

In his initial interviews, Bob showed a lack of keen interest in writing, even describing writing assignments as, “It’s homework, so it has to be done.” He mentioned the topic: “It it’s a topic I like, I’ll write a lot, but if it is not, I’ll just write what is necessary.” It is possible that in the case of the two sample essays, he was not enthusiastic about the topic so chose to “just write what [was] necessary.” In the second-round interview, Bob spoke most enthusiastically about the persuasive research speech/essay, so perhaps the freedom of topic choice was especially important to him in terms of putting forth effort in writing. He also mentioned the fact that the strategies instruction and the class critique helped him improve his research speech/essay, so perhaps writing on demand is less appealing to Bob than completing the steps of the writing process over time, with peer feedback and the time to gather and process background information. Bob’s experiences and results support a common belief among many writing researchers: Essay samples obtained from one-shot, timed assessments may not accurately reflect every student’s true capabilities.

Jamie.

In all of the persuasive trait categories, Jamie’s first essay earned either a 9 or a 10, although her holistic score was only a 3. On her posttest essay, her holistic score increased by one point, but her persuasive trait scores dropped in every category. Jamie’s pretest essay responded to the driving age prompt. Although this essay was marked by uneven syntax and a number of errors, Jamie included many logical ideas to support her

argument. The essay clearly revealed that the writer used the information packet for ideas, including many statistics about the benefits of working during high school. Jamie made inferences about the results of changing the driving age that went beyond the information provided and showed an appeal to logic: “And the working environment may also seem less stressful because they’ve already had job pressure. All of these good outcomes are from jobs, which is *dependent* on driving.” Jamie included emotional appeals from her own experience, describing her parent’s difficulties in finding her rides home from band practice because of their work schedules. This resulted in late nights for her, waiting to be picked up: “This was a bad experience because I often had a load of homework, which I couldn’t get done and I couldn’t get enough sleep for school the next day.” She compared her experience to band members who could drive to further emphasize her point: “Some of the marching band members owned cars and could easily drive home in time.” Jamie painted a clear picture of the importance of driving in the lives of students involved in after-school activities, earning a high score (10) in the emotional appeals category. Finally, Jamie made a plea that responsible teens not be penalized by “what stupid teens may do, which is have more accidents,” showing her ability to refute the opposition. Her essay had a strong overall audience appeal, as well as an appeal to ethics, indicating a knowledge of the types of student activities and student attitudes that an adult audience would be likely to respond positively to if asked to decide whether teens should drive or not.

Jamie’s posttest essay was on the school uniforms topic. Her holistic score went up one point, from a 3 to a 4, yet her scores dropped in all of the persuasive trait categories. Although her pretest essay showed a strong audience appeal and logical

supports for her argument, her posttest essay scores dropped dramatically, losing seven points in the ethical appeals category, six points in the emotional appeals category, and five points in overall audience appeal. Although Jamie clearly took a side, this essay was much shorter, and showed weak writing skills overall, including many grammatical mistakes. The overall quality of the writing was stronger than in her first essay, a possible reason for the rise in her holistic score by one point despite the lack of persuasive strategies. She earned her highest score (6) in the logical appeals and taking-a-side categories, but dropped to a 4 in all other categories, and seemed to have trouble supporting her argument. She chose to argue against a school uniform policy, using freedom of choice as her main point. It is possible that this topic led to less mature thinking and writing for some students because of their own emotional responses to the prospect of wearing a school uniform. Jamie's tone in parts of this essay seemed to become a bit emotional and aggressive: "Since when does what you wear have to do with your knowledge?" Jamie did attempt to use a logical appeal that would resonate with her audience, describing the costs parents would incur if they had to buy both uniforms and "normal clothes for all the time."

Although Jamie reported that she felt more confident as a persuasive writer after the unit, her use of persuasive strategies decreased on the posttest essay. In Jamie's interview responses, she briefly mentioned formal school experiences with persuasive writing: "In the past I've had to write persuasively in school, but I don't think I've ever had to write a speech or do a debate or anything," but she first explained that her experiences with persuasion were "persuading parents to do something, go somewhere or get something." This experience may have accounted for her skill at appealing to the

imagined adult audience in her pretest essay. Two factors in Jamie's sharp decrease in success with persuasive strategies on the second essay may have been topic and background knowledge. In response to a few of the interview questions, Jamie described topic and background knowledge as important aspects of her comfort and success in writing: "...it all depends what we're writing about cause some topics I'm more knowledgeable about and I know both sides, like you know, but some topics I have no clue what I am writing." Jamie also described the information packet included with the essay prompts as helpful, showing a connection to her use of the factual information in her essay on the driving age prompt. When asked which aspect of the instructional unit was least helpful to her, Jamie named the "timed writings," meaning the pre- and posttest in-class writings as least helpful, because she did "not [have]time to think about it and which side." This dislike of the in-class and posttest essays may have related to Jamie's lower scores on the second essay, although her success with persuasive strategies on the first essay seems to indicate that topic and prior knowledge were keys to her initial success.

Yoshi.

Like Jamie, Yoshi's holistic score also rose from a 3 to a 4, but his performance in the use of persuasive strategies showed mixed improvement, with scores on audience appeal and taking a side rising by one point, from 8 to 9; yet scores on refuting opposition, use of logical appeals, and use of ethical appeals all dropped by one point. Although Yoshi's scores in the use of ethical and logical appeals did remain in the high end of the scores, with a pretest score of 8 in each category and a posttest score of 7 in each category, his ability to refute an opposing argument went from a 5 to a 4, showing a

weakness in this area that did not seem to be improved by the instructional unit.

However, Yoshi did show improvement in his use of audience appeals, with a pretest score of only 6, but a posttest score of 9. In the case of audience appeals, the instructional unit did seem to help Yoshi improve.

Yoshi's pretest essay on raising the driving age showed the use of some emotional appeals and a fairly strong use of logic. Although the essay was well organized, the writing was somewhat immature for a ninth grader, with little sentence variety or syntactic maturity. The essay overall was a bit sparse, though Yoshi did offer a number of reasons not to change the driving age. Yoshi acknowledged that teens have a higher rate of crashes than adult drivers, but his refutation of this statistic was weak: "I think a couple years delay wouldn't help much at all." Yoshi earned his lowest score, a 5, in the category concerned with refuting an opposing viewpoint, likely because of this weakness in his essay. Yoshi went on to describe working as a reason to allow teens to drive, using a number of logical appeals, for which he earned an 8, but he did not use this as an opportunity to appeal to the emotions of his audience: "The most convenient solution is for a teen to have his/her own car." Yoshi's lack of emotional appeals earned him a 6 in this category, although his audience awareness score of 8 was much higher.

Yoshi's posttest essay was more successful, earning a holistic score of 4 and showing better organization and a better use of emotional appeals. His scores dropped in the categories of logical appeals, ethical appeals, and refuting opposing viewpoints, reflecting the fact that his arguments in favor of school uniforms were much more focused on the emotional results for students than on factual outcomes: "It would decrease insecurity. There wouldn't be discrimination against who wears it. It's

absolutely everyone. With more confidence, students will show more school spirit, go to more school events, and be an overall good example.” Yoshi also increased his audience awareness score, earning a 9, likely due to his arguments directed to adults and parents: “The community would be impressed, and all the parents of the students would be also.” He even provided an alternative to the argument that school uniforms are expensive for parents: “Even though school uniforms can get pricey, they can be affordable with financial aide, and fundraising.” Surprisingly, Yoshi received a very low score of 4 in the category of refuting opposing viewpoints, although he did this twice, once when he mentioned the price issue, and later in the essay when he addressed the issue of religious freedom and dress codes, noting that, “principals will usually accommodate for religious issues.” Overall, Yoshi’s posttest essay was fairly successful as a persuasive piece, as reflected by his strong scores on the persuasive trait scale. His score of 4 on the holistic scale seemed to reflect the disparity between his general skill as a writer and his ability to persuade.

Yoshi’s improvement in the use of persuasive strategies was also reflected in his interview responses. When asked which aspect of instruction helped him the most, he mentioned that learning about the three rhetorical appeals helped the most, stating that it “helps me put them all together and use them to effectively persuade the reader or readers.” He also remarked on the use of models, specifically “different ads and articles,” which “helped me see what different kinds of audiences and writing there is.” In the first round of interviews, Yoshi’s responses indicated that he preferred creative writing to expository writing and that research or information gathering was difficult for him. During the second round of interviews, he was able to look at his writing growth

with some degree of metacognition, identifying the improvement in his persuasive writing ability and his successful use of the audience awareness strategies learned in class.

Shu.

Shu's holistic scores on both the pre- and post test essays were the same. Her pretest essay on mandatory school uniforms earned a 5 on the holistic scale, as did her posttest essay on the driving age. Overall, Shu had impressive persuasive trait scores ranging from 7 to 9 on her pretest essay and 8 to 10 on her posttest essay. On the persuasive trait scale, Shu's scores went up by one or two points in every category, except for refuting opposing views, where they dropped one point, from a 9 to an 8. This pattern indicates growth in persuasive abilities, despite the fact that her holistic score did not improve.

Shu's pretest essay took a very strong stand against school uniforms while also displaying mature, varied syntax, excellent use of vocabulary, and overall skillful writing. Shu earned a high score, a 9, in taking a side. Shu's organization in this essay seemed to be based on refuting common beliefs about why uniforms would be beneficial: "First of all, many critics believe that students' grades will improve because of the uniforms." She went on to provide logical, well stated opposition to this and other arguments in favor of uniforms, which may explain her score of 9 in the refuting the opposing viewpoint category and her score of 8 in the logical appeals category. Shu also scored a 9 for audience awareness, clearly indicated throughout her essay in sentences such as, "I doubt many parents would appreciate that," in reference to the high cost of school uniforms. Shu even used humor to appeal to the audience while refuting the idea that school

uniforms would decrease the inappropriately sexy clothing worn by girls, stating, “However, I have a feeling that girls who dress that way would end up finding new ways to turn their uniform into something less than desirable. If girls were to begin making the skirts shorter, then it *would* become a distraction for some boys in the classroom.”

Shu’s posttest essay also scored a 5, and only dropped in one category on the persuasive trait scale: refuting opposing arguments. Shu’s second essay showed excellent organization and mature writing skills, just as her first essay did. Shu included many logical appeals, a category in which her score rose to a 10 on this essay. These included references to statistics from the United States Department of Labor, which helped build her ethical appeal while also logically supporting her view that the driving age should not be raised. Shu skillfully appealed to her adult audience while also offering logical reasons for continuing to allow 16-year-olds to earn their licenses: “If the groceries need to get picked up or a younger sibling needs a ride to soccer practice, it is always helpful to have an extra person to share some of the work.” Shu did not mention any opposing arguments in her essay, instead focusing on reasons that the current driving age is a good idea; this lack of acknowledgement of the reasons for raising the driving age likely accounted for her drop in score in this category. Overall, Shu’s argument in this essay was successful, with strong writing helping her to make her points successfully: “Some argue that age brings maturity, but I believe that practice makes perfect.”

Shu’s initial interview responses revealed some surprising contradictions. Despite Shu’s strong organization and overall performance on both essays, she commented on her dislike of being asked to write on a specific topic: “I just don’t really like it when I have

to write about a specific thing.” She also commented on how a specified topic influences her organization, saying, “When I have to write about a certain kind of information, I sometimes have trouble thinking about how I should organize it.” Although she described herself as “moderately confident” about her ability to persuade in writing, Shu again mentioned topic choice as a factor in her success: “Sometimes, depending on the subject I’m persuading on, it can be difficult.” Shu’s success on the pretest may be due to a number of previous experiences with persuasive writing: “In sixth grade we wrote a lot of persuasive essays because we were learning about the Revolutionary War. We would write letters to King George to persuade him and we would write letters to the principal to let us chew gum or something like that. Practice letters to people to get them to do things. I also did some of those in seventh grade.” These practice letter-writing assignments seemed to have been connected to both classroom learning in social studies as well as to real-world concerns, as recommended by Langer (2001). Shu’s second-round interview responses indicated that she felt positive about how helpful the instructional unit was, but showed ambivalence about the use of models during instruction. When asked which part of the unit helped her improve her writing the least, she replied, “when we read other persuasive pieces because specifically pointing out different writing styles” was not helpful to her. Yet when asked for her thoughts on the use of models for instruction, Shu’s answer seemed positive: “For my own self, it drilled into my head how it should sound.” The aspects of instruction that Shu described as most helpful included audience strategies and the three rhetorical appeals, all areas in which her scores rose on the posttest: “After Ms. K. explained pathos, ethos, and logos...” and “how to target it towards a certain audience.” The only clue about why

Shu's holistic score did not rise on her second essay, despite her increased use of persuasive strategies, was her repeated discussions of how an assigned topic could make writing difficult for her.

Non-Models Group

The non-models group of interview participants began with a higher mean score on the holistic scale for the pretest essay than the models group, but did not make as large of a mean gain. The non-models group showed improvement in every category of the persuasive trait analytic scale.

Faye.

Faye's scores initially seemed puzzling; her holistic score on the pretest essay was a 5, but she dropped to a 3 on the posttest essay. Despite the two-point drop in her holistic score, Faye's persuasive trait scores went up by two points in three of the categories: taking a side, use of emotional appeals, and refuting an opposing viewpoint. Her score in the use of ethical appeals went up by one point, and her score on audience awareness remained the same. The only category in which Faye's persuasive trait scores went down was the use of logical appeals, and here she only lost one point.

Faye's pretest essay (score: 5) included excellent writing, organization, and reasoning. She presented logical appeals for her view that the driving age should not change, while appealing to the audience. Faye did not state her position until the second paragraph, a possible explanation for the fact that she only scored a seven in taking a side. Faye offered a number of very original logical supports for her side. She connected the solution of raising the age to eighteen to the fact that an inexperienced eighteen-year-old driver might have other factors influencing his or her driving skill: "In fact, it would

be more dangerous to raise the age because drivers have more access to substances like alcohol through relationships with older friends, so not only would the drivers be less experienced, they would be more likely to be driving drunk.” Faye appealed to the audience’s emotions when she mentioned the fact that many teens need to drive themselves to work, including, “some who work to support their families.” She also appealed to today’s busy parents, reminding them that, “Most parents don’t have time to be chauffeuring their kids to school, from school, to a work place, and then home,” while also underscoring how much driving parents would have to do if the driving age was raised. Faye’s mature and thoughtful writing style was her best appeal to her audience, and likely the reason this essay earned a 5. Her conclusion illustrated this: “Many laws and restrictions are already in place to protect our young drivers but time and experience are our greatest weapons against the dangers of the road.” In this final sentence, Faye skillfully promoted her argument while aligning herself with the adult audience to show that they all have the same goals, using words such as, “our young drivers,” and, “our greatest weapons.”

