ABSTRACT

Title of Document: A GROUNDED THEORY OF DEAF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS' REVISION OF THEIR OWN WRITING

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This study used a grounded theory methodology to examine the experiences of deaf middle school students attending a program for deaf children in a public school to answer the following question: How do deaf children in middle school construct meaningful texts? The students were in one of two self-contained classes taught by a teacher of the deaf. The eight students and two teachers were each interviewed at least once. Classroom observations of the students engaged in writing an essay were conducted, and writing samples from each student were provided by the teachers.

All of the data were analyzed, and a grounded theory that describes the experiences of the deaf students emerged. The theory consists of one core category and four key categories, which encompass three parts of writing: *Knowing, Experiencing*, and *Doing*. The core category, which captures the essence of what revision is to the students, is *Living in Language* and is the sole category in *Knowing*. Three key categories fall under the *Experiencing* heading: *Interacting with the Text, Interacting with Instruction,*

and *Interacting with Self as Reviser*. The final key category is the sole category in *Doing*: *Fixing Wrongs*.

This research contributes to the literature by illustrating how deaf students who are in one middle school understand, experience, and approach revision tasks. A significant understanding is that the students in this study are not given many opportunities to construct meaningful texts independently in their classes. Despite the lack of control over their own texts, the students have developed strategies to successfully "play the game" of writing in school.

In addition, recommendations for future research and ways to improve instruction are offered. The greatest implication for instruction is that teachers need to step back and consider how instruction impacts the students. Students especially need to be empowered to control their own writing and develop metacognition of their own work. Future research can be done to test the theory using a broader scope of participants in other settings. It could also examine the writing process from the teachers' perspectives to provide information about what informs their instruction of writing and revising.

A GROUNDED THEORY OF DEAF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS' REVISION
OF THEIR OWN WRITING

By

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DEDICATION

To Bill and Dudley
My companions on this journey

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Writing and reading are not merely skills that children must learn to command. They are also places of great and troubled history, reflection, controversy, and thought.
(Jardine, Clifford, & Friesen, 2003, p. 72)

I am eternally grateful to the people who provided support and assistance throughout my entire doctoral career. The following people have been especially instrumental in ensuring my success:

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CHAPTER I:
INTRODUCTION

Prompt: Write about the most exciting day of your life and the most boring day of your life.

Student 1 response:
> most exciting because not boring exciting day many how most boring always exciting happy no exciting need best no boring day not most exciting yes propaply not knew why most be tell me who where book boring need not funny who your exciting both always boring Read boring always

Student 2 response:
> My exciting day is: I like to go to LAX. Every Saturday, I go to the Go Karting with my dad somebody that I know who work in Go Karting I talk to them and they gave me a free ticket to ride, because they were my friend. To see a sign that saids 'No HW and No School for 5 days.' Play football.

> My boring day is: To wake early in the morning. To read and HW. Play soccer. A long day drive. Wait forty get a beagle. You have a school today.

These were actual responses written by middle school students to the above prompt. While these responses may be unusual for most teachers at the middle school level, they were typical for me. The students who wrote these responses were deaf, and they were representative of written works that I received for every writing assignment in the English classes I taught in a special program for deaf children in the school. While I have moved from teaching deaf children in middle school to teaching deaf and hearing students in college, my middle school experience remains close in memory and perspective after being away for two years.

The first text is very difficult to understand because there are no grammatical markers or conventions of Standard Written English to help the reader comprehend the message. The second response answers the prompt, and there are some markers to help

the reader. However, the writing is not expressed in complete sentences, which impairs the clarity of the text. The ideas are strung together in a loose fashion, and it reads as a list of things the student does and does not enjoy doing instead of speaking about a day with specific incidents that are either exciting or boring. These students were trying to communicate a message to me that, unfortunately, I could not fully understand because of the structure of their writing. In addition, both pieces are short, ambiguously answer the prompt, and use minimal elaboration of ideas. According to Kretschmer and Kretschmer (1986), in order for my students' messages to be understood by a reader, such as their teacher, they "must display communicative intentions and content in a form that can be comprehended by others" (p. 133). While my students show some communicative intentions, their written products are not comprehensible by others, at least not without a good deal of effort.

This phenomenon is not unique to my students. Researchers for several decades have found that the writing of prelingually deaf students who have had limited or no early access to American Sign Language (ASL) with no other disability is typically shorter than writing of their hearing peers, utilizes simple sentence structures, and uses improper grammar (Albertini & Schley, 2003; Antia, Reed, & Kreimeyer, 2005; Bunch, 1979; Charrow, 1974; Gormley & Sarachan-Deily, 1987; Heider & Heider, 1940; Kretschmer & Kretschmer, 1986; Lieberth, 1991; Sarachan-Deily & Love, 1974 ; Singleton, Morgan, DiGello, Wiles, & Rivers, 2004; Yoshinaga-Itano, Snyder, & Mayberry, 1996), although semantically, they attempt to express similar ideas as compared with their hearing peers (Albertini & Schley, 2003; Yoshinaga-Itano & Snyder, 1996; Yoshinaga-Itano, Snyder, & Mayberry, 1996).

The purpose of this study is to examine the processes deaf children in one school use as they revise texts written for English class in an effort to understand better how these children convey meaning through writing. Eventually, this knowledge will lead to improved pedagogy and educational outcomes for children who are deaf, two areas I struggled with in my own classroom.

My Entry to the Deaf World

As a child, I was fascinated by sign language, and although I knew nothing of deaf people or Deaf culture, I declared at an early age that I would one day teach deaf children. (Deaf culture, with a capital D, is the preferred naming convention of the Deaf community [Padden & Humphries, 1988; Woodward, 1972].) To fulfill that ambition, I attended Gallaudet University, the world's only university established for deaf and hard-of-hearing people as a hearing master's student in the deaf education program. The graduate program accepted both deaf and hearing students, but most of my classmates were hearing. As part of my graduate studies, I expected to become fluent in ASL and learn the specific techniques necessary to teach deaf children. What I learned in addition was of a problem that continually troubles deaf people: poor English literacy skills (Allen, 1986, 1994; Holt, 1993; Marschark, Lang & Albertini, 2002). For example, there were deaf students in my graduate classes whose writing I could not understand, regardless of whether the assignment was a formal paper or participation in an online discussion. I have since learned that a part of this struggle to write stems from language issues related to their hearing loss, although the issues are not a direct result of the hearing loss, but rather a lack of access to language at an early age.

Prior to my arrival at Gallaudet, I had assumed that all deaf people used ASL to communicate. I quickly learned this was not true; I met many people who used a variety

of languages and methods for communicating at home. Some of my classmates used ASL, some used a contact form of sign language and English, some spoke, and others used Cued Speech, a system of visual cues based on phonology (Cornett & Daisey, 1992).

Several of my classmates and friends shared stories of being the only deaf person in their high school classes as a result of *mainstreaming*. Mainstreaming, the practice of placing students with disabilities in general education classes, is used with increasing frequency, and it is one way for educators to meet the federal requirement that children with disabilities be educated with their nondisabled peers to the greatest extent possible (IDEA, 2004). Mainstreaming is viewed positively within the hearing special education community (Lipsky & Gartner, 1997), but members of the Deaf community view mainstreaming as a very isolating practice (Oliva, 2004; Ramsey, 1997). The ASL sign MAINSTREAM illustrates that isolation. In the standard sign MAINSTREAM, the right and left hands are in the 5-handshape and come together so that one merges with the other to indicate the coming together of two groups, hearing and deaf. In the sign that indicates isolation, a 1-handshape is sub-positioned under the 5-handshape to emphasize that a single deaf child is placed in a classroom with many hearing children.

Until Gallaudet, I had not given much consideration to the literacy skills of deaf people; I incorrectly assumed they were no different from hearing people. Instead, I learned that language access, and consequently, English language proficiency is a significant concern for researchers (Alamargot, Lambert, Thebault, & Dansac, 2007; Albertini & Schley, 2003; Charrow, 1974; Heider & Heider, 1940; Marschark, Lang, & Albertini, 2002; Myklebust, 1965; Sarachan-Deily & Love, 1974; Schulz, 1965;

Yoshinaga-Itano & Downey, 1996a, b). Several of my friends are able to write and communicate using Standard English without any grammatical markers that indicate Deaf English, which is characterized by misuse of function words (such as articles and prepositions), misuse or omission of inflectional morphology (such as verb tense and plurality), and improper word order (Charrow, 1975). How is it possible that they developed and internalized English grammar rules when most of my students have not and do not appear to be making any progress? What is the difference between them (highly literate people) and the majority of my deaf students who did not achieve even a functional level of literacy by the time they graduated high school? These questions are not easily answered, and they have led me to this study, which uses a grounded theory methodology to construct a theory grounded in data that will help explain what deaf children do as they learn to write and revise their own writing.

Self as Teacher-Researcher

Qualitative research requires the researcher to act as the instrument for gathering and analyzing data (Charmaz, 2000; Patton, 2002). As Charmaz explains, "The researcher composes the story; it does not simply unfold before the eyes of an objective viewer" (p. 522). When considered in this way, the researcher's background and experiences must be explored. To assist in exploring and monitoring my subjectivity, I am using Peshkin's (1988) suggestions for identifying researcher "I"s. He identified six of his own "I"s by conducting an audit, to systematically locate "the warm and cool spots, the emergence of positive and negative feelings, the experiences [he] wanted more of or wanted to avoid, and when [he] felt moved to act in roles beyond those necessary to fulfill [his] research needs" (p. 18). I, too, have explored these feelings in order to be aware of how my research is impacted by them. After reviewing my experiences and

reflecting on my writing, I have identified three "I"s: Teacher-I, Interpreter-I, and Communicator-I.

The Teacher-I is the part of me that does not want to waste any opportunity that children have to learn. The teacher in me may want to take control and help students as they write and revise texts, and I need to remember that I will be serving in a different capacity when I interview and observe the students. My second I, the Interpreter-I, is the part of me that will want to interpret the message intended to be expressed by the students because I have previous experience teaching them, thus putting words in the students' mouths. I will need to step back and attempt to read the text as a person who has no personal connection to the students. I will also need to ask students about the meaning they are trying to express, so they can share their vision of how the text should be interpreted. The third I, the Communicator-I, may be tempted to intervene and explain to students when they express confusion about something the teacher has said or written. I need to remain as neutral as possible and again, not interpret the intentions of the teacher, nor encourage students in any manner that might put my interpretation on the teacher's intention.

As I have already shared, I taught hearing students and deaf students in different middle schools. Juxtaposing these teaching experiences gives me the ability to see the unique issues deaf children face in acquiring English. The difference between my hearing students' writing and my deaf students' writing was in the patterns of "mistakes" (nonstandard usage) that they made as they wrote. My hearing students omitted vowels from words, used simple sentence structures, and typically wrote the way they spoke. I could generally figure out what they were trying to communicate as I read their papers.

My deaf students made different types of mistakes in their writing. They made word reversals, had no identifiable English structure to the grammar (especially in the absence of articles and prepositions), and usually incorporated too many ideas into one sentence. It was extremely difficult to determine what the text was about unless I had an opportunity to sit with the student and ask about the intended message.

When I asked my deaf students to write at the beginning of each school year, they would visibly slump. Writing was frustrating for them because they knew that they did not write like their hearing peers. When I encouraged them to communicate with hearing people, such as the nurse, by writing notes, the students became anxious. They knew that hearing people would have difficulty understanding their writing. I helped them craft notes to ease their anxiety and to provide an authentic learning lesson. Writing notes to request assistance is a type of writing that my students would need to communicate with hearing people throughout their lives (Luckner & Isaacson, 1990).

To illustrate this point, I share an experience from a class field trip to a fast food restaurant. Although my colleagues and I had worked beforehand to prepare the students with strategies for reading the menu, ordering food, and paying for meals, confusion reigned when we arrived at the restaurant. The students were excited to have time for socializing, and they stood in line talking with each other. They forgot the strategies they learned in class and did not know what they were supposed to do upon arriving at the register.

One student attempted to order and became frustrated because the cashier did not understand him. He had not written his order down, and he flagged one of the chaperones over to interpret his order for him. She refused and took him aside to explain the process

to him again to give him another chance at being successful. In the meantime, other students had seen this happen, and they were scared about their own turns at the register. They hurried to write down their orders before they arrived at the front of the line. One girl went up, placed her order, paid, and received her food completely independently; she was proud of herself. After that, other students figured out what they needed to do, and they successfully ordered lunch. Once they finished eating, some students were so excited by their new skills, they went back to order dessert. The best part was to watch the struggling students be helped by their peers. I could see their excitement as a new world was opening up.

My students should grow up feeling this independence and experience less frustration over their struggle to read and write. "A deficit in language mastery strikes at the core of successful living in society by creating barriers to adequate interpersonal relationships, to development of healthy self-concepts, and to the ability to acquire knowledge and to understand the world" (Streng, Kretschmer, & Kretschmer, 1978, p. 69). There is freedom in being able to communicate clearly and have others understand and reciprocate that communication (Akamatsu, Mayer, & Farrelly, 2005). Parents of students on the field trip recognized the importance of the skills their children acquired (also observed in Akamatsu et al.) and wrote to thank the teachers for helping their children become more self-confident in their skills.

As a result of the real-life communication skills and self-confidence one student gained, her parents felt secure in allowing her to go to the mall with friends. To participate in an age-appropriate activity like this was a huge step forward for my students. This growth and potential added to the desire for my deaf students to gain

independence, and it fueled my passion to know as much as possible in order to provide them with the best education possible.

Early in my career, I searched for strategies that would help my students improve their literacy skills. I attended conferences and read professional journals in an effort to improve my instruction. I applied new strategies and new tools, but my students made few gains when they were asked to write, either freely or for class assignments. What was particularly disconcerting for me was the inability for students to interact with non-signing adults in the school using pen and paper. With such little success in raising writing skills, I stepped back and asked why the students were writing the way they did and how could I help them communicate better through writing. I was looking for the answers to improve my students' writing skills, but there were none to be found. There were tools that helped in insignificant ways, such as dialogue journals (Bailes, Searles, Slobodzian, & Staton, 1986; Kluwin & Kelly, 1991; Lieberth, 1991), color-coding grammar (Long, 1999), and structured writing tools (Ledbetter, 2002). However, none of these tools was the so-called magic bullet that I was seeking. Eventually, I came to realize that perhaps the students needed something different in their writing instruction because they used different processes from hearing students when they wrote. There were definitely issues with language access for my students because most of them went home to hearing families that signed very little or not at all.

As a teacher of deaf students, I understand the language access issues common to the population of students in my school. Most deaf students in the program are the only deaf person in a hearing family. Few of those families communicate fluently with the deaf child, and those who are able to may or may not do so consistently, thus impacting

access to language. One additional confounding factor is that several students come from homes where English is not the primary language, so the child may be struggling to balance two to three languages between home and school.

As a result of these access issues, I have had few deaf students in my class who are able to write syntactically at levels equivalent to their hearing peers, a phenomenon also noted by researchers (Akamatsu, 1987; Bunch, 1979; Charrow, 1974; Easterbrooks & Stoner, 2006; Erickson, 1991; Everhart & Marschark, 1988; Heider & Heider, 1940; Ivimey & Lachterman, 1980; Kelly, 1988; Sarachan-Deily & Love, 1974; Schirmer, Bailey, & Fitzgerald, 1999). Although researchers have found that deaf children's writing is semantically equivalent to the writing of their hearing peers (Schirmer, Bailey, & Fitzgerald, 1999; Yoshinaga-Itano & Downey, 1996a; Yoshinaga-Itano & Snyder, 1996), the meaning is masked by the grammatical issues. The goal of my instruction has been to help my deaf students make themselves understood through their writing. In order to do that, I feel it is important to first understand how deaf students construct meaning through writing.

Kretschmer and Kretschmer (1986) note that "Writing can be seen as both a process and a product…research on the writing of hearing impaired children has focused almost exclusively on analysis of the products themselves" (p. 153). It is time to focus analysis on the children themselves and try to understand what happens when they write and revise texts. We can only improve writing instruction for deaf students if we understand how they use English to create meaning, and it is the goal of this study to increase this understanding.

Language Use

It is only fitting in a study of language that I should take some time to consider my own use of language. There are three important areas that must be explored: labeling children with hearing impairments, using glosses to represent American Sign Language (ASL) signs, and using present tense when quoting the work of other writers.

Deaf vs. Hearing Impaired

There has been discussion in the field of special education about how people with disabilities are labeled (Zola, 1993). The preference for identifying people with disabilities is to use what is called "people first language" (Murphy, 2003; Titchkosky, 2001) to remove the disability as the main identifier of a person. This generally means referring to "children with hearing impairments" instead of "hearing impaired children." However, the Deaf community prefers the term "deaf" to "hearing impaired," since the implication of a hearing impairment is that something is deficient (Marschark, 2007), and Deaf people do not view themselves as having a deficiency (Padden & Humphries, 1988). As Ogden (1996) notes, "Deafness is about communication, not sound" (p. 43). To this effect, members of the Deaf community prefer to state their deafness first, because they are not ashamed of the fact that they are deaf, and it is often a part of their identity. For this study, I will be working with children who identify themselves as deaf, and therefore I will refer to them as *deaf* children.

The term *deaf* may be used to refer to people with any degree of hearing loss. There is, however, a difference between being deaf and being Deaf (Padden & Humphries, 1988). Anyone with a hearing loss can identify themselves as deaf, but only those who identify themselves socially, linguistically, and culturally as part of the Deaf community are Deaf, or big-D deaf (Marschark, 2007; Padden & Humphries, 1988;

Pagliaro, 2001; Senghas & Monaghan, 2002). The linguistic aspect of Deaf Culture involves the use of ASL (which includes using non-manual grammatical markers, following rules of syntax, and not using one's voice simultaneously while signing). My students often preferred to use their voices and sign in English word order; this is more indicative of a manually coded English (MCE), which is not a language but any of a number of manual systems that often use ASL signs in English word order. Additionally, not all of the students included in this study socialize in the Deaf community and are frequently unaware of some of the social and linguistic customs of Deaf Culture. Therefore, I will not capitalize the *d* when referring to them. Other researchers may refer to deaf children as having hearing losses, being hearing impaired, or being hard-of-hearing. In those cases, I have maintained the language of the original author.

Use of Glosses

ASL does not have a written form, which creates a challenge in having a written discourse on the linguistic features of the language. Typically, ASL is represented in English writing through the use of English glosses (Hoffmeister, Moores, & Ellenberger, 1975; Johnson & Rash, 1990; Liddell, 1980, 2003; Valli, Lucas, & Mulrooney, 2005). English glosses represent ASL morphemes, but they do not necessarily indicate syntactic or semantic equivalence (Hoffmeister et al., 1975; Johnson & Rash, 1990). However, the glosses symbolize English concepts that allow for a written discourse on the study of ASL to occur.

English glosses of ASL signs will follow conventions set forth by previous researchers and linguists. Glosses will be written in capital letters (Johnson & Rash, 1990; Klima & Bellugi, 1979; Liddell, 1980, 2003; Valli et al., 2005). For example, the sign corresponding to the English word *think* is written as THINK. Fingerspelled words

are written in capital letters that are separated by hyphens (Johnson & Rash, 1990; Klima & Bellugi, 1979; Valli et al., 2005). A popular greeting in ASL is H-I, a fingerspelled version of the English word *hi.*

For ASL signs that represent more than one English word, the words will use capital letters and will be joined by a hyphen (Johnson & Rash, 1990; Klima & Bellugi, 1979; Liddell, 2003). The ASL sign representing the English *hot dog* would be written as HOT-DOG. Compound signs, which are multiple signs representing one English concept, will be joined by using an arc (Johnson & Rash, 1990; Klima & Bellugi, 1979; Liddell, 2003). The ASL sign representing the English word *agree* would be written as THINKˆSAME.

Verb Tense and APA

Although this dissertation generally adheres to the guidelines set forth by the fifth edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (2001), there is one point of divergence which is important to clarify. The manual guidelines suggest that when quoting an author's work the past tense should be used, but for the purposes of this dissertation, a stylistic decision has been made to quote the authors' words in the present tense. It is a small way of keeping their words and ideas present in the reader's mind, which is a writing convention of many qualitative methodologies.

Writing as Process

This is a study of revision processes, but it is important to understand that revision is just one small piece of the larger writing process. Writing as process has become pervasive in classrooms since it was first introduced in the research over 40 years ago (Emig, 1971; Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2006; Whitney, Blau, Bright, Cabe, Dewar, Levin,

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Macias, & Rogers, 2008). However, the writing process has evolved to encompass multiple definitions and implementation techniques.

For example, Whitney et al. (2008) conducted a case study of two teachers' approaches to teaching the writing process. They found that the teachers essentially used similar terms and strategies, but the way that the teachers framed the purposes and processes of writing differed markedly. In one classroom, the teacher focused instruction and student attention on the state standards. Instruction was systematic, and the writing process was used as a series of discrete steps that children followed as they prepared a final draft. Peers reviewed each other's writing to edit papers, but there was no discussion on ideas. In this class, "writing was framed primarily as an activity where correctness was prized over ideas" (p. 225).

The second teacher, on the other hand, expressed a desire for her students to become authors, have a basic understanding of the traits of good writing, and to communicate effectively. In her class, students were encouraged to talk with each other about ideas as well as editing. Although students did receive help on mechanical issues, "assistance was usually provided more in the spirit of helping to make the piece of writing more effective for communication rather than as a way of avoiding lost points" (p. 225). The authors noted that although the ways the teachers framed writing as process to their students were different, the terminology and strategies for writing were essentially similar.

There are also variations in the ways the stages of the writing process are laid out and labeled. Even though steps are laid out here in a sequential fashion, it is important to remember that the writing process is nonlinear and recursive. Writers move between the

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stages in a manner that suits their needs, and stages may occur simultaneously (Calkins, 1986; Gunning, 2000). There are six stages that are commonly identified: prewriting, drafting or composing, revising, evaluating, editing, and publishing (Calkins, 1986; Gunning, 2000; Tompkins, 2004).

Prewriting generally begins with a consideration of the topic, audience, and form for the writing piece. Other tasks that make up prewriting include: generating and researching ideas, planning, and rehearsing. Generating and researching ideas is also referred to as brainstorming. Planning is closely related, because writers may use graphic organizers, outlines, or pictures to help plan the flow of ideas. Rehearsing is a little different. It is "that part of the writing process in which the writer thinks over or mentally composes a piece of writing" (Gunning, 2000, p. 422). In general, prewriting is the process of preparation prior to composing or drafting, and writers may return to this process several times during the construction of a text.

Drafting, or composing, is the process of writing the piece. Initial drafting may include getting ideas on paper without being overly concerned with neatness, spelling, or grammar (Gunning, 2000; Murray, 1991; Tompkins, 2004). The focus is more on content than on mechanics. Writers try to get their ideas down on paper, with an understanding that refinement and corrections will come later (Murray, 1991). Since authors do not begin writing with the entire piece fully rehearsed in their minds, they often need to return to the drafting stage throughout the writing process. As Murray (1991) frequently iterates, "Writing is rewriting" (p. viii), and writers should expect to rewrite drafts.

Revising is the part of the writing process where changes to the draft are made, with a focus on clarifying and refining ideas (Gunning, 2000; Murray, 1991; Tompkins,

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2004). The definition developed by Fitzgerald (1987) is frequently used by researchers: "Revision means making any change at any point in the writing process" (p. 484). During revision, writers may examine their writing by adding, deleting, substituting, or moving ideas on a variety of levels: word, phrase, sentence, or paragraph (Gunning, 2000; Tompkins, 2004). Revision is also a time when writers may return to the prewriting stage to gather more ideas or to the drafting stage to add more details. When asked to revise in school, children tend to focus on changing mechanics (e.g., spelling, capitalization, punctuation) rather than on altering ideas (Gunning, 2000; Murray, 1991). This is actually a separate part of writing.

Evaluating includes the examination of a text by teachers, peers, and self. When students engage in evaluating, they frequently move between other stages of the writing process (Calkins, 1986). An important element of evaluating includes conferencing with teachers and peers. Calkins (1986) and Graves (1983) write about ways in which conferences can be used to help students make changes to their writing. Conferences can serve to help students focus on their subject, determine the form of the text, explain their processes, evaluate the writing in terms of audience, and to edit (Calkins). Conferences can be teacher-student, peer conferences, or even a conference with oneself.

Editing is the point of the writing process where students polish the writing piece by correcting spelling and other mechanical errors (Gunning, 2000; Tompkins, 2004). Sometimes during this process, writers may set a piece aside for a few days and return to it with a fresh pair of eyes for proofreading and locating errors (Tompkins, 2004).

The final stage of the writing process is *publishing.* At this stage, writers publish their writing and share it with their audience (Tompkins, 2004). Publishing in school

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means that students have more of an audience than just the teacher to write for (Gunning, 2000) and could be a way to motivate students to revise and edit their writing (Tompkins, 2004). Publishing may take any number of forms including: class books, handmade books, anthologies, or scripts that are performed (Gunning, 2000; Tompkins, 2004).

Defining Revision

Revision, as a process, takes different forms, even within the same written work. In general, revision is a way of taking a draft and manipulating it until the author is satisfied that a written piece meets its intended purpose (e.g., publication, submission to a teacher, shared with a friend). This is not to imply that revision is completed in one sitting. Actually, revision frequently occurs over a number of sessions. As writers revise, they recognize the need to return to previous stages in the writing process because they need to gather additional information or draft new sections.

Murray (1991) suggests that revision focus on five "problems" that may be completed separately or simultaneously: meaning, audience, order, evidence, and voice. When authors revise for meaning, they need to find the focus of the piece. Then they must ensure that "every piece of information, every literary device, every line and every word must support, develop, and communicate the meaning" (p. 67). It is possible that half, two-thirds, or even three-fourths of the draft may be eliminated during this process, which then leaves space for adding the ideas and details that move the meaning forward.

When authors revise for an audience, they re-read the piece from a prospective reader's point of view and attempt to "estimate what the reader knows of the subject and what the reader needs to know" (Murray, 1991, p. 61). Authors must also ask and answer potential questions of the reader. Peer and teacher feedback can also be helpful at this stage in reinforcing the notion of audience.

Next, authors should revise for order. This is done by "building a written house of meaning" (Murray, 1991, p. 86) through two activities: identifying the form and building the structure of the piece. Form is essentially the genre of the piece and is determined by the message to be shared. Structure is the order or sequence of ideas, with consideration also given to opening, closing, and pace. As with the other parts of the revision process, the elements of the draft that are retained are those that serve to move the meaning forward.

The fourth step of revision according to Murray (1991) is revising for evidence. During this part of revising, writers add details and specific information to the text as well as check for accuracy. It is also important to select the information carefully that will continue to move the meaning of the text forward in a powerful way.

The final step of Murray's revision process is voice. At this juncture, writers work with the language of the piece. Word choice, rhythm and sentence flow are examined in an effort to create a voice that communicates the meaning while allowing the author's individual voice to show through. It also encompasses editing, which is changing mechanical elements of the text (Graves, 1994; Murray, 1991). Given that many students will focus on mechanics when asked to revise (Gunning, 2000; Murray, 1991), it seems appropriate to include changes that are often considered editing in addition to the changes that students make to meaning for this study.

<div align="center">

Overview of the Research Problem

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For this study, I am interested in analyzing the revision processes that deaf middle school students use in their constructions of written texts. The research on deaf students' writing has primarily been concerned with evaluating written products over the processes involved in composing a written work (Kretschmer & Kretschmer, 1986; Marschark et

al., 2002; Webster, 1986). According to Ruiz (1995), "Perhaps more of our current models of literacy acquisition should reflect the diversity of paths children take in becoming proficient at reading and writing, and, most importantly, account for the diversity at a theoretical level" (p. 216). As a special education teacher, I have found that considering diversity in learning by applying the Multiple Intelligences Theory (Gardner, 1983) to be beneficial for my students, both hearing and deaf. They each learned in different ways, especially my deaf students who had fewer opportunities to access the English language. To communicate, they used a number of strategies to overcome their struggles to acquire English.

To highlight the struggle of English language learning for deaf children, experts in the field of deaf education often quote the statistic that deaf children graduate high school on average with a fourth grade reading level, as compared to their hearing peers (Allen, 1986; 1994; Holt, 1993). This statistic needs to be qualified with an explanation of the limitations of the data as well as how reading levels are defined. First, most data used to derive the statistic use the *Annual Survey of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children and Youth* (hereafter, *Annual Survey*) that is compiled by the Gallaudet Research Institute. The survey has significant limitations in that the data collected are dependent on schools and programs reporting the number of students they serve who are deaf or hard of hearing, which often results in an under-reporting of students mainstreamed in general education classes, particularly if the school or district serves a low number of students (Mitchell, 2004).

Kluwin and Stinson (1993) point out that students who are in mainstream settings often achieve at higher levels than students in segregated or self-contained settings;

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however, they caution that it is not known if the students achieve higher because they are mainstreamed or if they were mainstreamed due to higher achievement. Therefore, using the *Annual Survey* data as a starting point for determining academic achievement is problematic since higher-performing students will be under-represented. Despite these issues with the *Annual Survey*, my experience has served to support the general idea that deaf students are not reading at the same level as their same-age hearing peers. Most of my students left eighth grade unable to read independently and comprehend simple chapter books, which hearing third graders typically begin to read. To illustrate this point, most of my middle school students could not independently read any of the *Boxcar Children* book series by Gertrude Chandler Warner. The series is rated between a second and third grade level by the Accelerated Reader program (n.d.), a popular reading assessment system used in schools.

There is still the issue of how reading levels are defined, however, and the definition is a moving target that changes from school to school and teacher to teacher. Allington (2002) explains that the definition of "reading on grade level" derives from the average reading achievement of students at particular levels; using an average means that roughly half of students would be above and the other half would be below. Therefore, it is impossible to expect all students to read "on grade level" at the same point in time, as that designation is an arbitrary one.

Despite the issue of identifying reading levels consistently, teachers still need to have reference points from which to measure student performance. These points act as tools to help a teacher determine growth or identify areas for future development for students. My students, for example, were unable to read and comprehend the same level

of texts that their hearing peers could (and what the curriculum expected of them at each level). Another measure for comparison to the reading performance of other students is the state standardized test administered to every child from third to eighth grade. The majority of students in the school I taught at received scores of "proficient" or "advanced," while all but one of my students received scores of "basic" (which means their performance was "below grade level").

This is not to imply that deaf students are incapable of performing at high levels of academic achievement. Rather, their capacity to demonstrate high performance levels results from an incomplete access to language or ineffective instructional practices. Easterbrooks and Stoner (2006) explain that "Children who are deaf and hard of hearing do not have the same access to the rules of spoken language as do children with normal hearing. Similarly, they are delayed in the development of a signed language…thus, the relationship between spoken or signed language and written language is limited in this population, resulting in written language acquisition that is both delayed and incomplete" (p. 96). Easterbrooks and Stoner are referring to the majority of deaf children who are born to hearing parents. There are deaf children with deaf parents who have early exposure to ASL and English and do not experience delays in language. However, given the research on the writing skills of deaf students, and my own experiences in teaching deaf children (who typically have hearing parents), it was overwhelming for me to consider the skills my children needed to develop before they graduated high school. Some of my students were unable to communicate basic ideas through writing in a comprehensible form.

If my students could not communicate with me, a teacher accustomed to their writing style, through the written medium how would they ever be able to communicate in the hearing world with adults who are not? The opening prompt was part of a pre-assessment I gave to students at the beginning of the school year to determine a plan for writing instruction for the year. Educators learn that pre-assessments are essential for understanding what skills students bring to the classroom and what skills need to be developed (Dochy, Segers, & Buehl, 1999; Phye, 1997). Only then is it possible to plan instruction effectively. As the opening examples demonstrate, students came to my class with limited English writing skills. It was my job to determine the most important skills to teach, what the students could feasibly learn in a year, and how to balance the required curriculum with students' needs. This was a daunting task, especially considering that my students did not adhere to the most basic rules of Standard Written English: sentences start with capitals and end with periods (or other forms of punctuation).

It was through exercises such as the opening prompt of this study that I came to recognize differences between my students' writing and that of their hearing peers. I began noticing patterns in students' writing that I had not seen when I taught hearing children. One particular example, which I began referring to as "word reversals," involves reversing the order of words in short phrases or compound words. For example, my students would change *breakfast* to *fast break. Hot dog* became *dog hot,* and *daycare* became *care day* in their writing. Even more ironic and puzzling was that each of these expressions, except *daycare,* has one individual sign associated with it. In manually coded English (MCE), these concepts are not signed by using the individual parts of the compound word. BREAKFAST may be signed by using a B-handshape tapping the

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mouth. HOT-DOG is signed by changing the handshape from C to S while moving the hands away from each other in front of the body. Finally, *daycare* is sometimes signed as DAY^CARE; however some of my students sign only CARE to signify the entire concept. This sign is made by making a K-handshape with each hand, placing the right hand on the left hand, and moving them outward in a circular motion.

I have not found any published research discussing the phenomenon of word reversals; however, there has been some recognition that the phenomenon exists by other professionals in the field (L. Tompkins, personal communication, November 18, 2008). Understanding the use of word reversals and how they are treated during the revision process is just one way to determine how deaf students approach revision tasks in their writing. Since I only have encountered word reversals with deaf students, investigation into this writing practice can help teachers understand how English is approached by deaf children, which will lead to more effective instruction. Although research regarding word reversals is lacking, there are other studies on the English language use of deaf children who sign that must be considered. These studies can be broken into two overlapping categories: evaluating instructional strategies and analyzing specific writing skills.

Evaluating Instructional Strategies

Dialogue journals are the most common instructional strategy used with deaf children that have been written about by researchers and educators (Abrams, 1987; Bailes, 1999; Bailes et al., 1986; Kluwin & Kelly, 1991; Lieberth, 1991; Pogoda-Ciccone, 1994; Schleper, 2000). Dialogue journals can take a number of forms in classrooms, but the fundamental features are essentially the same. Students are permitted to choose the topics they write about, and the journals act as a written dialogue between

at least two people. Discourse unfolds in a natural progression, and journals are not corrected, revised, or graded.

The dialogue journals used by researchers have been student-to-student and student-to-teacher, although educators also have encouraged parent-to-child uses. In each of the research studies, dialogue journals were found to be an effective strategy in improving students' writing, most notably in fluency and grammar (Kluwin & Kelly, 1991). Classroom teachers also share the journaling process as a strategy useful and effective for their students (Bailes, 1999; Bailes et al., 1986; Schleper, 2000). After implementing dialogue journals, researchers have found that the complexity of sentence structures increased for deaf students (Kluwin & Kelly, 1991) and syntactical quality improved (Lieberth, 1991).

Researchers also have found direct instruction of specific skills and strategies to be effective in teaching students to understand story structures (Akamatsu, 1988) and to use adjectives in their writing (Easterbrooks & Stoner, 2006). However, the results also show that the learning is not fully internalized (Akamatsu, 1988) or negatively impacts other areas of writing, such as story action and elements of story grammar (Easterbrooks & Stoner, 2006). These undesirable outcomes could be indicative of the need for further or more effective instruction on the topic. It could also be that as students are learning and using new skills their attention to other aspects of writing decreases and, thusly, negatively impacts the overall piece (Easterbrooks & Stoner, 2006). This could be because the writing process is so complex, and there are several processes that occur simultaneously. Students struggling with English can only maintain focus on so many processes at once. The implication for this study is that the way deaf students

conceptualize and approach revision may be impacted by the quantity of processes they can focus on simultaneously or by the instruction they receive.