Faye’s second essay took a side almost immediately in the first paragraph, which was probably the cause of her two-point score increase in this category. Her introduction appealed to her audience, using both logical and emotional appeals: “Learning to make decisions is a part of maturing and not allowing children to practice their decision-making skills with fairly harmless things, like clothing selection, puts them at a disadvantage when making important life decisions.” Faye went on to offer a skillful refutation of the opposing side, utilizing the ethical appeal by citing a study from the University of Notre Dame that found that uniforms “had no direct effect on behavior or

attendance.” She went on, “They, in fact, displayed a negative effect on academics.” At this point, Faye’s essay lost its persuasive strength as she began to discuss school opt-out policies without making a clear case for her argument. Her essay ended abruptly, as though she did not have time to write a conclusion. This ending helped to solve the mystery of Faye’s drop to a 3 on the holistic scale while still gaining points across most of the persuasive trait categories. Faye’s posttest essay likely earned a 3 on the holistic scale because it weakened in writing, organization, and persuasiveness half-way through and provided no conclusion. Faye did successfully use persuasive strategies in her excellent first half, explaining her gains in most of the persuasive trait categories.

It seems unusual that such a strong writer would lose control of her essay halfway through, but one of Faye’s interview responses provided a possible explanation. When asked what helped her to improve her writing the least, Faye responded, “Timed writings are a pain!” Faye showed confidence in her ability to persuade: “Fairly confident....If you can articulate in speaking, you can articulate in writing, and writing is easier because you can rewrite.” In the case of the pre-and posttest writings, there was no opportunity to rewrite, another possible reason for her drop in score on the second essay. Faye’s improvement in the use of persuasive strategies can also be connected to her interview responses. She mentioned that she felt more confident in her ability to persuade after the instructional unit, stating that “there were lots of different strategies that were gone through.” Later she mentioned, “the handouts on different ways to set up a persuasive essay” and the “different kinds of arguments/sheets” that the non-models group received as the parts of the unit that helped her the most, but later said that “some styles didn’t do much for *me*.”

Jack.

Jack's pre-and posttest writing scores are also puzzling, but for a different reason. In Jack's case, his holistic score jumped from a 3 to a 4, but his persuasive trait scores fell between one and three points in every category. Jack's pretest essay supporting school uniforms was creative, with a strong personal voice. The frequent use of second person showed that Jack may have perceived his intended audience to be other high school students: "What will you wear to school?" Jack's introduction was engaging, describing the scenario of a student's stress-filled morning, deciding what to wear to school. Jack then offered his viewpoint, that uniforms would solve the problem, ending his introductory paragraph with, "There may, however, be a way to avoid such an agitating morning routine. And it's the school which you attend that could make your morning hassle-free. The solution: schools should implement school wide uniforms." Jack earned a 9 for clearly taking a side, and a 10 for his use of emotional appeals. Jack's essay directly addressed the reader throughout, with sentences such as, "Now I know that you may be thinking that's great and all, but I'm sure that the high schoolers didn't like the uniform implementation," yet he only earned a 7 for audience awareness. This may be due to his misunderstanding of the imagined audience specified in the writing prompt, and his lack of attention to an adult or school board audience. Jack used factual evidence about the results of school uniforms in Long Beach, California from the information packet to establish logical and ethical appeals. He earned an 8 in each of these categories. Jack's pretest essay, though filled with an engaging personal voice, only presented a few direct arguments, perhaps leading to the holistic score of 3.

Jack's posttest essay was even more engaging and creative than his pretest essay, with a greater sense of personal voice and more mature syntax. Jack earned a 4 for this essay, likely because it was so engaging and well written, despite the fact that he offered only one main argument throughout the entire essay: Students need to drive to help their parents. Jack's persuasive trait scores fell in all categories. His essay did show an awareness of audience, a category in which he earned a 6: "Imagine you are a parent of five children." The only other argument or fact that Jack offered to prove his point is that if the driving age were raised to 18, "most teenagers would just be entering college, and parents would get sick worrying over their children." Although this showed an appeal to logic, it is the only other logical appeal offered beyond his main argument: driving at sixteen is a benefit for parents. Overall, Jack's second essay lacked the use of argument strategies, despite being well written.

Jack's interview responses showed a similar tension between creativity and background knowledge: "If it is something I like, I really enjoy writing papers, but if it is something I don't support I might not like it because it would involve research." Jack described learning to use appealing adjectives and verbs in elementary school, plus being taught to "have a hook to appeal to the reader." It is clear that Jack continued to incorporate the "hook" concept in his writing, using the approach of placing the reader into an imagined scenario in the introductions to both of his essays. Jack was very confident about his ability to persuade during the first-round interview. Jack mentioned feeling even more confident during the second-round interview: "Definitely yes, because there were some things I learned that I had not known before." During the first round of interviews, Jack was in favor of models in writing instruction, saying, "I would prefer a

model almost like an outline or specific format to follow because that way I know how to structure my paper....It would help me think more clearly to have some kind of an outline or format.” During the second round, he said that he would probably have preferred the models instruction to the non-models instruction his class received: “I like structure a lot because it’s easier for me to model.” Perhaps for Jack, the lack of model arguments resulted in his low persuasive trait scores on the posttest essay. Although Jack was a strong writer, his ability to use persuasive strategies did not improve. Jack’s metacognitive statements about his own writing process showed that he may have been more successful if he could have seen model arguments.

Steve.

Steve earned a 4 on the holistic scale for his pretest essay against school uniforms. Despite his strong holistic score, Steve earned low scores in many categories on the primary trait scale, including a 3 in refuting the opposing viewpoint and a 4 in the use of ethical appeals. Steve’s posttest essay showed great improvement, with a holistic score of 5 and primary trait scores of 9 or 10 in all categories.

Steve’s pretest essay included mature vocabulary and excellent sentence variety for a ninth grader, which may have contributed to his high holistic score: “Should the students be deprived of this simple yet crucial freedom, they very well may distinguish school to be a dominant, oppressive bully with only its own communistic priorities in mind.” He also used a number of emotional appeals, earning his highest score of 7 in this category: “I can only envision the gloomy looks upon the faces of these students as another boring, unchanged day of submissiveness should school uniforms be deemed mandatory.” Steve received only a 6, a mid-range score on the 10-point primary trait

scale, for audience awareness, despite a direct plea to the audience, “I beseech you, residents of _____ County, to put an end to this authoritarian act which neglects the students....” Despite Steve’s elevated diction and passionate appeals, his essay did not mention any factual evidence to support his view, nor did he acknowledge or refute the evidence for the opposition, possibly contributing to his low scores in this area.

Steve’s posttest essay showed a marked improvement in the areas of logical appeals, ethical appeals, and audience awareness, jumping from scores between 4 and 6 in these categories on the pretest essay to scores of 10 in these three categories on his posttest essay. In this essay, Steve toned down his impassioned rhetoric and reliance solely on appeals to emotion, instead using the factual background information provided in the packet that accompanied the prompt. Steve used the background information provided to support his side, but also to make a concession in his acknowledgement of the opposing argument:

True, the fatality rate due to the inexperienced driving skills of the teenager is higher than older drivers. Yet, how do those older drivers get their good driving skills? They have to learn sometime, so if the driving age was increased to 18 years, the fatality rate for older drivers would increase as well, due to the fact that they are now the inexperienced drivers.

Although Steve used simpler language in this essay, his holistic score also went up, from a 4 to a 5. His argument in his posttest essay relied less on passion and more on building an argument using a variety of persuasive strategies, implying that the instructional unit helped him learn to persuade with greater delicacy and facility.

In his interview responses, Steve was enthusiastic about persuasive writing and writing in general, from the start, calling it “fun” a number of times. He was very confident about his ability to persuade in writing during the initial interview session: “I’ve had a pretty good background with that....Then in eighth grade we had to write several persuasive pieces and we got better and better as we went along. Now, we’re getting to this unit and I feel like we’re better than ever before.” Steve also came down squarely against models in writing instruction during the initial interview, frequently mentioning “creativity” and “freedom” as key elements in writing instruction. His desire for freedom in his writing may have made him the ideal student for the non-models instructional group. The student-generated writings that the class did to practice with each persuasive strategy may have been the type of instruction most helpful for Steve, leading to marked improvement in his use of these strategies on his second essay. Steve clearly had confidence in his own abilities, coupled with a desire to “do it on your own.” It would be interesting to have seen whether Steve would have made equal improvement in the models group, or if he would have found it constraining. He mentioned the Toulmin model as the least helpful part of the unit, along with “the construction part, which part was which.” He noted that, “Professional writers don’t follow a set diagram.” Overall, Steve seemed to be an independent and confident writer who was willing to learn but who did not like to have structures imposed on his writing.

Steve himself remarked on his own improvement, saying, “I could write fairly well before but I didn’t know why. Now [I] have a better understanding of what I am doing.” Steve also remarked that instruction in the three rhetorical appeals was most beneficial to him, as was the class critique. The increase in his use of the three rhetorical

appeals was clear in his improved persuasive trait scores on his posttest essay. The class critique may have contributed to his ability to write with an awareness of audience, shown in the four-point jump in his audience awareness score. Steve's final interview response showed his positive view of the non-models instructional unit: "I liked that because it made your writing more original." Steve's ability to view writing instruction and his own writing metacognitively, coupled with his enjoyment of writing and his enthusiasm for persuasive writing in particular, make his remarks and his improvement particularly noteworthy as they serve as a reminder that for many students, instruction must include room for self-determination and creativity in order for it to be effective.

Riley.

Overall, Riley earned the highest scores of any of the students who were interviewed for the study. Her pretest essay supporting a raised driving age earned a 5 on the holistic scale, with scores ranging from 7 to 9 on the persuasive trait scale. Riley's holistic score jumped to a 6 for her posttest essay, which received scores of 10 in all categories on the persuasive trait scale.

Riley's pretest essay showed clear facility in overall written expression, as well as strong use of persuasive writing strategies. Riley began her essay with a rhetorical question, and from there built a strong argument against teen drivers, using excellent sentence variety and a number of rhetorical strategies. She appealed to the emotions of her intended audience by describing driving as "a scary thing," going on to appeal to logic with an argument based on the idea that students need time to perfect their driving skills by gaining experience through a longer period with a learner's permit. Riley included factual information from the packet provided with the prompt, also using the

sources to build her ethical appeal. She earned scores of 8 and 9 for her use of the three rhetorical appeals, but only scores of 7 for audience awareness and refuting the opposing viewpoint. Her frequent use of rhetorical questions and second-person statements does show an awareness of audience, but her negative view of teenagers may account for her lower score in this area; she describes teenagers as, “Reckless, irresponsible, dangerous, immature,” going on to say, “Teenagers have a tendency to be wild, dangerous, and careless, so why should we put the safety of them and others around them in their hazardous hands?” She did not make any concessions to the opposing viewpoint, nor did she discuss any of the reasons that teenagers might need their licenses.

On her posttest essay, Riley blended the three rhetorical appeals with a clear awareness of the audience and the opposition to create an essay that earned perfect scores in all categories. She did a skillful job of weaving in quotations and factual information from the information packet to build ethical and logical appeals. For example, she wrote, “Also, Dick Van Der Laan of Long Beach Unified School District tells us that after adopting a mandatory uniform policy, ‘students concentrate more on education, not on who’s wearing \$100 shoes or gang attire.’” Riley made connections between the facts she included and her own argument: “And what these two principals have said is absolutely true....If uniforms were mandatory in our school system, maybe students might not spend so much time deciding what to wear to school, and more time studying.” In this essay Riley was clearly mindful of the audience, using phrases such as, “I think we can all agree that saving money is a good thing” and “Don’t you want your school to be safe?” She also included concessions: “Many people who are opposed to adopting uniforms might say that uniforms have no effect on students’ behaviors. But, if you look

at the facts, you'll see that they are very wrong.” Overall, Riley’s second essay seemed to show that she combined her writing skills and persuasive talent with the strategies taught in the instructional unit to create an excellent argument.

Riley’s interview responses showed that, like Steve, she enjoyed writing: “I like to write and I definitely want to do it for a career later on so any opportunity I have...practice makes perfect.” Her success on the pretest essay may be attributed to earlier instruction in persuasive writing. In response to a first-round interview question asking about her background with persuasion, Riley responded, “Last year, my English teacher introduced us to persuasive writing but not in depth. This year I’m taking debate.” Steve, also a successful persuasive writer and eager participant in the instructional unit, according to the instructor, was also part of the debate class/team. It is important to note that these two students had supplementary instruction in persuasive strategies as part of the debate team. This may have contributed to their success in writing their pre-and posttest essays. Their choice to participate in debate, an elective at this school, may have also indicated an interest in persuasion that lead them to pay close attention to the strategies instruction in class.

Despite Riley’s skill and previous experience with persuasion, she did not express much confidence about her ability to persuade in writing. She first said that it “depends on the topic,” echoing a number of the other students for whom topic was an important factor in their confidence and comfort with writing. She then described herself as, “not horrible but I’m not very good. I guess I’m somewhere in the middle.” Riley’s lack of confidence despite her high level of performance on her initial essay was surprising. It may have indicated that she was a perfectionist about her writing, or that she was simply

modest. Another possibility is that her lack of confidence was a result of her participation in the debate class with students from higher grade levels who may have had more persuasive experience than she did, making her think that her skills weren't that strong. Riley's lack of confidence may have led her to work harder on her first essay in order to do a good job. During the second round of interviews, after the unit was completed and the students had written their posttest essays, Riley described herself as being much more confident with persuasive writing, specifically mentioning her new knowledge of the three rhetorical appeals. She again mentioned the three rhetorical appeals when asked what the most helpful part of the instructional unit was for her: "Pathos, ethos, logos. Those really helped because it helps you think of, like, tactics." Riley's use of the three rhetorical appeals was clear throughout her posttest essay, indicating that she seemed to have learned to use these strategies successfully during the instructional unit.

Unlike Steve, the other student in the non-models group who earned high scores on both of his essays, Riley seemed to be somewhat in favor of the use of models in writing instruction during the first round of interviews. Her response was positive but hesitant: "I guess probably with the model because it gives you an idea of what they are looking for and how to organize it." Her word choice "what they are looking for" and "how to organize it," may have indicated that she defined the term model as a guideline or outline for a paper, as did some of the other students at this stage of the study. During the second round of interviews, Riley, like Steve, described the Toulmin model as the least helpful aspect of the instructional unit. As with most of her responses, Riley was hesitant in her answer to this question: "One thing with...um...it was like...the Toulmin

model with the Janet Jackson example was not very helpful.” Riley’s dislike of the Toulmin model was at odds with her initial response in favor of models. However, if she had an incorrect or incomplete understanding of the term model, she may not have been discussing text models when she responded. The opinion she offered on the non-models instructional unit was somewhat positive: “I like how we did it because if you had the other [unit] you might do what they did.” She seemed then to be agreeing with Steve that the lack of models helped her to be original in her writing. Riley’s hesitancy may have indicated an imperfect understanding of the term model, or it may have indicated a desire not to offend the interviewer. Another possibility is that she was not skilled at discussing her writing on a metacognitive level, causing her to become nervous and reticent during the interview sessions. Riley’s writing, with its mature, articulate use of language was very different from her brief, hesitant spoken language in the interview setting.

Discussion of Qualitative Results

Overall, the students’ essays and interview responses showed that they improved in their ability to use persuasive strategies in writing. Because a small sample of students (4) was interviewed from each instructional group, their interview responses were more important than group score gains in revealing whether the instructional unit helped them to increase their ability to use persuasive traits in their writing.

The students from the models group who were interviewed raised or maintained their holistic scores, showing that they did improve in their overall ability to write a persuasive essay. Although their scores as a group went down in most categories on the persuasive trait scale, the gains in holistic scores, combined with their remarks about their

learning, revealed that the instructional unit did help them improve their ability to use persuasive strategies in their writing. Three of the students from the models group described writing as a chore in their initial interviews, yet during the second round of interviews, after the instructional unit was complete, the models students all reported feeling confident about their ability to persuade in writing, with each of them mentioning their knowledge of persuasive strategies as a factor in their confidence. In the question asking them which part or parts of the unit helped them improve the most, three of the models students described strategies instruction as an important aspect of their learning. None of the students mentioned the analysis or imitation of model texts directly in response to this question, but the analysis and imitation of model texts was used to help them understand and practice how to use persuasive strategies in their own writing. Of the four students in the models group, only one of them, Shu, mentioned the analysis of models as the part of the unit that helped the least. Shu contradicted this statement when she described the models instruction as helping by “drilling into my head how it should sound.” The other three students in this group were very positive about how much models helped them to learn to use persuasive strategies, but all described the value of models in terms of “seeing” how to use the strategies, with none of the students mentioning the imitation of models as a factor.

The non-models group made gains on the persuasive trait scale, while also showing gains on the holistic scale. Two of the students interviewed from the non-models group started out the initial interview by describing their enjoyment of writing, while the other two described it as a chore. All of these students reported a background with persuasive writing; this may have contributed to their high pretest scores. During

the second round of interviews, all four of these students also mentioned instruction in persuasive strategies as the part of the unit that helped them feel confident about their ability to persuade in writing. They also mentioned instruction in strategies as the part of the unit that helped them to improve their persuasive writing the most. When asked if they thought not having models as an instructional strategy during the unit was helpful, two students were very definite about the fact that not having models worked for them. One student seemed ambivalent, offering reasons for and against models for her own learning, and another student expressed the desire for models because “I like structure....”

One important finding from the interviews was the shifting nature of the term *model*. The term was used in the interviews and in the instructional unit to refer to a text model, however, the teacher also described herself as *modeling* a writing strategy for the students in various lessons, and the term was also used to refer to the Toulmin model. Before the start of the unit, the students in both groups seemed to define the term *model* to mean a guideline or organizer for writing. The non-models students continued to hold this definition at the conclusion of the unit. The fact that their definition of the term did not change may have stemmed from the fact that they did not have a chance to revise their definitions during the unit, as they did not work with text models or hear the word *model* mentioned during instruction. Within the social cognition/ cognitive apprenticeship framework, the students in the models group came to a new understanding of the term model through their cooperative work with model texts during the course of the unit.

Despite their differing views on writing and models, the students all spoke enthusiastically about the persuasive strategies they learned. This feature seemed to be

the part of the instructional unit that all students found most helpful in improving their ability to persuade in their writing.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented the results of the present study in which I examined the effects of an instructional unit using models and imitation on ninth-grade honors students' persuasive writing quality. I presented statistical findings relating to research questions one and two. An analysis of the interview responses and the essays written by the interview participants provided additional information related to research question two. In Chapter V, I will summarize the study, discuss conclusions drawn from the quantitative and qualitative results, and present recommendations for further inquiry in the area of persuasive writing instruction and the use of models.

Chapter V

Summary and Discussion

In this chapter, I will summarize the research study. A discussion of the results, the limitations of the study, and the implications of this study for further research and practice will follow.

A Summary of the Research Study

Kellogg (1991, 1994), Ransdell (1989) and Reed et al. (1985) have posited that persuasive and descriptive writing requires greater cognitive effort than narrative writing. Data from the 2002 National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) Writing Report Card (Persky, Daane, & Jin, 2003) supports this finding, showing that only 17% of 12th grade students scored in the “skillful or better” range on a persuasive writing task. In contrast, 29% of 12th grade students scored “skillful or better” on a narrative writing task. Persuasive writing instruction in high schools is becoming more commonplace since the advent of the new SAT essay section, which requires students to compose an argument supporting one side of an issue, but as recently as 2000, researchers found that there was a dearth of persuasive writing instruction in American middle and high schools (Crowhurst, 1988; McCann, 1989; Nystrand & Graf, 2000). The new SAT essay requirement and the fact that argument writing continues to be a staple of the college and work worlds (Connolly & Vilardi, 1986; Odell & Goswami, 1986; Zeiger, 1985; Sommers & Saltz, 2004) are both good reasons for secondary English teachers and

researchers to focus on persuasive writing instruction. Additionally, persuasive writing instruction is important at the secondary level because it can help students develop higher-level writing and thinking skills. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) have theorized that students develop as writers through stages of “knowledge-telling” to “knowledge transforming.” Riley and Reedy (2005) found that elementary students developed higher-order thinking skills through a unit on argument. Persuasive writing is a valuable skill because it requires students to transform knowledge as they seek to convince an audience of their viewpoint.

One strategy for teaching persuasive writing is the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts. Some writing theorists rejected the use of imitation and models in writing instruction (Moffett, 1983; Murray, 1985; Shaugnessy, 1977). Researchers examining the efficacy of the use of models in writing instruction have found mixed results (Hillocks, 1986; Knudson, 1991, 1992), while others have found the use of models to be a promising instructional strategy (Crowhurst, 1991; Stolarek, 1991; Yeh, 1998).

The purpose of this study was to explore the effects of the use of nonfiction models and imitation as instructional strategies on the persuasive writing of ninth-grade honors students as part of an instructional unit on persuasive writing. Geist’s (1996) description of the use of imitation and models provided inspiration for the study, which was informed by constructivist theories of learning and cognitive apprenticeship and social constructionist models of instruction. The study was designed to address two research questions:

1. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts to learn the conventions of persuasive writing significantly improve the quality of ninth-grade honors students' persuasive writing on a holistic scoring scale?
2. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts to learn the conventions of persuasive writing significantly improve ninth-grade honors students' ability to use persuasive strategies in their writing?

Sub-questions for Research Question 2 included:

- A. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' ability to take and support a side?
- B. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' ability to use emotional appeals?
- C. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' ability to use ethical appeals?
- D. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' ability to use logical appeals?
- E. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' audience awareness?
- F. Do the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts improve students' ability to refute opposing arguments?

A Summary of the Research Methods

During the spring 2004 semester 39 students from two intact ninth-grade honors classes at a large suburban public high school in the mid-Atlantic region were taught a unit on persuasive writing. One group, the models group, analyzed and imitated

nonfiction persuasive text models as part of their instruction. The other group, the non-models group, received the same instructional treatment with one difference: instead of analyzing model texts, the non-models group learned each persuasive strategy then worked in cooperative groups to create their own persuasive texts using each strategy. Both instructional units were developed using social constructionist and cognitive apprenticeship models as the theoretical underpinnings. The instructional unit took approximately 6 weeks of class time, and both classes were taught by the same instructor, an experienced teacher of honors English 9 with a special interest in writing instruction.

Pre- and posttest persuasive writing samples were obtained from the students before and after the unit. Two pilot-tested topics were counter-balanced, and students were randomly assigned to write on one topic for the pretest and the other for the posttest to guard against the testing threat. Because students' prior knowledge of a topic has been found to be linked to their success in writing assessments (Myhill, 2005), the topics were pilot tested to determine whether ninth-grade students would have understanding, interest, and background knowledge of the two topics. Additionally, information packets were provided for the students on each topic to assist them in planning and to guard against false results due to students' lack of background knowledge. These information packets were examined by an experienced English teacher to determine whether they provided a balance of fact so that students would be able to argue from either point of view on each topic. The essays were scored during two rounds of blind scoring: one using the *NAEP Grade 12 Persuasive Scoring Guide*, which is a focused holistic scoring instrument; and the other using a researcher-created persuasive trait analytic scale. ANOVA procedures were used to analyze the quantitative results. Eight purposefully

selected students, four from each instructional treatment group (two males and two females per group), were interviewed before the instructional unit began and again after it was completed to add students' voices to the analysis of the quantitative results. Triangulation of data using this mix of methodologies helped to protect against threats to validity and reliability.

A Discussion of the Results

In this section, I will discuss the results of the study as they relate to the research questions.

Overall Persuasive Writing Improvement

The results of the holistic scoring using the *NAEP Grade 12 Persuasive Scoring Guide* revealed that no statistically significant gain was made by the group of students who analyzed and imitated nonfiction persuasive text models (the models group) during the instructional unit on persuasive writing. Although the students in the models group did show promising results, with a greater mean score gain than the non-models group, the results were not significant at the $p < 0.05$ level. One interesting result of the study was the fact that although the non-models group began with a higher mean pretest score (3.79) than the models group (3.39), the models group outscored the non-models group on the posttest, with a mean score of 4.11. Although the results were not statistically significant, these students clearly made progress in their persuasive writing abilities over the course of the instructional unit, gaining nearly a full score point in 6 weeks.

Improvement in Students' Ability To Use Persuasive Strategies

Although holistic scoring using the *NAEP Grade 12 Persuasive Scoring Guide* was undertaken to address research question one, which examined the improvement in

overall quality of persuasive writing, scores on this holistic scoring instrument may also have reflected the successful use of individual persuasive strategies. An analysis of the holistic scores showed that both the models and non-models groups' posttest essays showed some overall improvement in persuasive writing quality, with a mean gain of 0.76 for the models group and a mean gain of 0.16 for the non-models group. The greater improvement in the holistic scores may reveal that students from the models group were better able to use persuasive strategies in a timed writing assessment, thus earning a higher mean holistic score during the posttest writing.

The researcher-created persuasive trait analytic scale was designed to assess the use of six specific persuasive strategies that were taught during the instructional unit. The six sub-questions for research question two corresponded to these six strategies. An analysis of the results revealed that there was no statistically significant difference in the models and the non-models groups' ability to use the persuasive strategies described on the persuasive trait scale, with the exception of one trait, the ability to appeal to an audience. In the audience appeal category, the models group scored significantly higher than the non-models group at the $p < 0.01$ level. An analysis of the mean score gains in each category revealed that both the models and the non-models groups scored higher for each trait on the posttest essays than on the pretest essays. For the models group, these results varied from a mean gain of only 0.059 in the ability to appeal to emotions category to the statistically significant gain in the audience appeals category described above. The non-models group also showed mean gains ranging from 0.158 in the use of logical appeals to 0.0579 in both the use of ethical appeals and in the ability to take a side. Although the only statistically significant gain for the models group was in the

audience appeals category, it is important to note that the models group did show slightly higher mean gains than the non-models group in all categories, with the exception of the use of appeals to emotions. These results suggest that the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts gave the models group a slightly better ability to use persuasive strategies in their writing, but the lack of statistically significant results in all categories, with the exception of audience appeals, may indicate that strategies instruction in general, and not the use of models, was the main cause for improvement in the students' abilities to use persuasive strategies.

The qualitative section of the study was also designed to elicit information on the students' ability to use persuasive strategies. Eight purposefully selected students, four from each instructional group, were interviewed before and after the instructional unit. Pre- and posttest essays by each of the eight students were analyzed to determine improvement and evidence of the use of persuasive strategies. The essay results were analyzed in conjunction with the students' interview responses to gain a fuller picture of how their learning and attitudes before, during, and after the instructional unit was reflected in their essays.

The first round of interviews took place before the instructional unit, and was designed to elicit background information on students' knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about persuasion and writing instruction. The following results and themes emerged from the first round of interviews:

1. The students were first asked to describe their feelings and actions when assigned to write a paper. Of the eight students, four described writing as a chore and the other four said that they enjoyed writing. The students who

described writing as a chore all mentioned the type of writing required by the teacher as an important factor in their feelings about writing. The students were unable to describe their actions when beginning a paper, instead focusing on their feelings about the assignment.