A third instructional strategy employed by researchers is the use of a writing assessment rubric to improve the overall writing of deaf students (Schirmer, Bailey, & Fitzgerald, 1999). Whereas the previous paragraph discussed strategies used to improve one aspect of writing, the rubric was aimed at examining nine traits of writing: organization, mechanics, sentence structures, story development, text structure, content, topic, voice/audience, and word choice. The classroom teacher taught each trait over a period of two days, and had students use the rubric to evaluate writing samples. Once all nine traits had been covered, she explained that the rubric would be used to assess students' writing for every writing assignment.

The teacher followed this procedure for each writing assignment from September to June. As a result of the implementation of the rubric, students' writing significantly improved on four of the traits: topic, content, story development, and organization. Students' writing did not improve in the remaining five areas. All of the traits that showed improvement are ideas addressed early in the writing process, thus it is probably a reflection of better planning than an improvement in the overall process. Also, students' writing shifted from a focus on personal expression of emotions and opinions to a focus on problem-solving, storytelling, and sharing information, which may be due to the variety of writing topics and styles the students wrote throughout the year.

A fourth instructional strategy is the use of Strategic and Interactive Writing Instruction (SIWI), or Morning Message, which is being employed and studied at the elementary and secondary levels by Wolbers (2008a; 2008b). SIWI is a guided approach

to teaching writing that typically begins with the teacher leading students through the writing process by composing a text together. Ideas are created by the students, and the text is student-generated. The teacher provides specific instruction and guidance to help the students understand how the writing process operates. Instruction is focused on student needs and geared toward individual texts. In addition, discussions around what makes a sentence English-based versus ASL-based are important in helping the students to understand the difference between their two languages. Wolbers has shown that using SIWI with students promotes progress in writing skills.

The research appears to indicate that specific strategy instruction is a successful way to improve the writing of deaf children, but with limitations. The story structure and visual tool strategies are designed to impact very narrow aspects of writing. Dialogue journals do not target one specific aspect of writing, but they do rely on students to discern intuitively and begin incorporating aspects of written English that are modeled by their journal partners. The rubric also does not target one specific area of writing; however, it does rely on students' metacognition of their writing skills in order to make adjustments. Although the studies presented here did not provide students with strategies for revision, they do give insight into the way teachers' instruction can influence the writing processes used by their students. In my study I will pay particular attention to the instruction that children are receiving in order to understand fully and explain how they approach revision in their work.

Analyzing Specific Writing Skills

As seen in the examples at the opening of this chapter and as reported by researchers, English grammar is a problematic area for deaf students. Early studies that focus on specific writing skills are generally concerned with grammatical features of

writing, or syntax, while later studies have changed focus to examine features related to semantics. Two early studies (Bunch, 1979; Charrow, 1974) investigated the extent to which deaf students internalized grammatical rules of written English by having deaf students write down recalled sentences. Both studies indicate that while deaf students do not follow one grammatical system, there are some patterns worth further investigation.

Charrow (1974) offers her position that prelingually deaf children do not become proficient in Standard English, even after seven or eight years of instruction in the English language. Instead, she suggests that the errors in written works by deaf students occur within patterns and may be a distinct dialect – "Deaf English." Deaf English contains expressions called "deafisms" which are features observed in deaf people's writing that are not part of Standard Written English (Webster, 1986). The subjects, 15 deaf students with a mean age of 14.9 years, and a control group of hearing students (ages 9 – 10) were given a test of 50 sentences written in Standard English and 50 sentences written in Deaf English. The sentences were flashed on a computer screen for 6.5 seconds, and students recorded what they remembered of the sentences.

Charrow (1974) concludes that the deaf students found the Deaf English sentences easier to remember than the hearing children did. However, deaf students did not perform significantly better on the Deaf English sentences than the Standard English sentences, thus leading Charrow to conclude that deaf children do work with a set of grammatical rules that have a variable nature and are not part of Standard English. She suggests that a longitudinal study of deaf children's acquisition of Deaf English would aid understanding of this phenomenon. The present study examines the ways revision

processes interact with syntax and semantics; it may well be that the children operate under a special set of grammatical rules, and that possibility is taken into consideration.

Bunch (1979) investigated the degree to which 75 deaf children aged 9 – 16 used memorized and internalized grammatical English rules in recalling and correcting sentences. Additionally, he examined the effect of language teaching method, sex, and age on the children's English skills. Bunch concludes that deaf students rely more on recall than on internalized knowledge of grammar, because they repeat sentences with errors, omit words, or make other types of errors. Bunch also concludes that this is indicative of something more than a simple language delay. The findings in these early studies by Charrow (1974) and Bunch provide a look into how deaf students process written English. They do not explain how the grammar changes between the reading and writing of each sentence or how the sentences are constructed the way they are by the children. Charrow and Bunch do, however, show that the way deaf children process and construct text in written English is different from hearing children, which is also shown in the next set of studies.

Researchers in deaf education (Alamargot et al., 2007; Arfe & Boscolo, 2006; Ivimey, 1976; Ivimey & Lachterman, 1980; Odom & Blanton, 1967; Singleton et al., 2004) have compared the performance of deaf students to that of hearing students in an effort to understand how deaf students are performing academically. Deaf students are found to underperform their hearing peers on syntactic measures while performing at levels commensurate to their hearing peers on measures of semantics. Heider and Heider's (1940) classic study continues to influence the deaf education field over 60 years after its publication and thus warrants discussion here. Heider and Heider compared

the written compositions of deaf children and hearing children, ranging in age from 8 to 14. They found that deaf children wrote fewer words, had more simple sentences, and utilized grammatical features that were highly structured and did not allow for variability.

Historically, deaf education has emphasized an oral approach to education that promotes speech development over language development. Also, use of such structured programs as the Fitzgerald Key and the Apple Tree Program have led to an emphasis on drilling grammar as a way to help deaf children acquire English proficiency (Paul, 2008). These approaches to teaching English are reflected in the work of Heider and Heider (1940), who emphasize the syntactical elements of the children's writing.

The findings of Heider and Heider (1940) have continued to maintain validity today, almost 70 years later, even though instructional strategies have shifted from a focus on syntax and structure to an emphasis on writing-as-process. For example, Student 2's work at the beginning of this chapter exhibits most of these characteristics. The text is short, utilizes short sentence structures, and the structure does not vary. Student 1's piece from the beginning of this chapter has no discernible sentence structure and the text is very short; however, the Heiders did not attend to the meaning that was being conveyed through children's writing, an area that is central to the present study. If the analysis focused entirely on syntax, then what would be missed in the two pieces from the beginning of the chapter is how the answers do not match the question. Student 2's piece definitely comes closer in providing an answer; it is almost impossible to determine what Student 1 was trying to convey. The point is, left only to syntactical analysis, the discovery of the question-answer mismatch is left uncovered.

Yoshinaga-Itano and Snyder (1996) attempted to do more of a semantic analysis by finding the frequency and proportional distribution of a variety of variables in the written language of deaf and hearing students, who were matched based on academic performance. Specifically, they examined the quantity of propositions, cohesive devices, and T-units. T-units are phrases that "convey a recognizable and understandable unit of meaning" (Arfe & Boscolo, 2006, p. 279) and may be found in sentences that are grammatically correct or incorrect. This is a very useful tool in examining the writing of deaf children because their syntax does not always follow conventional English rules.

Yoshinaga-Itano and Snyder (1996) discovered that deaf or hard-of-hearing students used fewer words in their writing than hearing children, but they produced similar numbers of propositions and cohesions. They also found that deaf students tended to use less grammatical variety in their writing and relied heavily on predicates to carry syntactic and semantic devices. These results highlight ways that syntactical abilities of deaf children may interfere with the meaning-making processes of writing. However, Yoshinaga-Itano and Snyder attempted to quantify meaning through the measurement of semantic devices, which is problematic because it is nearly impossible to quantify meaning. The present study examines meaning-making in a way that does not eliminate analysis of the context and other factors that may be impacting why children write and revise by attending to what children do rather than by quantifying their products.

Arfe and Boscolo (2006) examined the causal coherence of Italian deaf students' written narratives and the relationship between the students' syntactic skills and their ability to use causal structures. The narratives of 17 deaf high school students were compared to 17 hearing high school students and 16 hearing second grade students.

Causal coherence is the linking of events in a narrative; the more events are linked causally, the easier it is for a reader to comprehend the story. Causal structures generally follow a goal-attempt-outcome (GAO) episode model.

In a narrative where the goal is the character's objective, attempts are made by the character to achieve that goal, and the outcome of the attempt is either favorable or not. GAOs within a narrative are connected to each other and are organized into a network. The more a GAO connects with other GAOs, the more it is superordinate to other GAOs. For example, the protagonist's primary goal and ultimate outcomes are found in the superordinate GAO, since this connects with other subordinate GAOs that occur within the narrative.

Arfe and Boscolo (2006) analyzed the T-units and the GAO structures in the students' narratives. They found that the deaf students wrote significantly longer narratives than both groups of hearing students, as measured by the number of T-units in the narrative. The total number of GAOs written by each group did not vary significantly. The deaf students less frequently included superordinate GAOs than the hearing high school students, but they were not significantly different from hearing second graders. Arfe and Boscolo conclude that the deaf students showed difficulties in organizing a narrative at a global level and connecting events at a smaller level. They report that, unlike the hearing students, the deaf students were less concerned with connecting the events of the story to the superordinate GAO and more concerned with the description of each event. They also conclude that "Although both deaf students and hearing children have difficulty in managing causal discourse structures in narrative writing, their

difficulties might have different explanations" (p. 287). This study will attempt to explain where some of the difficulties are occurring while the students are revising their work.

The literature on deaf students has been more focused on product comparisons than on process comparisons between deaf and hearing children. Much of the early research has portrayed the ways that deaf students' writing is inferior to hearing students' writing, particularly in the area of syntax (Heider & Heider, 1940; Myklebust, 1965; Schulz, 1965). Research over the past decade has shifted focus to studying how deaf children perform semantically (Arfe & Boscolo, 2006; Lang & Albertini, 2001; Mayer & Akamatsu, 2000; Yoshinaga-Itano & Snyder, 1996), developing better ways to assess the writing of deaf students (Schley & Albertini, 2005; White, 2007), understanding the variables that impact writing (Antia et al., 2005; Koutsoubou, Herman, & Woll, 2007; Padden & Ramsey, 1997), and using instructional strategies to help deaf students improve their writing (Long, 1999; Padden & Ramsey, 1997; Schirmer et al., 1999; Schirmer & Ingram, 2003; Wolbers, 2008a). Although deaf children are capable of performing on a similar level to hearing peers semantically, they are held back by their difficulties with English syntax (Antia et al., 2005; Musselman & Szanto, 1998; Singleton et al., 2004; Yoshinaga-Itano & Snyder, 1996). This study focuses on processes used by deaf students as they make meaning through writing, particularly centering on the process they use as they revise texts that are required assignments for their English class.

Research Methodology

This section provides a summary of the research methodology that is used for this study. The purpose and significance of this study are described as well. The research questions guiding the study are presented, and an overview of grounded theory follows.

Finally, the organization of this study is laid out. (A more developed description of the methodology appears in Chapter Three.)

Purpose of the Study

According to Kluwin and Kelly (1990), "While there has been to date almost no research on the writing processes of deaf writers, some of the research on less able writers suggests that differences in the composing process may be at the heart of some of the writing problems reported for deaf populations" (p. 2). Almost 20 years later, this statement still holds true. There is not much additional research on the writing processes and very little on the revision processes for deaf populations. This study describes and explains the processes used by certain adolescent deaf children to convey meaning through the construction of texts, specifically through the analysis of the revision process, by using a grounded theory methodology.

Grounded theory is intended to explain a phenomenon or process at a theoretical level (Charmaz, 2006). The process is studied within its natural context, and a set of propositions is presented in the form of a theory or a conceptual model (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory can enhance understanding of a process and "provide a meaningful guide to action" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 12). This study develops a grounded theory that explains the processes some deaf children use when they revise their own texts. In the future, the grounded theory can be used as a guide to develop improved pedagogical strategies for teaching writing.

Research Questions

This study explores the processes used by selected deaf middle school students to create and revise texts written as a response to their English teachers' assignments. The following questions guide this study:

1. How do deaf children in middle school construct meaningful texts?

    a. How do the texts that deaf middle school students write differ in their intended and conveyed meanings?

    b. How do syntactic features evolve as deaf students revise their writing?

Grounded Theory

Qualitative research helps us understand complex phenomena and processes of life within the natural settings where they occur (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). One type of qualitative research, grounded theory, "gives priority to the studied *phenomenon* or *process* – rather than to a description of a setting" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 22). As such, grounded theory is an appropriate methodology for studying the processes that deaf children use as they write and revise texts. Using this methodology, I develop analytic concepts to explain the underlying processes of how deaf children in middle school convey meaning through writing, with a focus on the revision process.

Grounded theory consists of a systematic set of guidelines and procedures for collecting and analyzing data to construct a "well-codified set of propositions" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 31) grounded in the data themselves. The well-codified set of propositions is the basis of the theory or conceptual model and is often displayed using a graphic representation. This study develops of a grounded theory that is composed of categories and their major defining properties, which are identified through a process of constant comparison (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). These propositions also create possible conceptual frameworks that can be used in practical situations, which is an important consideration for this study. The conceptual model explains the writing and revising processes used by deaf children, while also ensuring that it is relevant to educators. If the process of

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learning to write is better understood, then teachers will be better equipped to assist their students in making progress.

Significance of the Study

Although there is a large amount of research on the writing skills of deaf children, the research focuses on narrow, often mechanical, aspects of writing and is more product-focused (Arfe & Boscolo, 2006; Bunch 1979; Charrow, 1974; Heider & Heider, 1940; Kluwin & Kelly, 1991; Lieberth, 1991; Yoshinaga-Itano & Snyder, 1996). Although the semantics of deaf students' writing have been analyzed (Arfe & Boscolo, 2006; Yoshinaga-Itano & Snyder, 1996), there has been little research on the processes that deaf children use to construct and revise meaning through writing. This study provides an examination of how children communicate meaning through the production of written works.

"A grounded substantive theory that corresponds closely to the realities of an area will make sense and be understandable to the people working in the substantive area" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 239). Hopefully, this study will help teachers working with middle-school-age deaf students to understand the relationship of technical aspects of writing and meaning-making as they evolve through the writing process. By understanding these writing relationships, teachers of deaf children can begin to understand pedagogical practices that will help to improve the writing of deaf children.

Organization of the Study

This chapter introduced the research problem and questions addressed in this study. Chapter II reviews research relevant to this study, including research on deaf students' literacy, communication modes, adolescent literacy, and instructional strategies. Chapter III outlines the research design for the study, including procedures for sampling,

data collection, and analysis. Chapter IV shares the results of the analysis and a conceptual model. Chapter V discusses the implications and addresses the specific strengths and weaknesses of this study.

CHAPTER II:
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter provides a preliminary review of the literature regarding the education of deaf adolescents. The review sets a context and establishes the need for this study by providing an overview of research in the language development of deaf children, with an emphasis on writing and revising. This literature review is not designed to establish a framework but to show the gap in research and demonstrate the contribution to the knowledge base that this study will make. This is because "the researcher does not want to be so steeped in the literature that he or she is constrained and even stifled by it" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 49). Constructing a grounded theory requires that the researcher remain firmly grounded in the data "without any preconceived theory that dictates, prior to the research, 'relevancies' in concepts and hypotheses" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 33). Completing a comprehensive literature review prior to conducting the study may prevent the researcher from articulating his or her own ideas. Upon completion of the data analysis and the generation of the conceptual model, a comparison with the literature is made (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

There are several issues specific to deafness and deaf education that must be considered, especially since the language and communication methods used by deaf people vary considerably and impact the way they compose texts. Deaf people identify themselves in unique ways that hearing people find difficult to understand, especially if they do not participate in the Deaf world. Communication and language are two common threads in the research on deaf people, since hearing loss greatly impacts these areas. Ogden (1996) states that "Deafness is about communication, not sound" (p. 43). This first

section describes the most common methods used to communicate in deaf education. Although a number of communication methods used by teachers of the deaf are outlined here, American Sign Language, English, and a contact form of the two languages are the most commonly used to communicate outside the classroom among deaf people.

Communication Methods

There are several methods of communication that are used in deaf education with much disagreement about which method provides the best linguistic input to result in the acquisition of language by deaf children (Quigley & Paul, 1986; Streng, Kretschmer, & Kretschmer, 1978). While people on different sides of the communication debate agree that language acquisition is of utmost importance and exposure must begin early in life and be used consistently, they disagree about which communication modality is the most effective.

Advocates for Deaf culture view ASL as the natural language of Deaf people and, therefore, the most appropriate mode of verbal communication for deaf children (Lane, Hoffmeister, & Bahan, 1996). School programs that support ASL development are often considered bilingual-bicultural, and this approach to education usually involves teaching English through ASL. An alternative viewpoint is that spoken English is the most desirable mode of communication because it allows deaf children to participate in the larger hearing society (Alexander Graham Bell Association, n.d.). Variations of these arguments are as many as the stops on the continuum of communication, ranging from oralism to manualism.

Communication options generally fall into three categories: sign languages, manually coded English (MCE), and spoken languages. ASL and spoken English are the primary languages for verbal communication used by D/deaf people in the United States

that are natural languages. The MCE systems identified here are coded forms of English that have been created to enhance a deaf child's ability to visually access and internalize English syntax.

American Sign Language (ASL)

ASL is the signed language used by deaf people in the United States. Other countries do have their own signed languages, but this study focuses on students in the United States, so ASL is the signed language being discussed. ASL is a recognized language with its own vocabulary, syntax, pragmatics, and semantic structure (Stokoe, 1960; Valli et al., 2005). For example, in English the question "Where are you going?" can be expressed in ASL as YOU GO WHERE. It is imperative that the appropriate grammatical facial markers accompany the hand movements, thus the eyebrows should be scrunched down. Without this grammatical facial marker, the sentence is a statement, not a question.

As noted previously, children who use ASL as their primary language often attend bilingual-bicultural education programs where they learn via the signed language of ASL and written English. There is no written form of ASL, and one of the challenges teachers face is how to teach English in its written form through ASL.

When writing about concepts that have been signed in ASL, it is sometimes helpful to use glosses (as described in Chapter 1) to explain the concept than to translate to English. Glosses have been used in this study, when appropriate, to help show the students' or the teachers' own words.

Manually Coded English (MCE) Systems

Signing Essential English (SEE1) and Signing Exact English (SEE2) are two examples of *MCE* (Marschark, 2007; Russell, 2007). The signs are derived from ASL;

however, they are signed in English word order. Additionally, every grammatical feature and morpheme of English is given a sign representation (Marschark, Lang, & Albertini, 2002). For example, in ASL there is no sign that equates to the English concepts such as *the, an,* and *it*. SEE1 and SEE2 have signs for each of these words. Also word endings such as *–ing* are given signs invented specifically to aid English comprehension. The fundamental principle of SEE1 and SEE2 is that deaf children will become more fluent in English if they have a visual representation of every word and morpheme. Another feature of MCE is that English compound words are signed using their individual components instead of using the ASL sign for the concept. The word *butterfly* is signed as two conceptually unrelated signs, BUTTER and FLY, instead of using the conceptually appropriate BUTTERFLY (Anthony, 1966). The premise behind the creation of these sign systems is that deaf children will be able to internalize English syntax if they are able to access it through visual means.

Contact Signs

Contact signing is a form of communication that changes depending on the participants in the conversation. Contact signing derives from the intersection of deaf signers and hearing speakers with varying degrees of signing fluency, although it is not always the case; deaf signers do use contact signing among each other (Lucas & Valli, 1991). Lucas and Valli describe four linguistic features of contact signing: lexical forms, lexical meaning and function, morphological structure, and syntactic structure.

Most of the signs produced in contact signing are ASL signs or ASL-like signs. ASL-like signs use the same basic elements of ASL signs (e.g., movements, locations, orientation, and handshapes), but they are not used in ASL. An example of an ASL-like sign is BECAUSE. It borrows a handshape, location, and orientation found in ASL.

However, it is a sign for the English word *because,* and its meaning and function are closely related to the English word. In ASL, the sign WHY (signed with specific nonmanual markers) is used as a conjunction with similar meaning (Lucas & Valli, 1992). Two other lexical forms that make up contact signing are "[1] single, isolated mouthed or audibly spoken English words with no accompanying signs, and [2] mouthing or whispering of English words with accompanying signs" (Lucas & Valli, 1992, p. 78).

The second feature Lucas and Valli (1992) described is lexical meaning and function. In contact signing, most lexical forms are ASL signs with ASL meanings and functions; however, there are some signs that have been changed to have more English-like meanings and functions. One example of this is the sign RUN (as in "to run in a footrace"), which has a very specific meaning in ASL, but is sometimes used to represent the various meanings of the English word *run* such as "running a business" or "running for president."

Contact signing also includes drastically reduced English and ASL morphology. For example, English words may be fingerspelled with their inflectional or derivational morphemes or by using signs that have been created for those morphemes such as the word endings –ING or –MENT. ASL inflection may also be present, particularly with signs that use location and orientation morphemically such as TELL or INFORM. The syntax of contact signing consists of elements from both ASL and English. Primarily, the signs are used in English word order, incorporate English structures such as prepositions, and incorporate ASL structures such as use of space and eye gaze (Lucas & Valli, 1992).

Spoken English

       Auditory-oral communication, or oral communication, means that the child is taught to listen and speak (Moog, 2007), with an emphasis on developing a child's speaking skills and maximizing the use of his or her residual hearing. The oral method aims to provide linguistic input in the form of English only; the use of a signed language or other manual methods are opposed in a traditional oral approach to language (Connor, 1986), although they are not forbidden in all programs.

       Cued Speech uses manual cues with spoken English. It was created in 1966 by Dr. R. Orin Cornett to make English more visible in hopes that deaf children would have improved reading skills (Cornett & Daisey, 1992; Smith, 2007). Dr. Cornett never intended for Cued Speech to replace ASL (Marschark, 2007), which is what has happened in some programs for deaf children. Parents of my students have told me that they did not want their child to sign at all – only to cue. What these parents did not realize is that socially, those children were signing with their peers, which is precisely what Dr. Cornett intended. He expected ASL to be the language for social and academic communication and Cued Speech to be used as an aid for lipreading and literacy. He wanted to increase deaf children's literacy levels by helping them gain access to the English language, using cues that ease lipreading by making the phonemic bases of spoken English visually accessible (Marschark et al., 2002).

       Unlike ASL which takes years to master, Cued Speech can be learned in a weekend, although fluency takes time. Cued Speech consists of eight handshapes to signify consonant sounds and four placements and four movements to signify vowel sounds; the cues must be presented in conjunction with vicemes (unvoiced mouth movements representing speech) in order to be fully understood. Cuing while speaking

provides unambiguous visual access to spoken language, especially with words that are traditionally very difficult to lipread or to differentiate from similarly-formed words, such as *mom*, *mop*, and *mob*. Thus, visual access to spoken English is provided and the child can acquire language more easily. One of the benefits of Cued Speech is that it can be used with slight modifications to codify any spoken language. Two of the challenges associated with Cued Speech are that it is not widely used because cuing programs for deaf children are few, and Cued Speech transliterators are difficult to find.

Language Development

As acknowledged in the previous section, there are a number of ways in which educators provide deaf children access to language, but my students continued to struggle in mastering English. To understand this phenomenon, I examine research around language acquisition for deaf children. It should be noted that 90% of deaf children are born to hearing parents (Gallaudet Research Institute, 2006; Rose, McAnally, & Quigley, 2004). Two critical variables in language development are parental attitudes toward hearing loss and the quality of communication between parents and their children (Marschark et al., 2002).

Hearing parents are typically unaware of the implications of deafness prior to the birth of their own deaf child. Once they discover their child is deaf, they enter the grieving process, which involves the steps of denial, anger, guilt, depression, and acceptance (Ogden, 1996; Stewart & Kluwin, 2001). During this emotional time, parents receive an overwhelming amount of information and must make critical decisions that will impact their child's development, such as whether to get a cochlear implant or how they will communicate with their child (Ogden, 1996; Stewart & Kluwin, 2001). The latter is a continual issue in the development of language and communication skills with

deaf children (Marschark, 2001; Marschark et al., 2002; Streng, Kretschmer, & Kretschmer, 1978).

Marschark et al. observe that shared communication between parent and child "leads to early foundations in language which, in turn, support the acquisition of literacy and cognitive and social skills during the school years" (p. 91). This is also a factor linked to academic success in school (Hart & Risley, 1995). However, ASL is a language and is difficult to learn and master for non-native adults. Other manual methods of communicating (such as Cued Speech) are not widely available, and auditory-oral methods may not provide enough visual access to the spoken language for deaf children to succeed in acquiring language naturally.

As a result, less than half of deaf children are able to communicate fluently with their families, especially if the children's primary way to communicate is through signing (Marschark, 2001; Rose et al., 2004). Jordan and Karchmer (1986) found that 35% of hearing parents use sign language to communicate with their children, a statistic derived from parent responses to a questionnaire, and that supports my own experience in which about 25% of my deaf students who used sign language were able to communicate fluently with their parents using signs. This number increases to 42% when I include students who used Cued Speech and aural/oral methods of communication, a proportion still in line with the research.

Being unable to communicate fluently with family members restricts access to language for deaf children, resulting in delayed development of a first language (Marschark, 2001; Rose et al., 2004; Streng, Kretschmer, & Kretschmer, 1978). By contrast, hearing parents of hearing children and deaf parents of deaf children are

typically fluent in their respective languages, which are used to communicate freely and

consistently, thus providing a linguistically-rich environment in which children acquire a

complete language naturally (Marschark, 2001). Children in these families typically have

a fully developed first language by the time they are five years old. Deaf parents with

deaf children may choose to send their children to deaf residential schools that support

the development of both ASL and English, or they may choose to send their children to a

primarily English environment to support the development of English.

Since some of my deaf students experienced delayed and incomplete language

access and development, it followed that their literacy development would also be

delayed. The written language of my deaf students tended to be difficult to understand

since the grammatical features of English had not been internalized (Charrow, 1974;

Myklebust, 1965). Easterbrooks and Stoner (2006) address some of the common issues

identified in the writing of deaf children:

> Students who are deaf and hard of hearing have considerable delays and
> variances in written language, expressed in their writing through the use of
> too many nouns, verbs, and determiners relative to too few adverbs,
> conjunctions, auxiliaries, pronouns, prepositions, and adjectives. This
> stagnation in language development is reflected in research reporting that
> students with hearing loss often use the same descriptors for item
> explanation (e.g., general number and size) at age 18 as they did at age 10.
> (pp. 96 – 97)

Studies evaluating the literacy of deaf children tend to focus on the development

of reading (Marschark et al., 2002), with some indication that deaf children develop

reading skills in the same pattern as their hearing peers although the development may

not occur at the same rate (Ruiz, 1995; Schirmer & McGough, 2005). However,

Kretschmer and Kretschmer (1986) suggest that "The early linguistic development of

hearing impaired children seems to parallel that of normal hearing children, but as

hearing impaired children become older, they show English language abilities that are increasingly less like those of individuals with normal hearing" (p. 154). This statement indicates that while deaf children's language development may follow the same patterns as hearing children early on, as they mature, deaf children's development increasingly deviates from hearing children. This finding illustrates the need for greater understanding in deaf students' development of language and instructional practices used by teachers of the deaf.

Webster (1986) notes that there have been two ways of viewing deaf students' writing: either as deviant or delayed. Older deaf students demonstrate certain features that appear in the writing of much younger hearing children (Arfe & Boscolo, 2006; Heider & Heider, 1940), which indicates a delay in language. However, there are also features that remain idiosyncratic to the writing of deaf children and thus suggest deviation (Marschark et al., 2002). Although the present study is not comparing the writing of deaf students to the writing of hearing students, it will add to the current body of knowledge and provide a deeper understanding in the way deaf children construct texts.

Written Language Development

Research on the written language development of deaf children generally has focused on the examination of writing skills and evaluation of the impact of discrete instructional strategies. There have been a few studies that compare the pattern of writing skills in deaf children to hearing children (Arfe & Boscolo, 2006; Heider & Heider, 1940; Yoshinaga-Itano & Downey, 1996a; Yoshinaga-Itano & Snyder, 1996) in an attempt to describe and analyze the differences between their writing, which are often characterized as deviations or delays on the part of the deaf children. Also, the studies have been primarily concerned with the structural and linguistic elements present in the children's

writing in their descriptions. "The[se] traditional studies were useful in that they clearly indicated that syntactic development in hearing impaired children did progress through predictable stages, and the English usage in hearing impaired writers tended to be rigid" (Kretschmer & Krestchmer, 1986, p. 138).

Rose et al. (2004) identify five common types of analyses of deaf children's writing that have been used in research: number and length of sentences, complexity of syntax, number and types of errors made, frequency in various parts of speech used, and types of grammatical structures employed. Over the past two decades, there has been a shift in emphasis in the research from syntax to semantics. However, analyses of semantics have continued to focus on products over processes and have used quantitative methods, though it is difficult to quantify meaning. To do this, researchers count T-units, clauses, propositions, and units of cohesion, but in the end, that tells us very little about the ideas that students are attempting to convey through their writing.

Examination of Writing Skills

The primary focus of research in the writing of deaf children has concentrated on the structure or form of a written product (Rose et al., 2004; Streng et al., 1978). Rose et al. note that "Although the most recent studies in the language development of hearing children have focused on the processes used in composing and recording 'inner language,' little information is available regarding the processes of writing by deaf children" (p. 179). In fact, only one study has examined the writing process of deaf children. Mayer (1999) investigated the composing processes of two eighth grade deaf students. Data collection consisted of written documents, interviews, and observations of the students as they wrote. The classroom teacher "tries to maintain a balance between focusing on meaning concentrating on form" (pp. 40 – 41). Although the instruction

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being given to the students is not emphasized in Mayer's study, it is a factor as the students reported that the instruction they received influenced their writing.

Mayer (1999) found that the students employed a series of four strategies while they wrote: mouthing and mouthing while signing, recalling prior instruction, recalling previous experiences with text, and utilizing fingerspelling. In Mayer's study, the initial setting of ideas to paper was examined, which provides insight into the drafting process. The current study examines a different part of the writing process, revision, in an attempt to provide greater insight into how texts are composed by deaf children as they write texts for their English classes.

One limitation of Mayer's (1999) study is a lack of description of the context. For example, the students' current academic performance is not provided, and thus it is difficult to determine whether these strategies are employed by students who already are successful readers and writers or whether these are strategies used by students who struggle to acquire literacy skills. Mayer does suggest, though, that no two deaf students will use these "cognitive tools" in the same way and that "the challenge for educators…is to create classroom environments that offer possibilities for nurturing and exploiting the full range of available cognitive tools" (p. 44). She describes the process of writing used by the students, but she stops short of explaining how the students construct meaning and connect ideas through their writing. The present study moves beyond merely describing strategies employed by deaf students as they write and revise. I attempt to explain why students choose particular strategies and uncover attitudes that impact how they draft and revise texts.

In a follow-up study, Mayer and Akamatsu (2000) investigated the ways in which ASL and English-based signing allow for comprehension of content and how they influence the process of composing a written text of the story. They had three middle school participants, one who had deaf parents and two with hearing parents. The students were accustomed to seeing ASL and English-based signing as both are used for instruction. The students were shown two fables, one in ASL and the other using English-based signs, and asked to write a narrative of each fable. Students were permitted to re-view the videotapes when they were revising and editing. Students were also interviewed about their perspectives of the writing process. The researchers found that students were able to comprehend the fables, regardless of whether they were presented in ASL or English-based sign.

Mayer and Akamatsu (2000) conclude that since English-based signing can be used to communicate content, then it would be an appropriate way for helping deaf students to think in English. They observe that students who were more proficient writers tended to think in English as they wrote. Some of the strategies students reported were: using inner speech (in English), visualizing pictures of the story then identifying English words and expressions that matched the picture, and naming specific grammatical rules to help make changes. Additionally, the researchers note that one student mouthed words while writing and used this strategy to help determine spelling. Their study indicates that deaf children use a variety of strategies to write and revise in English, regardless of their language levels. The present study builds upon this knowledge by describing the processes that inform the strategies deaf children are using.

Sarachan-Deily and Love's (1974) early investigation of the underlying linguistic and grammatical rule formation of deaf and hearing children reveals that the knowledge of English syntax differs for deaf and hearing children of the same age. Specifically, they found that deaf students significantly violated English syntax more frequently than hearing students. Forty-two deaf students and 21 hearing students ages 15 – 19 participated in the study. Half of the deaf students received instruction by the Rochester Method (simultaneous fingerspelling and speech) and the other half received instruction through an oral approach. None of the deaf students received formal language training prior to four years of age.

For this study, the students were shown a series of sentences and high frequency words and were asked to write what they could remember. The researchers observed that deaf students were just as likely to make syntactical errors as they were to make errors that did not interfere with the grammatical structure. While this study confirms that deaf students and hearing students have different grammatical skills, it relies heavily on the students' ability to recall a specific text, rather than asking the students to construct something new. As such, it does not provide any insight into the composing process or how syntax is impacted while writing, and specifically, revising texts. The present study uses student writing that is produced for a specific purpose in a more natural environment in order to examine how some deaf students' revisions impact the meaning they intend to convey.

In a similar study, Tomblin (1977) examined the serial-recall performance of deaf and hearing students between the ages of 14 and 17 and found that deaf children do not process syntactically-structured information. Each student was shown two sets of word

strings, one ordered according to English syntax and the other ordered randomly, and was asked to recall them. Results were analyzed in two ways: using right-wrong scoring and error type analysis. For right-wrong scoring, the students' responses were scored as correct if all of the words in the string were given in the same order as presented. The right-wrong analysis shows that deaf and hearing students had fewer mistakes on the strings that followed English syntax.

There were three types of errors identified for the second analysis: omissions, intrusions, and metathesis errors. Omissions were counted when a word presented was missing in the response; intrusions indicated the addition of words in the response; and metathesis errors indicated proper word recall in incorrect order. Metathesis errors occurred most frequently in word strings that were not syntactically ordered than in strings that followed English syntax. Tomblin's study confirms the type of errors other researchers have found in deaf students' writing (Easterbrooks & Stoner, 2006; Heider & Heider, 1940; Mayer & Akamatsu, 2000; Musselman & Szanto, 1998), but under artificial, controlled conditions. Students were not given the opportunity to generate their own texts, only to recall what they were shown, thus not providing insight into the way deaf students process and review texts.

The classic study of Heider and Heider (1940) examined the syntactic structures employed by deaf children from 11 to 17 years of age and hearing children from 8 to 14 years of age. Different age groups were used because the main criterion for inclusion in the study was the ability to write an entire story. For hearing children, 8 was the earliest age that this was done, and for deaf children it was 11. The researchers were more

concerned with the developmental course for each group of children than in a year-by-year comparison of the skills acquired.