2. Next, the students were asked if the type of writing assignment made a difference in their ability to write the paper. Six of the eight students said that the type of writing did make a difference in their ability to write a paper. These students preferred open-ended, creative assignments to expository writing. Of these six students, five mentioned the difficulty of expository writing, particularly doing research to gather information. Bob, one of the two students for whom writing type was not a factor, focused instead on his own discourse knowledge, saying, "If it's persuasive or expository it doesn't matter as long as I know what I am doing." For Steve, topic choice mattered more than the type of writing. Overall, the students' responses indicated that type of writing assignment can be viewed as an important factor in students' ability to write an assigned essay. Students' background knowledge, of both the conventions of the writing form and factual information about the topic, was also a key factor in their feelings about being assigned a writing task.
3. The students were next asked to discuss their backgrounds with persuasion. All eight of the students mentioned some type of background in persuasion, from writing persuasive letters in prior years of school to using persuasive skills in door-to-door sales. One particularly interesting theme that emerged from this question was that all of the students readily identified persuasion with both

speaking and writing. The social constructionist and constructivist underpinnings of the instructional unit gave all of the students the chance to use verbal persuasive skills as they learned about written persuasion in cooperative groups, possibly further strengthening this connection for them. One surprise was that none of the students identified the thesis-based argument writing required in their English and social studies classes with persuasive writing. All of the students who took part in the interviews showed awareness of the audience-focused nature of persuasion, which may have been a cause for the distinction they made between persuasive writing and the argument writing they had been doing for English and social studies. The students' focus on the concept of convincing an audience as part of persuasive writing may have resulted in the significant improvement in the use of audience appeal strategies for the models group. This theme may offer an important insight to the teachers at this school: namely, that the connections between persuasion and argument could be made more explicit to the students within English classes, and the similarities between the writing they are asked to do in English and social studies should be discussed. The students' responses seemed to show that they perceived the writing assignments from different units and disciplines as unrelated, which may result in difficulty in transferring a familiar writing schema to new writing situations.

4. The students were asked about their levels of confidence in their ability to persuade in writing. Again, four out of the eight students were very confident about their ability. Of these four, three were students who had described

writing as a chore earlier in the interview. This may reveal that students who are confident about a particular type of writing do not necessarily enjoy school writing tasks. Of the four students, two of them described their skills in verbal persuasion as reason to be confident about doing well with written persuasion, again underscoring the connection the students made between written and spoken persuasion. The other students all mentioned topic and background knowledge as reasons for their lack of confidence about their ability to persuade. None of the students mentioned knowledge of persuasive strategies as a reason for being confident, although two students did describe past classroom instruction as a factor in their confidence levels.

5. The students were asked if they believed that classroom instruction in writing could help them become better writers. Although all eight of the students answered affirmatively, two of them included qualifiers recommending that teachers need to allow students “freedom.” Overall, the students equated instruction with writing practice and with learning the characteristics of various writing forms. None of the students mentioned learning writing *strategies*, but one student did volunteer that reading and analyzing model texts was a helpful part of classroom instruction.
6. The students were next asked whether they preferred having a model to guide them when writing or whether they preferred complete freedom. Half of the students were enthusiastic about models, calling them helpful, while the other half preferred freedom. One theme emerged from their responses to this question: All of the students seemed to equate the term *model* with an outline

or a template for how to organize a specific type of paper rather than a text model by another writer. This definition suggested the possibility that the students equated quality writing with formulaic patterns for organization based on previous school instruction. Although troubling, this view of models is not surprising. At this school, students in ninth grade are introduced to the five-paragraph essay formula in English class and to a related formula for their social studies essays. The earlier discussions by two students about teachers allowing students to have writing freedom may have also been caused by the students' view of writing instruction as learning a specific formula. Because of the students' and the researcher's differing definitions of the term *model*, their responses to this question cannot be used to make inferences about their view of text models as instructional tools.

The students were interviewed after the instructional unit was completed, to gather information on their impressions of the instructional unit and their metacognitive awareness of changes in their knowledge about persuasive writing. The following information and themes emerged from their responses:

1. The students were asked whether they felt more confident about their ability to persuade in writing after the instructional unit. All eight agreed that they felt much more confident in their abilities. Seven of the students mentioned their new knowledge of persuasive writing strategies as a factor in their confidence levels. This may indicate that the instructional unit, whether it included models or not, helped students learn to use strategies with confidence. Of the students from the models group, three mentioned strategies directly, while one student

may have been referring to strategies when she said, “We’ve touched base on ...different kinds of persuasive things.” All of the non-models students mentioned strategies instruction as important to their confidence. The students in the models group did not mention the analysis and imitation of models as a reason for their confidence, although one student may have been alluding to the analysis of models when she listed different types of persuasive forms that she had studied in class. The students’ responses to this question may reveal that students remembered the content knowledge (persuasive strategies) more readily than the method of instruction (analysis and imitation of models), yet their clear confidence about their ability to use this content knowledge in their writing may indicate that the method of instruction was helpful, despite the fact that they did not mention it. The differing definitions of the term *model* that came out of the first round of interviews may also have been a lingering reason that none of the students used the term *model* in response to this question. Although the term was used throughout the instructional unit to refer to text models, the students may have maintained their earlier definition of the term when discussing the use of models in the interview setting, or they may not have been confident about their new understanding of the term.

2. When asked to describe which part or parts of the unit helped them the most, all eight of the students mentioned the persuasive strategies they learned during the course of the unit. Three students mentioned the persuasive research project as a helpful learning experience, with two of them describing the class critique of their oral presentations of their rough drafts as a key element of their

learning. Again, none of the students from the models group mentioned the analysis or imitation of models. As in the question above, this may indicate that the students remembered specific content knowledge better than the instructional strategies used to teach it. The students' enthusiasm for persuasive strategies throughout their second-round interview responses was an interesting result. During the interviews, the students' responses showed that they seemed to view the strategies as a set of tools that they could use to improve their writing, while still maintaining the freedom and creativity that they mentioned during the first round of interviews. This may be a valuable finding for teachers of ninth-grade honors students, who seek to find a balance between teaching students the characteristics of academic or expository writing while still allowing them room for the creativity and freedom they seem to desire as writers.

3. Next, the students were asked which part of the unit was least helpful to them. The students offered a variety of responses to this question, with only one element of the instruction being mentioned by more than two students. Two students, one from each group, were positive about everything in the unit, offering no specific element as least helpful. It is possible that these students may have been unwilling to criticize the unit to the researcher, or they may truly have found all of the lessons helpful. The Toulmin model was described as least helpful by three students, two from the non-models group and one from the models group. The responses of the two non-models group members revealed that they seemed to think the Toulmin model was a repressive

template that restricted their freedom as writers. The models group used the Toulmin model to analyze and critique model editorials by student writers, so they may have seen this as less of a repressive template and more of an instructional tool. Two students described the pre and posttest assessments as unhelpful, and one student from the models group said that reading persuasive writing by other writers was the least helpful. It may be important that none of the students mentioned the instruction in strategies as the least helpful part of the unit. There seemed to be a very positive view of the instruction in strategies among all the students.

4. The students were asked whether they thought their participation in the interviews had affected their behavior during the unit in any way. Two students from each group answered that it had no effect on them, with three of them giving fairly detailed explanations of how little the interviews had changed their behavior. The remaining students all said that their participation helped them to focus their attention on the unit in a positive way.
5. The students in each group were asked their opinion on the instructional group in which they participated: models or non-models. Because of the differing definitions of the term *model* in the initial interviews, the term was explained to mean a text model in the context of the research before the question was asked. All four of the students in the models group were positive about the use of models as an instructional tool. Their responses showed that they understood that the models were the text examples that they analyzed and imitated. One theme emerged from their answers: the idea that the models helped them to

“see” or “hear” what effective persuasive writing would look or sound like.

Despite being given a definition of the term *model*, the non-models group still seemed to believe that models were repressive guidelines for writing in a very specific, teacher-defined form. Three of the students in this group were happy not to have been subjected to models, revealing through their responses that they felt a model would have curtailed their freedom. The final non-models student, who also held the template view of models, wished that he could have had a model to help him write, “because I like structure a lot.” Overall, the students’ responses to this question revealed that their conception of the term *model* only changed through exposure to model text passages in class.

Limitations of the Study

I acknowledge the following limitations of the study: (1) the use of intact honors-level classes, (2) the sample size, (3) instructor bias, (4) the length of the instructional unit, (5) interrater reliability levels, and (6) the nature of the writing assessment.

Intact Classes

Because the study involved intact classes, the sample of students was not random. Huck and Cormier (1996) and Gall et al. (1996) have noted that nonrandomized designs may lead to lower internal validity than a true experimental design using randomization. Unfortunately, working within the limitations of the school system meant that I could not use random sampling. Therefore, the non-randomized nature of the intact classes somewhat limits the generalizability of the study.

The school system in which the study took place had an open-enrollment policy for honors-level classes. Under the open-enrollment policy, any student could choose to take

honors English without passing a placement exam or obtaining a teacher recommendation. Students who were motivated to excel in school often chose the honors track; however, this policy also allowed students with low skill levels to attempt honors classes. The combination of the use of intact classes and the open-enrollment policy for honors classes meant that I could not control for previous experience with persuasive writing, cognitive ability, or writing ability. The choice of honors classes limits the generalizability of the results only to similarly motivated students in open-enrollment honors programs.

The results of interview portion of the study were also limited by the use of intact classes. Three out of the four students in the non-models group had been identified as Gifted and Talented (GT) students earlier in their lives, two in third grade and one in middle school. These three students were all educated in the school system's GT Centersystem until entering high school. The students in the non-models group and the one remaining student in the models group all identified ninth grade as their first experience with an honors-level class. This disparity in the students' educational backgrounds may have influenced the result of the study.

Sample Size

Pragmatic considerations dictated that I had access to only two classes of students. The state in which the study took place imposed a cap of 24 students per class in English courses. Of the two classes used for the study, one was comprised of 24 students and the other class was made up of 25 students. Of these 49 students, only 39 agreed to participate in the study. Huck and Cormier (1996) and Gall et al. (1996) have recommended that sample sizes be large enough to ensure powerful statistical analysis.

The sample size in this study was a limitation. Finally, because only eight purposefully selected students were interviewed for the qualitative portion of the study, the results of the interviews are limited in their generalizability.

Instructor Bias

The fact that the instructional units were taught to both the experimental group and the comparison group by one experienced ninth-grade teacher may have been a limitation if the instructor unknowingly revealed that she preferred one instructional method over the other when teaching. The instructor was made aware of this limitation and agreed to maintain neutrality about the two instructional methods. Additionally, she agreed not to discuss what each class was learning with the other class. During three classroom observations, I did not observe the instructor privileging one method over the other; however, she may have done so inadvertently when I was not present.

Length of the Instructional Unit

In order to fit the instructional unit into the school curriculum for Honors English 9, the instructional unit had to be completed in 6 weeks. Although this is a typical number of weeks to spend on a unit at this school, students may have benefited from longer and more in-depth instruction in persuasive writing. The school curriculum also required that the instructor devote part of each week's instructional time to a literature unit. This further reduced the amount of class time available for the instructional unit, making the length of the instructional unit a possible limitation of the study.

Interrater Reliability Levels

The interrater reliability levels were limitations. According to Deiderich (1974) reliability coefficients of .90 or above are sufficient for measuring individual growth in

teaching or research, and reliability coefficients of .80 or above are sufficient for program evaluation. During the holistic scoring sessions using the *NAEP Grade 12 Persuasive Scoring Guide*, the raters achieved a 92.7% rate of agreement with few essays needing group consensus to resolve scores. This level of interrater reliability allows some confidence in the use of the holistic scores for each essay. However, during the primary trait scoring sessions, the interrater reliabilities ranged from 80% to 96%. These levels of interrater reliability were only achieved through the use of adjacent scores. Reliability between raters without using adjacent scores was much lower, ranging from 35% to 52%. The primary trait scoring sessions did not proceed as smoothly, or with the same levels of reliability, as the holistic scoring sessions, making interrater reliability a limitation of the study in terms of the scores on the persuasive trait analytic scale.

Cooper (1977) asserted that, “When raters are from similar backgrounds and when they are trained with a holistic scoring guide—either one they borrow or devise for themselves on the spot—they can achieve nearly perfect agreement in choosing the better of a pair of essays: and they can achieve scoring reliabilities in the high eighties and low nineties on their summed scores from multiple piece of a student’s writing” (p. 19). The teachers who took part in the holistic scoring sessions came from very similar backgrounds, not just in terms of their teaching experiences and assignments, but in terms of their cultural backgrounds and educations. All of the holistic raters were from middle-class American backgrounds. Two of the four attended the same undergraduate English program and the same graduate school of education. All four had taught together for between 2 and 5 years and socialized outside of school as well. This group of teachers was from a school that required weekly grade-level team meetings for curricular planning

and grading discussions and bi-weekly vertical team meetings to promote vertical articulation of the English curriculum. The similarities in their backgrounds, as well as their frequent professional discussions of curriculum and grading issues, may perhaps have been factors in the high level of interrater reliability among this group of raters.

The same similarities of background and opportunities for collegial discussions were not present for the second set of raters, who scored the essays using the persuasive trait analytic scale. Although both of these teachers were experienced AP Language and Composition teachers, both with over fifteen years of experience, and both described as excellent teachers of writing by their administrators, they came from somewhat dissimilar backgrounds. One of the two raters had a background similar to the group from the first round of scoring: she was from a middle class American family and had attended the same university as two of the holistic raters. The other teacher from the analytic scoring session was raised in Germany and attended German and Scottish universities before moving to the United States to begin her teaching career. This dissimilarity in cultural and educational background may have accounted for some of the disagreement between these two raters. Other issues that might have caused less reliability between these two raters included the school in which they worked and their experiences as colleagues. These two teachers had worked in the same department for less than one year. Although both were experienced AP Language teachers, they had each spent the majority of their careers in different schools with different curricula. The school in which they both worked during the time of the scoring sessions could be characterized as non-collegial, with little experience of grade-level teamwork and no vertical teaming in place. In fact, both raters left the school at the end of that school year in search of more collegial and

professionally supportive work environments. Although these two teachers were friendly and looked to one another for collegial support during the year they worked together, their conversations were described by one of them as “gripe sessions” about the administration rather than professional sharing. Unlike the raters from the holistic session, who worked together on grading rubrics and took part in yearly grade-level common grading sessions, these two teachers had no similar experiences beyond training to score AP essays using the AP scoring guidelines. Using raters with more similar backgrounds for the persuasive trait analytic scoring may have resulted in more precise and reliable data. The one statistically significant area of gain made by the models group on the persuasive trait analytic scale was the ability to appeal to an audience. This was the trait with the second highest level of interrater reliability, with an agreement level of 94% when using adjacent scores. The lowest level of interrater reliability was for the trait “appeal to emotions.” In this category, the two raters achieved only 80% agreement when adjacent scores were accepted. The problems with interrater reliability during the scoring session for the persuasive trait analytic scale were a limitation of this study.