Heider and Heider (1940) found that the compositions of deaf children had more sentences, which contained fewer words and clauses, than hearing children. Despite the difference in usage from hearing children, deaf children's words per sentence increased with age. Deaf children used a greater number of simple sentences than hearing children but fewer compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences. All groups of hearing children, except eight- and nine-year olds, used more complex sentences than 17-year-old deaf children did. The researchers also conclude that deaf children use more rigid structures that are easily learned, and thusly, have less variability in their writing. This spurs me to wonder if there are certain revision strategies deaf children use because they are easily taught and learned, and what is the impact of these strategies on the process as a whole. Although an in depth analysis of syntax was completed, there was no explanation of the relationship of the syntactical elements to the overall meaning or how the discourse was impacted by the structures used. The present study attempts to explore the semantic as well as the syntactic elements in a written work, as well as to understand why certain structures are used over others and how those structures evolve during revision.

Where Heider and Heider (1940) found growth in the syntactic skills of deaf children as they grew in age, Antia, Reed, and Kreimeyer (2005) found that semantic skills also improve as children age. For their study, the researchers used the third edition of the *Test of Written Language* (TOWL-3), a test norm-referenced for a hearing population, to describe the writing achievement of deaf students attending public school

in a particular state that is not specified in the study. Over a three-year period, the TOWL-3 was administered to 110 students between the 3rd and 12th grades, 63 of whom used spoken English as their primary mode of communication; 22 used a mix of speech and sign; 19 used sign only, and six were missing data.

The mean scores for the deaf children fell into the below-average range, and about half of the students received scores that were below-average. Relative strengths of the students' writing includes story construction and contextual conventions (punctuation and spelling), while the most troublesome area was contextual language (vocabulary and syntax). Older students performed better than younger students in syntax, story construction, and overall writing; however, a plateau in performance was noted in contextual conventions.

Finally, the researchers found that 18% of the variance in the writing achievement of the students was due to demographic variables chosen by the researchers: grade, gender, level of hearing loss, communication mode, interpreter use, length of time in a regular classroom, and whether students receive free lunch. Other demographic factors that may have explained more of the variance in students' writing but were not included in the study are: ethnicity, country of origin, age received first hearing aids, and first language (English, ASL, Spanish, none). In addition, instruction received by students may have helped to explain more of the variance, but it was not a factor in this study. This study demonstrates that while deaf students in public schools make progress in their writing, they are still lagging behind their hearing peers. It also highlights the need of researchers to consider other factors that influence student performance, such as instruction.

Like Antia et al. (2005), Yoshinaga-Itano and Snyder (1996) also found that semantic growth continued from age 10 to age 14 in their investigation of the semantic and syntactic usage of deaf, hard-of-hearing, and hearing students who used auditory oral or total communication. Specifically, they examined the quantity of propositions, cohesive devices, and T-units in students' writing. They found that while the deaf and hard-of-hearing students used fewer words in their written narratives compared to hearing students, they produced similar quantities of propositions and cohesions. The researchers also found that the deaf students tended to use less grammatical variety in their writing and relied heavily on predicates to carry syntactic and semantic devices.

Essentially, Yoshinaga-Itano and Snyder (1996) saw that three things were happening: 1) although deaf students had the ability to include similar amounts of meaning as their hearing peers, they lacked the syntactic skills necessary to communicate their ideas; 2) they depended on only one or two strategies through which they conveyed information; and 3) their cohesion depended primarily on using demonstratives, pronouns, and repetition. These findings led the authors to conclude that the strategies used by deaf children for including semantic information are different from hearing children. This perhaps supports the notion that as deaf children mature, their English develops on a different trajectory from hearing peers.

Additionally, the researchers found that the development of the use of cohesive devices and propositions was not linear. Where 10 and 15 year olds used fewer of these elements, there was a peak in usage among 12 year olds, thus resulting in an upside down U-shaped curve. Yoshinaga-Itano and Snyder (1996) note that the peak of the curve happens at a time when deaf students have been found to plateau in their English

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language development. As a result, they assert that this curve and their results represent a "period of cognitive reorganization that requires a certain level of language development" (p. 27). The present study may help to uncover more about what is happening in the development of deaf children's writing during this period of cognitive reorganization.

Musselman and Szanto (1998) examined the written language of 69 deaf adolescents (ages 14.5 to 19.5 years) to determine their performance on a standardized norm-referenced test and the effect of genre on students' writing skills. The second edition of the *Test of Written Language* (TOWL-2) was administered to the students to obtain their standardized scores, and the students were asked to write a letter about deaf education. The researchers were interested in uncovering whether the writing task (which was deemed as less authentic) would result in different scores than the letter (deemed more authentic).

As in Antia et al. (2005), Musselman and Szanto (1998) found that the deaf students' performance on the TOWL-2 was approximately one standard deviation from the mean, putting them in the low average range, thus implying that approximately half of the students scored in the average range and half below average. They also found that the deaf students received higher scores on the letter, supporting the notion that genre of writing, which they equate with authenticity, impacts quality of the final product. Finally, the researchers note that though the students demonstrate difficulties in syntax and vocabulary, they are able to convey ideas successfully, a finding similar to Yoshinaga-Itano and Snyder (1996). This study demonstrates that these deaf students are able to convey ideas and content through written language, but they continue to struggle with the structure of the language. The tasks provided to the students only allowed for the students

to generate one draft for scoring. If students were given the opportunity to revise and rewrite their texts, the number of structural errors may have been reduced.

In an early study, McCombs and McCombs (1969) analyzed the descriptive language in essays written by 450 deaf students between 10 and 18 years old to uncover how the descriptive language changed as the students grew older. They found 11 categories of descriptive attributes present in the writing: size and number (general and specific); climate/weather; temperature; location; definition/relationship; physical appearance (clothing and hair style); location in time; psychological or physiological state; evaluations of inanimate objects; and color. The quantity of usage of most descriptive attributes showed little change from age 10 to 18, suggesting that deaf children's descriptive writing does not change much as they move from primary grades through the secondary grades. Although McCombs and McCombs' study provides insight into the descriptive language use of deaf children, it neglects to provide a context for the reader. There is no sense of the students' learning environment or experiences in composing texts. The impact of these descriptive attributes on the writing and meaning-making of the child are also not considered. And a major absence is a consideration of the connection between students' syntactical abilities and their intended meaning. It is possible to write something that is grammatically acceptable but which has a different meaning from what is intended.

Yoshinaga-Itano , Snyder, and Mayberry (1996) assert that language tests used for deaf adolescents do not accurately show the growth that is made between the ages of 10 and 15 because the focus is on syntax instead of semantics. In their study of the lexical and semantic skill differences in deaf readers and non-readers, they asked 31 students to

write the best stories they could about a given picture and to complete a number of

standardized tests that assessed writing skills. The researchers coded each story for words

per T-unit, number of major propositions, number of minor propositions, total cohesions,

and collocation cohesions. They ran a factor analysis with the coding analyses and the

standardized test scores to determine which factors accounted for the highest amount of

variability in the students.

Yoshinaga-Itano et al. (1996) found the semantic language component to be the

variable that accounted for 36% of the variance in the sample, and higher than any other

variable. Syntax accounted for 19% of the variance, and hearing/speech and cognitive

performance accounted for 9% each. Neither age nor communication mode seemed to be

significant when comparing the students' written language performance. They advocate

for expanding studies of written language to include semantics, because semantics

appears to be sensitive to the variability in the deaf population. Marschark et al. (2002)

remark, "Although such investigations have expanded our knowledge about deaf

students' writing abilities, little information is available on how they actually compose

what they write" (p. 173). Even less is known about how they approach revising their

compositions.

Evaluation of the Impact of Instructional Strategies

Studies described in the previous section have measured the writing skills or

strategies of deaf students, often by comparing them with hearing students. This section

describes studies that have attempted to meliorate some of the writing deficiencies or

areas of deviance described above through the testing of instructional strategies.

Although the present study does not focus on the writing instruction children receive,

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instruction does play a role in the strategies and processes used by students and thus, is an important part of the literature.

Cambra (1994) examined the impact of a program of instruction on the development of reading comprehension and writing skills by deaf children. Ten deaf students ages 11 to 14 participated in the three-phase study. During the pretest and post-test phases, the students were asked to convert a descriptive passage to a narrative passage and to sequence a narrative then summarize it. During the intervention phase, a variety of activities were used to teach story structures and provide strategies for writing to the students. After the post-test, the researcher found that students showed significant improvement in the structure of their writing, and that deaf children did not always understand the narrative they were summarizing due to the inclusion of new features added in the summary. Cambra concludes that the students were familiar with text structures but needed continued instruction to improve their writing abilities. She also notes that students did not achieve syntactic accuracy in their writing.

A weakness of Cambra's (1994) study is that it asked students to perform tasks that are more artificial than classroom writing (writers do not convert one type of writing into a different one). Students may have been able to demonstrate greater mastery of skills if the task had been more natural. The complexity of both tasks may have hindered students' abilities to perform at their best. Additionally, the researcher concludes that the deaf children did not understand the narrative because they added elements in the summary. Perhaps, it is more that the students did not understand how to write a summary. The present study strives to avoid an emphasis on the deficits in the students'

writing skills and instead highlights their knowledge and skills. As such, I attempt to unearth and unpack students' understandings of writing and revision.

Along similar lines, Wolbers (2008a) investigated the impact that Morning Message, an interactive balanced instructional activity, had on the writing of deaf students in two elementary classes and one middle school class. Morning Message is typically a 15 to 30-minute writing activity that occurs daily. The students and teachers collaborate in the writing of a text by choosing a lead author who suggests a topic for the day. The group works together to create and revise the text, while the teacher's role changes. Initially, the teacher may serve as a model for how the activity runs and actively thinks-aloud the entire process. Later, the teacher may move into a supportive role by stepping into and out of the conversation to provide guidance on elements of writing for the students, thus transferring the control of the activity to the students.

For this study, Wolbers (2008a) was interested in whether Morning Message had any impact on writing skills (both semantic and syntactic) and whether there was a differential effect based on school level (elementary or middle school). A pre-test and post-test were administered where students were asked to write about a personal event or experience. These writing samples were scored using a rubric designed by the researcher that included four categories: primary traits (organization, details, cohesiveness); contextual language (sentence types, subject-verb agreement, use of determiners, vocabulary); contextual conventions (punctuation, capitalization, spelling); and total word count. To assess growth in the students' revising and editing skills, they were asked to revise and edit a story written by a different person. The story contained errors in mechanics, cohesiveness, and text structure.

Results indicate that students made significant gains in their writing and revising after completing 21 Morning Message activities. Wolbers (2008a) found that the elementary students made a greater number of corrections in the post-test, but all corrections were to mechanics. The middle school students, on the other hand made surface-level corrections on the pre-test, but made additional corrections to semantic elements during the post-test. Two caveats must be recognized: the sample size is small (three classrooms), and the elementary and middle school classes are in different types of schools. The elementary classes are located in a center-based program in a public school, while the middle school class is located in a residential deaf school. The findings related to age level may be confounded by the location of the classrooms. Despite these limitations, this study helps illuminate the impact that instruction has on the writing skills that students acquire, and this is something that I attend to as I progress in the present study.

In a later study, Wolbers (2008b) investigated the effects of using Strategic and Interactive Writing Instruction (SIWI) with deaf, middle school students who use ASL and English as their first and second languages, respectively. Like Morning Message, SIWI begins with guided and collaborative writing and moves toward independent writing as students internalize the skills and processes for writing. For this study, Wolbers divided 33 students into two groups, control and intervention. The intervention (SIWI) lasted for eight weeks, and the group receiving the intervention wrote two expository reports while the control group continued with their typical literacy instruction. Results of the study show that students in the treatment group made significantly greater gains with writing (both higher-level and lower-level skills) as

compared to the control group. Again, this shows the impact instruction has on the students' learning and processes used for writing, and highlights the need for me to attend to it.

Schirmer and Ingram (2003) investigated the effectiveness of an instructional intervention on the writing development of high school and middle school students who were deaf by increasing their use of a targeted language structure through the use of online chat. The study involved two experiments, one involving pairs of high school students (experiment one) and the other pairs of middle school students (experiment two). Each pair consisted of one deaf student and one hearing student. Three pairs of students participated in experiment one. The deaf students attended a state program for the deaf, communicated in ASL, and had profound hearing losses; their hearing partners attended a special technology-rich classroom. Students were given ten minutes of online discussion each day for a period of three weeks to work together on an astronomy report. During the conversations, an online teacher also participated by recasting the deaf student's responses. After the intervention, five of the participants were interviewed (one deaf student was unavailable). Due to absences, only one pair completed the study. Analysis of the data for the one dyad indicate that the deaf participant's use of descriptors (the targeted language structure) increased significantly during the intervention. The deaf students also used the online teacher as a resource to help provide assistance in explaining unfamiliar concepts or vocabulary that the hearing partners might use.

In experiment two, four hearing-deaf dyads were created (ages 10 to 12). The deaf students attended a program at a public middle school and were mainstreamed for some of their classes. They communicated using a form of English-based sign, and were

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identified with severe to profound hearing losses. The hearing students attended a special technology-rich classroom. All students were given 15 minutes of online discussion daily for a period of four weeks (around winter break). After collecting baseline data, the researchers chose to focus on conjunctions as the language structure for the online teacher to promote. As with the first experiment, the students were asked to work together to develop an astronomy report, and interviews of the students were conducted upon completion of the intervention. Results indicate a sporadic increase in the use of conjunctions from the baseline. Overall, results indicate that the intervention was effective for the one high school deaf participant but not for the middle school participants. The researchers attempted to find a reason for the variance in the middle school students' scores, but they could not find one. This study shows that written language development in middle school is not easy to pinpoint and that interventions developed for other age groups may not be effective. The present study attempts to explain some of what is happening as middle school students experience the writing and revising processes in an effort to develop more effective instructional strategies for them.

Kluwin and Kelly (1991) evaluated the effectiveness of dialogue journals for improving the writing skills of deaf students. They paired 204 deaf students with hearing peers for a period of one year. The students were located in 10 cities, ranged in age from 10 to 18, and were in grades 4 through 12. During the study, each deaf-hearing dyad maintained a dialogue journal. The students chose the topics and the flow of discourse within the journals, although periodic assistance in generating ideas was needed from the teachers. Teachers did not participate in the journal writing; they served more as facilitators who encouraged and monitored the writing.

At the end of the study year, Kluwin and Kelly found that the complexity of sentence structures increased for deaf students. They also found that the "tone of entry" changed over time. Students who began with brief entries were initially self-centered and became more so throughout the project. Students who wrote moderate exchanges started as less self-centered than the brief writers, but they also became increasingly self-centered throughout the project. Students who wrote the longest began with a greater emphasis on others and became more so throughout the project. This study highlights what deaf students do when they are given the opportunity to control the discourse and how the discourse changes over time. Since discourse is an important aspect of writing, the present study attends to how the tone of entry changes as students revise their writing.

Lieberth (1991) describes the outcomes of a project in which nine undergraduate deaf education majors were paired with nine deaf students (ages 9 – 12) through dialogue journal exchanges in an effort to improve the writing skills of the deaf students. Formal writing samples were collected as a baseline, midway through the project (12 weeks), and at the conclusion of the project. The samples were analyzed to identify areas that needed remediation. During the study, each dyad communicated through dialogue journals, and although the discourse unfolded in a natural progression, the undergraduates were aware of the targeted need areas and attempted to model language in those areas. They also modeled the correct usage for other errors they observed in the children's writing. Using a syntactic quotient to represent accuracy of usage, Lieberth found that syntax improved while length of entries decreased for the deaf students. Lieberth's study indicates that deaf students are able to pick up grammatical features of English through indirect

instructional methods. In the present study, I am mindful of indirect strategies the teacher may use to help prompt students in revising their work.

Another strategy evaluated by researchers is the direct instruction of a particular writing feature, such as story structure or adjective use. Akamatsu (1988) explicitly taught story structures to deaf children in an attempt to improve their written summaries. Prior to intervention, baseline data were collected by having students read stories and write summaries of them. During the three-week long intervention, two subjects, ages 11 and 12, were given explicit instruction on story structures. The students were permitted to use a visual cue (a bulletin board with story structure elements) until day seven to assist in their summary writing. Two maintenance summaries were collected, as well. Results show that students' summaries demonstrated an improvement in the knowledge of story structure. After the intervention, however, only one student maintained the new skill. Akamatsu concludes that the strategy has potential but further research needs to be conducted. Additionally, written works produced on day seven, after the visual cue was removed, indicated that the story structure elements had not been fully internalized. While the present study emphasizes the revision strategies used by deaf students, there may be other elements of classroom instruction that prompt them to make certain revisions.

Easterbrooks and Stoner (2006) also used a visual tool, which was more of a graphic organizer; however, they were attempting to increase the use of adjectives in the writing of deaf students. Three deaf students, ages 17 and 18, were given explicit instruction in using the visual tool for one week. The visual tool was divided into two sides: one side was for the student to list nouns and the other had circles in which

adjectives describing the nouns could be identified. Instruction was followed by a one month intervention phase in which the goal was to increase the adjectives used by each student. The results showed that the tool was effective in increasing the number of adjectives in the students' writing; however, elements of the story, such as action and quality were lost.

Another strategy explored by researchers is the effectiveness of a writing assessment rubric in improving the writing of deaf students. Whereas Akamatsu (1988) and Easterbrooks and Stoner (2006) used strategies to impact one area of writing, this rubric targets several areas at once. Schirmer, Bailey, and Fitzgerald (1999) used the rubric with 10 fifth and seventh grade deaf students over the course of one school year. The students' teacher provided direct instruction on each of nine writing traits assessed by the rubric: organization, mechanics, sentence structure, story development, text structure, content, topic, voice/audience, and word choice. After receiving instruction in all nine traits, every written work produced by the students was scored using the rubric. Schirmer et al. found that the deaf students' writing significantly improved on four of the traits: topic, content, story development, and organization. Students' writing did not improve in the remaining five areas. They also observed that students' writing shifted from a focus on personal expression of emotions and opinions to a focus on problem-solving, storytelling, and sharing information. Again, this study points out the importance of attending to tone of entry changes in students' writing, as well as how the instructional program is involved in the change.

Several studies presented thus far have incorporated middle-school age children, but only a few have focused on the middle school age group (11 to 14 years old)

exclusively. While research has shown a plateau or dip in the achievement of deaf children around the age of 12 (McCombs & McCombs, 1969; Yoshinaga-Itano & Snyder, 1996), it is not yet understood what happens during this "in-between" age when it comes to academic performance. Rose et al. (2004) even note that most of the studies of deaf children's language parallels research on hearing children, but these studies are based on studies of early language development, and not that of adolescents.

Revision in Deaf Students' Writing

Writing is a process that is not linear and sequential, but fluid and recursive (Kluwin & Kelly, 1992). Writers must use metacognitive strategies to consider ideas, formulate those ideas into words, and then review and revise the text to ensure that their ideas are expressed clearly. Little research has been done on the way deaf children approach revision of their own work, and only two studies have specifically studied revision. Two other studies had findings significant to understanding deaf students' revision, although it was not the emphasis of those studies.

Generally, research shows that writers frequently monitor and self-check as they write (Webster, 1986). These are strategies that deaf students may not use, although they are in the students' repertoire (Marschark et al., 2002). Webster (1986) further explains, "Authors who have thought about what they do when they write lay great stress on the stages of pre-writing and review. These are the stages of thinking about what should be said, and subsequently inspecting or reviewing ideas as they are put onto paper" (p. 193).

To stress the importance of reviewing ideas as they are written and to demonstrate the lack of review used by some deaf students, Webster (1986) conducted an "invisible ink" experiment. Twenty deaf and twenty hearing children aged 11 to 12 years old participated in the study. The experiment was conducted in two parts. First, the children

wrote stories about a picture on a regular sheet of paper; in the second part, students

wrote a second story using expired ball-point pens on paper that was carbon copied. In

the first condition, the children could read and revise as they wrote (a process referred to

as *rehearsing* by Webster). In the second condition, they could not.

After careful analysis, the researchers found that in the first story, where children

could rehearse, the data confirm much of what other researchers have found: deaf

children use simpler sentence structures with fewer words, make more errors in syntax,

include a greater number of nouns and verbs and fewer function words (prepositions or

conjunctions) than hearing children. When the ability to see what they were writing was

taken away in the second condition, the writing of the deaf children remained very

similar to their first piece. The hearing children, on the other hand, performed

significantly worse; their writing decreased in length while the number of errors more

than doubled. The hearing students began making mistakes that are often referred to as

"deafisms" (Charrow, 1974), such as using inappropriate word endings and omitting

determiners and auxiliary verbs. Webster (1986) notes, "There is little cross-reference or

recursion, and the writer has been unable to sequence and interweave his sentences to

produce a fluent, cohesive text. The overwhelming impression is one of writing sentence-

by-sentence" (p. 197). The implication of Webster's (1986) study is that rehearsing as

one writes is an important part of the process of creating coherent and fluent texts.

Since the deaf students' performance was the same in both conditions, Webster

(1986) concludes that they do not rehearse as they write and this could lead to the writing

that many deaf children produce. The study provides insight into what is happening as

deaf students write, and highlights the lack of self-correction and revision that happens

during the process. However, since the intent of Webster's experiment was not to examine revision, it does not provide much insight into how deaf children approach the task of revising their work, something the present study will set out to do. Webster provides us with research showing that deaf students do not rehearse as they write; but as he only asked for one draft to be produced, it is unclear if the children would have gone back to make substantial revisions if given the opportunity.

Gormley and Sarachan-Deily (1982) conducted a study of deaf students' revision and found that deaf children made few changes to their original drafts. They examined the revision skills of twenty deaf high school students who were identified as either relatively good writers or relatively poor writers by their teachers. The students were asked to write a persuasive essay on a given topic, and two days after the initial writing, students were given the opportunity to revise their essays to show their "best writing," a concept not explained further to the students. A feature analytic scoring guide was used to score the essays in three main areas: content, linguistic considerations, and surface mechanics. Their scores indicate that students were making minimal changes when they revised. There are two other findings in this study: 1) good writers' content was well-developed, cohesive, and appropriate while poor writers' content was not and, 2) both groups of writers had difficulty with surface mechanics.

While Gormley and Sarachan-Deily (1982) set out to study the revision process used by deaf students, their study actually became a study in the features inherent in deaf children's writing. However, it does highlight that when given instructions to revise or edit their essays, students made very few changes. The authors then conclude with the single pedagogical implication being to teach students to revise. The sole

recommendation does not help teachers who want to target specific needs of their students and help them make substantive revisions. This could be due to a lack of understanding about what was meant by "best writing" or even "revise" or "edit." The present study attempts to develop a deeper understanding of how deaf middle school students interpret and apply the process in their own writing. Deaf students have some understanding or thoughts about how the revision process works, and one study began to examine what happens at this stage of the writing process.

Kelly (1988) examined the impact of syntactical anomalies on the writing processes of one female deaf college student. While he was reviewing the writing process from start to finish, Kelly did develop research questions about how patterns of pausing and revising are related to the syntactical difficulties and what these patterns suggest for instruction. The student wrote one composition for this study, the content of which was a narrative of a signed video she was shown. Kelly broke the writing process into two parts: generating and revisions. During the generating process, the student created a first draft of the story, although the student did review and revise the text as she wrote. Then for the revising process, which occurred at a later session, the student was asked to check the text and make changes that would improve the grammar of the draft. Kelly found that the student had 180 syntactic anomalies in her original draft. During revision, she altered 83 of those and eliminated the errors in 78 of the altered anomalies. The most common errors were related to the use of function words (e.g., prepositions, conjunctions, and determiners). Instructional guidance included recopying the first draft as part of the revising process instead of after editing and focusing on getting ideas down on paper, before worrying about producing a "perfect copy."

Kelly's (1988) study provides valuable data by showing that deaf students do engage in revision and rehearsal as they compose, and his findings on the types of errors present in both drafts confirm the types of syntactic errors found by other researchers. However, one student wrote one composition for this study, which means that patterns and trends cannot be generalized to the deaf population. Additionally, revision only focused on changes at a surface, mechanical level, and the impact of changes on meaning was not examined. For example, it is not known if the student's changes brought the composition more in line with what she was trying to express (intended meaning). The present study attends to the ways in which students' revisions impact the meaning of the text, and to the extent possible, the impact on intended meaning.

Livingston (1989) analyzed the types of questions teachers asked deaf students when conferencing with them and the subsequent revisions made to the text. Twenty-two deaf high school seniors (16 to 21 years of age) participated in the study. They wrote one story a month for three months, and the topics were of their own choosing. Students generated a first draft, Draft 1, had a written conference with their teacher, and wrote a second draft for "publication," Draft 2. Livingston collected all copies of Draft 1, Draft 2, and conference transcripts for analysis. She found that teachers use six types of questions: 1) requesting clarification of stated, but unclear aspects of the story; 2) requesting additional information to fill gaps; 3) inviting the student to move beyond the story to address feelings or connect related experiences; 4) directly suggesting what students should or should not write; 5) asking questions where the answer was provided in previous drafts; 6) asking questions that were vague or difficult to answer. Teachers most frequently requested additional information to fill gaps, and they rarely asked the last

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three types of questions. However, Livingston observes that direct suggestions had the greatest impact on student revision, followed by requests for clarification.

In the second part of the study, Livingston (1989) analyzed changes made between Draft 1 and Draft 2. Four categories of changes were developed: deletion, substitution, addition, and reordering. Addition was the strategy most frequently used by students, followed by substitution. Revisions were most frequently made at the phrase level, followed by word, sentence, and consecutive sentence levels. Students were more likely to make revisions when the teacher requested re-phrasing of language and least likely to revise when the teacher asked for additional text. The narratives were then shared with trained readers who were asked to rate the drafts with the emphasis being placed on meaning rather than on grammar. Without knowing which draft was first or second, the readers determined that most of the students' second drafts were better than the first drafts. Livingston notes that for the majority of Draft 2s judged to be improved, they incorporated the greatest number of revisions, although this was not always the case. This study provides us with an idea of how teachers influence the revision process and how students interpret the process. One significant issue with this study, however, which may have impacted the results, is that the teacher conferenced with the students solely through writing.

In my own experience, and in the literature (Anderson, 2005; Calkins, 1986; Graves, 1983; Indrisano & Paratore, 2005; Tompkins, 2004), conferences involve discussion between the teacher and the student using spoken or signed language, in addition to providing written feedback. This method gives students the opportunity to explain their choices, ask questions, and clarify expectations – opportunities not available

when the conference is conducted only through writing. People tend to shorten their exchanges, and the discourse is not always as substantial, especially when the children involved already struggle with literacy. The present study examines the revision process as it happens naturally in the classroom to get a clearer picture of how deaf children revise their writing. Another concern with written conferences as the only method of communicating feedback to students is that some deaf students have difficulty reading and understanding print. Working only through print allows for greater misunderstandings to occur.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, relevant research was presented to provide a context for this study. Researchers have long used a product-focused quantitative approach to the analysis of compositions written by deaf children. Their findings suggest that the deaf children in the studies do not follow all of the rules of English syntax, although the number of ideas they attempt to communicate are commensurate with their peers. There is a lack of research on the revision process of deaf students. Research in that area shows that the deaf students in the studies make few revisions, and often they make revisions based on direct suggestions from the teacher. The greater number of revisions made generally leads to a perception of greatly improved writing. "These data support the contention that a new direction is warranted in the emphasis of written-language research for deaf or hard-of-hearing and normally hearing students. It is important to know that…deaf or hard-of-hearing students' language competence is not yet completely understood" (Yoshinaga-Itano et al., 1996). The present study attempts to understand this process through the use of a grounded theory methodology to generate a conceptual model. The next chapter provides the

theoretical background for using grounded theory and outlines the methodology and

procedures to be used for this study.

CHAPTER III:
METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN OF THE STUDY

As discussed in the previous chapter, the literature on the writing processes used by deaf children does not address how they construct and revise texts. Research has primarily been concerned with the skills (or lack of) exhibited by deaf children, or the effectiveness of instructional strategies on improving deaf children's writing. "Although such investigations have expanded our knowledge about deaf students' writing abilities, little information is available on how they actually compose what they write" (Marschark et al., 2002, p. 173). In order to fill this void, the present study uses a grounded theory methodology to explore how the writing and revision processes unfold and manifest with one group of deaf students in middle school.

This chapter explains the purpose of this study and the epistemological and methodological background of grounded theory. Also, I describe the procedures used in this study, including participant selection and sampling, data collection, and analysis. The chapter concludes with a discussion of my role as a researcher, establishing trustworthiness, and limitations of the study.

Purpose of the Study

According to Kluwin and Kelly (1990), "While there has been to date almost no research on the writing processes of deaf writers, some of the research on less able writers suggests that differences in the composing process may be at the heart of some of the writing problems reported for deaf populations" (p. 2). Since Kluwin and Kelly made this observation, research has not adequately addressed these differences in the composing process. The purpose of this study is to get at the heart of the problem by examining how one group of adolescent deaf children construct meaningful texts through

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revision. The data from this study are used to create a grounded theory that explains the processes.

Research Questions

This research study explores the processes used by selected deaf middle school students to create and revise written texts. The following questions guide the study:

1. How do deaf children in middle school construct meaningful texts?

   a. How do the texts that deaf middle school students write differ in their intended and conveyed meanings?

   b. How do syntactic features evolve as deaf students revise their writing?

This study explores the composing and revising processes of deaf children in one school setting. Hopefully, the grounded theory presented here will help teachers of deaf children to understand more fully the writing and revising processes of their students, especially as they plan for writing instruction. In the next section, I provide an overview of qualitative inquiry and the underlying assumptions inherent in this type of study. I then address grounded theory, specifically, as the methodology I use to conduct the study.

Qualitative Research

Creswell (1998) defines qualitative research as

An inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological
traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The
researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports
detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting.
(p. 15)

Guba and Lincoln (1988) emphasize that qualitative research is contextualized. Human behavior cannot be observed out of the context in which it occurs, and meaning-making based on these observations should not be constructed apart from that context. For this reason, qualitative research occurs in a natural setting. The researcher gathers data and

conducts the analysis using inductive methods. Qualitative research helps us understand the complex phenomena of life, particularly people's lives, stories, and behavior (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). It provides us with an in-depth look at these phenomena in order to arrive at meaningful interpretations (Guba & Lincoln, 1988).

Philosophical Assumptions Guiding Qualitative Inquiry

Creswell (1998) writes that qualitative researchers approach their studies with certain assumptions that guide them through their work. Guba and Lincoln (1988) identify three categories of assumptions underlying all research: ontological, epistemological, and axiological. Creswell adds two additional assumptions to the list: rhetorical and methodological. These assumptions, as they relate to qualitative inquiry, are described as follows.

Ontological. Researchers understand that multiple versions of reality exist (Creswell, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1988). Realities are constructed by each individual in a context (the researcher and anyone reading or interpreting the study), and there are as many realities as there are individuals (Guba & Lincoln, 1988). As such, the researcher and each participant of a study each construct different interpretations of phenomena, which may be in conflict with each other (Mertens, 2005); however, these constructions shape who we are and how we interact with our environment. Thus, the researcher understands that there is more than one way to make sense of the data (Mertens). To assist in the interpretation of these multiple perspectives, the researcher looks for multiple statements or observations that demonstrate the various perspectives or themes as they are constructed by participants. Qualitative researchers often use the words of their participants as support and evidence when presenting their findings.

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In the present study, it was not possible to co-construct meaning with the participants given the time constraints of the school day and the students' language development. Rather, I collected data from multiple sources and sought the teachers' help in order to make interpretations that reflect the experiences of the participants as accurately as possible.

Epistemological. This assumption guides the relationship between the researcher and the participants. Qualitative researchers try to narrow the distance between themselves and the participants through interaction. The interaction involves spending time in the field and sharing experiences in order to gain "insider" knowledge (Creswell, 1998). Participants in the present study were actively engaged in the interviews, and passively engaged in providing data for the observations and writing samples. As such, the researcher is the primary analyzer and constructor of the grounded theory.

This study is informed by a post-positivist epistemology. Post-positivists recognize that "knowledge is not based on unchallengeable, rock-solid foundations – it is *conjectural*" (Phillips & Burbules, 2000, p. 26). Thus, while post-positivists adhere to a systematic set of methods for collecting and analyzing data, they allow for their findings to be recognized as constructions that are not universal or infallible (Crotty, 1998; Jones et al., 2006; Phillips & Burbules, 2000).

Axiological. Qualitative researchers recognize that values cannot be separated from the study (Guba & Lincoln, 1988). Guba and Lincoln explain that values come from the researcher, the participants, any theories employed, and the culture at large. To mitigate the impact of their own values in the study, researchers actively seek to identify and report their values and biases. They also acknowledge that the data gathered are

value-laden at the start. As I conducted this study, I found that my beliefs and values as an educator were challenged. I have worked with an inquiry auditor and three peer debriefers to ensure that the beliefs that I do hold are either highlighted or presented in a way that is grounded in evidence.

  Rhetorical. This assumption considers the language of the research. To qualitative researchers, it is important to tell the stories of the participants; therefore, qualitative researchers use a personal, engaging voice to shape their narratives (Creswell, 1998). The language of a qualitative study is narratively-oriented and engaging. In this study, I have opted to write in the present tense in order to keep the stories and experiences of the students present in the narrative.

  Methodological. In a qualitative study, the researcher works inductively to analyze the data. The data are considered in context, and the findings emerge as the analysis progresses. In fact, details are worked with in the initial stages of analysis, and the research moves out to the emerging themes and interpretations later in the study. Also, the researcher begins with a general set of questions that may be modified as the study progresses.

  There are two main factors that should be considered in determining the methodology for a qualitative study: what the researcher intends to study (Charmaz, 2006), and how the researcher's orientation relates to the five assumptions described above (Guba & Lincoln, 1988). Both of these factors assisted me in determining that a grounded theory methodology is appropriate for this study. The grounded theory methodology consists of "systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories 'grounded' in the data themselves" (Charmaz, 2006,

p. 2). Using this methodology, I developed a grounded theory to explain the underlying

processes of how deaf children in middle school write and revise.

Charmaz (2006) adds that "Grounded theory gives priority to the studied

phenomenon or *process* – rather than to a description of a setting" (p. 22). Mayer (1999)

addresses the process of deaf students' writing, specifically the writing processes that two

eighth grade deaf students used when composing. She describes part of the process that

the students used when writing; however, it remains at a descriptive level as opposed to

rising to a more theoretical level required by grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006). Through

the use of grounded theory, I explain here the writing and revising processes for deaf

students in more theoretical terms in order to build a conceptual model that will help

teachers understand difficulties the children encounter in learning to write and revise so

that pedagogical processes can be improved.

Grounded Theory Methodology

Grounded theory is described by Glaser and Strauss (1967), co-creators of this

methodology, as "the discovery of theory data systematically obtained from social

research" (p. 2). Grounded theory methodology is an inductive form of reasoning that is

grounded in data and results in the development of a theory grounded in data that can be

displayed using a conceptual model. Strauss and Corbin (1998) state that "Our theories,

however incomplete, provide a common language (set of concepts) through which

research participants, professionals, and others can come together to discuss ideas and

find solutions to problems" (p. 56). Glaser and Strauss note that grounded theory can be

presented as part of a theoretical discourse or as a "well-codified set of propositions" (p.