The Nature of the Writing Assessments

The time limit imposed on the pre- and posttest writing assessments, with students being asked to complete their essays in 50 minutes, was a limitation of the study. Time limits on essay assessments can have a negative effect on reliability (Zinn, 1988). However, White (1994) described a 45-minute time span for an essay as allowing time for “thoughtful, organized, and somewhat creative responses.” Another limitation is the one-shot pretest/posttest design. Although Cooper (1977) described the holistic and analytic evaluation of essays as useful for “growth measurement” (p. 20), according to

White (1994), a holistically scored pretest/posttest model should not be the only method of evaluating a writing program. White described this model as having “beneficial effects,” but recommended that it should not comprise the entire research design (p. 252). Both the length of time allowed for the writing assessments and the pretest/posttest design were limitations of the study.

Comparison of Results to Previous Research

The study was inspired by Geist’s (1996) use of imitation as an instructional strategy for teaching style in argumentative writing. Although Geist’s work is theoretical and descriptive in nature, the results of the present study somewhat support her anecdotal descriptions of the use of imitation. Of note was Geist’s description of the students’ sense of play as they imitated the model texts. This was also observed during the present study. Geist warned about the difficulty in detecting and describing stylistic phenomena in model texts. Perhaps because they were asked to look for persuasive strategies, rather than style in general, the students in the models group did not appear to have difficulty identifying or discussing the use of strategies in each model.

Much of the research base on models comes from Hillocks’s (1986) meta-analysis of experimental research on the use of models as an instructional strategy in writing. Hillocks reported that the use of models was not generally effective as a teaching strategy in writing instruction (Caplan & Keech, 1980; Martin, 1981; Pinkham, 1981; Sponsler, 1971; West, 1977). Hillocks noted that these studies used complex, often literary models, which may have obscured the use of specific writing strategies. Hillocks did find significant results when models were chosen to illustrate a limited number of specific writing features (Calhoun, 1971; Reedy, 1966; Rothstein, 1970). In the present study, text

models were selected to follow this recommendation, as well as Geist's description of student success with short text models chosen to illustrate specific strategies. However, the models group's lack of statistically significant improvement on the holistic scoring instrument reflected the lack of results found in some of the studies reported by Hillocks. The significant improvement by the models group on the audience analysis category of the persuasive trait analytic scale is in line with Hillocks's finding that the models strategy could show significant results in studies of the use of short text models using specific criteria for analysis. The present study adds to Yeh's (1998) finding that direct instruction in the use of pre-writing heuristics significantly improved students' use of voice and development in their argument essays by showing that direct instruction in audience-related strategies can significantly improve students' ability to appeal to an imagined audience in persuasive writing. Finally, the present study, notably the analytic scoring results and the examination of the interview responses and the interview students' essays, revealed different results than Durst, Laine, Schultz, and Wilter's (1990) findings that logical appeals and the use of five-paragraph structure correlated most closely with 11th- and 12th- grade students' holistic scores on persuasive essays. The students in both the models and the non-models groups used appeals to emotion and ethics as well as appeals to logic, and five-paragraph structure did not appear to be a striking characteristic of the students' essays. Although this school relied heavily on the five-paragraph form in writing instruction, the students' interview responses revealed that many of them had a desire for more freedom in the organization of their writing. As shown in the interview responses and the essays, the students' embraced the persuasive strategies, speaking enthusiastically about them in response to more than one question. It can be surmised that

the students may have shown such excitement about the strategies because they gave the students a set of tools for persuasive writing that each student could use creatively, shaping their essays according to their own ideas, rather than being limited to a prescribed format. The students' enjoyment of working with the strategies in class, and then their use of them in their writing, may be an important serendipitous finding of the study. It should be noted that these were all honors students, who may have been less reliant on a familiar writing structure than the general population. However, instruction in persuasive strategies, through models and imitation or other teaching methods, may provide a helpful middle ground between strict adherence to formulaic writing and complete, and possibly intimidating, amounts of freedom for student writers.

Other Possible Explanations for Results

Factors other than the instructional treatment may have influenced the results of the study. For example, the novelty of learning to use a form of writing that appeals to an audience other than their teacher may have been instrumental in building the students' enthusiasm for persuasive writing, leading to overall improvement on the posttest, and the models group's significant results on the audience appeals section of the persuasive trait scoring rubric. The cooperative nature of the instructional unit, which was designed to help students become a community of apprentices, may also have influenced the outcome of the study. As stated in the Limitations section of this chapter, the small sample size, which was dictated by pragmatic considerations, may have influenced the lack of significant results on the holistic scoring rubric. Finally, the teacher's enthusiasm for the instructional unit, coupled with her delight at having the chance to break away

from the more rigid writing curriculum of the school, may also have been a factor in the results.

Recommendations for Future Research and Practice

The interviews revealed the students' clear enthusiasm about persuasive strategies instruction. This positive result of the instructional unit, coupled with the overall improvement of both groups of students on the posttest essay, indicates, in general, that instruction in persuasive writing is beneficial for ninth-grade honors students. Although the results did not reveal that the specific instructional strategy being studied, the analysis and imitation of model persuasive texts, was a significantly successful instructional strategy, the models groups' strong gains in appealing to an audience and their 0.75 mean gain on the holistic scale both indicate that further research on the imitation and analysis of models as an instructional strategy would be worthwhile. The results of this study suggest several possibilities for future studies of persuasive writing instruction:

1. In future studies, it would be helpful to ascertain the students' prior definitions of terms related to the instructional unit, especially the term *model*, and to analyze how their perceptions about instruction affect their learning.
2. In future studies, it would be illuminating to ask students to re-read and comment on their essays during the interview portion of the study to gather more in-depth data about their use of strategies and their thinking as they wrote, or to use think aloud protocols with the students being interviewed as they write their pre- and posttest essays.

3. In future studies, it would be interesting to narrow the scope of the instructional unit to include only the three rhetorical strategies, as students who were interviewed all described them as the most helpful learning from the unit. Holistic gain scores could be compared with scores from this study to see if instruction in only the three rhetorical appeals would be just as efficacious in improving students' persuasive writing scores as the entire 6-week unit.
4. In future studies, it would be beneficial to focus more instructional time on the Toulmin model, perhaps working with students in 10th or 11th grade, after they had been exposed to an initial unit on persuasive writing in the 9th grade. Although the Toulmin model was the least favored part of the instructional unit for the students who were interviewed, perhaps students with more persuasive writing experience would find it more helpful.
5. In future studies, it would be interesting to compare instruction in the Toulmin model of argument with instruction in audience-based strategies. This could be accomplished by comparing two groups of students. One group would take part in an instructional unit focusing entirely on the Toulmin model of argument and the other would focus only on audience-based rhetorical strategies to see which aspect of persuasive instruction is more effective in increasing overall success in persuasive writing.
6. In future studies, it would be illuminating to determine what proportion of variance in the holistic writing scores was caused by each of the persuasive traits.

7. In future studies, it may prove helpful to have the same set of scorers complete both rounds of scoring.
8. In future studies, it would be beneficial to use a larger sample of students, with multiple teachers teaching the instructional unit, to determine whether models instruction continued to improve students' ability to appeal to an audience or if the results would differ.
9. In future studies, it would be interesting to look at students who are not in honors-level classes to see what effect the instructional unit and the study of models would have on their persuasive writing. These students may likely have fewer writing skills to call on, making the text models more helpful to them.
10. In future studies, it would be beneficial to use discourse analysis methodologies during the instructional sessions to compare the interactions of the students in the models and non-models groups. The models groups' discussions of the text models could be compared with the non-models discussions and critiques of their own group-created persuasive examples. It would be interesting to determine whether the non-models group actually did *more* work with persuasion than the models group because the non-models group had to both *create* and critique their own models.
11. In future studies, it would be beneficial to see if students would be more successful on the persuasive writing tasks if they had more topic choices. Perhaps having four topics available, so that students could choose

between two topics for each writing assessment would help students to feel more comfortable and to produce more text because they could choose a topic that appealed to them. In the interviews, students mentioned topic as an important factor in their feelings as they approached a writing assignment.

12. In future studies, it would be interesting to take a longitudinal approach, studying the students' growth over a longer period of time. Perhaps students could be taught the elements of persuasive writing over each of the four years of high school. Growth could be assessed through pre- and posttest writing samples each year, but data on SAT essay performance, AP Language exam scores, state standardized writing tests, and overall performance in English classes could also be gathered to gain a clearer picture of the ways in which students' knowledge of and ability to use persuasive writing grows over time.

Closing Remarks

This study contributes to the research base on persuasive writing instruction and on the research related to the use of models to teach writing. It suggests that the analysis and imitation of models as an instructional strategy in writing has merit and is worthy of further study. The improvement of the students in both instructional groups indicates that ninth-grade honors students can benefit from explicit instruction in persuasive writing. The students' enthusiasm for learning and using audience-based persuasive strategies was a surprising outcome of the study, indicating an area for additional research.

Skill in persuasive writing and speaking can help students in so many ways: in academic writing, in workplace writing, and on standardized tests such as the newly revised SAT. Knowledge of the strategies writers use to persuade audiences can help all students become wise consumers of information as they learn to see beneath the surface of persuasive writing and speaking to the persuasive structures that writers use to convince them to form specific viewpoints, buy certain products, or support certain political candidates. In the words of the National Commission on Writing, “Above all, armed with new strengths in analysis and logic, Americans will be better equipped to observe, think, and make judgments about the many complex and demanding issues that come before the citizenry in a democracy” (p. 18). Instruction in persuasive writing must become an important part of today’s secondary language arts curriculum. This study and future research on the most engaging and effective strategies to teach students to become successful persuasive writers will provide valuable insight into how persuasive writing instruction can best be infused into American secondary schools.

Appendix A

Writing Prompt: Driving Age

Should the driving age be raised?

The _____ State Legislature is thinking about raising the minimum driving age to eighteen. You have the opportunity to write an editorial to support your views on this topic for a local newspaper.

Using the fact sheet provided, as well as your own background knowledge on the topic, write an editorial essay to persuade the readers of the newspaper to support your viewpoint on this issue.

Your audience includes all readers of the newspaper, who are residents of the _____ community.

Be as persuasive as possible as you try to get the readers to take action on this issue in support of your viewpoint.

Appendix B

Writing Prompt: School Uniforms

Should _____ County Public Schools require high school students to wear uniforms?

The _____ County School Board is considering a plan to require all high school students to wear uniforms to school. You have the opportunity to write an editorial for a local newspaper stating your views on the subject.

Using the fact sheet provided, as well as your own background knowledge on the topic, write an editorial essay to persuade the readers of the newspaper to support your viewpoint on this issue.

Your audience includes all readers of the newspaper, who are residents of the _____ County community.

Be as persuasive as possible as you try to get the readers to take action on this issue in support of your viewpoint.

Appendix C

NAEP Grade 12 Persuasive Scoring Guide

6 Excellent Response

- Takes a clear position and supports it consistently with well-chosen reasons and/or examples; may use persuasive strategy to convey an argument.
- Is focused and well organized, with effective use of transitions.
- Consistently exhibits variety in sentence structure and precision in word choice.
- Errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation are few and do not interfere with understanding.

5 Skillful Response

- Takes a clear position and supports it with pertinent reasons and/or examples through much of the response.
- Is well organized, but may lack some transitions.
- Exhibits some variety in sentence structure and uses good word choice; occasionally, words may be used inaccurately.
- Errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation do not interfere with understanding.

4 Sufficient Response

- Takes a clear position and supports it with some pertinent reasons and/or examples; there is some developments.
- Is generally organized, but has few or no transitions among parts.
- Sentence structure may be simple and unvaried; word choice is mostly accurate.
- Errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation do not interfere with understanding.

3 Uneven Response (may be characterized by one or more of the following:)

- Takes a position and provides uneven support; may lack development in parts or be repetitive OR response is no more than a well-written beginning.
- Is organized in parts of the response; other parts are disjointed and/or lack transitions.
- Exhibits uneven control over sentence boundaries and sentence structure; may exhibit some inaccurate word choices.
- Errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation sometimes interfere with understanding.

2 Insufficient Response (may be characterized by one or more of the following:)

- Takes a position but response is very undeveloped.
- Is disorganized or unfocused in much of the response OR clear but very brief.
- Minimal control over sentence boundaries and sentence structure; word choice may often be inaccurate.
- Errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation interfere with understanding in much of the response.

1 Unsatisfactory Response (may be characterized by one or more of the following:)

- Attempts to take a position (addresses topic), but position is very unclear OR takes a position, but provides minimal or no support; may only paraphrase the prompt.
- Exhibits little or no apparent organization.
- Minimal or no control over sentence boundaries and sentence structure; word choice may be inaccurate in much or all of the response.
- Errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation severely impede understanding across the response.

Appendix D

Persuasive Trait Scoring Guide

Essay Code:

	<p>Clearly takes a side</p> <p>1 strategy not used</p> <p>2 strategy used only minimally and/or ineffectively</p> <p>3 strategy used with some positive effect</p> <p>4 strategy used to good effect</p> <p>5 strategy used with excellent effect</p>
	<p>Using emotional appeals</p> <p>1 strategy not used</p> <p>2 strategy used only minimally and/or ineffectively</p> <p>3 strategy used with some positive effect</p> <p>4 strategy used to good effect</p> <p>5 strategy used with excellent effect</p>
	<p>Using logical appeals</p> <p>1 strategy not used</p> <p>2 strategy used only minimally and/or ineffectively</p> <p>3 strategy used with some positive effect</p> <p>4 strategy used to good effect</p> <p>5 strategy used with excellent effect</p>
	<p>Using ethical appeals</p> <p>1 strategy not used</p> <p>2 strategy used only minimally and/or ineffectively</p> <p>3 strategy used with some positive effect</p> <p>4 strategy used to good effect</p> <p>5 strategy used with excellent effect</p>
	<p>Audience awareness</p> <p>1 strategy not used</p> <p>2 strategy used only minimally and/or ineffectively</p> <p>3 strategy used with some positive effect</p> <p>4 strategy used to good effect</p> <p>5 strategy used with excellent effect</p>
	<p>Refuting the opposing viewpoint</p> <p>1 strategy not used</p> <p>2 strategy used only minimally and/or ineffectively</p> <p>3 strategy used with some positive effect</p> <p>4 strategy used to good effect</p> <p>5 strategy used with excellent effect</p>

Appendix E

Initial Open-Ended Interview Script

1. Describe your thoughts and actions when you are assigned to write a paper for school.
2. Does the type of writing assignment make a difference in your ability to write the paper?
3. Describe your background with persuasion. What type of experience have you had with convincing someone to think or do something?
4. Do you feel confident about your ability to persuade in writing? Why or why not?
5. Do you believe that classroom instruction in writing can help you to become a better writer? Why or why not?
6. Do you find it easier to write a paper if you have a model to guide you or do you prefer total freedom? Explain.