31). That set of propositions is the basis of the theory, and the propositions are generally

displayed using a model. These propositions also provide a conceptual framework that can be used in practical situations.

The grounded theory is composed of categories and their major defining properties, which are identified through a process of constant comparison (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Constant comparison is based on the idea that every piece of data is initially compared to other data for the purpose of generating categories. Later, new data are compared with the emerging categories to flesh out and fully define the categories and their properties. Constant comparison is essential to the grounded theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Glaser and Strauss also emphasize that theory is a constantly evolving process (*theory as process*); it is never completed. They maintain:

> Joint collection, coding, and analysis of data are the underlying operation. The generation of theory, coupled with the notion of theory as process, requires that all these operations be done together as much as possible. They should blur and intertwine continually, from the beginning of an investigation to its end. (p. 43)

Although Glaser and Strauss (1967) argue for the systematic and explicit coding and analysis, Charmaz (2006) asserts that these are guidelines that offer a general structure for doing grounded theory work. The procedures are not prescriptive, and they will vary according to the needs of each study. However, coding and analysis are the major processes involved in doing grounded theory, and they must be an integral part of the study.

Using a grounded theory methodology allowed me to remain grounded in my data and their contexts, and did "offer insight, enhance understanding, and provide a

meaningful guide to action" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Glaser and Strauss (1967) share

this view that within the conceptual model,

> Concepts should be *analytic* – sufficiently generalized to designate
> characteristics of concrete entities, not the entities themselves. They
> should also be *sensitizing* – yield a 'meaningful' picture, abetted by apt
> illustrations that enable one to grasp the reference in terms of one's own
> experience. (pp. 38-39)

The intent of my study is to develop analytic concepts that frame deaf students'

writing, while at the same time ensuring that these concepts are relevant to educators. If

the goal is achieved, then the development of more meaningful pedagogical strategies for

teaching writing to deaf middle school students will occur. If the process of learning to

write is better understood, then teachers will be better equipped to assist their students in

making progress.

Participant Selection

Sampling in qualitative research is not done in a way to obtain a representation of

a population (Guba & Lincoln, 1988). The purpose of sampling in grounded theory,

specifically, is two-fold. Initially, participants with similar characteristics are chosen in

an effort to define categories and their properties. Later, theoretical sampling is used to

increase the variability of the participants in an effort to develop the categories more fully

and to achieve saturation. In addition, theoretical sampling tests properties and refines

their dimensions.

Site Selection

To locate qualified participants, I began with the program in which I formerly

taught. To minimize the variation in context, participants were selected from one school.

I secured permission from the school system and the principal to conduct my research in

a school (see approval letter in Appendix A). The teacher participants were identified by

the principal, and I met with the teacher(s) to share the study and answer any questions regarding participation and obtain their consent (see Teacher Consent Form in Appendix B).

The school I chose is a public middle school on the East Coast. During the 2007 – 2008 school year, there were 805 students. Approximately 42% of the students were White, 31% were Hispanic, 16% were African-American, and 11% were Asian. Students receiving special education services of any kind comprised 16% of the total population, and 29% of students received free and reduced lunch, a proxy for socio-economic status. The school primarily serves hearing students from the surrounding neighborhood, but the program serving deaf students is a center-based program that draws deaf students from all over the county. Deaf students have the opportunity to interact with their hearing peers through classes, extracurricular activities, and social times (such as lunch or between classes). They also have the opportunity to socialize with deaf peers through similar means. Students in the program have a variety of academic placement options available to them. They can be taught in mainstream classes by a general educator, co-taught by a general educator and a teacher of the deaf, or in self-contained classes by a teacher of the deaf. Students have schedules that include different combinations of the three settings throughout the day. Interpreters and transliterators are on staff and available throughout the day for students who use ASL, MCE, or Cued Speech.

Since this school is one in which I previously taught, the issue of closeness to the participants and setting needs to be addressed. Creswell (1998) cautions against studying in one's own "backyard" (p. 114), which is defined as being in one's own institution or among friends or colleagues. This could compromise data collection as interviewees may

tell the researcher what they think is the "right" answer, or they may provide information that is "political and risky" (p. 114) for another member of the group, such as the researcher, to know. It may also skew the researcher's perspective on the happenings in the environment and decrease the objectivity because of previous involvement in the environment. For example, as a former teacher in the program being used for this study, I have an understanding of the curriculum being used, the underlying political ideologies that drive instruction in the school, and the students themselves. However, I believe this is mitigated by the fact that at the time I conducted this study, I had been outside of the school for over one year. Therefore, I have the advantages of insider knowledge, but without the risk of studying directly in my own "backyard."

I am aware that as a former insider, I risk being blind to certain underlying values and biases held by my participants. To mitigate this possibility, I employed the use of two peer debriefers and one inquiry auditor, who reviewed the procedures and analysis in this study. The peer debriefers served "the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit in the inquirer's mind" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 308). In other words, the peer debriefers assisted me in exploring and uncovering underlying subjectivities in the analysis of the data. The inquiry auditor "provides a check on the content of what is written… [and] provides verification that what is written truly comes from the data" (Jones et al., 2006, p. 171).

Participant Selection

To recruit student participants for this study, I visited the students' English classes (after appropriate classes were identified by the school administration) and presented an introduction to the study (see Appendix C for the recruitment script). At this time, students were given an opportunity to ask any questions they had regarding participation

in the study. Students who were willing to participate were provided an Assent Form to read and sign (see Appendix D). Data collection did not occur until consent was received from both the student and his or her parents (see Appendices E and F for the Letter of Invitation and Parent Consent Form).

Participants for this study were selected through the use of purposeful sampling. Initially, I sought a sample of participants who had a specific set of characteristics and had experienced the process of writing (Creswell, 1998). Creswell suggests identifying people who have "participated in a process that is central to the grounded theory study" (p. 114). This means that student participants were required to receive daily writing or English instruction in school. Additionally, since this study focused on the revision processes used by deaf middle school students, it was essential that the students have a hearing loss and attend middle school (defined as serving students in grades 6, 7, and 8).

In addition, the five participants in the initial sample met a pre-specified set of criteria: They had a bilateral sensorineural prelingual hearing loss, used MCE as their primary mode of communication, attended a middle school (grades 6 – 8) program for children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, had daily English or writing instruction or support from a teacher of the hearing impaired, had parents who are hearing and do not sign at home, and received permission from their parent or guardian to participate in this study. This procedure was used to identify the initial group of participants; theoretical sampling was used later in the data collection and analysis to identify additional participants.

The criteria identified here are factors that generally have an impact on language development for deaf children. Having a prelingual hearing loss in both ears and parents

who do not sign limits access to language for students from an early age. Additionally, the students who use a MCE to communicate tend to access English primarily through visual means (in a written form) as opposed to auditory. Students who use Cued Speech or oral methods tend to rely more on auditory input or a mix of auditory and visual means. They are more likely to be receiving English through both means.

It is possible that the students who use Cued Speech have a greater command of the English language than the students who use ASL or MCE. The reason is due to how the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (DHOH) program in this district is set up. Children can enter the program as soon as they are identified with a hearing loss. Often at these early stages and through early elementary school, parents opt for their children to focus on oral methods. If the children are not successful, then the parents (in conjunction with the DHOH professionals) may select the Cued Speech program because it still promotes listening and speaking. If the children are still not successful in the Cued Speech program, then parents may place their child in the Total Communication program (in this particular district, Total Communication is synonymous with sign-supported English). Since the children in the Total Communication program have missed out on instruction in a language that is comprehensible to them, it follows that their English language development may be delayed when compared to those children who use Cued Speech successfully.

Theoretical Sampling

Theoretical sampling is different from traditional sampling in a key way: sampling is driven by the need to fully develop, analyze, and saturate developing categories. The goal is to refine ideas and concepts, not to expand the sample size (Charmaz, 2000; Jones et al., 2006). "Theoretical sampling pertains only to conceptual

and theoretical development; it is *not* about representing a population or increasing the statistical generalizability of your results" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 101).

Theoretical sampling is different from other forms of sampling in that it is not predetermined. The logic behind theoretical sampling is that ideas or patterns emerge in the initial data collection that the researcher feels should be explored to the greatest extent possible. Or, as Strauss and Corbin (1998) say, it allows for "maximizing opportunities for comparing concepts along their properties for similarities and differences" (p. 202) to work toward saturation of categories and fill out the properties of the categories.

To do this, I returned to the participants throughout the data collection and analysis processes to follow up on ideas (Jones et al., 2006). After completing some interviews and engaging in coding, I added variation into the initial group of participants in order to increase differences. The students selected through theoretical sampling added variation to the grade level and communication mode of the students. In addition, more of the students in the theoretical sample had been in the school program since their entrance to school. Another variation is that the English teacher of the students in the theoretical sample was hearing, and that may have had an impact on the instruction that was provided. The selection of the students for the theoretical sample was based on a desire to increase the variance in the sample of the students, particularly as related to language use. Since the students who use Cued Speech are monolingual, their writing processes may be different from the children who use ASL or MCE to communicate.

The theoretical sampling process tests the categories and their properties by increasing variance. For example, the initial group of participants were similar on several

important characteristics, and this allowed for categories and properties to emerge through the process of constant comparison.

Later, categories needed to be fully developed and saturated with descriptive properties and dimensions. This was done by increasing the diversity of the participants' characteristics and returning to the participants to follow up on ideas in order to test the boundaries of the properties and their dimensions. The objective was not to determine how many people exhibit the characteristic, but to determine what the feature looks like across a variety of conditions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Participants

Eight students participated in the study. In addition, there were two teachers who assisted in the data collection and participated in interviews. The students came from two different classes, one with each teacher. Five of the students were in Ms. L's fifth-period English class and communicated primarily through MCE, although Ms. L uses ASL as the language of instruction. These students were in eighth grade. The other three students were in Ms. G's seventh-period seventh-grade English class and communicated through a mix of spoken English, Cued Speech, and sign-supported English, although the primary mode of communication was Cued Speech.

The students have each attended the DHOH in the same school district for at least four years. Of the eight student participants, five have attended the DHOH program since preschool. One eighth grade girl entered the program in third grade, one eighth grade girl entered in fourth grade, and another eighth grade girl entered in fifth grade. All three of these girls moved into the district from another country.

Data Collection and Sources

The best way to study writing development is to read students' writing. For this reason, the primary source for data collection in this study is student writing samples. To aid triangulation and to provide richer data, I also conducted student and teacher interviews and observed the students in their writing classes. I looked at several different "slices of data" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 65) to help tell the story of how these deaf middle school students revise their compositions. The data collection occurred over a period of ten weeks during the second semester of the academic school year.

Student Writing Samples

The texts collected primarily were elicited responses written by the students themselves in response to a curricular requirement. All written works that had multiple drafts and works with single drafts that indicated student rehearsal were used as data for this study. So as not to impede upon the required curricular and instructional program, I worked with the teacher informants to identify written works that served the purposes of the curriculum and this study.

Additionally, I asked students to "free write" a brief sample prior to our interviews. Students chose the topic, length, and style of their writing. This provided insight into the types of writing that students produce spontaneously, as well as provide an untouched writing sample. During the interview, I asked students to describe how they would approach revising the essay, identify specific changes they would make, and explain why they would make those changes. Using texts produced in different contexts is consistent with Charmaz' (2006) view that "Grounded theories of textual material can address form as well as content, audiences as well as authors, and production of the text

as well as presentation of it" (p. 40). I considered all of these elements as part of the textual analysis.

Interviews

For this study, it was important to dig into the students' attitudes about writing and revising and to ask questions about my observations in the classroom and in their texts. To accomplish this, I conducted videotaped interviews of the students and the classroom teacher. The students participated in at least one interview where they had the opportunity to explain some of their writing pieces and revisions in detail. They also were asked questions regarding their experiences and perceptions of revising. The interviews ranged in length from 14 minutes to 28 minutes. The average length of the student interviews was 21 minutes.

Both classroom teachers also participated in an interview in order to have the opportunity to share their perspectives on the students' progress, attitudes, and continuing instructional needs. I asked the teachers to describe how the writing process works in their classrooms to ascertain any instructional factors that may impact students' writing. Questions revolved around time allocated for drafting and revising, feedback and conferencing practices, instruction provided about specific writing skills and knowledge, and their perceptions of what students are doing. The interviews were 44 minutes and 40 minutes. In addition to the interviews, ongoing dialogues were maintained with the teachers to address any questions that arose during data collection and analysis.

The interviews were semi-structured to allow the discussion to unfold. I asked a common set of open-ended questions to all student participants (see a list of questions in Appendix G), as well as some that were individualized for each participant. The questions allowed me to dig deeper and open up underlying attitudes about writing and

revising. Questions centered on how the concept of "revision" is constructed by the participants, how they envision the revision process occurring, and their attitudes about revision. The interviews were conducted using the participants' or teacher informants' preferred communication modality and were videotaped. For interviews conducted in ASL or using contact signs with no voice, the videos were translated into English and transcribed for coding and analysis; all other interviews were transcribed verbatim.

Videos were transcribed by an adult child of deaf adults (CODA), who is a native signer. Both of her parents are Deaf, and she maintains ties to the Deaf community. I reviewed each transcript and corrected any errors. If additional questions remained, I asked the teacher informants to review the transcription and provide corrections or clarifications.

Observations

Interviews and written samples allowed participants to determine what to share and what to withhold. They also may have had subconscious attitudes that impacted their writing production, revision practices, and performance, and some of these attitudes were apparent during classroom observations. Specifically, I observed students' behavior as they wrote an essay from start to finish, noting how they engaged (or disengaged) with the task, how they responded to feedback and instruction from the teacher, and how students interacted with each other. When the teachers conducted conferences, I paid particular attention to the exchange between the teacher and student to see what feedback was provided, how it was explained, and how the student responded. Twenty-one videotaped classroom observations were conducted, 14 in the eighth-grade English class and 7 in the seventh-grade English class. Each class period was at least 45 minutes in length.

Description of Writing Samples

Several different writing samples were collected for this study. Since they play an important role in the development of the grounded theory, it is important to identify them here. I had an opportunity to observe students engage in three of the writing assignments, and the rest were written by the students prior to the study and provided by the teachers for use during the interviews and for analysis. This section identifies the three writing assignments I observed students write and revise and one additional essay. The additional essay was written by the eighth grade students prior to the data collection for this study. It was provided by Ms. L to be used during the interviews to ask students about how and why they made specific changes to their writing. Additional writing assignments were collected through the course of this study, but I only received multiple drafts for one student so they will not be discussed frequently. A brief background is provided at the point where those assignments are discussed.

Word Choice Brief Constructed Response

Before discussing the specific assignment, it is important to describe the concept of a *brief constructed response (BCR).* A BCR is essentially a term that has been taken from standardized tests required by the state in which the school is located. It is a short paragraph written response to a text that has been read. BCRs typically require some type of analysis supported by textual evidence, and as such, are frequently several sentences long. They generally do not require any type of personal experience or application to be incorporated into the response.

Over a period of several classes, I had an opportunity to observe the eighth grade students as they engaged in writing the *word choice BCR.* For this assignment, students were asked to consider the word choice used by Langston Hughes in his poem, *Ode de*

los Raspados. They were asked to analyze how an author created meaning through word choice. Ms. L conferenced with students about this assignment over a period of two weeks. The conferences about this BCR and the character change essay overlapped, therefore making it difficult to specify the amount of time spent on this assignment.

Character Change Essay

This essay was written by the eighth grade students, and classroom observations were conducted throughout the entire process used to write it. For the *character change essay,* students were asked to respond to the following prompt: "Explain how a character in 'As You Like It' changes as a result of his time in Arden." Although the prompt is left open for students to choose which character to discuss, Ms. L decided that the students should all use the same character from the play, Oliver, and she provided instruction on the change that Oliver experienced throughout the play.

Activities related to the composition of this essay occurred over a period of nine class meetings. Instruction and pre-writing occurred for four periods. Drafting, revising, and conferencing occurred over the remaining five periods. It is impossible to separate these activities into separate components by time, because students were working on various stages simultaneously. The final draft was completed at home over the weekend after the ninth day of working on the essay. Every student except one turned in a final draft.

For pre-writing, Ms. L provided a graphic organizer, copies of selected text from the play, a list of ten character traits, and instruction on how to complete the graphic organizer. The instruction consisted of a review of the pertinent part of the play (beginning, middle, or end) that clearly showed Oliver's character. That was followed by highlighting the text, true Shakespearian words, and then work on completing the graphic

organizer. Ms. L met with students to review their entries on the organizer and provided feedback. Some students were required to re-do their organizers before they could move on with the writing. Therefore, all content was approved prior to composing the first draft.

Character Choice Essay

The *character choice essay* was completed by the seventh-grade students over a period of eight class sessions. For the essay, students were asked to "analyze how a character's choices influence the outcome of a story." They were permitted to choose anything they had read during the year, but, encouraged by Ms. G, each student opted to focus on the play by William Shakespeare, "A Midsummer Night's Dream" because it was the one they had most recently read. It was also the text that Ms. G encouraged them to use. For the essay, Ms. G provided a graphic organizer, a diagram showing how the essay should be structured, a checklist for students to review after they had completed the essay, and instruction to introduce the essay and on using higher-level vocabulary and idioms in the writing. The instruction on using vocabulary and idioms occurred after students had generated a first draft. As a result of the instruction, students were expected to return to their essays and revise for word choice and make the writing more descriptive.

Persuasive Essay

The persuasive essay was written by the eighth grade students prior to my observations. As such, I did not have the opportunity to observe students as they wrote this essay. However, it was the piece of writing used during the student interviews to ask why specific changes were made and is important to the development of the grounded

theory. For the persuasive essay, students were asked to answer the following question: "Which way of living as a teenager is better during 1940s or 2000s?"

For this essay, Ms. L provided students with a timeline of due dates for different parts of the essay, including pre-writing, introduction, body, and conclusion. Revision, or any other associated term, was not listed on the timeline. In addition, the following worksheets were provided for students to use as they drafted the persuasive essay: "Making a Plan" (opinion statement and three supporting reasons), "Writing Topic Sentences" (each supporting reason is changed into a topic sentence), "Persuasive Essay: Organized List" (each topic sentence is written with three facts or details), "How to Write Introduction for Persuasive Essay?" (directions and structure for writing an introduction), "How to Write Body for Persuasive Essay?" (structured paragraphs for students to insert topic sentence, facts, and concluding sentence), and "How to Write Conclusion for Persuasive Essay?" (similar to introduction).

Methods of Analysis

Although presented separately here, sampling, data collection, and data analysis are recursive processes that occurred simultaneously throughout the study (Charmaz, 2006; Jones et al., 2006). The procedures outlined in this section also occurred simultaneously. Therefore, the coding, saturation, memoing, diagramming, and discourse analysis processes were employed as data were being collected. It is essential to grounded theory that the researcher engages in "a process of constantly analyzing data at every and all stages of the data collection and interpretation process [that] results in the identification of codes" (Jones et al., pp. 43-44).

Coding Procedures

The three coding procedures used in this grounded theory study are listed here separately, but they are in actuality intertwining and overlapping processes that did occur simultaneously (Holton, 2007). Open coding, axial coding, and selective coding are identified by Strauss and Corbin (1998) as ways to begin analyzing data. A software program, ATLAS/ti, was used in the analysis of the study. ATLAS/ti was a tool that assisted with data management tasks, and it was not used for the purposes of autocoding or theory building (Weitzman, 2000). The program was used to store and retrieve codes as identified in the data; store, link, and retrieve memos and diagrams; and assist in diagramming the final conceptual model.

The constant comparative method was used to compare data with other pieces of data to find similarities and differences (Charmaz, 2006). For example, the data collected from different students were compared with each other; data from an individual were compared over time (i.e. different texts); new data were compared to categories, and categories were compared with other categories (Charmaz, 2000; Jones et al., 2006). Glaser and Strauss (1967) assert that constant comparison is critical in doing grounded theory work. In this process, data are taken apart and examined at a conceptual level. In later coding exercises, the constant comparative method was used to compare data with the emerging conceptual model to reassemble some of those pieces.

Open coding. Open coding begins with line-by-line analysis of data where incidents and data are compared with each other to identify participants' experiences, understandings, and insights. In this process, patterns in the data are named "with a label that simultaneously categorizes, summarizes, and accounts for each piece of data" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 43). Working so closely with the data forced me to be in a

"conceptual mode of analysis" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 66) and helped the development of concepts that became the building blocks of categories and properties.

Categories simultaneously represent and explain abstract concepts or phenomena derived from data. Strauss and Corbin (1998) define phenomena as "important analytic ideas that emerge from our data" (p. 114). It is an important part of the open coding process to begin grouping the named segments that appear to have similar qualities into categories (Jones et al., 2006), and if possible, use the participants' own words to name the categories as an effort to preserve their voices. This practice is known as using *in vivo codes,* which may serve to "preserve participants' meanings of their views and actions" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 54), but they must be held to the same analytic treatment as other codes. Doing this close analysis also enabled me to identify underlying assumptions and taken-for-granted notions that participants may hold and to try and identify sources of biases and beliefs to prevent them from intruding on the study. These hidden assumptions began showing themselves in the coding process and become sources for in vivo codes during the analysis.

Another part of open coding involves exploring and delineating properties and dimensions of the categories. Properties are the specific characteristics of a category, and dimensions are the variations that exist within the properties. For example, apples have several properties, one of which is color, which can be red or green. Those colors may also have dimensions that vary on a continuum, such as the hue. Examining categories by identifying properties and dimensions helps to clarify ideas more precisely (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Identifying properties and dimensions assists in clarifying the bounds of categories and clearly differentiating them from each other (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Open coding in the present study was done using Atlas/ti to help manage the codes and yielded a total of 332 codes for 1755 quotations. Those codes were then sorted into 14 groups by hand and input into Atlas/ti for further manipulation. These groups of codes became the bases for the final categories and subcategories.

Axial coding. Through axial coding, the second level of analysis in grounded theory, categories become more connected to their subcategories with their properties and dimensions. "When analysts code axially, they look for answers to questions such as why or how come, where, when, how, and with what results, and in doing so uncover relationships among categories" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 127). Strauss and Corbin (1998) also suggest that during axial coding, categories be compared with each other along their properties and dimensions in order to identify relationships, discover patterns, and establish connections. Axial coding is the process through which categories generated during open coding are systematically connected into a coherent whole (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Additionally, the core category, or axis of the conceptual model, will begin to emerge and take shape.

During axial coding, the core category began to emerge, and it was examined in terms of the overall grounded theory. There were three categories that emerged during open coding that seemed to be possibilities for the core. Each one was carefully examined in relation to the other emerging categories, and additional data were collected and analyzed specifically to tease out the connections among categories.

Selective coding. "Selective coding is the process of integrating and refining categories" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 143). Integration is the process of bringing the entire theory or conceptual model together through the recognition of relationships

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between categories. The conceptual model must be presented as a set of interrelated concepts, not as a list of themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The concepts and relationships are derived from working closely with the data and represent all cases in the study, not just one or two. Also, the concepts may become categories for inclusion in the model, and if they are, must be saturated and defined.

To begin the integration process, the core category is identified (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The core category pulls the entire model together into a complete and coherent story through its relationships with every other category. It may be derived from the list of existing categories or developed by the researcher to connect all other categories. To identify the core category, Strauss and Corbin (1998) offer three strategies: writing the storyline, using diagrams, and reviewing and sorting memos. To write the storyline, they recommend returning to the raw data and reading them for the general sense of what is happening. Then, write a descriptive story that captures the essence of the data, from which the central concept can be derived. Later, a storyline memo can be written where the central concept is linked to every category.

Diagrams, the second strategy for identifying the core category, force the analyst to move away from details and work with concepts. Relationships among categories must be clear and logical in order for the diagram to flow and remain easy to read. Diagrams need not include every concept identified through the coding processes, but must include all categories. The third method of identifying the core category is to sort memos, which are records of analyses and thought processes, according to categories, then reread them. Doing this allows the researcher to see how the concept evolved and provides the opportunity to identify connections and relationships among categories.

Selective coding also requires the refinement of the conceptual model. The relationship between the core category and the other categories must be validated; categories are further refined and developed in this process, and gaps in logic are identified and eliminated (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). During selective coding, categories are reviewed to determine whether saturation has been reached. When the conceptual model was assembled, I checked for gaps in the logic of how categories are defined and integrated. When a gap in logic was detected, I returned to the data for further investigation. If the gap resulted from categories not being fully developed, then data were reviewed or additional data were collected to saturate the categories. Finally, the conceptual model must be validated, not in the sense of testing the model, but in determining the extent to which the model explains what is happening in the data. This was accomplished by comparing the model with the data.

In the selective coding process, I began to put the model together in a visual form. Diagramming allowed me to really play with the categories and examine the relationships. Through the diagrams, I was able to see where connections among categories were strong and where they were weaker. A total of 20 diagrams were made throughout the process, and the categories shifted from 14 to 5. Memos were also used throughout the process to capture my thoughts and to develop the storyline of the grounded theory. Finally, as I detected gaps in the theory, I returned to the data or collected new data to flesh out the categories until they were saturated.

Saturation

The process of data collection, coding, memo-writing, and theoretical sampling can occur concurrently, and often they do. This process is very cyclical, and it seems that there is no end to it. However, the standard in grounded theory is to stop sampling and

gathering data when categories are saturated (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Jones et al., 2006). Categories are saturated when new data yields no new insights or data, thus allowing the development of properties and their dimensions (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Memo-writing and Diagramming

An integral part of data analysis in grounded theory is writing memos. Charmaz (2006) notes that "When you write memos, you stop and analyze your ideas about the codes in any - and every - way that occurs to you during the moment" (p. 72). The idea is to write oneself to new insights and meaning. Memos are useful, concrete tools that allow researchers to fill out categories and develop properties. They force the researcher to stop other activities and completely engage in a category (Charmaz, 2006). Memo-writing is a time-consuming activity, and Glaser and Strauss (1967) advocate taking as much time as necessary in order to fully engage the category and bring it to the most logical, data-based conclusions.

I used memo-writing throughout this study to help develop the grounded theory explicating the processes of writing and revising for deaf middle school students. I identified codes that seemed to represent ideas present in the data, and then I "raise[d] them to conceptual categories for [the] developing analytic framework" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 91). Essentially this required that the codes be examined more deeply by defining them conceptually through a narrative form. The codes then moved beyond being used as descriptive devices to raising the concepts brought forth to an analytic level (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The writing served several purposes in this study, including: fleshing out categories and their properties, questioning assumptions and hidden meanings in the language, connecting categories, asking questions, and

identifying new directions for further data collection through theoretical sampling. As soon as possible after each data collection session, I wrote memos to help capture my thoughts and ideas to maintain focus on the research and ensure that important ideas did not get lost (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I also wrote memos as new ideas emerged during the analysis of the data.

Memos varied in length, and the topic of each memo varied depending on the purpose for the memo, the research phase, and type of coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Using a narrative format requires researchers to move beyond raw data by working with concepts (Strauss & Corbin, 1998); additionally, they allow "the analyst to use creativity and imagination with one idea often stimulating another" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 220). By writing memos, researchers may make connections or develop ideas that would not have otherwise been developed through the coding process.

Diagramming occurs concurrently with memo-writing after each level of coding is completed (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The purpose of diagramming is to compare memos and try to fit them together into a visual diagram, showing the relationship of the core categories and their properties to other categories and their properties. The visual diagram is a tool to help bring the pieces of the conceptual model together into a logical order for future readers. Diagramming can help sort the relationships between categories and describe those relationships (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Due to the concise and precise nature of diagrams, they also force the researcher to "finalize relationships and discover breaks in logic" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 238) that need to be repaired. Diagramming aided me in the next step of the process, explicating and describing the grounded theory,

because it requires a description of how the categories relate to each other and the core category.

Building the Grounded Theory

After a diagram was developed that conveyed the storyline for the grounded theory, it was time to move toward the final stage of describing each category and its properties and dimensions. In this stage, diagrams and memos were integrated in an effort to build the final theory. The diagrams showed relationships between and among the categories, while the memos provided descriptions and analyses of the categories (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). By integrating diagrams and memos, "the relationships between categories are more systematically considered than might otherwise be the case" (Urquhart, 2007, p. 353). The grounded theory was built by integrating and sorting memos according to the organizing scheme laid out in the diagram. "Sorting is important because it is a final step in the analytic process…The final sorting enables the researcher to write on each topic in detail as well as on the integrated whole" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 240).

Establishing Trustworthiness

Establishing trustworthiness refers to the ways in which a researcher provides evidence that his or her findings are worthy of attention. It is a way of showing the rigor of the study (Guba & Lincoln, 1988). This process is akin to determining reliability, validity, and objectivity in quantitative studies. Lincoln and Guba (1985) offer four criteria to help researchers establish trustworthiness: (a) credibility, (b) transferability, (c) dependability, and (d) confirmability.

Credibility

Credibility refers to the way in which the researcher represents the realities constructed by their participants. Lincoln and Guba (1985) offer a number of ways to establish credibility, four of which were used in this study: prolonged engagement, triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checks.

Through prolonged engagement, the researcher spends sufficient time in the natural setting to learn the culture, build trust, and test for misinformation. I was engaged with the research participants for a part of the academic year, ten weeks, during which time I visited and observed in the classrooms almost daily. Also, I was engaged in the school and with students whom I previously taught, giving me a previous experience of prolonged engagement within the setting and some of the study participants. However, this experience could have allowed me to "go native" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and I had to be vigilant in remaining in my role as researcher to keep the results and interpretations grounded in data.

The second way of establishing credibility is through triangulation. Lincoln and Guba (1985) observe that the use of multiple and different data sources is the most frequent form of triangulation, and it was also part of this study, as data were collected from multiple students. Using multiple methods of collecting data is another feature of the present study that supports triangulation of the results. Observing the classroom environment, conducting interviews, and gathering written documents were the data collection methods that were used in this study.

The third method of establishing credibility entails the assistance of a peer debriefer, a person with no stake in the outcome of the study. Peer debriefing is done by participating in a shared discourse about the procedures and analyses throughout the

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study. The peer debriefer's role is to bring forth any hidden biases or values that the researcher may harbor, although the debriefer may consider all aspects of the study during analysis: substantive, methodological, legal, and ethical issues or questions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I used peer debriefers who were unaffiliated with this particular study and its participants in order to assure that they possessed less of the insider knowledge that could hinder analysis.

The peer debriefers had varied backgrounds that allowed for variety in the discourse. One peer debriefer is a deaf colleague who has experience in education. A second peer debriefer is a hearing colleague who has experience in language and literacy as they apply to deaf children, and the third peer debriefer is an outsider to deaf education but is experienced in matters concerning language and literacy. It was important to ensure that the peer debriefers were truly peers, a relationship advocated by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The debriefers should not be inferior, as their input may be disregarded, nor should they be superior, as their input may be accepted as mandate. Once the peer debriefer(s) were identified, we established an introductory meeting to review the expectations and study background. Each peer debriefer met with me two additional times to review and discuss the study. Notes were taken at each meeting and saved as part of the audit trail, discussed in detail below.

The fourth method to establish credibility is member checking. Participants verify the data, the findings, and the conclusions of the study. This was problematic since I was working primarily with children. However, I asked the teacher informants to review and verify the interviews to ensure that translation and transcription accurately reflected the participants' discussion. I also asked the teachers to review data relating to the

observation and correct any errors in fact or interpretation, as well as provide any additional information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The teachers did not make any changes to the transcripts that I showed them. However, after reviewing the dialogue with two students, Ms. L provided additional background information to help explain the answers the students provided.

Transferability

Transferability addresses the ability of the findings to be applied in other contexts with a different set of participants. Lincoln and Guba (1985) emphasize that it is not the researcher's role to ensure that the study can be transferred, but he or she should provide enough descriptive data to allow future researchers the opportunity to make judgments regarding the context of their studies. This means providing thorough descriptions of participants, the methodology, the results, and the emerging theory, which has been done throughout this study.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the notion that if this study were to be repeated, that the findings might be similar. To establish dependability, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest conducting an inquiry audit. An auditor examines the process by which the inquiry was conducted (e.g. sampling and data collection) and verifies the product of the inquiry (e.g. interpretations and findings). As such, it is essential that the inquiry auditor be familiar with the grounded theory methodology. The inquiry auditor has access to all documents and data to make a determination on whether or not the process of data collection was conducted appropriately and are the findings justified. I engaged an individual familiar with the grounded theory methodology and experienced as an inquiry auditor to conduct the inquiry audit of my complete study.

Confirmability

Confirmability addresses the degree to which findings have been influenced by biases and values. Lincoln and Guba (1985) offer two methods of accomplishing this: maintaining an "audit trail" and keeping a reflexive journal. Keeping an audit trail of all the raw data, analyses, and processes is necessary for the inquiry audit to be conducted. I located an inquiry auditor who is knowledgeable about grounded theory. Early on in the study, the inquiry auditor was involved so that he could become familiar with the study and begin to offer input and keep the analysis on course. We met three times to review the data and analyses. Upon completion of the review, he wrote a letter asserting the trustworthiness of the study (Appendix H).

The second way to establish confirmability is to keep a reflexive journal. The journal is used to record personal experiences and the decision-making process (Guba, 1981). It can include a schedule of activities and a decision log that lists each decision that was made with its corresponding rationale. The journal became part of the audit trail and inquiry audit.

Theoretical Sensitivity

Theoretical sensitivity is gained when the researcher is able to view the data from multiple viewpoints, compare ideas, follow leads, and build on ideas (Charmaz, 2006). The researcher needs to be thoughtful and insightful. The researcher must think conceptually, not descriptively. To guard against descriptive thinking, Charmaz suggests using gerunds in the coding and memo-writing processes. In this way, the categories develop from people's actions instead of describing the individuals themselves.

Chapter Summary

This chapter outlines the inquiry paradigm, methodology, procedures, and analysis techniques that were employed in this study. Additionally, I have considered my role in the process as well as strategies for establishing rigor and trustworthiness. This study uses a grounded theory methodology to create a conceptual framework of the processes used by deaf middle school students to approach the revision of their texts. It provides educators with a deeper understanding of how deaf middle school students approach revision of their writing. Although revision is but one step in the writing process, it is an important step that must be better understood. The resulting grounded theory will provide teachers with a better understanding of the revision processes used by deaf students, with the hope that pedagogy in deaf education and academic outcomes for deaf children will improve.

CHAPTER IV:
FINDINGS AND CONNECTIONS TO LITERATURE

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of eight deaf middle school students as they write and revise essays for their English classes. The experience for the students tends to include a significant lack of control. The main area students struggle to control and master is the English language, but in the classroom, they also are given little command over what they write about or how it is structured. Students even have little control over deciding what needs to be changed and what is acceptable in their own writing. They are reliant on external sources (such as the teacher or a computer) to help them determine what and why textual changes should be made, thus preventing the students from developing the confidence and ability to control their own writing.