Appendix F

Follow-Up Open-Ended Interview Script

1. Do you feel more confident about your ability to persuade in writing now that the persuasive writing unit is complete? Why or why not?
2. Describe the part or parts of the unit that you believe helped you improve your persuasive writing the MOST.
3. Describe the part or parts of the unit that you believe helped you to improve your persuasive writing the LEAST.
4. Do you think that your participation in the initial interview affected your attitude or behavior during the unit in any way?
5. What are your thoughts about the instructional method your class experienced-models or non-models?

Appendix G

Parental Consent Forms

Letter to Parents and Guardians

Dear Parents or Guardians:

Your child's Honors English 9 class has been selected to be included in a study I will be completing during 2003/2004 school year for my doctoral dissertation at the University of Maryland. Principal _____ and the _____ County Research Screening Committee have approved this study for _____ High School.

Project Title

The Effects of Honors Ninth-Grade Students' Strategic, Analytical Reading of Persuasive Text Models on the Quality of their Persuasive Writing

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the effects of an instructional unit designed to improve students' persuasive writing. All students will take part in the unit as part of their normal English instruction for the school year. Ms. _____ will be teaching the instructional unit as part of her normal Honors English 9 curriculum, and all students will complete two writing assignments, which will be graded by Ms. _____ as part of the normal curriculum. You are being asked to give consent for your child's two essays to also be scored by trained raters, who will be _____ County English teachers, and included in the study.

Measures/Data

Students will write one in-class essay before the unit begins, and one at the conclusion of the unit. You are being asked to consent to the use of these essays for the study. With your consent, two of your child's essays will be photocopied and scored by trained raters. Following the regulations of _____ County Public Schools and the University of Maryland, all writing samples will be kept confidential. Students will type their essays during class and label them with randomly selected code numbers before they are used for the study.

I would also like to interview a small number of students about their writing processes, their background knowledge of persuasive writing, and their thoughts about the essays they produce. Although as an educator, I regularly speak with students about their writing, I need to seek your approval before I can use this information in my dissertation. By giving your consent for your child to participate in this study, you are giving permission for your child to volunteer to be interviewed. Of the group of students who volunteer, four students will be randomly selected for the interviews.

Risks

Risks to the students include teacher coercion, peer pressure and confidentiality. Students may feel coerced into participating in the study because their teacher asks them to do so. Ms. _____ will minimize this risk by assuring them during class that their grades will not be affected in any way by their decision to participate or not. Students may also be at risk because they will feel peer pressure to participate. I have designed the procedures for collecting the consent forms and the two writing samples so that students will remain as anonymous as possible to alleviate any peer pressure they might face. Finally, students may be at risk because of issues of confidentiality. Confidentiality will be maintained in the ways listed in the confidentiality section below.

Benefits

By agreeing to allow your child to participate in this study, you will be helping to advance our knowledge of how persuasive writing can most effectively be taught.

Confidentiality

Following the regulations of _____ County Public Schools and the University of Maryland, all information about the students who participate in the study will be kept anonymous. All writing samples used for the study will be kept confidential. Students will type their essays during class and label them with randomly selected code numbers before they are used for the study. Students' names will not be used to label their interview responses. Students' will not be mentioned by name at any stage of the study.

Freedom to Withdraw

You may request that your child be removed from the study at any time with no penalty, and their essays will not be used for the study, nor will any interview responses be collected from them or used for the study. Your child will not be penalized in any way if you choose not to consent to the use of their essays or to the interview.

Conclusion

Feel free to call or email me if you have any further questions or concerns about the study, either before the study begins or during the course of the study. Please complete the attached permission slip and return it by January 16th, 2004.

With thanks,

Jennifer Beach
 Secondary Language Arts Specialist
 Office of High School Instruction
 7423 Camp Alger Ave.
 Falls Church, VA 22042
 Fairfax County Public Schools
 Phone: 703-208-7707
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Dissertation Advisor:
 Prof. Wayne H. Slater
 College of Education
 2311 Benjamin Building
 University of Maryland
 College Park, MD 20742-1175
 Phone: 301-405-3128
 Email: wslater@umd.edu

Signature Form

I, _____, (please print your name) understand all of the information about the conduct of this study as described above, and I

(check your preference here)

_____ agree

_____ disagree

to have my child, _____, (please print your child's name) participate in this research. I also understand that, should I consent, I may withdraw that consent at any time without penalty.

Signature _____ Date _____

(Please initial and date each page, indicate whether you agree to have your child participate in the study or not, sign this form, and sign the Parent/Guardian Consent Form. Please return the entire packet by January 16, 2004.)

Parent/Guardian Consent Form

I, _____ (please print your name), give permission for two essays written by my child, _____ (please print your child's name), to be used for a study on persuasive writing instruction to be conducted at _____ High School. I further give permission for my child to be interviewed about writing, if my child volunteers for this portion of the study.

I understand that my child's identity will be kept confidential and will not be reported in the findings of this study. I am also aware that I may request, without penalty and at any time, that my child's writing not be used in this study and/or that they not be interviewed.

Parent or Guardian Signature

Date

Appendix H

Student Assent Form

Introduction	Your Honors English 9 class has been selected to be included in a doctoral dissertation study which will be completed during the 2003/2004 school year. Principal _____ and the _____ County Research Screening Committee have approved this study for _____ High School.
Project Title	The Effects of Honors Ninth Grade Students' Strategic, Analytical Reading of Persuasive Text Models on the Quality of their Persuasive Writing
Purpose of the Study	The purpose of the study is to investigate the effects of an instructional unit designed to improve students' persuasive writing.
Measures/Data	<p>All students will take part in the unit as part of their normal English instruction for the school year. Students will write one in-class essay before the unit begins, and one at the conclusion of the unit. You are being asked to assent to the use of these two essays for the study. With your assent, two of your essays will be photocopied and scored by trained raters.</p> <p>I would also like to interview a small number of students about their writing processes, their background knowledge of persuasive writing, and their thoughts about the essays they produce. Students who choose to participate in the study may volunteer for the interview portion of the study. Of the group of students who volunteer, four students will be randomly selected for the interviews.</p>
Procedures	Ms. _____ will be teaching the instructional unit as part of her normal Honors English 9 curriculum, and all students will complete the two writing assignments, which will be graded by Ms. _____ as part of the normal curriculum. You are being asked to give consent for two of your essays to also be scored by trained raters, who will be _____ County English teachers, and included in the study. The essays will be written in class, and you will not be required to spend time beyond the class period in order to participate in the study. If you volunteer, and are

selected, to be interviewed, you will make an appointment to stay after school or during lunch on two occasions. The interview sessions will last approximately thirty to forty-five minutes.

Risks

Risks to the students include teacher coercion, peer pressure and confidentiality. Your grades will not be affected in any way by your decision to participate or not, so you should not feel obligated to give your assent just because your teacher asks you to participate. There is also a risk that you will feel peer pressure to participate. I have designed the procedures for collecting the consent forms and the two writing samples so that students who participate will remain as anonymous as possible to alleviate any peer pressure. Finally, you may be at risk because of issues of confidentiality. To guard against this risk, confidentiality will be maintained in the ways listed in the Confidentiality section below.

Benefits

By agreeing to participate in this study, you will be helping to advance teachers' and researchers' knowledge of how persuasive writing can most effectively be taught.

Confidentiality

Following the regulations of _____ County Public Schools and the University of Maryland, all information about the students who participate in the study will be kept anonymous. All writing samples used for the study will be kept confidential. Students will type their essays during class and label them with randomly selected code numbers before they are used for the study. Students' names will not be used to label their interview responses. Students' will not be mentioned by name at any stage of the study.

Freedom to Withdraw

You may withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty, and your essays will not be used for the study, nor will any interview responses be collected from you or used for the study. You will not be penalized in any way if you choose not to consent to the use of your essays for the study or to the interview. You will be required to complete the unit and the essays as a part of the regular curriculum for Honors English 9.

Ability to Ask Questions

You may ask questions about the study at any time during the course of the unit.

Student Assent Form

I, _____, (print your name) understand all of the information about the conduct of this study as described above, and I (check your preference here)

_____ agree

_____ disagree

to participate in this research. I also understand that I may withdraw my assent to participate at any time without penalty.

Student Name _____ Date _____
(please print)

Appendix I

Driving Age Information Packet

Driving Age Fact Sheet

Current Virginia Driving Age Laws: from: www.dmv.state.va.us

You must be 15 years and 6 months of age to get your learner's permit. This allows you to drive with

- ❖ a close relative who is a licensed driver and over 18 years of age in the car with you
- ❖ any licensed driver over age 21.

Required Knowledge and Tests for a License- If you are under 19 years old, you must pass a vision screening and a two-part knowledge exam, and you must provide proof that you passed a state-approved driver education program and received 40 hours of driving practice.

Curfew- If you are under 18, you are prohibited from driving midnight to 4:00 a.m., except in special situations, such as returning home from work or in an emergency.

Passenger Restrictions- Drivers under 18 may only carry one passenger under 18 during their first year with a license. After that, you may carry three passengers under 18 until you turn 18.

Teen Driving Statistics: from <http://drivehomesafe.com>

- ❖ 14% of deaths due to car accidents are teenagers.
- ❖ 53% of all teenage deaths due to car accidents occur on weekends
- ❖ 45% of the time, teen drivers killed in motor vehicle accidents had a teen passenger in the car at the time
- ❖ Teens have the highest crash risk of any age group, especially among 16 year olds who have limited driving experience
- ❖ Crashes involving 16 year olds most often are caused by driver error
- ❖ Crashes due to drunk driving are higher among older drivers than teens
- ❖ Teenagers are less likely to use seat belts

What Other States are Doing:

- ❖ 33 other states have adopted a graduated licenses system with fewer driving privileges until the driver turns 18, and tough laws which take away teens'

licenses for any minor driving offense. 12 states are considering adopting similar plans

Teens and the workforce

- ❖ Teenagers who work at least 10 hours per week have higher GPAs and test scores than nonworking teens
- ❖ Teens who work in high school and continue their educations will earn more money in their twenties than their nonworking peers, possibly because of the job skills and responsibility they practiced as teens.
- ❖ Jobs provide teens with social skills, experience, ethics, and money management skills.

Statistics on Teens in the Workforce

- ❖ Percentage of teens who work increases with age.
- ❖ More teens work in the summer than during the school year.
- ❖ Most popular industries for teens are retail (62%) and services (25%)

Employment Activity of High School Students

- ❖ During the school year, the average working 16 year old worked 15 hours per week. The average working 18 year old worked 21 hours per week.
- ❖ During summer vacation, the average working 16 year old worked 20 hours per week. The average working 18 year old worked 26 hours per week.

Who works most among 15-17 year olds?

- ❖ During the school year and the summer, 16 year olds do.

According to the US Department of Labor:

- ❖ Teen participation in the labor force is declining
- ❖ Between 1994 and 2000, the percentage of teens who worked during the summer fell from 57% to 51%
- ❖ Between 1994 and 2000, the percentage of teens who worked during the school year fell from 42.1% to 37.8%

Appendix J

School Uniforms Information Packet

A Research Article on School Uniforms by Researchers at the University of Notre Dame:

- ❖ Mandatory uniforms in public school have been a recent topic of interest.
- ❖ Proponents of uniforms say they are beneficial for behavior and academics.
- ❖ Their study of tenth graders from The National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 tested the claims made by uniform advocates.
- ❖ They found that that student uniforms have no direct effect on substance use, behavioral problems, or attendance.
- ❖ In fact, they found “a negative effect of uniforms on student academic achievement.”
- ❖ They said that uniforms may “indirectly affect school environments and student outcomes by providing a visible and public symbol of commitment to school improvement and reform.”

From: Brunnsma, D.L. & Rockquemore, K.A. (1998). Effects of Student Uniforms on Attendance, Behavior Problems, Substance Abuse, and Academic Achievement. *The Journal of Education Research*, 92, 53-62.

History of Uniforms in Public Schools

- ❖ Cherry Hill Elementary in the inner-city in Baltimore was the first school to adopt uniforms in 1987.
- ❖ Long Beach Unified School District in California adopted uniforms for ALL schools in 1994. Since then, assaults in grades K-8 have gone down by 85 %.
- ❖ In 1996, President Clinton advocated uniforms as a way to keep schools safe, during his State of the Union address. After than, uniforms in public schools began to grow quickly.
- ❖ According to Promowear, "Market-research company the NDP Group Inc. reports that school-uniform sales rose by 22 percent in 2000, reaching \$1.1 billion, compared to \$900 million in 1999." (March/April 2002)

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) published these facts:

- ❖ "Adopting uniforms should be a school-by-school decision," says Vincent L. Ferrandino, NAESP's executive director. "Schools should engage the whole school community in the discussion on whether or not to introduce uniforms. It should not be a top-down decision. If adopted, uniform policies should allow for religious expression and provide financial assistance for families in need.
- ❖ Principals reported positive effects from uniform policies on:

- School's image in the community
- Classroom discipline
- Peer pressure
- School spirit
- Concentration on school work
- Student safety

Pros and cons from the NAESP website:

Pros:

reduce violence
 reduce gang presence
 increase school safety
 increase school attendance
 improve grades
 provide financial benefits for parents
 make economic differences between students less discernible

Cons:

have no effect on safety or violence without other discipline policies
 have no direct bearing on students' academic achievement
 teach an undesirable lesson about individuality and making choices based on internal values
 may mask risky behaviors (*e.g.*, gang participation)
 violate students' rights to free expression

How many schools have uniform policies?

- ❖ As of 1997 only 3% of public schools required uniforms, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the U.S. Department of Education.