Much of the lack of control that students experience in this study stems from living in a state of eternal confusion. The students in this study do not have complete grasp of the English language. Since writing is a complex linguistic task requiring sophisticated knowledge and skills in English, for the students it leads to a struggle to navigate the processes inherent in creating a satisfactory text that achieves its purpose. The grounded theory presented in this chapter explains how students survive the tasks of writing and revising. One core category and four key categories comprise the grounded theory. This chapter begins with a description of the participants in this study. Then the grounded theory is presented, and each category is explained individually.

Meet the Participants

Eight deaf students and two teachers of the deaf participated in the study. I begin first with an introduction of the participants, who each have been given pseudonyms to protect their identities.

Abha

Abha is a 15-year-old female in the eighth grade. She moved to the United States from India when she was 10 years old, and at home, her family speaks Gujarati and English. Abha explains that when she moved, it was in December, and she began in the fifth grade. Since she had missed half of the school year, she repeated fifth grade in the elementary school. From the elementary school, Abha entered the middle school and has attended the same middle school for three years. Altogether, Abha has been in the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (DHOH) program in the same district for over four years.

According to her teacher, when Abha entered the DHOH program, she began in an oral approach, learning to listen and speak. However, when she entered middle school and was exposed to MCE, her parents realized the importance of visual access to language for her and allowed her to switch communication modes. As such, Abha has been signing for approximately three years. Prior to moving to the United States, Abha communicated with her family using spoken Gujarati, spoken English, and gestures.

According to the demographic questionnaire that her parents completed, Abha has a severe hearing loss (between 71 and 90 decibels) in both ears when unaided. Her parents report that she uses hearing aids in both ears. Abha is not identified with a disability, and she does not receive any testing accommodations for writing.

Abha is a friendly and caring girl who enjoys spending time with her friends. In our interview, she talks of spending time with friends at the mall. She writes:

> I wanted to go to the mall with all of my friends to buy clothes, shoes, earrings, things. We bought Chinese food, then I wanted to buy ice cream with my friends. But my friends did not have money, so I asked my mom if I can buy ice cream. She said no, so I'm sad.

In class, she discusses the upcoming end-of-year trip to a local amusement park with her classmates. She is excited about some of the attractions at the park. She describes a particular ride that she enjoys, "where you sit and go up a hill slowly. Then you go down fast, and there's a huge splash! It's fun!" She loves having time to spend with her friends, whether it is close to home, such as the mall, or some place more special, such as an amusement park.

Corinne

Corinne is a 14-year-old bi-racial female in the eighth grade. She has attended the DHOH program in the school district since preschool, and she has been in the signing program for her entire educational experience. While English is the language used by her family at home, in school, Corinne prefers to use ASL.

Corinne's hearing loss is identified as profound (91 decibels or higher) when unaided. She has a cochlear implant in her left ear, and the right ear is unaided. During my observations, Corinne did not use her cochlear implant while in class. She is not identified as having a disability, nor does she receive any testing accommodations specifically for writing.

Corinne is a social girl, who enjoys being with her classmates. She loves to chat with her friends, even in class. When Corinne is conversing with an adult, her demeanor is stiff and serious, but when she interacts with her friends, she is much more animated. During several class periods, she uses dance to express her excitement and emotions to her friends. Using ASL, She describes herself in the following way:

> I really love joy and fun, because I like to enjoy socializing and fun but I don't like people who are depressing. So I try to cheer them up but they won't. So sometimes I have fun being hyper, jumping around. And my friends are like, "Oh geez." It makes them have attitudes. They say, "Stop! Calm down." I don't care. I

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don't pay attention to them. I just ignore them. And they don't care it doesn't matter cause they are my friends and they love me.

David

David is a 13-year-old White male in the seventh grade. David has lived in the school district for his entire life, and he has attended the DHOH program since pre-school. David uses Cued Speech and spoken English to communicate in school, and at home, his family uses spoken English and does not cue.

David has a profound hearing loss in both ears when unaided. He has a cochlear implant in his right ear, which I observed him using in class. His left ear is unaided. He is not identified with a disability, but he does receive testing accommodations for writing. His parents report the use of a scribe, visual or graphic organizers, and extended time as being accommodations required by the Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

David enjoys being silly and talking with Joshua. He spends as much time as he can socializing in class. When there is a substitute in his English class, David tells her "We read for eight minutes." She leaves the students to read, and David begins chatting. The substitute reminds the students to read, and she learns that they do not typically read at the beginning of class. She asks why they would tell her that they read, and David responds, "To relax...We do relaxing for eight minutes!" and smiles broadly. He is very quick-thinking and seems to be proud of his silliness.

Joshua

Joshua is a 13-year-old male in the seventh grade. He is Black, and his family speaks English at home. In school, Joshua uses Cued Speech and spoken English for his classes, and a mix of Cued Speech, MCE, and spoken English to communicate with his friends. In English class, he and David have conversations without using their voices by

using a mix of cues and signs. For our interview, Joshua requested that I use sign-supported speech because he wants to learn more sign. I complied with his request, but I supported with cues as necessary.

Joshua moved to the school district and started in the pre-school program prior to kindergarten. He began kindergarten in the elementary school that provides communication through MCE, but switched to the school that uses Cued Speech. He attended that elementary school until he entered middle school.

Joshua has a moderate to severe (41 to 90 decibel) hearing loss in his right ear and a profound loss in his left ear. He uses a cochlear implant in his left ear, and his right ear is unaided. Each time I observed him in class, he was using his cochlear implant. He does not have any disabilities, and his IEP lists testing accommodations specifically for writing. He receives the use of speech-to-text, word processors, tape recording responses, spelling and grammar devices, visual or graphic organizers, and extended time as accommodations listed in his IEP.

Joshua is a student who wants to do well in class, but at the same time, he is very social. Like David, Joshua enjoys being silly; there were times in our interview and during class which made me smile. He discusses his typing as very fast, and he says of a typo, "My hands are so fast." He proceeds to smack them in a teasing gesture and says, "Bad hands." He then explains, "My left hand is the fastest of all," and begins fake typing on the table.

Although he has moments of silliness and playfulness, Joshua knows when to be serious. For example when a substitute teacher is in the class, Joshua and David are off-task for much of the period. In the midst of a conversation, Joshua remembers that I am

in the room observing the class. He reminds David that they need to focus because this is

for my project, and if they are not doing their work, then "she will get an 'E' [failing

grade] because of us." He is aware of and sensitive to the needs of others around him.

Kenny

Kenny is a 13-year-old Black male in the eighth grade. His parents are from

Jamaica, but they speak English at home. Kenny told me that his parents sign a little bit,

but he mostly speaks and listens. His brother and sister can only fingerspell, but Kenny

tries to teach them some signs. He has a moderate to severe hearing loss in each ear, and

he wears hearing aids in both ears. He does not have any disabilities, nor does he receive

any testing accommodations specifically for writing.

Kenny has been in this DHOH program since preschool. He attended his home

area school as a mainstream student for kindergarten. For first grade, he transferred to the

center-based school that focuses on oral communication, and in second grade, he changed

schools again to attend the center-based school that uses MCE. He has been signing since

second grade.

Family and religion are very important to Kenny, as he explains in this written

text:

> This is about my hero - my mom and God. And…Because I believe God is a
> leader and has strength and makes my life better for the future. And my mom
> always teaches me to be a better person by not trying to be mean.

When given the opportunity to free write on any topic of his choosing, Kenny chose to

honor his mother and his religion. In addition to these aspects of his life, Kenny enjoys

socializing with his classmates in school. He admits, "I like to talk off-point, but I have to

work." Indeed, in class he is often the instigator of the off-task chatting with his

classmates, but he is also one of the first students to complete the work.

Pilar

Pilar is a 15-year-old female in the eighth grade. She is Hispanic, and she moved

to the United States from Honduras when she was in third grade. She repeated third grade

in another state, then moved to the current district in fourth grade, where she began in the

DHOH program. Prior to her arrival in the United States, Pilar attended a deaf school,

where she used Honduran Sign Language. In the DHOH program, Pilar uses MCE to

communicate. At home, her family uses Spanish; they are not able to communicate in

either Honduran or American Sign Language, so Pilar and her family communicate

through a system of home signs and gestures.

According to her parents, Pilar has a severe hearing loss in her right ear and a

moderate loss in her left ear. She uses hearing aids in both ears. She does not have any

disabilities, and she does not receive any accommodations specifically for writing.

Pilar is a very studious eighth grader. While she enjoys engaging in conversation

with her friends, she is rarely off-task in class. In addition, family is an important aspect

of Pilar's life that she shares in her written description of herself and future aspirations:

> My favorite sports are soccer and wrestling. For my job, I would like to act, plan
> weddings, or be an artist with drawing skills. Next, who do I want to marry? He
> must be rich, a good man, and dress nicely. Then my children, I want one or two
> boys… I don't like girls. Then my favorite music is called 'Pink' and another one
> is 'Fallout Boy.'

Ramona

Ramona is a 14-year-old female in the eighth grade. She is Hispanic, having

moved to the United States from El Salvador when she was in third grade. She has

attended the DHOH program in this district since the third grade, and she uses MCE to

communicate in school. At home, her family uses Spanish, and they use a mix of home

signs and gestures to communicate with Ramona. Prior to her arrival in the United States,

Ramona attended a school with other hearing children. Instruction was in Spanish; no signed languages were used in her education.

According to her parents, Ramona has a moderate hearing loss in both ears. She does not use a cochlear implant or hearing aids. She has not been identified with any disabilities, nor does she receive any testing accommodations specifically for writing.

Ramona enjoys playing sports, particularly baseball and flag football. She likes school, and she works hard in class to earn good grades. "My favorite classes are PE [physical education] and history…My best class is history." When Ms. L asks her if she likes school, Ramona answers, "Yes. I like to socialize with my friends." Being with her friends is important to Ramona, and she appears to get along with each of her classmates in her English class.

Vivian

Vivian is a 12-year-old White seventh-grade student. She uses Cued Speech to communicate in and out of class. Vivian has always lived in Maryland, but her parents emigrated from Bulgaria. Her parents and siblings speak English and Bulgarian at home, but Vivian is only able to speak English.

Vivian attended the preschool DHOH program in the district, then she attended the elementary school that uses Cued Speech for communication, and finally she matriculated into the middle school program. Vivian has a profound hearing loss in both ears. She uses a cochlear implant in her left ear, and her right ear is unaided.

Vivian is a shy girl who tries hard in class and cares about her classmates. In class, she is asked to journal about her relationship with her classmates. She writes, "I would describe my relationship at school as fun-loving and friendly." She likes Joshua and David, and she even teases them a little when discussing the journal: "It's friendly,

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but evil to him (points to Joshua)." However, the same day in class, Joshua is feeling sad, and Vivian expresses concern. She asks him, "[Joshua], what's wrong? Why are you crying?" She is sensitive to the feelings of those around her, but she will only speak up if she feels comfortable with the person.

Teachers

There are also two teachers who participated in this study by providing access to their English classes and sharing their perspectives on what the students are doing as they write and revise. Ms. G is responsible for teaching English to the seventh-graders in this study, and Ms. L is responsible for teaching the eighth graders. Neither of the classes that were used for this study had a paraeducator assigned specifically to assist the class.

Ms. G is a hearing, White female. She is able to fluently communicate using sign-supported English, and since she teaches the students using Cued Speech, she has learned the entire system. She is able to cue everything, but she is still working on building fluency. As a result, her instruction consists of a mix of Cued Speech, spoken English, and sign-supported English. In my observations, it appears that the students understand her as their responses are generally appropriate to the discussion.

Ms. G has been teaching in deaf education for 22 years; however, it was her first year teaching in the school where this study was conducted. She did work in the school the previous year as a long-term substitute for a teacher in the DHOH program. She learned to cue this year, because many of her students use Cued Speech for their academic coursework. She learned to sign when she was 12 years old because she attended school with deaf and hard of hearing children who signed. She went on to earn a bachelor's degree in communication disorders and deaf education, and she is currently working on a certificate in Adolescent Literacy. Ms. G is credentialed to teach in the

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following areas: K-12 Deaf/Hearing Impaired, Reading, and English. The qualification to teach English was met by taking the Praxis test for Middle School English and receiving a passing score according to the state.

Ms. L is a Deaf, White female. She is fluent in ASL, and she instructs students using ASL. She learned to sign when she went to college and saw that was how the deaf people there communicated. She picked it up quickly, and now ASL is her preferred language. At the time of the study, it was Ms. L's 11th year teaching, and her second in the school and teaching the students English. Ms. L has worked as an itinerant teacher and in a residential deaf school.

Ms. L received a bachelor's degree in social work, a literacy specialist certification in deaf education, and a master's degree in deaf education. She is credentialed to teach in the following areas: K-12 Deaf/Hearing Impaired and literacy specialist.

Overview of the Theory

The emergent theory presented in this chapter describes how the deaf middle school participants in this study experience and navigate the writing and revising processes. The theory consists of one core category and four key categories, all of which evolved from analysis of interviews with the students and teachers, classroom observations, and samples of the students' writing that had multiple drafts. There are three aspects of the students' process for navigating writing and revising: *Knowing*, *Experiencing*, and *Doing*. A visual representation of the theory is included in Figure 1.

The core category, *Living in Language,* resides under the heading of *Knowing*. It encompasses what happens internally as students are writing and revising. How students understand and know the English language impacts every aspect of writing and revising,

because they are linguistic tasks requiring knowledge of English in order to be accomplished. Thus, the core category is connected to each of the other categories as the understanding of English impacts how other elements of writing and revising are experienced and accomplished.

Three key categories fall under the heading of *Experiencing*, because they describe interactions the students have with elements of the process. The categories here are: *Interacting with Text, Interacting with Instruction,* and *Interacting with Self as Reviser. Interacting with Text* describes how students experience the writing and revising processes. In this category, what students understand the purpose of writing and revising to be and how the processes work are explained. *Interacting with Instruction* refers to how the students interact with the instruction provided by the teacher, the authority figure in the classroom. How students understand language impacts how they interact with the teacher and the instruction. *Interacting with Text* overlaps with *Interacting with Instruction* in that how students describe the process is influenced by the instruction they receive.

The third category under *Experiencing* is *Interacting with Self as Reviser*. This category explains how students "revise" themselves and identify their place in the classroom environment. It uncovers the ways students respond to information that is presented to them as they work through the writing process. Again, *Interacting with Self as Reviser* is not a discrete category, but rather overlaps with the others presented in this theory. *Interacting with Instruction* plays a role in how the students respond to the teacher and even to other students, and *Interacting with Text* helps to explain why students respond the way they do. The final key category, *Fixing Wrongs,* is found under

the heading of *Doing.* This category describes and explains the actual physical process that students use as they work through the revising process.

DOING

EXPERIENCING

Interacting with Text
- *naming the purpose of writing*
- *naming the purpose of revising*
- *going through the motions*
- *simulating revising*

KNOWING

Living in Language
- *"Think English!"*
- *sense-making*
- *encountering language breakdowns*

Interacting with Instruction
- *seeking approval*
- *seeking assistance*
- *deferring to authority*
- *overdepending*

Interacting with Self as Reviser
- *negotiating expectations*
- *keeping up appearances*
- *performing disengagement*
- *wrestling with confidence*
- *displaying resilience*

Fixing Wrongs
- *identifying wrongs*
- *making changes*
- *rehearsing*

Figure 1. Conceptual model of how eight deaf middle school students encounter writing and revising tasks.

It should be noted that the participants in this study are still developing, and their experiences and behaviors are not always uncommon for middle school children who are still learning to write and revise. In fact, many of their behaviors and experiences parallel other groups of students who have been studied, specifically students with learning disabilities and students who are English language learners. Literature is presented in each section to illustrate how the findings of this study are parallel to the existing

knowledge base. Connections to the literature are included in this chapter because it helps to keep the findings of researchers in the field present with the findings of this study. Comparisons of the participants in this study are made with the participants in other studies, but it is important to remember that the specific needs of deaf children and those who have learning disabilities or are learning English as a second language are different.

Living in Language

The core category that emerged from the data and which encompasses the essence of these deaf middle schoolers' experiences with writing and revising is *Living in Language.* This category reflects the students' lives as they try to accomplish language-related tasks through a language that is not fully accessible for them, English. Being young and still learning how to navigate tasks requiring sophisticated knowledge of English means that students struggle to name many of their experiences with writing and revising, yet those experiences become apparent through the observations and writing samples. The students experience confusion when presented with language tasks such as writing; however, they have developed strategies for negotiating the tasks they are asked to complete.

There are several elements that compromise the category of *Living in Language*, particularly for the deaf children in this study: *"Think English," sense-making,* and *encountering language breakdowns*. Although each subcategory is presented here separately, they are inter-related and do impact and interact with other categories and subcategories of this grounded theory.

"Think English!"

This notion developed out of a conference that Vivian has with Ms. G, when Ms. G tells her to *"Think English!"* as she is revising her character choice essay. It seems an

interesting direction to give to any student, let alone one who is deaf, and thus was compelling for me. I began to consider what it means to think English and how one might explain the concept. The students seem to encounter tension when they are asked to perform tasks that require them to use English. This is true for both groups of students, those whose only communicate using English and those who use MCE or ASL and English.

Metacognitive awareness. Students are aware of and openly share their struggles to master English grammar rules. As Pilar says, "It's hard to think and write sentences." This awareness is a form of metacognition. Despite being aware of their own struggles, students employ relatively few metacognitive strategies to monitor their writing as they engage in pre-writing, composing, and revising, as compared to the findings of other researchers studying the writing processes of children with learning disabilities (García & Fidalgo, 2008). Metacognition is an awareness of self that allows a person to self-regulate behavior. John Flavell (1979) is often cited as the person who coined the term "metacognition," and he explains it in the following way:

> One's knowledge concerning one's own cognitive processes and products or anything related to them... For example, I am engaging in metacognition…if I notice that I am having more trouble learning *A* than *B*; if it strikes me that I should double-check *C* before accepting it as a fact; if it occurs to me that I had better scrutinize each and every alternative in any multiple-choice type task situation before deciding which is the best one; if I become aware that I am not sure what the experimenter really wants me to do; if I sense that I had better make a note of *D* because I may forget it; if I think to ask someone about *E* to see if I have it right…Metacognition refers, among other things, to the active monitoring and consequent regulation and orchestration of these processes in relation to the cognitive objects or data on which they bear, usually in the service of some concrete goal or objective. (p. 232)

Metacognition can be applied to a number of areas (Flavell, 1979), but for this study, the discussion of metacognition is centered on writing and revising. The most

common tension area that students talk about is English grammar; it causes much uncertainty for them. Almost every student indicates that grammar is a concern, and it is the area of confusion in which students are the most articulate. Although students are aware of their own struggles to learn English, they are not employing strategies to engage with and monitor their work as they write and revise. A demonstration of how the students' grammar is not regulated through the use of metacognitive strategies is found in the character change essays written by Ramona, Kenny, and Abha.

The students are expected to use textual evidence in their essays, but they do not copy it exactly as written in the play. This may be due to carelessness, overlooking the text, or not knowing what the text means, and thus not knowing when words are missing or incorrect. Or, it may be a combination of the three. For example, Ramona frequently is distracted by her classmates' off-task conversation during writing time. This distraction may be why she writes "What wilt do?" instead of "What wilt thou do?" (*As You Like It*, Act 1, scene 1, line 72). Then, when she re-reads and re-writes the essay, Ramona is not able to catch the grammatical mistake in her copying because Shakespeare's language is foreign and difficult to understand. She probably does not realize that what she copies is incorrect and does not make sense. Additionally, it is not something that the teacher indicates as in need of revision, therefore Ramona does not see a need to change it.

Kenny also makes several changes to the Shakespearian text as he copies lines in his essay. The Shakespearian text is remarkably different from what Kenny identifies as a quote. It seems at times that Kenny writes his understanding of what the words mean instead of copying them as written. For example, Kenny writes: "Before I was try to kill him but this time not try to kill him. I do not shame to tell you what I was. Since my

conversion so sweety tastes, being the thing I am." For Shakespeare's quote, "'Twas I;

but 'tis not I I do not shame | To tell you what I was, since my conversion | So sweetly

tastes, being the thing I am" (*As You Like It*, Act 4, scene 3, lines 140-142). Some of

these errors seem careless, such as spelling *sweetly* incorrectly. Others seem to be more

indicative of the grammar internalized by Kenny such as the awkward construction of

"this time not try to kill him." Other mistakes in quoting seem to be Kenny writing his

interpretation of the text in the language he understands.

In her character change essay, when Abha copies teacher phrases that include

commas, she does not copy the punctuation. Although it does not have a large impact on

the message received by the reader, the lack of a comma is not a grammatically correct

construction. It seems Abha may have overlooked the commas, which can be an

indication that the comma holds little or no meaning for her. These are just a few

examples of how students do no monitor their own writing. There are several other

examples presented throughout the discussion of this grounded theory.

Vocabulary knowledge. Pilar is overly concerned about her ability to use

appropriate word choice in her writing. This is apparent during the interview, where she

mentions her struggle several times, and it becomes the focus of revision for her. She

explains, "It's difficult for me to understand the different 'big words.'" By "big words,"

Pilar is referring to grade-level vocabulary provided through instruction. She further

explains, "It's hard for me to understand the different big words. So I look to the teacher

to give me answers many times, and I have to figure out how to use the big words." She

struggles to understand new concepts, and her strategy is to rely on the teacher for

assistance with the spelling or the sign. She has the awareness that she does not know

what to do, but she does not have enough grasp of English to make changes herself. Her strategy to manage the task of incorporating big words is to get help from the teacher.

Pilar notes that she often writes a first draft using words she is familiar with, then during revision, she returns and changes some words to higher-level vocabulary. Despite this, her initial drafts include higher-level vocabulary words. Perhaps the teacher provides a list of words or Pilar copies from them from the prompt. Either way, it is questionable about whether or not Pilar knows the words when she writes them. During the interview, Pilar demonstrates that she does not always fully understand the big words she is using in her essays. She stumbles when reading the word *persuasive*, although she easily identifies the sign used in class when offered a choice of two signs. Pilar also stumbles on the word *position* when she signs it as POSITIVE. In this instance, she does not stop reading. Instead, she continues on with the essay. In this case, the words are part of the initial prompt. Although she has not internalized the words fully, Pilar is aware that she is expected to use them from the prompt in her writing and does so. Her strategy here is one of survival. The language task is very difficult, but Pilar knows that if she uses those big words, the teacher will accept her paper.

Corinne faces a similar struggle with vocabulary. During her interview, Corinne discusses the character's traits in her BCR, "explaining how a character's understanding of responsibility changes in 'Twelve Angry Men.'" She tries to read the word *ardent,* which she wrote in her essay. She initially tries to fingerspell it without success, even though it is spelled out clearly on the paper, and she does not seem to know what the word means, even though she has written it in the essay. During the interview, she gives up on trying to figure out what *ardent* means or even to fingerspell it. Instead, she points

to the word, instead, whenever she wants to include it in the discussion. That is an indication that she is using unfamiliar words in her writing, probably as a result of instruction or teacher prompting. It shows that Corinne is making an effort to use words that are more appropriate to her grade level even though she does not know what they mean. I suspect Corinne is given a list of words from which to choose and incorporate in her essay. This is a strategy I witnessed in Ms. L's classroom during the course of data collection for this study.

The ability to access and retrieve linguistic knowledge such as vocabulary and syntax, is a measure of linguistic fluency (Van Gelderen & Oostdam, 2004). Van Gelderen and Oostdan posit that linguistic fluency is an important aspect of revision. They suggest, "For successful revision it is essential that the writer can choose from various lexical entries and syntactical structures in order to actually improve drafts" (p. 105). Linguistic fluency can be impacted by working memory capacity. There are many processes involved in writing (e.g., handwriting, typing, spelling, grammar, and ideas) that burden working memory; writers who are developing skills may focus only on form to relieve the burden on their working memory (Kellogg, 1996; McCutchen, 1996; Schoonen, Shellings, Stevenson, & Van Gelderen, 2009; Van Gelderen & Oostdam, 2004). This could be one possible reason why the students focused on the form and local structures of their writing over more global issues of meaning.

Syntactical knowledge. Knowledge of syntax is an important element, because it is impossible to think in English without it. It is almost universally mentioned by students and teachers alike. Although she identifies a specific area of confusion for writing, Pilar does not explicitly mention a struggle with grammar. However, from her responses to

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questions during the interview, it is apparent that she does have difficulty with English grammar. During our interview, when I ask her what changes she would make to an unedited text, the things she identifies are relatively superficial semantic changes, such as adding a description of her future husband and children. She does not suggest any specific grammatical changes or mention that any might need to be made at all. It seems that for Pilar, grammar is so confusing and overwhelming that she does not have strategies to help her decide where to start in identifying and making changes.

Like Pilar, Vivian struggles to decide when changes need to be made in her writing. She explains, "I don't know when something's wrong." This feeling also comes through during the classroom observations. Vivian reads her paper aloud while Ms. G is conferencing with her, but Vivian does not identify changes that could or should be made. Ms. G stops Vivian and asks her to think about a sentence or offer an explanation of the change that needs to be made. Without Ms. G stopping, Vivian will not identify any changes in her paper, although after a few times of being reminded about verb tense, Vivian does independently identify additional changes related to verb tense. It is during this conference that Ms. G tells Vivian to "Think English!" The strategy being employed by Pilar and Vivian, and for every other student participant in this study, is to rely on the teacher, because they do not have other strategies to monitor their own writing for possible changes.

Students do use the spell check and grammar check feature of word processing programs to identify and make changes. However, they do not always know how to make changes that would remove the notifications, particularly when the program does not offer an alternative. For example, when a sentence is a fragment, the computer does not

offer alternatives to choose from; it merely explains the sentence is a fragment and may need to be revised. Using spoken English, David describes his feelings about that: "I still don't like it because when I find out the bad grammar and it means that the...green underlining doesn't says what the underline, so sometimes I get...ummm...I really don't like it." This shows David's tension with grammar, which he openly admits, but also that he is frustrated when he is told to fix it. Kenny is also unsure what to do with that green underlining, but he shares that when he cannot get the green squiggly line to go away by fixing the sentence, he deletes the entire sentence.

  Awareness of message and audience. Another aspect of *"Think English!"* is that students share that they write what makes sense to themselves, but they are unsure how to determine if the essay makes sense to others who might read it. When asked if her writing is clear, Corinne responds, "I don't know…I can read it, but I feel if other people read it, they might not know. People might think differently when looking at this (essay)." Corinne knows what her message is, and she writes it to make sense to herself, but she does not know whether or not that message is being communicated to a reader. To overcome this uncertainty, she relies on the teacher for help. Ms. L assists Corinne in determining the clarity of the message for a potential reader by telling her what to change.

  Part of this confusion with having a message to share and ensuring that the message is clearly communicated seems due to not having a clear notion of who the audience is. Kenny talks in terms of people reading his essay. When questioned about who these readers are, he responds, "people reading." Asked to explain further about the specific group of people that might be reading the essay, he responds, "anyone in

general." Kenny is not able to identify the specific audience for his essay; it is a vague notion of "people." He cannot identify a specific group that might read his work, and thus adjust his written language accordingly. He is struggling to negotiate the world of English language and how to write for a specific audience. Other students also speak of people who might be reading their essays, but it is again a vague notion of some "other." They speak of "readers" but they are not clear on who their readers might be. There does not seem to be any indication of how one would change the language style or usage in order to meet the needs of different writers from any of the students.

For example, Abha rarely discusses her revisions in terms of audience. She is aware that there is a reader, but she is not aware that an audience exists for writing, or that there should be an audience for whom one is writing. She speaks in terms of the teacher doing the reading and making suggestions for changes that should be made to the essay. When explaining how she revises by moving or changing sentences because they are wrong, she clarifies the purpose, "It means you need to explain more so the reader can understand." Although her only reader is the teacher, I believe that Abha is referring to a vague outside person, and that this idea results from conferencing only with the teacher about her essay.

Researchers have also shown that novice writers are less adept at targeting their writing to a particular audience (Hayes, Flower, Schriver, Stratman, & Carey, 1987). In the case of the students in the present study, this could be due to a lack of instruction on the matter. Ms. L speaks about readers to the students, but it is never clear who those readers might be. Ms. L shares during her interview that she does not teach the concept of audience to this class because she is focusing her attention on purpose. She feels the

students need to meet the stated purpose of a task before they can write for various audiences. This could help to explain why Kenny and Abha are unable to adapt their language use to fit a particular audience. The instruction they receive is not geared toward developing their understanding of how to write for potential readers.

Awareness of changes. During the interviews, students are asked how they identify changes in their writing and why they decide to make specific changes in an essay. Students are generally able to explain why they make changes, but their responses seem more like teacher-talk than student-talk. For many of the changes students describe, there is a sense that the students are regurgitating the rationale that the teacher gave them for making the changes. For example, when Abha is asked why she switches the order of two sentences in her persuasive essay, she replies, "Because this sentence (pointing) is the topic sentence. So it needed to be moved to the top." This is probably a suggestion made by the teacher, because when Abha is later asked to identify changes in an unedited piece that she wrote, she can only identify one change to make and that is to list what she and her friends would buy at the mall. She does not consider the importance of a topic sentence or a conclusion; she just knows what she wants her message to be.

Ramona also seems to have a difficult time explaining why she makes changes to her writing or why certain changes are appropriate. When asked why she would change the capitalization on a word, which happened to be the first word of a sentence, she says that she fixed it so it was right. She does not really explain why capitalizing that word was right. Ramona has internalized some of the grammar rules that govern writing in English, but she does not have the language to explain why the given change is right. She just knows it is. Interestingly, in her unedited piece, written just before the interview,

Ramona does start sentences without a capital letter. She is focused on her ideas, and the syntactical elements are put to the side. When she reviews her unedited text for the purpose of revising, she identifies the sentence without a capital and knows it needs to be fixed. She just cannot explain why.

Ramona also struggles to explain the difference between *abuse* and *abusing* and why she chooses to use the latter one in a later draft of a BCR. During the interview, Ramona insists they are different words, although she signs ABUSE for both. When asked how they are different, she is confused because the words are clearly different to her. Again, she does not have the language to explain the difference, even when the change is requested by the teacher, as it most likely is in this case. It is also possible that Ramona does not know the difference between the two words.

Overall, students struggle to recognize items that can be changed and thus improve their writing, either in content or in form, because they are grappling with understanding the language through which they are expected to convey ideas, which is English. They tend to focus on local (sentence-level) features of the writing as opposed to considering global features, and they are unable to provide additional descriptions or definitions when asked. This characteristic is similar to the struggling writers in Lin, Monroe, and Troia's (2007) study on the development of writing knowledge of students in grades two through eight. They found that struggling writers focus on local meaning and physical product, whereas more experienced writers focused on global meaning and process.

Despite the small amount of monitoring their own writing, students do have a clear message in mind that they want to share, particularly when they are given the

opportunity to write on a topic of their choosing. However, there is some uncertainty about how to write in order to make sense, and for a reader other than the teacher. These tasks end up being assumed by the teacher.

Sense-making

Sense-making refers to the intent of the author in writing the text, as well as the person responsible for ensuring that the words on the paper convey a particular message. There seems to be some tension for the students around who is responsible for the sense-making task in an essay, the role others play (teacher, peers, audience), and how sense-making happens. Students know they have a message to share, particularly when they can write about something personal, but they are not always sure how to clearly write for a reader. Also, the students indicate that they are the responsible party for writing their essays so that they make sense (albeit with teacher assistance), but the teachers assume the bulk of the sense-making process during conferences and when providing feedback. It ends up being that the person with the greater sense of language is the one who controls the sense-making.

To illustrate, as she conferences with Joshua, Ms. G directs him to re-read his essay and in every place that he has written *get* or *got,* he needs to examine a list of synonyms and decide if one of those words can be used instead. He is to then add the words using a pencil. Ms. G then says, "I'll tell you if it makes sense." In this instance, Joshua is just to plug in words that he pulled from a thesaurus. There is no discussion of how to use a thesaurus other than look the word up and find five alternatives. Joshua is given the task of substituting words, while Ms. G controls the evaluation of whether or not it makes sense.

Through my own teaching experience, I have learned that students need to understand the nature or nuance of the word they are trying to replace in order to appropriately choose a replacement from a thesaurus. If they do not, then they make many substitutions with words that do not make sense in the text. This is especially true when words have multiple meanings. Joshua does not understand this about the words *get* and *got*, and when he plugs words into his essay, they do not always make sense.

Ms. G notices that he substitutes the word *acquire* several times in the essay. When she asks him why, he responds, "because they sound right." She works with him to identify other words that could be used. The original sentence reads: "Demetrius too got the potion in his eyes…" The first word he substitutes for *got* was *acquire*, and the teacher asks him to open his thesaurus and find another word that sounds right. He quickly reads off, "convey." Ms. G responds, "nope." When Joshua seems stumped, the teacher points to the thesaurus and says, "What about this? See where it says *be given*? That wouldn't make sense – *be given*. What if we changed it to *was given*? Does that make sense?" Joshua replies affirmatively and then makes the change. Joshua does not seem to understand the many ways *got* can be used in English, and I am not sure he understands the process of plugging a new word in the sentence and re-reading it to see if it makes sense. It is not a task required by the teacher; instead, Ms. G identifies a new word and Joshua agrees with her.

A second example of how teachers assume the bulk of the cognitive burden of writing is one of Ms. L's conferences with Ramona. During this particular conference, Ms. L is reviewing Ramona's word choice BCR. Ms. L ends up re-writing the assignment for Ramona. Below is a translation of the part of the conference where this takes place:

Ms. L: (*Takes pencil from Ramona and erases something, then underlines something.*) You don't write. I will write an example for practice. (*Ramona nods.*) You won't re-write this later. No. (*Ramona shakes head no as teacher signs NO.*) This is the last one, then it's finished. (*Ramona nods.*) I am going to show you how to write it, so you can see what I'm doing.

Ramona: Yes.

Ms. L: Next time, you will do the same thing yourself. You won't do a second draft, this is the final one. Then we will put this away and it's done. (*Ramona shakes head.*) What I'm showing you, you will learn. (*Ramona puts her head in her hand on the table.*) Watch and I'll show you. (*Ms. L starts writing on the paper. Ramona starts rubbing her hair and looking at other students.*) No watch. (*Ms. L continues writing on the paper. Ramona looks over at the other students again.*) Ignore them and pay attention here.

Ramona: Alright. *(Ms. L continues writing Ramona's essay. Ramona appears to be watching, but does not appear engaged or to really understand what is going on.)*

Essentially, Ms. L takes Ramona's essay and re-writes it in a format that is more

acceptable to her and easier to be understood by a reader. When Ms. L assumes the sense-

making task from Ramona, Ramona begins to "check out" of the task altogether. She is

not being asked to take part in the sense-making, just to watch it. She also is expected to

watch the teacher write and then grasp how to write a BCR for the next time. The

National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), the professional organization for the

teaching of language arts at all age levels, has published a number of position statements

about writing and writing instruction on their website. The NCTE position statement

regarding teaching composition to children notes that "Students learn to write by writing.

Guidance in the writing process and discussion of the students' own work should be the

central means of writing instruction" (NCTE, 1985). Although the intent of this statement

is probably to encourage teachers to devote additional time to writing in their classes, it

can also be interpreted to mean that students should be actively engaged in writing their

own texts. Through active engagement and supported guidance, the students can then work toward improving their own writing.

One striking feature of the conference between Ms. L and Ramona is how little dialogue actually happens. Ramona only manages to say two words; the revision process is teacher-driven. Ramona answers questions, and she watches the teacher write. Ramona is likely aware that the teacher was writing the paragraph differently. She probably assumes that the teacher is re-writing her BCR the "right" way since her essay is "wrong." However, Ramona is not given the opportunity to explain her thoughts or why she writes what she does. She is not asked to write or change anything to improve the clarity of the message. She is not even asked to compose her BCR in sign so that the teacher can ensure mastery of the content. Instead, Ms. L controls the process by doing the work for her.

As further illustration of the confusion experienced by Ramona in writing tasks, I would like to share a little follow-up. The conference described above occurs on a Friday. The next Monday, Ramona brings in the BCR written by Ms. L. She has rewritten it in her own handwriting and attempts to turn it in. Ms. L had explained on Friday that she did not want Ramona to write the BCR again, but Ramona does not understand. As Ramona sees it, she is supposed to write the BCR, and although she is not engaged in much of the process to write it, she should physically write it herself.

These two examples demonstrate how the teachers assume control of the sense-making activities of writing. However, the students also feel that sense-making is their job. It is something they express as part of their role as the writer of the essay. For example, David frequently talks of his essays needing to make sense. He is aware that, as

a writer, it is important to get a point across to the reader (who, for him, is typically the teacher). It seems as if, to David, making sense refers more to following syntax rules of Standard Written English, because David does not speak of ideas or content during our interview. For him, as with other students, "making sense" means that the grammar is correct and the structure of the writing is appropriate. This notion is reinforced by both teachers as they conference with students to revise their writing. Ms. G and Ms. L both talk of making sense with the students, but their comments focus students' attention and the revision process on mechanical changes.

As such, the students express uncertainty about their message. They are not sure if what they write makes sense. As previously shared, Corinne feels this uncertainty as she writes. She has a message to share, but she does not know whether or not her message is getting across to a reader. In her mind, it makes sense, but to an outside person, she suspects that it may not because the reader thinks differently from her. Corinne recognizes that her way of thinking and making sense of the world is different from others, particularly when it comes to English.

Kenny also struggles to grasp how changes should impact his message. At one point during our first interview, I ask him why he changes ideas in his persuasive essay. He responds that it is "because I needed to give more details, more facts." When I ask him why again, he responds, "That's because I have to explain more." I suspect that the teacher tells him he needs to explain more, and he accepts it, but he is not sure why he needs to do more explaining. He knows that the message needs more explaining, but he does not clarify whether that means the original text is unclear, superficial, or incomplete. Despite recognition of their role as sense-makers in the writing and revising processes,

students readily acknowledge a need for outside help with sense-making tasks, usually from a teacher.

Students do have other strategies for ensuring their essays make sense. David, Kenny, and Joshua each say that they check to make sure the text "sounds right" when revising. David and Joshua both speak quietly to themselves while working, and it appears they are reading their writing to themselves. Vivian also uses the strategy when conferencing with Ms. G. On the other hand, Kenny does not check his work by reading it aloud either to the teacher or to himself. The strategy of checking whether the writing sounds right is reinforced by Ms. G, but not Ms. L. This could help to explain why Kenny, or any of his classmates, does not use the strategy during classroom observations.

Students' strategies for determining if their writing makes sense are fairly limited, but they do have some at their disposal. Most of the strategies for sense-making tasks involve receiving help from the teacher, because the students are still learning how to think English. The next subcategory of *Living in Language* reveals how students identify and repair breakdowns in communication that occur as they try to think English.

Encountering Language Breakdowns

Students are *encountering language breakdowns* just about every day in school, and to succeed, they must manage these breakdowns. Breakdowns occur during conversations and while reading and writing. Students employ a variety of strategies to cope with and mitigate language breakdowns in English or sign.

In conferencing with Ms. L about her word choice BCR, Ramona has to manage a breakdown in understanding the word *swing.* The conference, as translated is below.

> **Ramona**: (*Writes as Ms. L looks on. Ramona looks up.*) I forgot the sign for this word. (*Giggles.*)

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Ms. L: Think S-W-I-N-G. (*Ramona begins to write. Ms. L stops her and points to her paper.*)

Ramona: Wing?

Ms. L: No.

Ramona: Looks like…

Ms. L: W-I-N-G-S.

Ramona: Wing. (*Ms. L shakes head.*) Wing.

Ms. L: W-I-N-G-S.

Ramona: Fly. Like a bird?

Ms. L: W-I-N-G-S. (*Ramona makes a sound as if frustrated. Ms. L writes on her paper. Ramona's arms drop and her body slumps. She watches Ms. L write.*) They are different.

Ramona: Swim?

Ms. L: No.

Ramona: (*Repeats sign from earlier in the conference*) Wild hair.

Ms. L: You know. A swing. (*She gestures as if on a swing.*) Swing.

Ramona: Yes. (*Ramona copies her sign.*) Swing. (*Ms. L gestures a different type of swing, like a pendulum. Ramona copies her sign.*) Yes.

Ms. L: That's swing. (*She removes the lanyard and keys from around her neck and swings them.*)

Ramona: (*Repeats sign previously used by Ms. L*) Swinging hair. Looks like…

Ms. L: Swing means what?

Ramona: It's like braided hair swinging back-and-forth.

It is clear from the conversations that Ramona initially does not understand what

swing means. In this conference, Ramona uses three strategies to try and manage the

breakdown: clarifying her point, repeating the sign of the teacher, and returning to her

original sign. Ramona does recognize that a breakdown is occurring, because she attempts to repair it. She clarifies that she means wings like a bird's, because she feels the teacher does not understand what she is trying to say. It seems that her confusion stems from the fact that the words *swing* and *wing* look very similar when written in English. When Ms. L is explaining what a swinging motion is, Ramona is copying her signs and indicating comprehension. Ramona's final strategy in managing the breakdown is to repeat a sign used earlier in the conference, WILD-HAIR. When she does not understand what the teacher is talking about with *swing,* but she knows that her wings are wrong, she returns to a sign that is used by the teacher to describe the swinging hair of the girl in the poem.

When Ramona returns to signing SWINGING-HAIR, it almost seems like that is an automatic response to the teacher. It is a sign and gesture combination the teacher has used in her instruction of the BCR, and to Ramona, it must be the right answer at some point. This type of response happens several times over the course of the classroom observations in Ms. L's class. When she signs a specific word or phrase, students automatically respond with the word or phrase they associate with the utterance. For example, when Ms. L is conferencing with Pilar, she asks, "Why did the author choose those words?" When Pilar sees the signs CHOOSE and WORD, she responds with ANALYZE. To Pilar, *analyze* is associated with *word choice* because that is what the prompt is asking her to do, and the teacher had spent a lot of time the previous day emphasizing that the students will be analyzing word choice. However, Pilar's response is not appropriate to the question. This signals a breakdown in the communication between the teacher and the student and the student and the text. To mitigate the

breakdown, Pilar responds with a word that could be appropriate because it is associated with what the teacher is discussing.

During the interview, and in class, Pilar frequently moves her hands around to appear as if she is conveying a message through ASL, but it is actually how Pilar manages breakdowns that occur in her world. She attempts to cover up breakdowns in understanding by signing gibberish. Ms. L shares that she feels this is an effort on the part of Pilar to look like she understands what is going on around her when she actually does not. Because of this strategy use, Pilar's was one of the toughest interviews to conduct and transcribe.

Another strategy in use by the students is to agree with the teacher or other perceived authority, even if they do not truly understand what is being asked. In the interviews, it is apparent when students use a word they do not know - *revision*. Two students, Joshua and Corinne, explicitly ask what the word means, but not until mid-interview, and upon reviewing the other students' interviews, does it become apparent that students in general do not always know what I am talking about, but they play along. One reason the signing students are able to do this successfully is that the sign used for *revision* is the same as the sign for *change*. They could infer that I am talking about changes to their writing. However, when I fingerspell R-E-V-I-S-I-O-N, there is a feeling that the students do not understand the word. I suspect that students play along because they do not want me to know that they have no idea what the word means. It is a strategy they employ to navigate the language breakdowns that happen so frequently in their worlds, particularly as teachers place demands for higher level vocabulary use in their writing.

Students use the higher level vocabulary, or big words, in their writing, but it is clear that they have not always internalized the meaning of the words. One example that was shared previously is when Corinne is discussing her BCR about how a character's understanding of responsibility changed in "Twelve Angry Men," and she struggles to read the word *ardent*. Corinne gives up on trying to fingerspell or figure out what *ardent* means. Instead, she points to the word whenever she wants to include it in her discussion. This usage indicates that she is using unfamiliar words in her writing. Corinne probably includes *ardent* in her BCR as a result of instruction or teacher prompting. She is making an effort to use words that are more appropriate to her grade level, but she does not fully understand every word she writes. There is a breakdown between the language of the students and the language of the teachers, which is the favored language in the classroom.

Another example of language breakdown and how it is managed occurred in the conference between Ms. L and Ramona about the character change essay for "As You Like It." When Ramona is asked about the title, she signs LIKE(enjoy) LIKE(same) IT. Ramona signs the title in that way twice during the conference. The sign that Ramona uses for LIKE(same) is the one that uses a Y-handshape and is moved back and forth in front of the body. It is possible when she signs it in this way that she is using LIKE(same) to mean *as* and LIKE(enjoy) for *like* in the title and employed some form of a word reversal here. However, Ms. L signs the title A-S YOU LIKE(enjoy) I-T or LIKE(similar) YOU LIKE(enjoy) I-T. The sign that Ms. L uses is made by making a 1-handshape with both hands and tapping them together side-by-side.

What I have observed should not be construed as the only way in which Ms. L signs the title in class, nor is it impossible that Ramona recognizes LIKE(same) as a

possible sign for *as.* Given my observations of the class, however, I think it is more likely

that Ramona knows that *like* has more than one sign associated with it. She probably is

not sure which sign is the correct one, so she uses both to be sure. Also interesting, is that

the words *as* and *you* are missing from the title as Ramona signs it. When Ramona signs

the title in this way, the teacher does not make any correction of the title.

Breakdowns not only occur in students' understanding of vocabulary, but also in

their monitoring as they write. As noted earlier, when students quoted Shakespeare for

the character change essay, they did not copy the text onto their papers exactly as written.

Another example is when Corinne incorporates the teacher's suggestions in her BCR on

"Twelve Angry Men." The teacher notes for Corinne to add the word *accused* on her first

draft. Ms. L writes the word in semi-cursive, so when Corinne adds it to her essay, she

writes *aecused.* This illustrates that Corinne does not truly understand the text, or that

aecused is not an English word, because she writes the word anyway. In the final two

drafts, Corinne maintains the misspelling of *accused.* Again, I doubt that Corinne

comprehends the meaning of words she is copying from the teacher's suggestions; she

just knows that if the teacher wrote it, she should use it. This is another survival strategy,

particularly for writing in school: do what the teacher requests and you will receive a

good grade.

Another way that the lack of self-monitoring manifests itself is through word

reversals. Abha demonstrates word reversals in her verbal language, and Abha and

Corinne write reversals in their essays. Although it is possible that word reversals are

used by students who use Cued Speech, in this study, word reversals are not

demonstrated by students who cue. When Ms. L is explaining how to write the word

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choice BCR to Abha, she signs WORD CHOICE PARAGRAPH. She then asks Abha to tell her what she is supposed to write about. Abha responds with CHOICE WORD PARAGRAPH, reversing the teacher's directions. In her persuasive essay, Abha has several examples of word reversals, but one notable construction is "nails red." This seems to be a construction that uses English words in ASL order. ASL grammar rules are such that the noun is followed by its descriptors, although this is not always the case. In Corinne's paragraph about the movie "Stand and Deliver," she writes 4.0 and 0.5 to describe the students' test scores. Later, in the same paragraph, she writes 4.0 and 5.0. This example is less clear as a reversal, but it still shows a reversal of the concept. It is not clear that this construction was intentional or just an oversight by Corinne.

Students also encounter language breakdowns when they are writing and revising on their own. This becomes evident during the interviews when students are asked to identify and explain changes they would make to an unedited text. They are generally at a loss to identify changes, and most students identify two or three superficial or minor changes to the text. Students just do not seem to know where to start with the task of revision. To manage this breakdown, students identify one or two items to change. Finding at least a couple of items means that the students have done what the teacher asked, and she may even be appeased. Then students will not be required to do more revising, which would require them to engage with the material in ways that are not easy for them.

Another area of breakdown in writing is the use of ASL-type constructions in the writing of some students who communicate using ASL or MCE. In her character change essay, Abha writes *why because* which is a semi-ASL construction. In ASL, WHY is the

sign used to begin a phrase that in English starts with *because*. Abha incorporates both concepts, which shows that she is mixing the two languages in her writing. This is an indication of Abha's two languages, English and ASL, influencing each other, a phenomenon seen in the writing of other bilingual students (Rinnert & Kobayashi, 2009). Although Abha does not herself sign ASL, she is exposed to the language by Ms. L, and as such, she has internalized some of the grammatical features.

Summary of Living in Language

Living in Language is the core category of the grounded theory presented in this study because it captures the essence of what these deaf middle school students experience when they are asked to engage in writing and revising tasks. The category is comprised of three subcategories: *"Think English!," sense-making,* and *encountering language breakdowns. "Think English!"* is the subcategory that explains the type of metacognitive and linguistic knowledge demonstrated by the students. Students appear to lack the metacognitive strategies necessary to revise their writing effectively. Schoonen et al. (2009) suggest that use of metacognitive knowledge is hindered by limited linguistic knowledge (in the second language). Although English is not the second language for every student in the present study, students do struggle to fully access it, and as such do not have full grasp of the linguistic knowledge.

Sense-making explains that although students share that they are responsible for ensuring their writing makes sense, the teachers are the ones who actually assume the burden of this activity. Finally, *encountering language breakdowns* explains how students negotiate a world based on language. When they encounter unfamiliar language, they employ a number of strategies in order to mitigate the breakdown.

Interacting with the Text

Interacting with the Text describes the ways students experience writing and revising as processes in constructing their own texts. This category has four subcategories: *naming the purpose of writing, naming the purpose of revising, going through the motions,* and *simulating revising.* Each of these subcategories are influenced by and inform how students live in language, how they interact with themselves as writers and revisers, and how they interact with instruction. How students "fix wrongs" in their writing is influenced by the purpose and processes they see as integral to writing.

Naming the Purpose of Writing

During interviews, students spend time *naming the purpose of writing*. Students do not always appear to have a clear purpose for their writing in class, and it is not apparent that they have a broader understanding of the purpose for writing in general. This is in keeping with the results of Lin, Monroe, and Troia's (2007) study on the development of writing knowledge. They studied students in grades two through eight, and they split students into two groups: struggling writers and typical writers. The researchers found that when struggling writers spoke of the purpose for writing, they spoke in vague, hypothetical terms, much like the students in the present study.

Although many of the students in the study have email accounts, cellular phones with texting capabilities, and social networking accounts (such as Facebook), they do not consider those activities to be writing. Indeed, the language surrounding those activities is not the same language used in writing instruction. For example, we "send" emails, "text" friends, and "update" our statuses. Each of these activities requires text construction of some sort, but the language used to describe them does not indicate writing as it is discussed and taught in school.

For the students in this study, writing is not something they do for fun in or out of school. When I ask Vivian if she enjoys writing, she responds affirmatively. However, she expresses a dislike for writing essays in school "because it takes longer. And it's many paragraphs, and you use a lot of details and examples." Vivian does enjoy writing funny stories, because it is easy. She explains, "Well, I like to do all short paragraph, but not long one like essay…because it's easier to write faster." Vivian enjoys writing when it is something she can do quickly without a lot of effort or if the topic is interesting to her. This sentiment is echoed by David, as well.

For other students, writing serves the purpose of getting good grades. Joshua mentions getting good grades several times during his interview. When I ask him to tell me about the process of writing an essay in school, he responds, "Well most of the times I get As, but three or four times I get Bs during English or reading." For him, writing is centered on getting the best grade he can.

For Ramona, writing serves as practice for improving her writing skills. She says, "I like writing better. It helps me practice. To practice writing, you write. Then you mess up and write it again, and it gets better." She understands that writing improves after re-writing, but the purpose of writing in her life is just to improve her writing skills. It does not seem that she understands clearly why learning to write is important; it is just something that she does in school. The students approach writing with a varied set of understandings, but what is noticeably missing is the reason that many adults pursue careers in writing and what teachers say writing is about: sharing a message with an audience. The students in this study view writing as something they need to do in school because teachers require it. This is similar to Lin, Monroe, and Troia (2007), who found

that struggling writers view writing as an "indistinct process through which the text is produced, and the ultimate goal is being good enough to meet the demands of the teacher, and then only in terms of basic writing conventions" (p. 220).

Saddler and Graham (2007) conducted a study of 20 fourth grade students, who were placed in one of two groups: less skilled writers and more skilled writers. They examined the students' knowledge about the attributes of writing and strategies for planning and writing a paper. They found that more skilled writers were able to explain how writing could be useful in and out of school, including future success in their careers. The more skilled writers also provided more substantive procedures, such as planning and revising, than the less skilled writers.

The students in the present study do not provide substantive examples of how writing can help them be successful in and out of school, and certainly, none of the students shares anything beyond high school. Ramona sees writing as a way of helping her learn to write, and Joshua views writing as something that will help him get good grades. They do not consider how writing may help them in the future. However, this is not something that I ask the students during our conversations.

The students in the present study generally do not describe substantive procedures for writing, which is described in the subcategory *going through the motions*. Joshua mentions doing some planning, although he does not call it such, and almost all of the students have to be prompted to include revision in their descriptions of the writing process. Again, this is similar to the less skilled students in Saddler and Graham's (2007) study. Compounded for deaf students, however, is the added dimension of not being able to Think English.

Naming the Purpose of Revising

Students also engage in *naming the purpose of revising* during the interviews, but like the previous subcategory, it is not apparent that students truly understand why revision is an important process. Although Ramona shares that re-writing her texts leads to improvement in her writing, it is not clear that the re-writing process includes revising or changing elements. If she is not required to revise by the teacher, I do not think that Ramona would engage in the process independently. This sentiment applies to the other students in this study as well. My observations indicate that students seem satisfied to turn in a first draft for a grade. The teachers also confirm this impression. Ms. G says, "If they have to revise it themselves, they will say it's perfect the way it is. And, we've done peer editing and revising, and the peers…(laughs and puts hands to face). It's a train wreck, because they don't have that sense of language." Ms. L echoes the sentiment. She says that the students in the study "look at it, and they think it's fine. They look and say it's great. If I suggest they add more, they feel it's perfect." Like writing, revising is something that is done in school because a teacher requires it.

For all of the students in this study, revising serves the purpose of fixing mistakes. Revising only needs to happen when something is wrong and needs to be fixed. If the essay is right, then there is no reason to revise. Lin, Monroe, and Troia (2007) asked struggling writers what kinds of changes they would make to a paper if the teacher asked for revisions. Their responses focused on changes to spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and penmanship. In contrast, the typical writers "exhibited metacognitive awareness of revising and comment [sic] about how they would make changes both to conventions as well as content" (p. 219). When I ask the students in this study about how they make changes or revise essays, they respond in a variety of ways. However, their answers all

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boil down to revising as fixing mistakes and making papers right. Student responses are

listed in Table 1.

Table 1.

Student Quotes Describing the Purpose of Revision

Student	Quote
Abha	Revision is important "to make sure you have good sentences so that when you read it, you can understand it and it makes sense."
Corinne	"The paper says you need revisions or changes…need fixing."
David	"We have to show the teacher first, and then we will fix it."
Joshua	"It's like when you give it to a teacher, she will like check it for mistakes or anything and give it back to you."
Kenny	"There's more work that needs to be done. You have to correct and fix sentences…Revising makes me feel better about using words right."
Pilar	"I give it to [the teacher], and she looks it over. And I need to make changes. It can be frustrating because I wrote the wrong sentence."
Ramona	"To practice writing, you write. Then you mess up and write again, and it gets better."
Vivian	"Then do real essay. To make sure everything is right so I can start essay."

The responses that students provide when asked what they might change in their

unedited writing pieces also support the notion that the purpose of revision is to correct

mistakes. When given the opportunity to describe possible revisions, students all have

one of two responses. Either they identify mistakes in need of correction, or they suggest

adding details. Ramona finds one mistake in her writing that she suggests fixing:

capitalize the *m* in *my*. The word *my* begins a sentence, and it is a grammatically

appropriate change to suggest. However, Ramona can not explain why the letter needs to be capitalized. She says, "I just need to fix the *m* so it is a capital. That's it."

Kenny realizes that he does not have subject-verb agreement in one place of his unedited text, and that would need to be fixed by adding an *s* to the end of the verb. He also feels that he needs a better topic sentence and to add more details to his writing. Vivian wants to check her spelling, because she is not sure how to spell words in her paragraph. She also says she would add a conclusion sentence.

Abha, Corinne, Joshua, and Pilar either state explicitly or demonstrate during the interview that they do not know how to find mistakes in their writing. Each of them indicates that the only changes they would make to their unedited works would be to add additional details. There are a couple of reasons why several of the students feel they need to add more details. First, students are not given a lot of time to draft their writing prior to the interview. Perhaps they feel that they were not able to get all of their thoughts down on paper, and they have more to say. Second, students may be used to teachers telling them to add more details or description to their writing, and that is an expected change.

Wong (1999) describes the results of several studies regarding children's knowledge of the writing process. Her analysis of the studies shows the following:

> Normally achieving students in Grades 4 and 5, and Grades 7 through 10 appear to be well on track in developing awareness and knowledge of the writing process. They focus on function rather than form of writing, and command sufficient knowledge of procedural aspects of writing. In contrast, students with learning disabilities (LD) focus on form rather than function of the writing process. In particular, they put priority on mechanical aspects of writing such as spelling and neatness of handwriting. (p. 186)

The students in the present study seem to share the characteristics of children with learning disabilities in that they focus on elements of form when they talk about writing. When describing revision, students rarely discuss modifying ideas or ensuring that the paper shares the message they want to convey. Much of their focus is on finding and fixing the mistakes.

Going through the Motions

The subcategory, *going through the motions,* refers to how students experience and describe the writing process. They go through the motions to write an essay, but they do not really engage in each step or consider why each step is necessary. They just try to hurry through the writing and do not use the writing process in the recursive manner it is meant to be. Several of the students do not understand what it means when I ask them about the process they use to write essays in school. Most of the students need additional prompting or support in order to answer the question. Pilar is the only student who does not answer the question, even after much prompting, because she does not grasp what I am asking her. She attempts answers to the questions, but the answers do not fit what is being asked. The word that students do not seem to understand is *process.* Vivian's response to being asked what process she uses in class to write an essay is, "What does that mean?" Kenny's is a question about whether I mean "writing a paragraph or three paragraphs." As such, the classroom observations are used to help fill in the gaps of what *writing as process* looks like for the students in this study, and for these students, the writing process is marked by the teacher.

The teacher directs each step of the writing process by determining which steps will be completed and the timeline that will be followed. Each step in the process is marked by turning something in to the teacher. For example, in Ms. L's class, students

are not permitted to move on to drafting until their graphic organizers are approved. When permitted to draft, they are only to write the topic sentence and gain approval before adding details. Using this approach creates a choppy process for students, who are also forced to rely on the teacher for determining when writing is acceptable. Each student gives a different description of what the process looks like. Ramona and Pilar do not understand the question, even with rephrasing; thus, they do not provide an overview of writing. The remaining six students manage to provide a description of the process for them, but it requires much prompting for students to provide a clear picture of the process that they use.

One of the more interesting descriptions of the writing process is David's. His process for writing is to describe in terms of physical processes, but not cognitive. His first response about the writing process in class is, "The teacher will give me a piece of paper, like lined paper. And just write it down and type it in the computer." After some prompting to get him to expand on the process, David explains, "If you're done early, give them [to the teacher]. Or if you're not done, save it, send to your email, do it at home. Then you print out your email and send it to your teacher…We have to show it to the teacher first, and then we will fix it. And we will type it on the computer." David gives no consideration or explanation to where the content for the writing comes from. He just focuses on the physical aspect of writing on lined paper, typing it on the computer, and emailing or printing the paper for the teacher.

Corinne's writing process is similar to David's in that she also focuses on the physical writing. She initially answers the question about the process for writing an essay in class by explaining, "You don't just go ahead. You practice to make sure everything

fits, and how…or everything. You write and explain and understand." When I ask her what it means to practice, she further explains, "Writing on every other line and write. And later when you're finished, you turn it in. And look it over for mistakes, and then you make changes." For Corinne, the writing process is focused on how she physically writes the essay.

Abha describes the process with more consideration of where content comes from and provides additional details, albeit with follow-up questioning. Her initial response to the question is, "First you read the story and then listen for what to do next. Then you talk about the story and make a paragraph. You summarize." I ask what that means to "make a paragraph," and Abha expands, "About the story. Where it takes place, what happens in the story, how the problem was solved." It is interesting that Abha considers writing about a story to be a summary. The essay they are writing in class during the time of the interview requires analysis of a character and his traits, requiring a deeper level of understanding than writing a summary. Abha also explains that there is a question to answer, and to answer the question being asked, she shares, "First I read and see where the sentence is. Then I go back to the book and look for that, and then start to write based on that sentence." I assume the "sentence" she refers to finding means some type of textual evidence, which is typically a requirement for the writing students to complete in class.

Finally, Vivian's process is very interesting because she does not consider her essay to be "real" until she is working on her final draft. The steps leading up to the real essay are "find the topic sentence," "find a lot of details to make essay," "organize," and write a draft. Once this is done, "then do real essay. To make sure everything is right so I

can start essay." For Vivian, the real essay is not begun until after she has done a lot of work in collecting information, organizing, and drafting. Part of the process for writing the real essay is to work with the teacher in identifying and making changes to the essay.

What is interesting in this section is that the students do not seem to have a clear picture of how an essay is written. They describe steps that are vague such as "writing a paragraph." Wong, Wong, and Blekinsop (1989) found that the students with learning disabilities used a strategy of "pouring out on paper whatever comes to mind, without prior planning and, indeed, without much thought" (p. 319). Only one of the students in the present study, Joshua, includes pre-writing as part of his description of the writing process. Although it is a strategy used in both classrooms, it does not appear to be a process students employ independently. This is also confirmed by Ms. G. In her interview, where she explains:

> We train them to brainstorm or map, come up with ideas…what words might you use? They're so worried about the end product, and maybe because it's a timed test. They don't even go back or take the time to do the pre-planning.

Due to the limited use of planning and forging ahead with writing by students with learning disabilities, Wong et al. conclude that they demonstrate a primitive knowledge-telling strategy, as defined by Scardamalia and Bereiter (1987). This is applicable to the students in the present study as well.

One of the earliest and most influential models of writing development was published by Scardamalia and Bereiter (1987). The model consists of two basic strategies for writing: knowledge-telling and knowledge-transforming. Knowledge-telling is the strategy used by novice writers and involves creating a text by writing what one knows on a topic. It is a matter of conveying information to a reader. Knowledge-transforming is

a more advanced strategy where the writer endeavors to process or make new meaning from the knowledge. According to Alamargot and Chanquoy (2001), "The main difference between the two strategies is the presence in the Knowledge Transforming Strategy of a complex problem-solving system" (p. 9). The students in the present study seem to fall along similar lines as the students in Wong et al.'s (1989) study; they describe their writing in terms of telling what they know and not how they construct meaning.

Simulating Revising

The revising process is marked in the same way as the writing process, and it is completed when the teacher accepts the essay. Students do not decide when a piece has been suitably revised; the teacher does. Students are not cognitively engaged in revising their essays; they are merely conduits who take the teacher's feedback and transcribe it into their own handwriting. In this way, students are *simulating revising.* It should also be noted that the teachers do not always give students an opportunity to revise their writing. In a writing organizer that Ms. L gives to the eighth grade students, the following steps are listed: First Draft, Making a Plan, Writing Topic Sentences, Prewriting, Organized List, Introduction, Body, Conclusion, Product, Final Draft (introduction, body, conclusion). Neither revising nor editing are listed as steps for the students to follow. In addition, both teachers share that they do not ask students to revise writing as frequently as they should, because they are required to teach the entire curriculum during the school year.

When I ask Ms. L about how she teaches students to revise, Ms. L does not give a clear response. She describes different strategies she has used to help students compose. When pressed, she explains that the students are unable to handle working on an entire

essay; therefore, she focuses instruction on one area at a time. She says, "We have to focus on one thing such as organizing ideas and identifying purpose. So that's what we revise on." Ms. G provides a clearer picture of what revision looks like in her classroom, but she explains it is a process that does not happen frequently. She says, "A lot of it is producing. And rarely do we take it through the whole process as you watched us do. That's a rarity. I think we do that once a quarter where they go through that whole process."

For the students, revising is all about fixing what is wrong. The process is generally as follows: give draft to teacher, teacher makes comments and either writes them on the paper or discusses them in a conference, and students make the changes. This cycle repeats until the teacher accepts the draft as final.

Vivian explains that the teacher helps her by checking her spelling and grammar and "she tells me to put more details or examples to help support the essay." Ms. G helps her figure out what needs to be changed, because Vivian is not sure how to identify changes on her own. Abha and Corinne also rely on the teacher to identify changes to make in the essay. Abha says, "If there is something wrong, I write again. I look at the corrections and then re-write." Corinne explains, "First I copy it down, and then in my own writing." She can not come up with any specific types of changes the teacher requests, but she is clear that the teacher gives her the essay back and says that things "need fixing."

David shows his essay to "the teacher first, and then we will fix it, and we will type it on the computer." Pilar also gives her essay to the teacher, "and she looks it over, and I need to make changes. It can be frustrating because I wrote the wrong sentence. So

I change it again and ask if it's wrong again. We have some back-and-forth. It's hard for me to understand the different big words, so I look to the teacher to give me answers many times. And I have to figure out how to use the big words." Ramona is the only student to not include the teacher in her initial description of the revising process. She says, "I just write, and if I spell something wrong, I write it again. Like that." Later she says, "The teacher makes corrections and then I copy the changes." For all of the students in this study, the teacher and the instruction they receive play a substantial role in the way that writing and revising are perceived and experienced.

Literature on Revision Processes

Researchers have been developing models of revision since the early 1980's. The initial model was developed by Hayes and Flower (1980) and is still frequently cited by researchers 30 years later. The model describes the writing process and its components. The section for revision is called Reviewing and consists of two sub-processes: Reading and Editing. Essentially, writers check and correct their writing to bring it in line with their intended text. Editing is considered to be an automatic process of fixing, that once triggered, interrupts the writing process. As such, it can happen at any point while writing.

In 1983, Scardamalia and Bereiter proposed a different, more specific model of revision. Essentially, revision consists of three activities: Compare, Diagnose, and Operate (CDO, in short). Compare is the activity of reading what is written and considering how it meets with the author's intentions. If the writing does not accurately convey the intended message, then the author moves on to Diagnose the exact nature of the problem. Finally, the Operate function is activated when the author chooses and applies a strategy to remedy the problem. For the students in the present study, applying

the Operate function is the activity in which they engage the most frequently. The other two, Compare and Diagnose, seem to be the teachers' job, as it is understood by the students.

However, it should be noted that Alamargot and Chanquoy (2001) consider this model to be more of a technique to help writers revise, a model successfully employed by Graham (1997) and discussed further in Chapter Five. Another concern with this model is that it ignores changes made for other purposes. When originally written, the text may have expressed exactly what the author intended, but revisions may have occurred because the author decided to change the message, the text is verbose, it lacks tact, or it does not enhance the main point of the text (Hayes, 2004).

The model which Alamargot and Chanquoy (2001) consider "as a central framework among current revising models" (p. 104) is the model developed by Hayes et al. (1987). The model considers the necessary knowledge for revising in addition to the processes that occur. The model generated by Hayes et al. (1987) provides more depth than the model developed by Hayes and Flower (1980), because it adds a description of the types of knowledge that are necessary to revise and how that knowledge interacts with the processes. One important feature of this model is called *Task Definition*, and it refers to the intentions and goals of the revising task. In order to revise a text, the writer must establish a goal for the revision (sense-making, grammar, etc.) and determine the scope of the revision (local, global, etc.).

Another important feature of the Hayes et al. (1987) model is *Goals, Criteria and Constraints for Texts and Plans.* This notion encompasses the reviser's knowledge about the structure of the text, all of which are necessary in order to determine the task

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definition and to evaluate the text as it is written. The knowledge representing how information is processed as it concerns a problematic unit of text is called *Problem Representation*. Using this knowledge, the reviser creates a representation of the problem, which shapes the strategies used to remedy the problem. Finally, the last domain of knowledge that is necessary for revising is the knowledge of possible strategies for actually modifying the text itself. This type of knowledge is labeled as *Procedures for Improving Text*.

The next model of revision was developed by Hayes (1996). In this model, there are three fundamental processes for revision: text processing (which includes processing of language), reflection (problem-solving and decision-making), and text production. These processes are controlled by the author's schema for the revising task, and they require the author to have working memory and long-term memory resources. To effectively revise, students must have an ability to process language, which is what much of the core category in the grounded theory presented here, *Living in Language,* is concerned with. In addition, the revision schema that students have appears to be limited to fixing what is wrong and copying changes made by the teacher.

The students in the present study seem to engage primarily in the physical execution of actual revisions. They do not possess much of the knowledge that Hayes et al. (1987) deem as necessary to be successful in revising a text. Students have basic knowledge of the task definition such as the type of writing they are to do and some of the content, but they are not required to have knowledge of the structure of the essay, notions of potential audience, the problems in the essay, or the procedures for fixing text problems. According to the students, those are processes completed by the teachers.

Summary of Interacting with Text

The key category *Interacting with Text* explains how students experience the writing and revising processes. It is also concerned with how the students use their experiences writing and revising in class to construct what the processes mean for them. There are four subcategories in *Interacting with Text*: *naming the purpose of writing, naming the purpose of revising, going through the motions,* and *simulating revising.* When students are *naming the purpose of writing,* they share the reasons they write. Students write in order to get good grades, to improve their writing skills, or to satisfy the teacher. They do not write for pleasure. Moving into *naming the purpose of revision,* the students share why they revise. For all of the students and the teachers, revising serves the purpose of fixing mistakes in the text, and those mistakes are typically related to syntax.

The third subcategory, *going through the motions,* describes how students view writing. They go through the motions of the writing process, but they do not comprehend the purpose of each step. They do what is asked by the teacher. This is particularly true of revision. Students are not equipped to handle revision tasks independently, so they rely on the teacher to identify changes. The students then copy the changes into a new draft, thus *simulating revision.* These struggles appear to be related to the issues the students have with English. They are asked to apply writing and revising processes to a text written in a language they do not fully understand, English.

Interacting with Instruction

As students engage in the writing and revising processes, their experiences are shaped by the interactions they share with the instruction, which is delivered by the teacher. When students interact with the teacher, they engage in a number of behaviors,

and these behaviors are the components of this category. The components are: *seeking approval, deferring to authority, seeking assistance,* and *over-depending*.