Costs

- ❖ In 1998 parents spent an average of \$185 per child on non-uniform clothes
- ❖ In 1998 parents spent an average of \$104 per child on uniforms.
Source: USA Today, October 15, 1998
- ❖ The price range for a uniform in 2002 was \$25-\$40.
Source: Wall Street Journal, August 9, 2002

No Uniforms

- ❖ In recent years, some schools are already giving up their uniform policies for various reasons.

Source: "Plaid's Out, Again, As Schools Give Up Requiring Uniforms" by Kate Zernike, The New York Times, September 13, 2002.

Pros and cons from the NAESP

Proponents say uniforms:

- reduce violence
- reduce gang presence
- increase school safety
- increase school attendance
- improve grades
- provide financial benefits for parents
- make economic differences between students less discernible

Critics say uniforms:

- have no effect on safety or violence without other discipline policies
- have no direct bearing on students' academic achievement
- teach an undesirable lesson about individuality and making choices based on internal values
- may mask risky behaviors (e.g., gang participation)
- violate students' rights to free expression

Things to Remember about Adopting School Uniforms

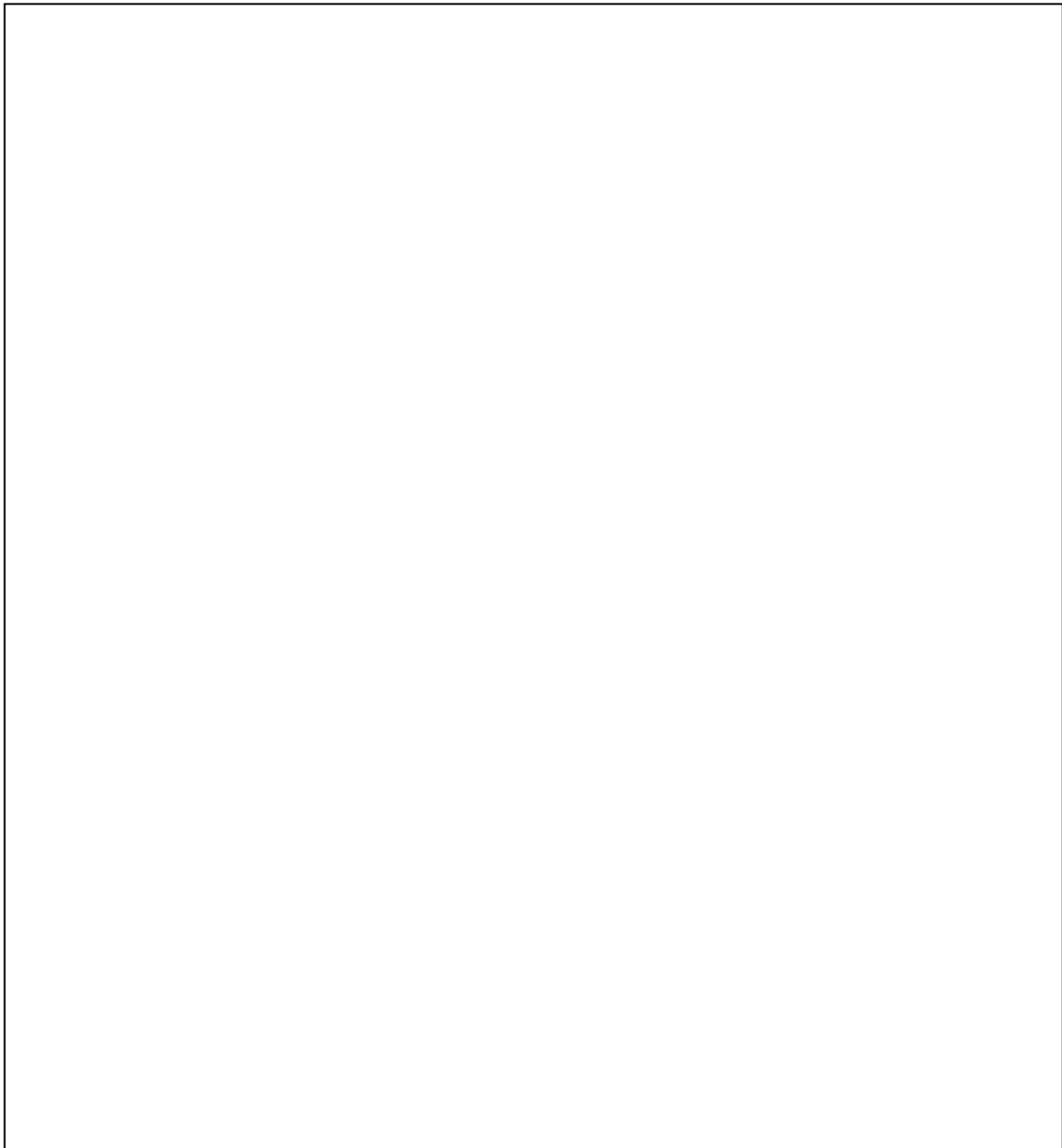
- ❖ Get parents involved in the decision and make sure they support the policy
- ❖ Students' religious expression rights must be respected. Under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act students must be allowed to wear articles of clothing for religious reasons, such as head scarves or yarmulkes.
- ❖ Protect students' rights of free expression. Students may wear things such as a political button, as long as it doesn't disrupt learning. School uniform policies can prohibit students from wearing, for example, a button displaying a gang sign, or anything that undermines their uniform's proper look.
- ❖ Some schools have mandatory policies in which all students are required to wear uniforms. Other schools allow students to choose to wear uniforms or their own clothing.
- ❖ Many schools have an "opt out" policy so that parents can choose whether their children participate. Some schools decide not to do this to ensure that all students dress in uniform.
- ❖ Make sure families with limited incomes get help with the purchase of uniforms. Help could include: schools giving needy students their uniforms, school parent groups working together to donate uniforms for those in need, and families donating used uniforms

Appendix K

Rater Preference Open-Ended Response Instrument

When scoring essays using a rubric, do you prefer to use an odd numbered rubric with a mid-point score (such as the AP rubric, with 9 score points), or a rubric with an even number of score points and no mid-point score (like the SAT essay rubric or the Virginia SOL rubric)?

Please indicate your preference below.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the respondent to write their preference regarding rubric scoring.

Appendix L
Writing Assessment Administration Scripts

Pretest Administration Script

Students should be in a computer lab, with one student per computer.

Say:

We will begin the writing assessment in a few minutes. First, each of you will take a packet. Please do not open the envelope, remove the yellow cover sheet or begin reading the materials in the packet until you are told to do so.

Hand out one packet per student.

Say:

Please take the envelope that is attached to your packet and place it on top of your computer. You will need it later to label your essay. Do not remove the yellow cover sheet yet. Does anyone have any questions?

Say:

When the writing assessment begins you will be asked to read the materials in your packet. The first page is the writing prompt. This is the topic you are being asked to write about. The rest of the packet contains information about the topic that you may use to help you write your essay if you wish. Does anyone have any questions?

Say:

Remember that you do not have to write a 5 paragraph essay for this assessment, instead write as well as you can using whatever organizational method you think is best for your writing. You may take either side of the issue, but you must take a side. There is no right or wrong side, so choose the one you feel that you can write about most persuasively. Does anyone have any questions?

Say:

Please do not discuss your topic or talk to other students during the assessment. If you finish early, you may read or work on other homework. When you finish your writing, please save it to your M drive.

Say:

Please log in and open a new Word document now.

Say:

Type your name at the top left corner of the document then skip down four lines.

Say:

You may now remove the yellow cover sheet and begin writing. You may use the yellow sheet as scrap paper if you want to jot down ideas to you're your writing. You will have 50 minutes to complete your writing sample.

Please time the students and ensure that they do not talk to one another during the assessment.

When 25 minutes have passed:

Say:

You are now halfway through your time. You have 25 more minutes to write. You may want to save your writing to your M drive now. Be sure to give the file a name that you will remember and save it to your M drive.

When 45 minutes have passed:

Say:

You have five more minutes to complete your writing.

When 50 minutes have passed:

Say:

You must now stop writing. Make sure that your name is on the upper left corner of your document. You should save your writing to your M drive now. Be sure to give the file a name that you will remember and save it to your M drive.

Say:

I will now ask you to print your document. You should print two copies. So that we don't overload the printer, wait until I tell your section of the room to print to send your document to the printer.

Have students print in small sections and retrieve their documents.

Say:

Everyone should now have two copies of their writing sample in front of them. Please take the envelope off of the top of your computer and open it. You should find two matching number labels and a small note-card. Take one number label and paste it over your name on one copy of your writing

sample. Take the other number label and paste it on the note-card. Write your name below it on the note-card. Seal the card with your name and number label in the envelope. Does anyone have any questions?

Say:

I will now collect the essays that have the NUMBER covering your name. Please place them face down on the pile as I collect them

Collect the first batch of essays.

Say:

I will now collect the sealed envelopes containing the card listing your name and number.

Collect the envelopes.

Say:

I will now collect the essays that have your names on them.

Say:

The writing assessment is now over. Please don't talk about the topics when you leave.

Posttest Administration Script

Students should be in a computer lab, with one student per computer.

Say:

We will begin the writing assessment in a few minutes. First, each of you will take a packet. Please do not remove the yellow cover sheet or begin reading the materials in the packet until you are told to do so.

Hand out one packet per student- make sure students get packets with their names on them.

Say:

When the writing assessment begins you will be asked to read the materials in your packet. The first page is the writing prompt. This is the topic you are being asked to write about. The rest of the packet contains information about the topic that you may use to help you write your essay if you wish. Does anyone have any questions?

Say:

Remember that you do not have to write a 5 paragraph essay for this assessment, instead write as well as you can using whatever organizational method you think is best for your writing. You may take either side of the issue, but you must take a side. There is no right or wrong side, so choose the one you feel that you can write about most persuasively. Does anyone have any questions?

Say:

Please do not discuss your topic or talk to other students during the assessment. If you have the same prompt that you worked on for the preliminary essay, raise your hand.

If you finish early, you may read or work on other homework. When you finish your writing, please save it to your M drive.

Say:

Please log in and open a new Word document now.

Say:

Type the code number from your yellow sheet at the top left corner of the document then skip down four lines.

Say:

You may now remove the yellow cover sheet and begin writing. You may use the yellow sheet as scrap paper if you want to jot down ideas to help your writing. You will have 50 minutes to complete your writing sample.

Please time the students and ensure that they do not talk to one another during the assessment.

When 25 minutes have passed:

Say:

You are now halfway through your time. You have 25 more minutes to write. You may want to save your writing to your M drive now. Be sure to give the file a name that you will remember and save it to your M drive.

When 45 minutes have passed:

Say:

You have five more minutes to complete your writing.

When 50 minutes have passed:

Say:

You must now stop writing. Make sure that your code number is on the upper left corner of your document. You should save your writing to your M drive now. Be sure to give the file a name that you will remember and save it to your M drive.

Say:

I will now ask you to print your document. You should print two copies. So that we don't overload the printer, wait until I tell your section of the room to print to send your document to the printer.

Have students print in small sections and retrieve their documents.

Say:

Everyone should now have two copies of their writing sample in front of them. Please make sure both copies have the same code number on them.

Write your name below the number on ONE of the copies only. Does anyone have any questions?

Say:

**I will now collect the essays that have only a CODE NUMBER on the top.
Please place them face down on the pile as I collect them**

Collect the first batch of essays.

Say:

I will now collect the essays that have your names on them.

Say:

**The writing assessment is now over. Please don't talk about the topics when
you leave.**

Appendix M

Unit Plan

Lesson 1: Introducing the Art of Persuasion

MODELS GROUP:

- Lead the students in the role play activity. Feel free to add different roles/ persuasive tasks based on the class's interests. The idea is to get the class thinking about verbal persuasion.
- Discuss the role of persuasion in their lives. Prompt a discussion to help them brainstorm all the ways persuasion influences them on a daily basis, keeping a list on the chalkboard. Once the list is complete, ask them to discover and discuss reasons why it is important to understand the persuasive strategies used in our world. Make connections to the list.
- Have the students read the model- a column from *The Oracle* on fluorescent lights
- Students should write a log responding to the model and answering the question: what makes it a good or bad argument?
- Share their responses briefly, first in pairs, then with the whole class. (Think, write, pair, share)
- Introduce the unit: they will be studying the art of persuasion. Similar techniques can be used in writing or in speaking.

NON- MODELS GROUP:

- Lead the students in the role play activity. Feel free to add different roles/ persuasive tasks based on the class's interests. The idea is to get the class thinking about verbal persuasion.
- Discuss the role of persuasion in their lives. Prompt a discussion to help them brainstorm all the ways persuasion influences them on a daily basis, keeping a list on the chalkboard. Once the list is complete, ask them to discover and discuss reasons why it is important to understand the persuasive strategies used in our world. Make connections to the list.
- Write a reflection in which they answer the general question: What makes a good argument?
- Share their responses briefly, first in pairs, then with the whole class. (Think, write, pair, share)

- Introduce the unit: they will be studying the art of persuasion. Similar techniques can be used in writing or in speaking.

Lesson 2: Recognizing the Three Rhetorical Appeals

MODELS GROUP:

- Hand out the three rhetorical appeals handout. Explain what each of the appeals is and together come to a class definition for each one. Write the definition on an overhead transparency of the handout so all the students can copy the class definitions.
- Separate the students into groups of three. Each group will receive a magazine advertisement. They will analyze these models to see which of the three rhetorical appeals is used most and in what proportion each of the three appeals is present in the ad. The groups will describe their findings to the class.
- Each group will draw a card. The card will give them a random product for which they will need to create an advertisement. The groups must use the same rhetorical appeals in the same proportion in their fictional ad as they found in the ad models they examined. Have art materials and old magazines available for the students as they create their advertisements.
- While the students work on their advertisements, hang the original model magazine ads on the front board. When the students finish their imitation ads, hang them under the models, but not in the same order. Ask the class to match the ads created by each group with their original model by determining the proportions of each rhetorical appeal that they have imitated.

NON- MODELS GROUP:

- Hand out the three rhetorical appeals handout. Explain what each of the appeals is and together come to a class definition for each one. Write the definition on an overhead transparency of the handout so all the students can copy the class definitions.
- Separate the students into groups of three. Each group will draw a card. The card will give them a random product for which they will need to create an advertisement. Before they begin, they will draw a second card, which will tell them which of the three rhetorical appeals to use in their advertisement. Have art materials and old magazines available for the students as they create their advertisements.
- Have the students hang their advertisements on the front board. Lead the class in a session in which the groups view one another's ads and decide which of the

rhetorical appeals is the strongest. Then have each group reveal their cards to see if the class was correct.