Seeking Approval

Seeking approval is when the students search for validation of their statements. They want to know that what they are saying is "right" and not "wrong" as defined by a perceived authority and seen in the literature (Davies, 1983; Moje, 1997). Particularly in English, where the students know that they do not have a complete grasp of the language, they want to know that their thoughts and ideas are right. There is an implicit assumption that things are always right and wrong, and that it is impossible for them to be both simultaneously. When seeking adult validation, students are also deferring to the power structure inherent in schools and throughout their lives. They are taught to obey teachers and parents and other adult figures in their community (Davies, 1983; Gracey, 1975); therefore, they want to know that what they are doing and saying is acceptable to the authority figure, which is the teacher for the students in this study. The literature on early adolescents' relationships with teachers is meager and still in its early stages (Kroger, 2007; Zimmer-Gembeck & Locke, 2007), and as such, there is little to apply here.

Students show that they are seeking approval in several ways: using facial expressions, positioning themselves above other students, or asking if they are right. Ramona frequently seeks approval of her answers during our interview, particularly when I ask her about her writing. At one point, I ask Ramona about the changes she had made in a BCR about how the author showed the character's traits in the story, *Something Girl,* by Beth Goobie. It was a piece of writing that Ramona had completed previously and already revised and edited. One of the changes she made was in capitalization. When I ask Ramona about why the word should be capitalized, she does not know, but she looks

to me to provide some indication of approval or disapproval. This type of situation occurs in several of the students' interviews, and when students are unsure of their answers, they look to me for some indication of right-ness.

Ramona also tries to position herself above other students as part of her strategy to gain teacher approval. This becomes apparent during one conference with Ms. L, Abha, and Ramona about the word choice BCR. Ramona is "helping" Ms. L explain the BCR to Abha.

Ms. L: (*to Abha*) Analyze one poem. That's it.

Ramona: (*explaining to Abha*) Analyze.

Abha: Analyze different kinds...

Ms. L: Pick one poem. One.

Ramona: (*at the same time as Ms. L*) Look at theses and put them here (*indicating poem and worksheet*). Understand? (*giggles*)

Abha: Oh. (*Ms. L writes on her paper.*)

Ramona: Put those there. Visualize the meaning. Understand?

Ramona: You are confused.

Abha: (*at the same time as Ramona*) Hair swinging (*points to paper*). I understand.

Ms. L hands Abha her paper back and turns to Ramona. Ramona passes her paper over and signs PERFECT. Ms. L does not respond and continues to read Ramona's paper. After this conference, Ms. L works with other students, but she returns to Abha and Ramona for a second conference. At this time, Ramona continues her strategy of positioning herself above Abha to gain teacher approval.

Ramona: (*to Abha*) I'll help. Meaning. (*points to Abha's paper*) …means what? Analyze (*points to paper*).

Abha: (*responds to Ms. L*) Right, pick one?

Ramona: No. Look. (*points again*) It means analyze. It means the same (*points to another place*). That means why (*signed as FOR FOR*).

Ms. L: You're supposed to write a summary, right?

Abha & Ramona: (*simultaneously*) Right.

Ms. L: No.

Ramona: No (*said as if she knew the answer all along*).

Using these two conferences in conjunction with an earlier dialogue where

Ramona corrects Abha's paper by explaining that *rainbow* is one word, it becomes

apparent that Ramona is trying to position herself as "smarter" than Abha. It is a way for

her to gain teacher approval because she is able to help other students fix their writing.

Ramona does not understand all of the language that is used in the classroom, and this is

her way of showing her knowledge and receiving teacher approval. Kenny also does

some positioning. When Ms. L is explaining to Pilar how to write the word choice BCR,

Kenny interjects with "It's easy!" and "I finished mine!" Since Pilar is struggling to

understand the task, Kenny is positioning himself as better because the task was easy for

him. He is also waiting for Ms. L to respond in a positive manner (such as praise), which

she does not.

During a later conference with Ms. L about his word choice BCR, Ms. L tells

Kenny she wants to see his topic sentence before he starts adding details. Ms. L explains

in her interview that this has been a focus of her instruction recently, thus it is not a new

concept for the students. Yet, Kenny still raises his hand and waits three minutes for her

attention to ask, "If I write the whole thing and there's no topic sentence, does that mean

if you read it, you will have no idea what I'm talking about?" Ms. L responds with, "Right." Through this question, Kenny is seeking approval from the teacher; he wants to be "right."

This phenomenon was also observed in Moje's (1997) study. For her study, Moje conducted a critical discourse analysis of one high school chemistry class to "examine the construction and negotiation of literacy practices as shaped by the discipline, the secondary school setting, and the relationships between the teacher and her students" (p. 36). At one point in this study, Moje highlights the case of Joni, a student in the class. The teacher in the class had asked another student, Paul, for a definition of *mixture.* Paul provided his definition, and the teacher then called on Joni to evaluate it. Joni was not confident in her response, "I thought a mixture could be separated" (p. 40). Subsequently, the teacher continued asking other students for a response. When the teacher asked Paul to write his definition on the board, another student told Joni that one of the words Paul used was inaccurate. Joni then immediately provided that response to the teacher, in order to "[vindicate] her earlier ability to demonstrate her knowledge by correctly identifying an imprecise word in Paul's definition" (p. 42). Joni wanted the teacher's approval of her knowledge and used the knowledge provided by another student in order to gain it.

Students also demonstrate approval-seeking behavior during the interview with me. They answer questions and look to me for some indication that the answer is right, especially when I ask them what they would change in an unedited text. They ask straight out if they were right or wrong as Ramona and Kenny do during their interviews. At times, it feels as if students are insecure about the answers they are providing because they look for any indication of "right-ness." This is particularly true of Ramona. Several

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times during the interview, she looks at me for an indication of approval for her answers to questions. Although I try to explain to her that I am not there to determine if she is right or wrong, she still seems to want to know that she is right. She lives in so much uncertainty, particularly with English, that I suspect being "right" is her way of coping.

Looking for an indication of approval is also a strategy Ramona uses with the teacher. If Ms. L shows any sign of approval, she attempts to write the answer down immediately. One particularly interesting example of this occurs during her conference with Ms. L about her word choice BCR; Ramona is struggling to describe the mood set by the author's words. She cannot figure out what answer the teacher is looking for. While Ms. L is looking at another paper to locate a possible choice, Abha tells Ramona that she said the mood is "happy." Ramona turns to the teacher, whose attention is still on the paper, and signs FEEL HAPPY. Seeing no response from the teacher, Ramona returns to her previous response FEEL BETTER-ABOUT-HERSELF, which also receives no response from the teacher. Ms. L then shows her a word, something along the lines of *excited* or *thrilled*, because Ramona signs EXCITED and begins writing on her paper. Ramona sees the word that the teacher wants her to use, and she immediately puts it down on her paper.

The final strategy for students to gain approval is used during the interviews. Students tell me things they think I want to hear. For example, in response to the question, "When you are stuck, but the teacher cannot help you because she is busy with someone else, what do you do?" Kenny and David share a list of strategies that they use, including look at the notes, ask a friend, and work on another section. However, in the classroom observations, not one of those strategies is used. When they need assistance,

they stop working and wait for the teacher to help. The boys list strategies that they probably have been told to use before, but they do not actually employ the strategies in class. Since the strategies they identify are likely teacher-approved, the boys feel they should share them with me. They both know that I was a teacher in that school, and perhaps they think they could win my approval by telling me what they should be doing.

Students seek approval in less direct ways. If the teacher makes a request, students typically comply. When the teacher makes specific changes to a writing assignment, students usually make them, no questions asked. If the changes are not made exactly as the teacher specified, I suspect the changes are overlooked by the students; students do not intentionally mis-copy or ignore the changes. Students want their papers to be approved and accepted by the teacher. Consequently, they do not need to re-write the papers, which means incorporating teacher changes even if the changes are not understood.

When I ask Joshua why he incorporates changes made by the teacher, he explains, "Because she…she made it a little more…easier to complete the BCR and…the teacher…teachers are…and English teacher are good, successful so I figured that maybe if I used the teacher's words and put it into a sentence with my own words that I would get a good grade." Using teacher changes means less work and better grades.

Deferring to Authority

The notion of using the teacher's words to get good grades is not only a demonstration of seeking approval, which is shown through the assignment of high grades, but also of deferring to authority. Joshua recognizes the teachers as the authority in the classroom, and if he wants to do well in the class he needs to do what the teacher asks. This is also true for the other students in this study, but they are not as articulate as

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Joshua is about why they use the teacher's words when they re-write their essays. When I ask them why, most of the students explain the reason for making the change, not the reason for using the teacher's feedback.

When students make changes requested by the teacher or other "authority" (which includes word processing programs), they often do so without considering the reason behind the suggestion. Kenny is the only student to say that "If the teacher changes it and I fix it then I wonder why it's wrong." However, wondering and questioning are two different things. Students generally make the changes without questioning how "right" the teacher's suggestions are or understanding the purpose behind the change. Kenny shares that if he wants to know why something was wrong, he will ask the teacher. However, there is not any attempt from Kenny or any of the other students to assert their own opinions, knowledge of the English language, or message while I observe in class.

In both Ms. G's and Ms. L's classrooms, the students do not make changes or move on in their writing until they receive teacher feedback and approval. It may be that students are trained to turn papers in to the teacher for each step of the way, in addition to the fact that they do not seem to know what might need changing in their essays. The teacher is the ultimate director of writing in the classroom. For example, Ms. L tells the students to write only the topic sentence of their word choice BCR, because she wants to approve the topic sentence before students move on to adding details. During interviews, students punctuate each step of the writing process by turning papers in to the teacher, and this is also confirmed, for Ms. L at least, through the "Persuasive Essay Due Dates" worksheet she gave the students. Each step of the process has a specific due date and

point value. In each step of writing the essay, students are expected to submit something such as a first draft, a plan, or topic sentences.

Students assume that the teacher is the authority in the classroom, and if they are told to do something, they need to do it. Although this assumption applies to general classroom functions, it is also true for writing. Appanah (2007) studied the impact of using a rubric on the writing performance of deaf adolescents. She conducted interviews with some of the students, and found that they see the teacher as the authority on editing. They remark that the teacher is knowledgeable about editing, and she is the person who can help them fix their writing, much like the students in the present study.

Students in the present study indicate during their interviews that they follow what the teacher requests because they want to earn good grades or the teacher just knows better, a sentiment Joshua expresses, "English teacher are good, successful so I figured that maybe if I used the teacher's words and put it into a sentence with my own words that I would get a good grade." The other students do not directly state anything about the teacher's authority, but their actions speak loudly: if the teacher asks for changes, students make them.

Corinne incorporates the teacher's suggestion to add the word *accused* to her essay about *Twelve Angry Men*. It is likely that she does not understand what the word means, because she spells it *aecused* in her paper. She maintains the misspelling in her final draft, although the word has morphed into *recused*. However, Corinne has a clear understanding that if the teacher writes it on her paper, she needs to include it in her writing.

This leads me to think that the social structure of the school is taken for granted by the students and teachers. In a classroom, the teacher is the authority and her authority must be obeyed (Davies, 1983; Gracey, 1975; Moje, 1997), particularly if students want good grades, which is another taken-for-granted notion. The concept of teacher-as-authority is shown in the study by Alvermann, Young, Green, and Wisenbaker (1999). They studied how 20 adolescents' perceptions and negotiations of after school talk during a book club in a public library setting were shaped by larger social contexts, such as schools. The adolescents were broken into four separate groups for the book club, assigned an adult, and they met to discuss texts. Alvermann et al. found that two of the groups were "waiting for a teacher-like authority figure to signal who was to talk, when, and for how long" (p. 255). This behavior was so internalized that although the groups were meeting in a non-school space, these groups acted and sounded much like groups in a classroom. The third group went out of their way to position the adult in a non-teacher role. They considered her a "responsible adult" (p. 245) whose role was to serve as paper-collector and riot-preventer. Although the group did not immediately assume the adult-as-authority role for their assigned adult, they did begin with an assumption that a teacher role is one of authority.

The students in the present study are unaccustomed to challenging the teacher, because of the teacher's authority. This seems to stem from a lack of confidence in their ability to understand language and write. It may also stem from the fact that, as students, they recognize that the teacher has been through much more schooling in order to teach them, and the teacher probably has more knowledge in the area of writing. Therefore, the teacher is in a position to say what is right or wrong in a piece of writing. As Moje (1997)

notes, the students act as demonstrators of knowledge, and the teacher acts as evaluator of the knowledge that students demonstrate.

David admits that he used the teacher's prompting and wording because she is the authority in the class. He feels that if she suggests it, he should do it. In response to a question about why he follows the teacher's suggestion, he says, "Sometimes they can be changed. If she changed it, I do it." This illustrates the sense of teacher being the authority who controls the grade. If the teacher suggests a change, it must be changed.

For Ramona, it seems to be less about the grade and more about her own confidence as a writer. She explains during her interview, "I suppose when you write, if you forget a spelling [word], you can ask your teacher. Then they tell you, and then you keep writing. But then the teacher, for example, makes corrections and then you copy the changes." She copies the changes being made by the teacher because she is not confident in her own English usage, and she recognizes the teacher as the authority in English.

Also, it may be beneficial to Ramona that Ms. L generally employs a strategy of providing direct feedback. Baker and Bricker (2010) examined the use of direct and indirect feedback on students' ability to make revisions. The study had 71 university students ranging in age from 18 to 38 (with a mean of 21 years old); 30 of the students were native English speakers, and the remaining 41 were English language learners. Students read two essays written by other students on a computer in sections, and at the end of each section, they were provided with a teacher comment. The comments were positive or negative (requiring correction). In addition, comments were direct (telling the students what to change), indirect (asking students to make a change), or hedging (suggesting a possible change). They found that for all students the direct feedback

statements were the ones identified the quickest and with the highest degree of accuracy. The students in the English language learners group were more accurate in making revisions when they were given a direct comment. Students were quicker at making changes from indirect comments, but their accuracy was not as high as when given direct comments. The authors conclude that the students may not be able to determine what the teacher expects, particularly when they use indirect and hedging comments in their feedback to students. Given the difficulty of the students in the present study to think English, it is no wonder that the students make changes requested by the teachers. Ms. G and Ms. L give most of their feedback in the form of direct comments.

Pilar expresses a similar sentiment to Ramona in her interview. She says, "It's hard for me to understand the different big words. So I look to the teacher to give me answers many times and I have to figure out how to use the big words." Not only does Pilar struggle with the precise language to use, but she also has difficulty in knowing what to write. She shares how the teacher pushes her to write a text that is acceptable:

> Yeah. It's hard to think about what to write…the process…the teacher says give me more and it's hard for me. So the teacher says, "Tomorrow, you'll give me a little bit more." So then later, it's finally done.

The teacher is the authority, not only in English but in process. She must be obeyed in order to be finished. In my observation of the classes, the students seem to write just enough to pacify the teacher. They want to be finished with the task, and if they do what the teacher requests, that means they are finished sooner.

Seeking Assistance

Since students know that if they comply with teacher requests, they can finish sooner, they frequently engage in *seeking assistance* from the teacher during class activities. This is particularly true when students are expected to write or revise. For

example, students in both classes seek assistance an average of two to three times per writing session (which is not the same as an entire class period). Ms. G typically responds immediately to requests; students rarely seek help when she is with another student. In Ms. L's class, students are less frequently responded to immediately; students wait between 30 seconds and 4 minutes for help. Unlike the students in Ms. G's class, the students in Ms. L's class attempt to or do actually interrupt the teacher as she is working with other students.

In both classes when students are waiting for help from the teacher, they rarely continue to work on their papers. Instead, they generally engage in off-task behaviors such as chatting with their peers or escalating attention-getting techniques. Abha frequently seeks the teacher's assistance on writing assignments. She rarely works for longer than a minute independently before seeking teacher assistance or switching to off-task behavior.

To illustrate, I discuss the day when students are pre-writing the character change essay. Ms. L provides approximately 29 minutes for the students to work independently. Abha spends 34% of that time actively writing. During the pre-writing time, Abha seeks assistance from the teacher on five separate occasions that total 17% of the independent work session. Frequently, Abha raises her hand, and if the teacher does not respond immediately, she gets up and walks over. This happens on three of the five assistance-seeking times; Abha raises her hand and then two seconds later stands up and walks over to Ms. L. On two of the three occasions, the teacher is already working with another student and Abha has to wait for her to finish. While waiting for assistance, she does not continue to work on her paper.

This is a common trait for all of the students. When I ask them what they do when they get stuck, most say that they raise their hands and wait for the teacher. I ask students what they do when the teacher cannot help them immediately. Joshua says he uses his notes or his "little paper dictionary," but he does not ask his classmates, "'cause when one of them has a C or a B, but in English I have an A. So I would like to get help from the teacher or a student with straight As." He does not view his peers as a good resource for assistance because they do not earn top grades in English. The teacher is the expert and the authority figure who controls the grade in the class; therefore, she is the only person capable of providing assistance.

Vivian is not too sure what she would do, but she says that she would "look at the notes again or dictionary or computer." After expressing this statement, she shrugs her shoulders, which indicates to me that these strategies are not particularly comfortable for her. David's strategies are to raise his hand, call out, or "skip one thing, go through another one until the teacher finishes." Kenny's strategies are to "use my notes…English notes, use verbs, like time change, like past tense to present tense…or I try my best…or help my friend. Ask a friend for help."

Although they can identify additional strategies for getting help when they are stuck, students generally use the teacher as their primary source for assistance. However, there are levels of assistance-seeking behavior exhibited by the students. Abha is the student who is the most aggressive in getting assistance from the teacher. She works for very short bursts before stopping and requesting help. Most frequently, she waves her hand to get the teacher's attention. Not once during the period in which I observe does Abha continue working while waiting for the teacher's attention. If the teacher is

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conferencing with another student, Abha watches the interchange. If the teacher does not

respond within a couple of seconds, Abha stands up and walks over to her, even if Ms. L

is with another student. In one observation, she watches 2 minutes of a 15-minute writing

conference between Ms. L and Ramona. While standing over Ms. L and Ramona

watching their conference, Abha waves her hand in front of the teacher's face in an effort

to get her attention. These observations show that Abha has not yet developed strategies

to continue working while waiting for assistance, perhaps due to her confusion about the

writing process and wrestling with confidence in her abilities as a writer.

In addition, Abha seeks attention so frequently that there is no fluidity to the

writing process for her. It is difficult to develop a sense of the process when it is

constantly being broken up. A study on the writing processes of sixth grade students with

learning disabilities showed that they spend less time actively engaged in the process than

their peers without learning disabilities, suggesting that this frequent interference could

add to the writing difficulties experienced by children with learning disabilities (García &

Fidalgo, 2008). Although Abha does not have a learning disability, there are parallels

between the behaviors she displayed in class and the behaviors observed by García and

Fidalgo. Abha spends very little time engaged with any process related to writing, and

even less than the students with learning disabilities in García and Fidalgo's study. It is

possible that the frequency of her assistance-seeking off-task behavior is a way to avoid a

task she views as extremely difficult, which is working with English.

At the other extreme of the assistance-seeking spectrum is Vivian, who seldom

seeks assistance and continues working despite her classmates' off task-behavior. Ms. G

is absent from class one day, and she leaves an activity for the students, which is to work

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on improving word choice in the character choice essays. The substitute teacher gives some basic directions about what to do to the entire class; then she gives directions directly to Vivian. Vivian is left to work independently for 28 minutes. In that entire time, she accomplishes very little work and engages in a number of behaviors unrelated to the writing task: staring at the paper, rubbing her face, getting a dictionary, cleaning her glasses, looking around the room, and going to the restroom. It seems as if Vivian does not know what is expected of her; however, she does not ask for help. Instead, she tries to appear as if she is working, and she waits for the substitute to check in on her. While Joshua and David are off-task and chatting most of the class, Vivian does not participate in those behaviors. She seems to prefer not to call attention to herself. Part of the reason she may not have asked for assistance is that she did not trust the substitute. Even though this is a substitute teacher, Vivian still does not seek assistance frequently from Ms. G. Vivian works independently, and when she completes a task or a step, she notifies the teacher.

David is in the middle range of assistance-seeking behavior. He asks for assistance from Ms. G periodically while writing his character choice essay. Two particular areas in which he requests assistance are during revision and writing the conclusion. During revision, he reads his paper aloud and waits for the teacher's response to his writing. Ms. G asks him questions to prompt his writing, such as what the forest looks like or to describe the night. David then takes that feedback and begins writing. If he is stuck, the teacher offers a specific wording, and David writes that down on his paper.

Early in the process of writing the character choice essay, David seeks Ms. G's attention while typing a draft of his essay, and while he is waiting, he looks around the room and does not engage with the task. When Ms. G appears ready to help, David gets her attention. The excerpt below shares their discussion.

> **David:** I need help with my conclusion. (*Ms. G finished with Joshua and walked over.*)
>
> **Ms. G:** What do you need help with?
>
> **David:** The conclusion.
>
> **Ms. G:** The concluding sentence. Okay, what is our topic sentence?
>
> **David:** (*reads from screen*) Lysander and Hermia's choice influenced the end of the story.
>
> **Ms. G:** Okay. Rephrase it.
>
> **David:** (*Attempts, pauses, and stares at the screen.*) The end of the story…
>
> **Ms. G:** (*prompting*) At the end of the story…
>
> **David:** (*repeats*) At the end of the story, Lysander and Hermia choice influenced.
>
> **Ms. G:** Yep. (*David types.*)

This exchange not only shows the attention-seeking behavior from David, but also how he depends on the teacher for crafting parts of his essay.

In Saddler and Graham's (2007) study of fourth grade students' knowledge about the attributes of writing and strategies for planning and writing a paper, they found that the more skilled writers were able to identify more strategies to help them write a text, with emphasis placed on the strategy of seeking teacher assistance, than the less skilled writers. In this respect, the students in the present study are like the more skilled writers

in Saddler and Graham's study because they also frequently request teacher help with the texts.

In an earlier study, Graham, Schwartz, and MacArthur (1993) also found that students use seeking assistance as a main strategy between grades four and eight, regardless of whether they have a learning disability or if they are normally achieving. The researchers interviewed 39 students with learning disabilities and 29 students who were normally achieving and found that when students encounter difficulties with planning and revising, they seek assistance from the teacher as their primary strategy for getting past the problem. However, the researchers also observe that the students with learning disabilities were much less likely than the normally achieving students to use other strategies to assist with troubleshooting. Other strategies include: information generation; reviewing, evaluating, and revising; and goal setting/planning. This reliance on the teacher for troubleshooting leads into the next subcategory in *Interacting with Instruction.*

Over-depending

Students engage in *over-depending* on teachers in almost every part of writing. They have few strategies to assist them in monitoring and regulating their work. One of the most telling events that illustrate this overdependence happens in Ms. G's classroom when students are working on their character choice essays:

Ms. G: (*after reviewing the writing process for this essay*) What's next?

Joshua: The final draft! No, I mean the final.

David: (*looks at Joshua)* Edit!

Ms. G: Editing and revising. Who's going to edit?

Vivian and David: (to Ms. G) You!

Joshua: I finished mine.

Ms. G: Your peers will look it over. Then I will.

It is interesting that the students automatically remove themselves from the editing process. In Joshua's case, he completed his first draft and emailed it to Ms. G the night before, and he considers it to be edited and revised, or in other words, done.

Peer editing, which actually does not happen during the course of writing the character change essay, as well as teacher-editing, are both planned activities and both involve processes external to the writer. Peer editing is not seen in either classroom during my classroom observations. Students do not have many opportunities to develop their writing skills by providing and receiving feedback, even though as struggling English language learners, this is an activity from which they can benefit (Lundstrom & Baker, 2009).

Self-editing is not planned, and that is the process which would most involve the students themselves. Of course, it is unrealistic to expect students to develop and use metacognitive strategies when they are given limited opportunities to engage in activities requiring such strategies. Students demonstrate their overdependence on teachers for writing in a number of ways.

First, in their writing samples, students only make changes indicated by the teacher. They never make changes to content unless specifically requested by the teacher. They do make syntactical changes on their own, but the changes are relatively few and minor. Below is an excerpt of an early draft of the essay describing how a character's understanding of responsibility changed in the play *Twelve Angry Men* that was generated

by Corinne. The teacher's additions are indicated by italics. All crossouts have been written by Ms. L.

> A Change *C*eharacter's understanding of responsibility *changed* in "Twelve Angry Men." 3 juror did changed his responsibility *At first, juror* [#]*3 did not want to be responsible because for the accused* because he blamed young adult man for killed father.

Here is the second draft of the same excerpt with the teacher's markings. Ms. L circled the misspelling of *first* on the draft.

> *The* Character's understanding of responsibility changed in "Twelve Angry Men". At frist, Juror 3[#] did not want be responsible for the aecused Young adult man for who killed *his* father.

Below is the final draft of the same excerpt incorporating the changes as Corinne understands them.

> The Character's understanding of responsibility changed in "Twelve Angry Men". At first, Juror, 3[#] did not want be responsible for the recused. Murder killed his father.

These examples show how most changes Corinne makes are requested by Ms. L. Although Corinne incorporates the teacher's requested changes, she does not copy them exactly as Ms. L writes them. Ms. L writes "juror #3 did not want to be," but Corinne copies it as "Juror 3[#] did not want be." Also the example of *accused* and *aecused* discussed in *Living in Language* can be seen here. It should also be noted that there are two changes from the second draft to the final draft that are not prompted by the teacher: the addition of the word *murder* and the inclusion of commas. I suspect that these features have been added as a result of Ms. L conferencing with Corinne.

A second way that students demonstrate their overdependence on the teacher for writing is in their reactions to being asked to identify changes they would make in an unedited piece written for our interviews. Although they are highly dependent on the

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teacher to provide assistance in writing, students have developed some strategies that manipulate the teacher into doing some of the heavy work involved in writing.

For example, the strategy most frequently used by students is to not answer the question. Students might shrug or say they do not know or even just look at the teacher blankly. The teacher will then answer the question for the student. One clear example of this strategy in use is a conference between Ms. L and Kenny about his word choice BCR.

> **Ms. L:** Yes! That! The child died. Awful. (*points to paper*) How does that make you feel to read about the death of the child? (*Kenny nods. Teacher points to paper.*) Because then…what will you put here? (*indicates paper. Kenny shrugs.*) Because (*points*) the poet used the words "calling child" because…tell me…

> **Kenny:** Because the child died and happened next. Child was dead.

When asked a question, Kenny merely shrugs. He does not even attempt a guess. Perhaps he knows that if he does not respond, then the teacher will immediately answer her own question, which is precisely what happened. Then he can repeat what the teacher says, which is that the child had died and be right.

In Ms. G's class, this is evident as well. David is struggling to figure out how to describe Lysander in his character choice essay. After a couple of attempts, Ms. G tells him the order of the words, and he writes them down.

> **Ms. G:** How would you describe Lysander?

> **David:** Lysander's an competitive and rivals with Demetrius.

> **Ms. G:** No. Describe him.

> **David:** umm…Lysander is a handsome…

> **Ms. G:** You could say, "The handsome Lysander…" (David picks up pencil and begins writing.)

With a bit more questioning, David may have been able to come up with the construction "The handsome Lysander," but Ms. G gives him the construction she wants instead. Instead of learning how to manipulate the language in different ways, David has learned to approximate what the teacher is asking for, and she will do the rest.

For their parts, the teachers do not discourage the practice of over-depending, particularly in the area of writing. As is noted in the *sense-making* section, teachers assume the cognitive burden for much of the writing process. They determine the purpose, audience, and form of the texts to be written. They determine the steps that will be followed, and they set the criteria and timeline for the texts to be completed. This is true for both Ms. G and Ms. L. Both teachers write wording or correct syntactical errors on students' papers more frequently than they suggest ideas or prompt students to consider changing specific things. When given teacher wording or correction, students almost always copy the text exactly as it was written by the teacher. As a result of this experience, most of the students share that writing and revising are easier when the teacher helps them.

Ramona explains her process for revision and what the teacher's role is for her. She says, "When I write, if I forget the spelling, I can ask the teacher, then she tells me and then I keep writing. But, then the teacher makes corrections, and I copy the changes." Ramona does not view herself as a reviser, but the teacher is the one who makes the changes. Corinne expresses a similar sentiment when I ask her if revision was easy or difficult for her. She says, "I feel comfortable. It's fine…because I understand the changes. The teacher explains them to me so I understand why I need to make the changes." Both girls take the feedback from the teacher, and then copy the changes into

their drafts, which is a phenomenon also seen in the writing samples and in the classroom observations.

Joshua takes a more active role in the revising process, but he says, "easy about revising is when a teacher gives you a little bit of advice or hint." He also is reliant on the teacher for knowing exactly what should be revised. In the classroom observations and in the writing samples, it becomes clear that Joshua does not incorporate changes unless specifically directed by the teacher.

David says he takes a more active role in the revising process. When asked if the teacher helps him make revisions, he says, "a little bit…If I have trouble, like I sometimes get in trouble with the main topic or between details, but rarely. I mostly need help with is the conclusion sentence." He tells me that the teacher does not help him much, but the classroom observations and writing samples indicate that David, like every other student in this study, only makes changes when they are requested by the teacher. David's sentiment may be his way to not appear as if he does not know, which seems to be a common trait among the students and is discussed further in *Interacting with Self as Reviser.*

This practice of students' over-depending on the teacher for revising tasks has been seen in other research as well. Lee's (2008) study examined factors that influence student reactions to teacher feedback. Fifty-eight 12 and 13 year old students from two classrooms in Hong Kong participated in the study. All of the students were native Cantonese speakers and learning English as a second language. One class had 36 students who were identified as highly proficient in English. The other class had 22 students who were considered to have low English proficiency. Lee found that the teachers' feedback

on student writing consisted primarily of error correction (75.8% and 98% of feedback), which could be influenced by the school's policy that they respond to every error made by the students. However, the policy does not preclude other more substantive feedback from being given. Lee concludes that "Teachers' feedback practices have a direct influence on student reactions and expectations. Simply put, teacher-dominated practices breed passive and dependent learners" (p. 157). Lee found that students in both groups desired more feedback in which the teacher does most of the heavy lifting, such as providing corrections for errors. However, merely correcting or indicating errors in students' writing does not translate into learning (Truscott, 2007; Truscott & Hsu, 2008). Learning is defined by Truscott and Hsu as "improvements in learners' ability to write accurately" (p. 293).

Summary of Interacting with Instruction

Interacting with Instruction is the key category that explains students' experiences with the teacher and the instruction in the English class. This category also explores ways in which students negotiate the social structures in the classroom as they interact with the teachers. There are four subcategories that describe behaviors that comprise *Interacting with Instruction: seeking approval, deferring to authority, seeking assistance,* and *overdepending. Seeking approval* encompasses the strategies students employ to gain approval from the teacher. Students engage in positioning themselves above other students to be praised for being "smarter" or "better" than others. They also seek affirmation of their responses by watching the teacher's facial expressions or asking for confirmation directly. Students are so uncertain about their abilities with English, that approval of what they do know is critical.

Deferring to authority explains why students make changes requested by a teacher. Students engage in *deferring to authority* once they know what the "right" answer is. Students and teachers accept their roles in the classroom. Students are power-less and knowledge-less; teachers are the ones holding the power and knowledge. As such, once students know the right answer, they make the changes without question.

Seeking assistance describes the attention-seeking strategies used by students. When students feel unsure of their work, they engage in *seeking assistance.* The teacher is the primary source used by the students to become unstuck. Most students request help periodically during the process, but there are some who engage in requesting help so frequently or so rarely that the process is disrupted. The reliance on teachers for support in writing and revising tasks leads students to *overdepending.* They only make changes requested by the teacher and use strategies to get the "right" answer when the teacher asks them a question they do not know how to answer. Due to their struggles with the English language, the students are placed in a position of needing the teacher to complete the complex task of revision.

Interacting with Self as Reviser

Interacting with Self as Reviser encompasses the sense of self that students experience as writers and revisers. The students must be savvy in order to negotiate the writing and revising processes in order to feel successful as writers and revisers. Through these interactions with the texts and the instruction, students are constantly revising themselves and searching for their place in the classroom. Students accomplish this by engaging in a variety of behaviors, which make up the subcategories of *Interacting with Self as Reviser*: *negotiating expectations, wrestling with confidence, keeping up appearances, performing disengagement,* and *displaying resilience*.

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Negotiating Expectations

Students are influenced by the expectations of others in their environment, especially those set and communicated by their teachers. Teachers set expectations for students through their words and actions, and students interact with and learn to negotiate these expectations in different ways. Ms. L describes her expectation that "if you take the teacher out of the picture, then the students are just there not knowing what to do…They need a lot of support." The forms of support that Ms. L provides her students also provide insight into the expectations that she holds for them: choosing the topic of the essay, pre-selecting the textual evidence to include, suggesting wording and changes to essays, and rewriting drafts for students. Each of these behaviors indicates to students that Ms. L is in control of the writing process, and they are not.

The control that Ms. L takes over the writing process also comes through in how she handles reporting student writing scores to the district office. She explains during our interview:

> How do I evaluate at the end of the quarter? I use their first drafts. I feel that's their real writing, because I feel funny that with all the feedback and revisions that it doesn't become their real writing. I only give the scores of the first draft to the [district office].

In this statement, Ms. L is sharing her expectation that after revising, students' work is no longer their own and thus, is unworthy of reporting to the district office. Ms. L's perspective is understandable since students rarely make changes that she does not request. Even if that means a paper still has some room for improvement in syntax or semantics, students do not initiate revision. However, this is concerning, because students are prevented from developing the skills and knowledge to become effective revisers.

Ms. G communicates similar expectations to and about her students. When describing how students approach revision, she explains:

> They don't catch hardly any mistakes. If they have to revise it themselves, they will say it's perfect the way it is. And we've done peer editing and revising, and the peers…it's a train wreck. Because they don't have that sense of language.

Ms. G focuses her attention on the mistakes in students' writing, and she shares her expectation that students do not have a sense of language. Students are not expected to revise their writing in any meaningful way. In class, Ms. G's students are expected to respond to this prompt: "The assembly today was about the history of music. How important is music in your life?"

> **Joshua**: (*After being asked to add more to his journal*) Okay. I wrote. I also wrote down, 'The history of music comes from the earth and its natural resource.' (*Looks up at Ms. G.*)
>
> **Ms. G**: What is a natural resource?
>
> **Joshua**: Um. The music that was from earth. The earth has the instruments you need like rocks or water or trees. Leaves.
>
> **Ms. G**: Okay, so they made instruments with natural resources.
>
> **Joshua**: Mm-hmm.
>
> **Ms. G**: Fix that. (*Joshua erases.*) They made…
>
> **Joshua**: (*repeating and writing simultaneously*) They made…
>
> **Ms. G**: Instruments…
>
> **Joshua**: Instruments…
>
> **Ms. G**: From…
>
> **Joshua**: Natural resources.
>
> **Ms. G**: Such as?

Joshua continues writing, and the final entry that is accepted by Ms. G reads:

Music is pretty important in my life. Some music is bad, and I hate country music. I also learned that the history of music that they made instruments from natural resources such as trees, rocks, water, and granite.