Lesson 3: Recognizing the Three Rhetorical Appeals in a Speech

MODELS GROUP:

- The students will analyze an argument for the use of the three appeals. They will read and analyze a political argument: “Instate Tuition for Immigrant Children” by Delegate Karen Darner. Have them analyze and discuss in groups, then do a class discussion to make sure everyone sees all of the uses of the three appeals.
- As a class, brainstorm a list of good topics for persuasive speeches. List them on poster paper. Make sure they are all appropriate.
- In pairs or trios, students will write a new persuasive speech about a topic of their choice from the list. They should try to write about their topic in the same tone, using the same persuasive techniques as Darner. Basically, they are imitating the persuasive appeals Darner used.
- If possible, have them do this on computers, so they can easily save and change their versions. Make sure each student in the group has access to a copy of their speech in case someone is absent for a future class when this will be used.
- Each group will choose one member read their argument to the class. The class members will all fill in critique forms to see how closely the speeches follow Darner’s techniques. You can also lead a brief discussion of the strong points of each speech.

NON- MODELS GROUP:

- Review the three rhetorical appeals. As a class, come up with a lists of examples of each appeal that they see in the world around them
- As a class, brainstorm a list of good topics for persuasive speeches. List them on poster paper. Make sure they are all appropriate.
- In pairs or trios, students will write a new persuasive speech about a topic of their choice from the list. They should work hard to include all three persuasive appeals.
- If possible, have them do this on computers, so they can easily save and change their versions. Make sure each student in the group has access to a copy of their speech in case someone is absent for a future class when this will be used.

- Each group will read their argument to the class. The class members will all fill in critique forms to see how much and how well the speeches use the three appeals. You can also lead a brief discussion of the strong points of each speech.

Lesson 4: Establishing Exigence/Audience Analysis

MODELS GROUP:

- Hand out the Rhetorical terms handout. Students should keep the forms in their binders because they will be filling in parts over the next few class periods.
- Today, you will explain the concepts of exigence and audience analysis. They will again come to a class definition. Put the definitions on the overhead transparency so that the class can copy them.
- Lead them in a large-group discussion of why each of these concepts is important in a persuasive speech or essay.
- In small groups, the students will analyze an argument for the use of exigence and attention to the audience. They will analyze George Bush's speech to the nation after 9/11. Have the students read and use colored highlighters to mark exigence and audience appeals on the copies on their own, then do a group share to make sure everyone is seeing similar things
- Students should move back into their speech groups from Lesson Three. They will analyze the speeches they wrote in their groups to see if they show exigence and an awareness of audience.
- They should revise them to include exigence and audience analysis if these are not strong in their original versions. Again, share the revised speeches with the class, using the class critique forms for exigence and audience appeals.

NON- MODELS GROUP:

- Hand out the rhetorical terms handout. Students should keep the forms in their binders because they will be filling in parts over the next few class periods.
- Today, you will explain the concepts of exigence and audience analysis. They will again come to a class definition. Put the definitions on the overhead transparency so that the class can copy them.
- Lead them in a large-group discussion of why each of these concepts is important in a persuasive speech or essay.
- Students should move back into their speech groups from Lesson Three. They will analyze the speeches they wrote in their groups to see if they show exigence

and an awareness of audience. Have the students read and use colored highlighters to mark exigence and audience appeals on the copies, then do a group share to make sure everyone is seeing similar things

- They should revise their essays to include exigence and audience analysis if these are not strong in their original versions. Again, share the revised speeches with the class, using the class critique forms for exigence and audience appeals.

Lesson 5: Structuring an Argument

MODELS GROUP:

- Students will complete the definitions on the parts of a full argument on the rhetorical terms handout. The teacher will describe these strategies. The class will again come to a class definition. Put the definitions on the overhead transparency so that the class can copy them.
- Read the pro-Pete Rose argument to see if it has all the parts of a full argument. They can write on their copies to show each part.
- In pairs or trios, they will try to put together the parts of the anti-Pete Rose speech (that has been cut into pieces) in the way that is most effective.
- Return to their speech groups. Analyze their group arguments to see if they follow all the parts. Revise accordingly.

NON- MODELS GROUP:

- Students will complete the definitions on the parts of a full argument on the rhetorical terms handout. The teacher will describe these strategies. The class will again come to a class definition. Put the definitions on the overhead transparency so that the class can copy them.
- Lead them in writing a class argument on an overhead that includes each part. This is most fun if you let them come up with a really silly topic, like Homer Simpson should be president.
- Return to their speech groups. Analyze their group arguments to see if they follow all the parts. Revise accordingly.

Lesson 6: Refutation/Opposition

MODELS GROUP:

- Fill in the definitions for concession, common ground, and bridging on the Rhetorical Terms list and discuss what they mean.
- Break the class into groups of four. Each group will receive one of the letters to the editor on the Confederate flag issue. Groups will analyze the letters for the use of concessions, common ground, and bridging. Students will then compose a letter for the opposing viewpoint, imitating the use of the strategies in their letter.
- Return to their speech groups. As a group, decide what the opposing view to their topic would be. Add examples of concessions, common ground, and bridging to their speech.
- Share speeches with the class. Ask the class to raise their hands whenever they hear an example of one of the three strategies from today.

NON- MODELS GROUP:

- Fill in the definitions on the parts of a full argument on the Rhetorical Terms list and discuss what they mean.
- Return to their speech groups. As a group, decide what the opposing view to their topic would be. Add examples of concessions, common ground, and bridging to their speech.
- Share speeches with the class. Ask the class to raise their hands whenever they hear an example of one of the three strategies from today.

Lesson 7: Using the Toulmin Model

MODELS GROUP:

- Introduce the Toulmin Model of argument as a way to understand the underlying structure of an argument.
- Give the students the Janet Jackson example of the Toulmin model.
- In groups of three, the students will analyze the Martha Stewart editorial, using the Toulmin template sheet.
- Lead the class in a large group discussion of their results.

- Each group will imitate the way that the author of the Martha Stewart article structures his argument using another controversial public figure. Students may need help brainstorming public figures besides Martha Stewart and Janet Jackson.

NON- MODELS GROUP:

- Introduce the Toulmin Model of argument as a way to understand the underlying structure of an argument.
- Give the students the Janet Jackson example of the Toulmin model.
- Each group use the Toulmin article to structure an argument on another controversial public figure. Students may need help brainstorming public figures besides Janet Jackson.
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Lesson 8: Evaluating Research Sources

MODELS GROUP:

- Give students the handout for their research paper. They must write an argument for or against a topic related to human rights.
- Brainstorm a list of acceptable world-wide human rights topics. Students may need to define human rights first.
- Help them realize that they will need to take a side on their topic.
- Show them the Research Paper rubric to show them what they need to strive for in their papers.
- Take them to the library for research time to start narrowing their choices. First hand out and go over the Website Evaluation Sheet and discuss how important it is to really be sure that you have credible sources.
- When they get to the library, give them the WebQuest that asks them to look at and evaluate two websites on China's one child policy.
- When they complete the WebQuest, lead a discussion about evaluating sources, because even websites can have agendas that they are trying to persuade their audience to accept. Then allow them time to begin researching.
- Topics due to you next class.

NON- MODELS GROUP:

- Give students the handout for their research paper. They must write an argument for or against a topic related to human rights.
- Brainstorm a list of acceptable world-wide human rights topics. Students may need to define human rights first.
- Help them realize that they will need to take a side on their topic.
- Show them the Research Paper rubric to show them what they need to strive for in their papers.
- Take them to the library for research time to start narrowing their choices. First hand out and go over the Website Evaluation Sheet and discuss how important it is to really be sure that you have credible sources.
- Topics due to you next class.

Lesson Nine: Audience Analysis Practice**MODELS GROUP:**

- Break students into new groups. Hand out magazine advertisements again. Students will analyze the advertisement, making a list of the persuasive strategies used. Next, students will complete an audience analysis sheet for the target consumer for the ad.
- In their groups, students will draw a card for a product. They will then develop an advertisement to sell their product to the target consumer from their advertisement in part one of the lesson. Note that the products on the cards will be very different from the products in the original ads; students may have to sell roller blades to a retiree, for example.
- Students will present their ads to the class, which will attempt to guess their target consumer.

NON- MODELS GROUP:

- Introduce the class to the concept of audience analysis.
- In their groups, students will draw a card for both a product and a target consumer. They will then develop an advertisement to sell their product to the target consumer. Students will complete an audience analysis form for their imagined consumer.

- Students will present their ads to the class, which will attempt to guess their target consumer.

Lesson Ten: Working on Audience Analysis for their Research Papers

MODELS GROUP:

- Students will complete an audience analysis sheet for their research project.
- Students will have library time to research information on their topic that will appeal to their audience.

NON- MODELS GROUP:

- Students will complete an audience analysis sheet for their research project.
- Students will have library time to research information on their topic that will appeal to their audience.

Lesson Eleven: Techniques for Strong Spoken Arguments

MODELS GROUP:

- Students will listen to Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech two times. As they listen, they will complete the spoken argument analysis forms, keeping track of strategies that they believe make the speech and its presentation effective.
- Lead the students in a large-group analysis on the strategies they noticed. Identify three top strategies.
- Students will break into pairs to practice using the three strategies with one another. Give them copies of the speeches they created in groups early in the unit, so they have a text to read from.

NON- MODELS GROUP:

- Lead the students in a large-group analysis on the strategies of effective spoken arguments. Identify three top strategies.
- Students will break into pairs to practice using the three strategies with one another. Give them copies of the speeches they created in groups early in the unit, so they have a text to read from.

Lesson Twelve: Presenting Persuasive Speeches / Critiquing their Peers’ Speeches

- Both groups will present their persuasive speeches (the rough drafts of their research papers.) Their classmates will complete the Class Critique sheets for

each speech, sharing them with the speakers so that they can determine what they need to work on for their final written draft.

Lesson Thirteen: Presenting Persuasive Speeches / Critiquing their Peers' Speeches

- Both groups will present their persuasive speeches (the rough drafts of their research papers.) Their classmates will complete the Class Critique sheets for each speech, sharing them with the speakers so that they can determine what they need to work on for their final written draft.

Appendix N

List of Models

Lesson	Model	Purpose
Lesson One	<p>Model Type: Student Newspaper Opinion Column</p> <p>Title: “Kill the Lights: Fluorescent just isn’t the way to go”</p> <p>Author: Caitlin Crowley</p> <p>Source: <i>The West Springfield Oracle</i>, 11/10/03</p>	Introducing persuasive writing unit- what makes a good argument
Lesson Two	<p>Model Type: Magazine Advertisements</p> <p>Publications included: <i>Money</i>, <i>Fortune</i>, <i>Ladies’ Home Journal</i>, <i>Parenting</i>, <i>Good Housekeeping</i>, <i>Seventeen</i></p>	Recognizing the three rhetorical appeals
Lesson Three	<p>Model Type: Political Speech Text</p> <p>Title: “Instate Tuition for Immigrant Children”</p> <p>Author: Karen Darner</p> <p>Source: Speech to the Virginia House of Representatives reprinted in <i>Notes from Richmond</i>, Fall 2003</p>	Recognizing the three rhetorical appeals
Lesson Four	<p>Model Type: Political Speech Text</p> <p>Title: “They cannot dent steel of our resolve”</p> <p>Author: George Bush</p> <p>Source: <i>Chicago Tribune</i>, 9/12/01, p. A6 (Note: This speech was given by President Bush from the White House Oval Office the day after September 11, 2001.)</p>	Establishing exigence and audience analysis
Lesson Five	<p>Model Type: Student Newspaper Opinion Column</p> <p>Title: “There’s no room for cheaters”</p> <p>Author: Kyle Smeallie</p>	Structuring an argument

	<p>Source: The Annandale A-Blast, 1/20/04, p. 3</p> <p>Model Type: Student Newspaper Opinion Column</p> <p>Title: “Reinstate the all-time”</p> <p>Author: Jared Smith f</p> <p>Source: The Annandale A-Blast, 1/20/04, p. 3</p> <p>Note: Pro and con arguments on allowing Pete Rose into the Major League Baseball Hall of Fame</p>	
Lesson Six	<p>Model Type: Student Newspaper Letters to the Editor</p> <p>Section Title: “Letters Concerning the Confederate Flag Battle: In response to last issue’s “Dear Desmond” column and the Confederate Flag”</p> <p>Source: <i>The West Springfield Oracle</i>, 2/4/04</p> <p>Note: Ten letters to the editor on whether wearing the Confederate Flag is racist propaganda or a free speech issue, a controversy that broke out at the school in the months before the study. The letters were balanced on both sides, and a letter from the school principal was also included.</p>	Refutation/Opposition-Learning to use the arguments of the opposing side
Lesson Seven	<p>Model Type: Student Newspaper Editorial</p> <p>Title: “Jury in Martha Stewart case created an unfair trial”</p> <p>Author: Daniel Liberson</p> <p>Source: <i>Saxon Scope</i>, Langley HS student newspaper, 3/29/04</p>	Using the Toulmin Model
Lesson Eight	<p>Model Type: Websites</p> <p>Topic: Researching China’s one child policy from two viewpoints</p> <p>Sources:</p>	Comparing two websites/Evaluating research sources

	<p>Chinese Embassy Website http://www.china-embassy.org</p> <p>Amnesty International http://www.amnesty.org/</p>	
Lesson Nine	<p>Model Type: Magazine Advertisements</p> <p>Publications included: <i>Money, Fortune, Ladies' Home Journal, Parenting, Good Housekeeping, Seventeen</i></p>	Audience Analysis Practice
Lesson Ten	No model	Working on Audience Analysis for their research papers
Lesson Eleven	<p>Model Type: Speech</p> <p>Title: "I have a dream"</p> <p>Author: Martin Luther King, Jr.</p> <p>Source: http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkhaveadream.htm</p>	Techniques of good spoken argument
Lesson Twelve	No model	Presenting persuasive speeches based on their research/ Critiquing their peers' speeches
Lesson Thirteen	No model	Presenting persuasive speeches based on their research/ Critiquing their peers' speeches

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