In her discussion with Joshua about his journal, Ms. G does a couple of things. First, she takes the gist of what Joshua says and composes a grammatically correct form of the sentence for him. Joshua is not expected to revise the sentence himself to improve the clarity. The second thing is that Ms. G focuses on a grammatical issue that does impact the meaning, but the sentence in which Ms. G and Joshua are focused does not answer the question being asked. Thus, the point of the prompt is being missed completely. Joshua tells us that music is important to him, but he offers up no solid evidence to support that statement. And Ms. G does not require him to do so.

Students generally respond to teacher expectations by complying with directives, as noted in a previous section. However, there is also a subtler, more internal response to teacher expectations. Students have internalized the expectation that they are unable to revise their writing without teacher support, much in the way Foucault's (1975) notion of "the gaze" describes how behaviors become normalized. Foucault describes how discipline and control have played out in schools, prisons, and other social institutions. He suggests that members of society are always being watched in an effort to discipline and control the masses through normalization of behaviors. Foucault writes, "The power of normalization imposes homogeneity; but it individualizes by making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialties and to render the differences useful by fitting them one to another" (p. 184). Some authority is gazing down upon inferiors, and this serves to normalize behavior of the "watched" through the internalization of the gaze. In the context of this study, the teachers are the authorities with the "right answers"

which are then imposed upon the students, who willingly accept them, because that is what they have been told is right. Judgment is passed down in the form of grades, which is a focus for the students. They understand that if they want to receive a good grade, they will do what the teacher requests. And with limited ability to think and write English, their normalization is perpetuated, and their writing abilities go underdeveloped.

Students often describe their difficulties with writing by using terms that seem influenced by the teacher. Joshua tells me during our interview that his main changes are to his topic sentence and conclusion. I ask him how he knows those are areas he needs to change, and he replies, "'Cause that's what my teacher said. And she always tells me that before high school I'm going to need to use difficult words for topic sentences and concluding sentences." Joshua has taken the teacher's feedback on his writing and internalized it to make it his own area for improvement.

When Kenny is describing the changes he would make to his unedited piece, he says, "Maybe I should have used a better topic sentence." This is a reflection of the teacher's instruction in class. Ms. L explains that she is focusing her instruction on having students understand the purpose of the essay, and that is done by setting up an appropriate topic sentence. When students are writing their word choice BCRs, Ms. L asks them to write only the topic sentence and turn it in to her before moving on with writing the specific details. Kenny has taken this instruction and internalized it, but he still is not sure how to change his topic sentence to be "better."

In her second draft of the essay about *Twelve Angry Men*, Corinne copies a sentence that Ms. L adds to the end: "At the end, Juror #3 changed his perspective about his responsibility." Corinne copies the word *perspective* as *pespective*, and Ms. L writes

the correct spelling above the word and in the margin adds a comment: "Look up the dictionary [sic]." This is an interesting, yet confusing expectation on the part of the teacher. Ms. L provides the sentence she expects Corinne to copy in to her paper, which Corinne does. Then Ms. L tells her to look up a word in that sentence. It is not clear why Ms. L would provide a sentence to Corinne that includes words Corinne does not know. Also, it is disconcerting that the teacher provides a sentence that Corinne is expected to copy without understanding what it means.

> Ms. L believes the comprehension of the new vocabulary will develop later:
>
> I just expose them to a lot of words over and over, and I separate them. This is a verb. This is an adjective…So they can internalize this knowledge for when they read…that's the only time I encourage the use of a dictionary. Not so they can understand but so they can find information. Some students will understand its meaning and others won't and we discuss it later…It requires 50 times before they internalize it. Often the words pop up afterwards, if they are common. Especially with adjectives they use the same one over and over. It's boring to use the same ones and they know it. For example the word "fright"… it's a strange word so they forget and so they say "fight."

However, for Corinne, writing a sentence that includes words she does not know means she is writing gibberish. It appears she does not remember it later when we discuss it in the interview, because she does not attempt to sign the word. The teachers in both classrooms try to expand student vocabulary and word choice in their instruction, but the expectation seems to be confusing for the students at times. Students want to incorporate new age-appropriate words ("big words" as Pilar says), but they just do not know or remember what those big words mean. The expectations and desires of the teachers play a powerful role in shaping how the students view themselves as revisers. The more teachers take on the tasks involved in revising, the less students need to engage with them, and the less sure they become of what they have written.

Wrestling with Confidence

The students in this study experience *wrestling with confidence* when they are required to engage in writing or revising. Students are not always confident in their own knowledge of English and the purpose for writing and revising, but they often attempt to portray confidence in their writing to me during our interviews. This is especially evident in the difference between student responses and behaviors when they are asked to describe changes they made to an already changed text, and when they are asked to describe changes they would make to a first draft, which has not been changed.

Students speak confidently of the changes that they already made and often offer sophisticated reasons for making those changes. However, this confidence comes only after the student has conferenced with or received feedback from the teacher. When faced with a text that has not been changed and has not received any feedback from another person, the students' confidence levels drop. Suddenly, they are unable to identify things they might change or explain what might need to be changed in a future draft. They just seem to be lost. Although they understand the nature of the changes they have already made, the students do not transfer that knowledge to new writing situations, which is a phenomenon supported in the research (Truscott, 2007; Truscott & Hsu, 2008).

This trend is evident in Abha's interview. When I ask her why she switches the order of two sentences, she explains, "This sentence (indicating first sentence) is off-topic. It was better to change the order of the sentences… Because this sentence (pointing to second one) is the topic sentence. So it needed to be moved to the top." Later I ask her why she adds the word *because* into a sentence, and Abha explains, "Because if you didn't add *because* it would mean what's the radio for? Then you add *because,* and you understand the reasons for different things…cool things." Finally, I ask her why she

added the sentence "During 2000's teenagers tend to use iPod and often do not go to dance hall" to her persuasive essay. She responds, "Teenagers don't go to dances because it's easier with their iPods to plug in and listen. They don't need to go to dances… Because people don't go to dance halls. It's not popular. IPods are easy to listen to at home or anyplace."

Abha's responses are delivered confidently, and she presents changes as things she considers and makes of her own volition. However, when I ask her what she might change in her unedited piece, her demeanor changes. Abha becomes unsure of herself as a writer. The exchange is as follows:

Me: What would you do? How would you improve it?

Abha: Make changes? (*seems unsure*)

Me: Like what?

Abha: I want my friends to go to the mall to buy clothes….

Me: So would you change the sentences or add and expand or what?

Abha: Change the sentences?

Me: Which sentence might you change?

Abha: (*looks at draft and then points to one line*) Change or maybe add?

Me: Add what?

Abha: buy earrings….clothes…pants?

Me: So maybe you add that you'll buy pants?

Abha: Pants and other things like a ring or something.

Me: So add more information or details?

Abha: More details, yes.

Me: Are those all the changes?

Abha: (*looks at her paper and then shrugs her shoulders and looks at me*) During this part of the interview, Abha's confidence falls. She does not appear to understand what I am asking her to do, nor is she able to consider why changes might need to be made.

Students not only like to portray confidence to adults, they also do this with each other. They seem to be posturing in order to not show any weakness. One particularly interesting example occurs when Ms. L is not in the classroom. She had just completed a conference with Kenny, and he was asked to fix his character change essay by adding quotes from the play. During the conference, he was showing frustration by sighing, lowering his head, and not responding to the teacher. When Ms. L was called out of the room, he got Abha's attention and engaged in this conversation:

Kenny: Your paragraph – is it hard or easy?

Abha: Easy. Write write write.

Kenny: Mine's easy, too. (*Abha returns to her essay. Kenny gets her attention again.*) Did you meet about it?

Abha: Yes, I finished. (*Both students return to their essays.*)

I suspect that Kenny asks Abha if the essay is hard or easy in order to gauge his response. If Abha responds it is difficult, he can commiserate with her, or he can say it is easy and position himself as smarter than her. If Abha responds that the essay is easy, which she does, he has no other course than to also say it is easy, even though it is clear from the preceding conference that it is not easy. Kenny then asks Abha if she conferenced with the teacher in order to discern her confidence level. Perhaps he feels that Abha's confidence level will be lower after she meets with the teacher. When Abha indicates that

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she has already met with Ms. L, Kenny cannot add anything to position Abha below himself, and he returns to his work. Kenny's confidence in his writing and writing ability seem contingent on the experiences of his peers.

Despite this outward appearance of confidence, inside the students do not feel so self-assured. The students face breakdowns in language on a daily basis, and it wears on their confidence in their ability to write. They also have not developed the necessary metacognitive skills to evaluate effectively and review their own writing, which again lessens the students' confidence. Students try to cover up the lack of confidence through a series of behaviors designed to help them in *keeping up appearances*.

Keeping up Appearances

When students engage in *keeping up appearances,* they are attempting to promote the idea that they are confident writers and hide their struggles with language. Students also do not want to be wrong. Students engage in a number of behaviors that are designed to cover up what they do not know and to position themselves above others in the classroom, to their classmates and their teachers, as capable of performing on language-related tasks. Since students do not have much power or control over their own writing; the positioning may be used to not only mask their insecurities, but also to obtain a sense of power or control.

Ms. G suspects that this desire to appear "smart" stems from a distorted view of how general education students perform. For example, on the end-of-unit assessments required by the school district, Ms. G shares a recent experience with her seventh graders:

> They wouldn't even start with a good attitude. [Joshua] had tears in his eyes. He said, 'Ms. G, every time we take one of these tests, we fail.' And so my heart was just like broken. And I had to explain to them [the test is] written on a level that's challenging for seventh graders.

As far as Ms. G can discern, the general education students also struggle with elements of the curriculum. She describes an incident in which her students were invited to a general education class for a special visit from a local group that teaches kids about Shakespeare, and how that experience demonstrates that students who are not deaf also struggle.

> We did interact with the regular [education] classes a couple of times because of [the Shakespearian group]…[The Shakespearian group] had index cards with script, and they gave it to the kids and said read it and perform it. And they just took turns doing that…So there was a lot probably lost in the translation for those experiences. I didn't think they were that helpful for our kids, but if only to let them be aware that all the [regular education] kids were not really understanding it.

The main strategy students in this study use to mask their struggles with English and confidence is by making a "perfect" copy of the essay. Other studies on students' writing have shown that children focus much of their attention on items related to appearance, such as handwriting, neatness, and spelling (Lin et al.,2007; National Writing Project, as cited in Wray, 1993; Wong, 1999). Other, lesser used, strategies include: creating smoke and mirrors by using over-flowery or vague language, and creating excuses for mistakes. These strategies also serve to protect the student's image and hide their anxiety about the task (Hui, 2009).

Making a perfect copy. To ensure a perfect copy, students' strategies change depending on the medium. If an essay is being handwritten, students tend to erase mistakes as they go along. Not once during my observations does a student cross out their writing; students always erase anything that is unwanted. The teachers cross out writing on students' papers, particularly when giving feedback. When I ask Kenny about this phenomenon, he explains, "I prefer erase. If you cross out, then you don't have enough room to write…I don't use writing and cross outs…The teacher crosses out that." Kenny

does not cross out his work, because it uses too much space on his paper, thus giving him more space to write a clean copy. Students do not submit handwritten drafts with any cross outs on them, regardless of which part of the process they are currently in. It is as Ms. G says, "They want it to look perfect."

Making the essay look perfect is something the students can control. On the other hand, the structure and the content are not areas in which the students have much control. The teachers direct most of the content and structure for every writing assignment, and as a result, the students themselves do not feel confident in their own abilities to produce an essay. Hence, students perfect what they can, and for now, that means ensuring the appearance of the essay is perfect. Students hope that turning in a perfect paper is enough to appease the teacher. Ms. G explains,

> They don't realize how far they are from [perfection]…I try to tell them, 'Just keep going. You want to get your ideas down…You can mark your ideas out. You can use the little delete sign.' But they want it just so. They don't want to look like they don't know…Maybe they have a false sense of what others are able to do. I don't know. Maybe too high of an expectation of what other people…'Well that kid must be perfect, so mine has to be.'

This perception of what others are capable of doing leads the quest for perfection.

The students are also eager to erase things indicated by the teachers as being not quite right. If a teacher approaches a student to ask about a particular construction, the student will likely begin erasing before answering the question. This is a phenomenon I witnessed in my own teaching, and I would often need to stop students and explain that it was not necessarily wrong. I just wanted to hear their rationale for a particular section. This tendency to erase at the first questioning from the teacher is an indication that students do not want to be wrong. They want their papers to be perfect, and with the teacher's help, then the content can be perfect in addition to the appearance.

If students type the essay on the computer, a perfect copy is one in which there are no red or green underlining marks. In the word processing program they use, red "squigglies" or red underlining marks mean a word is misspelled. Green indicates a potential syntactical or mechanical error. The misspellings are relatively easy to fix; it is the grammar that is more difficult for the students. Corinne explains how she uses this feature: "I take the left mouse button (while indicating the right button) and click on it. And it shows a sentence description. It tells me what the problem is or the mistake to change grammar. So I click on it to help me understand." She stops short of providing details about how she uses the description provided by the computer to help her make changes. David gives more information into this process:

> You have to fix the grammar and the spelling. What's difficult is that…that when I type bad grammar, it doesn't see that. When you have green underlining, it means grammar…I still don't like it because when I find out the bad grammar, and it means that the…green underlining doesn't says what the underline so sometimes I get um…I really don't like it.

The green underlining can be frustrating to fix because as Vivian says, "It says fractured something. So I have to figure it out and then ask for some things." If all else fails, the best way to eliminate that pesky green underlining is to do as Kenny does: "Then I erase the sentence with the squiggly. Erase it."

The students in this study are similar to the younger students and the struggling writers in Lin, Monroe, and Troia's (2007) study. They found that younger students and struggling writers focus on how their writing appears. Those students "mentioned handwriting, spelling, neatness, details, and getting the right words. Moreover, the notion of audience awareness was rarely mentioned in responses of students below fifth grade. [Struggling writers] did not appear to know about the power of writing for

communicating with others than their teachers" (p. 217). The students in the present study do not explicitly mention handwriting and neatness as important elements of writing, although when they handwrite any copy, especially a final copy, they ensure that it is written in the neatest possible handwriting.

Other strategies. Pilar is the student who makes the most use of flowery and vague language to cover up what she does not know. During her interview, she waves her hands around to appear as if she is signing in ASL, but in reality, those movements carry little or no meaning in our discussion. This made her interview one of the most difficult to conduct and transcribe. When I speak to Ms. L about Pilar's signing, she nods in understanding. It is Pilar's way of hiding her emerging sign language skills. Ms. L tells the story of attending Pilar's IEP meeting earlier this year. Her parents were excited at how well she has been signing and marveled at the beauty of her ASL, particularly Pilar's fluency and skills. Since Pilar's parents do not sign themselves, Ms. L explained that Pilar's signs are not always ASL. Pilar adds extraneous movements to make it appear as if she is signing in ASL. She is self-conscious of her ability to sign ASL and uses made-up signs to appear more knowledgeable.

The use of flowery and vague language is not limited to signing. Ramona's character change essay is an example of how she incorporated features to appear smart. She writes:

> of the scene 1, act 4, scene 3, and page 86.
> of oliver repentant because he realized he was wrongs.
> be about at the end, oliver beg to wages because orland not won't' on my money.
> of the scene oliver Give to money orland.

The use of the preposition *of* to begin most of her sentences is unsettling for a reader. It is a construction that is not used often in writing, and seems rather awkward.

Beginning a sentence with the word *of* is an advanced construction. While Ramona is probably not using such a sophisticated structure intentionally, it is possible that Ramona learned about *of* recently and is over-applying the word. However, I suspect that it is partially to show off what she knows and to appear as if she is skilled with grammar.

Another strategy used by the students to mask uncertainties is to create excuses for their mistakes. David and Joshua both blame minor typographical errors on their typing abilities. David explains one mistake: "I had to repair [the punctuation], because I was typing too quick." Joshua echoes the sentiment. He blames errors on his hands which move too fast. Corinne also blames a mistake in her essay on working too fast. She misspelled *first* as *frist* and explains, "I read and wrote it fast. Sometimes, I read too fast and write it down. But later, I re-read the sentence and realize I am wrong. I erase it and change it."

In addition to blaming speed for her errors, Corinne says, "I forgot…" for several other mistakes. The use of the word *forgot* is interesting, because it implies that whatever was forgotten was known at a previous point in time. When Corinne says, "I forgot I needed more information," the implication is that she knew she needed to add more information at some earlier point. Given my observations of her working in class, it is more likely that Corinne realizes the need to add information to her essay after it is pointed out and requested by the teacher during a conference. Otherwise, Corinne is not engaged in the writing process.

Performing Disengagement

When students are *performing disengagement,* they are giving an indication of boredom or disinterest in the writing task. The word *performance* is used to describe how the students act in class. Performance studies, a relatively new field (having emerged in the 1970s), is a study of performances or actions. "The underlying notion is that any action that is framed, presented, highlighted, and displayed is a performance" (Schechner, 2002, p. 2). Although the field has focused on the performing arts, such as theater, it is broadening to include ritualized, everyday performances. Performance theorists suggest that actions have an underlying motive that is being communicated to some other person (Goffman, 1959). The students in this study exhibit a number of behaviors that communicate a number of things to the teachers and their peers, which are examined in this category.

Performing disengagement consists of a number of behaviors that students engage in during class, particularly when asked to write or revise: watching other students, chatting with classmates, playing with objects in their vicinity, and sitting with head in hand, behaviors found by other researchers (Palasigue, 2009; Rock, 2005). Students perform these behaviors when they are overwhelmed by a task and do not know what to do, when they are waiting for assistance from the teacher, and when they do not want to work.

The best example of performing disengagement because of being overwhelmed is the conference between Ms. L and Ramona where Ms. L rewrites Ramona's BCR for her. (It is described in the *sense-making* subcategory of *Living in Language.*) During this session, Ramona does not seem to understand what is expected of her. When Ms. L begins to write, Ramona's attention drifts over to her classmates, who are chatting about

an off-task topic. Ms. L reminds her twice to pay attention and watch her write. Ramona is not sure what she should do, and she sits with her head in her hand, leaning to one side. She is completely unengaged from the writing process, and she is not sure what she should be doing.

Another example of performing disengagement occurs when Vivian is expected to add more descriptive words to her character choice essay (described in the *seeking assistance* subcategory of *Interacting with Instruction*). Vivian is disengaged from the process because she does not know what is expected of her. Her posture is slumped, she sits with her head in her hand, and she fiddles with nearby objects (cleaning her glasses and tapping her pencil). Vivian is not disengaged because she does not want to work. She is disengaged because she does not understand what she is expected to do and she does not want to ask for help.

While waiting for assistance from the teacher, students generally do not continue to do any work in either classroom. They are unengaged from the task. In Ms. G's class, Joshua either chats with David or sits at his desk and fiddles with papers or books. Vivian walks around the room, and David sits with his hands on his head, talks to Joshua, or looks around the room. In Ms. L's class, Kenny, Abha, and Corinne chat with each other. Pilar and Ramona raise their hands and wait for the teacher. If the other students are off-task, both girls will watch the conversation and participate minimally. If students are seeking teacher attention, they are not engaged with the task at hand.

To illustrate the point that students are not engaged if they are not working with the teacher, I discuss Corinne's behavior in class while writing the character change essay. Corinne turns in drafts, but she does not seem to be engaged fully with the writing

process. If the teacher is not working with her, she will begin chatting or playing with things on her desk. In fact, in my observations of her English class work through the process of writing the character change essay, Corinne rarely is focused on writing and never turns in a final draft of her essay to the teacher. Her behaviors seem to stem from a confusion of how English works and what she is expected to do. It should not be forgotten that Corinne is an eighth grade student, and it is possible that part of her behavior may be a way to do as little work as possible in class.

It is particularly interesting that Ms. L provides an activity on sentence combining "to keep the other students busy while I'm giving feedback to one. It's a warm-up that they can successfully do independently, while they are waiting for their turn to conference with me. While I am working with someone else, their time isn't wasted." However, what is observed is that when Ms. L is conferencing with one student, the others are off-task and chatting. This happens without fail when students are expected to work on the sentence combining. It is also not a skill that students appear to be using in their own work. In fact, performance theorists who have studied education have noted the disengagement of students and their behaviors of just going through the motions of schooling because the structures of schools promote a "banquet of boredom" (McLaren, 1999, p. 219).

The only time that students do not disengage from an activity while Ms. L is with someone else is when they have time to free write in their journals. Students seem to enjoy the opportunity to express themselves without fear of being told they are wrong or that something is not good enough. They remain engaged in this activity even without direct supervision from the teacher, which is not seen during any other task.

Displaying Resilience

Despite the struggles the students face as they write and revise essays, they continue to work at it and plow through. They are *displaying resilience* of people who are trying to overcome challenges. Resilience is a complex notion that is often examined in terms of life events, and to a lesser extent academic resilience has been studied (Martin & Marsh, 2009). Resilience refers to overcoming some disadvantage or challenge to development with positive or desirable outcomes (Martin & Marsh, 2009; Masten, 2001). Martin and Marsh argue that the desirable outcomes are in the form of academic success, but for the students in this study, that is not the outcome I found. In the present study, the challenges faced by the students are the daily frustrations of working in a language they cannot easily access. The positive outcome is not necessarily related to the task of writing and revising but more reflective of the fact that the children persist in the face of such a daunting task.

Even when students are not right and need to continue working, they do not give up. If they are conferencing with the teacher and cannot understand what the teacher wants or expects, the students do not give up. They are frustrated, but these students continue trying to figure out what to do until they are successful (for writing, this is measured by teacher acceptance of the product). Although the teacher may assist by providing the answers, students still feel a sense of accomplishment, which may be the positive outcome that allows them to persist on the tasks.

One example of displaying resilience is Ramona's and Abha's conference with Ms. L regarding the word choice BCR. The girls repeatedly try to understand the concept of *swinging hair*, but they just do not seem to get it. Despite all the wrong answers, neither girl gives up and continues to try and understand the concept. Portions of the

conference that do not relate to the topic have been edited. Where things have been

removed from the dialogue or action, an ellipsis signifies the omission.

Ms. L: (*Reads Abha's paper and looks up to begin conference.*) Visualize the ponytail swinging like a jump rope…Like a jump rope, see how it moves?

Abha: Jump rope.

Ms. L:(*Emphasizes movement of the rope by moving 1-handhsape in large circles. Abha imitates her sign.*) Hair is the same. (*Moves hand closer to head to show hair movement*) Yes?

Abha: Yes. (*Gives a slight nod, but does not seem too sure. She taps her hand on her shoulder. Ms. L moves on to Ramona. Abha watches the interaction instead of writing on paper.*)

Ms. L: (*Shakes head to show hair movement*) Swinging hair.

Ramona: (*Copies sign*) right.

Ms. L: Why swing?

Ramona: It's silly. Silly.

Ms. L: (*Writes on Ramona's paper...Picks up keys and swings them again to show swinging hair. She continues writing on Ramona's paper.*)…Why?

Ramona: Swing.

Ms. L: Why?

Ramona: The movement is the same (*repetitive*).

Abha: Why? Sunday.

Ms. L: Tell me more.

Ramona: It means moving the same (*repetitive*).

Abha: (*interrupts*) Why? It's silly, not boring.

Ms. L: How does the poet say it moves?

Abha: Move (*moves her body and her seat a few inches*).

Ms. L: How does the hair move?

Abha: Hair…no (*shakes head*).

Ms. L: Does the hair fly up?

Abha: No it doesn't say. There's no movement. (*Ramona repeats Abha's "no"*)

Ms. L: … What is it doing? Movement?

Abha & Ramona: No. Hair.

Ms. L: What is its movement? (*Points to paper*)

Ramona: Yes, swing. Hair.

Ms. L: The movement looks like this. (*Picks up keys and swings them.*)

Abha & Ramona: Back and forth (*imitate swinging movement*).

Ms. L: Is it fast?

Abha: No, it's not fast. More medium.

Ms. L: Swing. (*continues swinging keys*) Is it a fast or "wild" movement?

Ramona: Wild.

Ms. L: Why?

Abha: Visualize…

Ms. L: Visualize the hair. Okay? (*Ramona gives Ms. L a thumbs-up. Ms. L erases on Ramona's paper. Abha erases on her own paper.*)…

Ramona: …(*Points to paper*) That's hair swinging.

Abha: Hair swinging. It's a fast movement. (*Both girls start writing.*)

Ramona and Abha struggle to understand how the girl's hair can be swinging like a jump rope. They understand the concepts of jumping rope and of swinging hair, but they do not grasp the concepts as one entity. Despite their difficulties with the notion of hair swinging like a jump rope, both girls keep trying to understand. They are to write about

the impact of the author's words on the tone of the poem, and at the end of the conference, it is not clear that Ramona and Abha grasp the purpose of the author's word choice. However, the girls never give up trying to comprehend the words and their impact. For as long as the teacher is willing to help, the girls will continue to work at it. This seems like such a unique phenomenon, but Masten (2001) argues that resilience in children is the "magic of ordinary, normative human resources in the minds, brains, and bodies of children, in their families and relationships, and in their communities" (p. 235).

Summary of Interacting with Self as Reviser

The category *Interacting with Self as Reviser* explains the way students experience themselves as they go through the writing and revising processes. There are five subcategories that make up this category: *Negotiating expectations, Wrestling with confidence, Keeping up appearances, Performing disengagement,* and *Displaying resilience. Negotiating expectations* explains the ways students are influenced by the expectations of the teachers. The students know that they are not expected to identify and make revisions to their writing. As such, they passively wait for teacher directives and obediently comply. Students also learn that they are expected to use high-level vocabulary as determined by the teacher, even if they do not know what the words mean.

Wrestling with confidence describes how the students feel when faced with writing and revising tasks. Since teachers play an active role in the students' revision, the students experience apprehension when asked to engage in the process independently. However, when they are describing changes made as a result of conferencing with the teacher, they are much more confident in providing rationales for changes.

This leads into *keeping up appearances* and *performing disengagement* which explain how students deal with their feelings of uncertainty. In *keeping up appearances,*

students engage in strategies to mask their struggles with the English language. The primary strategy they engage is to make every draft look perfect. To do this, students always erase unwanted text; they are never observed crossing out. If they are typing, the perfect texts is one which has no red or green underlining to indicate spelling or grammar mistakes. When *performing disengagement,* the students remove their attention from the task. The disengagement is most often performed by chatting with classmates, but it also manifests as boredom.

Despite their uncertainties and struggles, students continue and persevere, which is explained by *displaying resilience.* Students do not give up, no matter how confused or frustrated they may be. They continue working until they reach a sense of success or accomplishment.

Fixing Wrongs

When students discuss revision, they speak in terms of *Fixing Wrongs*. This category is titled *Fixing Wrongs* and not *Fixing Mistakes*, because that is how the students discuss what they actually do when they are faced with making changes to their writing. When students describe revising using ASL or MCE, they sign FIX WRONG. In ASL, the sign WRONG is used for both English words *mistake* and *wrong.* This intersection of the two languages highlights the imperfection of translating meaning. In English, *mistake* and *wrong* have different connotations. It is more acceptable to make a mistake than it is to be wrong; being wrong is negative. In ASL, the sign is the same for both words, and thus the connotation is nearly indistinguishable.

Students rarely speak of changes that are made for purposes other than correcting errors, such as clarifying meaning or modifying content or tone. The conceptualization is understandable given that when students are asked to make changes to their writing in

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class, they are generally told to fix their mistakes. Written feedback from the teachers also focuses on mistakes in the students' writing, particularly syntactical elements. In addition, the teachers themselves discuss their teaching of revision, and again, the process is centered on fixing mistakes. Ms. G describes revision as "going back and refining your original draft." When pressed further, she clarifies:

> I would like them to have a clear passage so that it would make sense. Now that usually involves grammar and punctuation. So that's kind of what I'm looking [for] at first. So for them to go back and revise to make sure the grammar is as best as it can be and that it makes sense.

Within this category are three subcategories: *identifying wrongs, making changes,* and *rehearsing.* The first subcategory, *identifying wrongs,* explains how mistakes are identified and fixed. *Making changes* discusses the process of making changes that are not necessarily made in order to fix mistakes, and the last subcategory explains how students engaged in revision processes when they were still in the composing phase of generating text.

Identifying Wrongs

Identifying wrongs is the subcategory that describes changes made to fix wrongs in the text. Typically, the teachers assume responsibility for identifying errors in the texts that students write. However, this is not to say that students cannot identify things that need to be fixed. They can and do, but since they are not required to engage in the activity in meaningful ways, students depend on the teacher to "fix the wrongs." As a result, their abilities to identify mistakes that need to be fixed are limited. During the interviews, students indicate that they are not satisfied with their unedited pieces, but they seem lost at actually identifying what needs to change. Students are not generally expected to identify things to change in their essays, and they are less frequently asked to

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change content. The corrections that teachers make on students' papers almost always reflect mechanical changes that need to be made; very little feedback is given on semantics or content. Over the course of this study, teachers never ask students to explain why they choose a specific word in their writing. Instead, they focus attention on syntactical elements.

On Corinne's paragraph about the movie "Stand and Deliver," the teacher tells her to write in past tense and to fix her spelling. She also circles all of the misspelled words in Corinne's paragraph. To revise her character influence essay, Ms. G asks Vivian to read it aloud and listen for errors. The types of changes that this results in are primarily grammatical (adding suffixes to indicate past tense). There is one change from an ungrammatical construction to an English one. At this point of the conference Vivian is struggling. The teacher tells her to "Think English, [Vivian]!"

To illustrate, Corinne's paragraph about the movie "Stand and Deliver" completely changes from first to final draft. The first draft reads:

> 'Stand and Deliver' by Ramon Menendez That movie is mommsity, student can protect to math company because Math Company workers think that High School is not well, not smart, and cheated but students never cheated on exams math. Teacher thaung to his students a calculus. finnally kids got 4.0 and 0.5 for exam, Company was stocked. later years School getting high right tests 600 students got 5.0 and 4.0 tests.

The second draft reads:

> 'Stand and Deliver' by Ramon Memendez Students can protect to company because Company thunk they cheated on their tests but they never cheat on their test in their lives, Students studied on math schoolwork and Homework from teacher though students for calculus.

The first draft is completely crossed out by the teacher, with several comments.

Along the side of the paper, Ms. L writes, "Reduce Details; just state the main idea/topic

sentence." The second draft is written below the first draft, and below that are two additional comments: "verb tense – write in past tenses" and "spelling." There is most likely a conference between the teacher and Corinne, because the two drafts are drastically different. This supposition is supported by the fact that Ms. L conducts frequent conferences with students where she provides feedback and discussion on their work.

The data indicate that the students in the present study share characteristics with the novice writers in the study by Hayes et al. (1987), as well as the students with learning disabilities in García and Fidalgo's (2008) study. In the study by Hayes et al., seven expert writers and seven novice writers were asked to revise a text with planted problems. The experts identified more problems than the novice writers, 58% and 36% respectively. However, they conclude that it is not due to carelessness on the part of the novice writers; Hayes et al. conclude that the novice writers focus more on local features of writing, whereas expert writers look more globally. This is in keeping with the findings of García and Fidalgo's study.

García and Fidalgo (2008) compared the writing of 81 students with learning disabilities with 80 typical students. The finding most relevant to *identifying wrongs* concerns the emphasis that students with learning disabilities place on revision. The researchers found the following:

> LD students concentrate their efforts in the revising process on localizing and correcting the mechanical aspects of their compositions, such as spelling, changing words or phrase selections…students with LD spend very little time revising, and they do not progress to a revision of the conceptual and linguistic characteristics of the text according to its audience and purpose. (p. 79)

MacArthur, Graham, and Harris (2004) conducted an analysis of several studies examining how students with learning difficulties revise. They conclude that students with learning difficulties struggle with components of the revising process, although support with executive functions helped them to revise more effectively. Some of the difficulties faced by these students are that they,

> have a limited conception of revising as proofreading or fixing minor errors. Second, they have less knowledge than better writers about characteristics of good writing that can be used as evaluative criteria in revising…Third, they have difficulty with the executive control processes involved in managing the complexities of the revising process. Finally, their limited general writing skills make it difficult for them to make effective revisions even when they do identify a problem. (p. 130)

The students in the present study share some of these characteristics. They focus their revisions on local features that emphasize error correction. They also spend little time on the revision process, and as Hayes et al. (1987) observe, it is not necessarily due to carelessness. The students are not given many opportunities in which to practice and develop the ability to read a text and examine it at a global level. Despite this, students do make changes that impact the overall quality of the text.

Making Changes

The students engage in *making changes* when they revise their writing in a way that is not focusing on error correction. Sometimes changes are based on the students' own preferences. Kenny does this in his persuasive essay in the paragraph about music. He changes the order the different music styles are listed in because "I think it might be my favorite music bands in that order." He even adds a new change: "But I should have put that one first because go-go is my favorite anyway."

Corinne also changes the content of her persuasive essay to share her personal preferences. She changes one sentence from "I heard people buys the Nike Shoes. Nike

Shoe is best sell number 1#," to "I heard people buys the Nike Shoes and DC shoes are best sell shoe number 1#." The meaning for me changes from the second draft to the final draft. Initially, I understand this sentence to mean that Nikes are the top-selling shoes and are popular. The final draft indicates that people buy Nikes. However, it is not clear if Nikes are the best selling shoe in DC, if the store is called DC shoes, or if DC shoes are another brand of shoes that are the top seller. I ask Corinne about this, and she replies that DC is a type of shoe, and that they are the top shoes. Now, the intended meaning is clearer to me, but I am not convinced that Corinne's assertion about which brand is top is based on data. I suspect that Corinne likes the DC shoes the best and thus decided they are number one.

Students also engage in making changes at the teacher's direction. One such example is when Ms. G requests that students improve their word choice in their character choice essays. It is not that what the students write is wrong; it can just be improved by adding some description. Unfortunately, these changes do not always result in a better text. One such example is David's essay. His changes to the word choice (adding descriptive words) are limited to the first half of the essay, and as such, there is not much difference in meaning between the two drafts David produced of this essay. To illustrate, here is the first sentence of the essay from the first draft: "Lysander and Hermia's choice influenced the end of the story, A MSN Dream." After working with Ms. G and incorporating more descriptive words, David came up with this sentence for his final draft: "The handsome Lysander and the beautiful Hermia's choice influenced the end of the story, A Midsummer Night Dream."

David provided the barest amount of information possible to the reader about the play or any background on the characters. Words such as *beautiful* and *handsome* do not provide much information about the characters, their relationships with each other, the storyline, or the choices that were made. The new descriptive words, while not fixing anything that is wrong, do not add anything to the intent of the essay. They were added to appease the teacher, who is trying to encourage the use of "power words," or higher level vocabulary.

Rehearsing

Rehearsing is the process of revising while one is still engaged in composing. Students show evidence of rehearsing during classroom observations and in their writing samples. Typically, when students are engaged in composing, if something is not quite right, they erase the unwanted text and write the new text. Students were never observed crossing out their own writing. It is difficult to determine the purpose of the rehearsal, whether it was to change an idea, fix a spelling or grammar error, or just to make the handwriting neater. From the examples of rehearsal evident in the writing samples, few have residual marks that allow for readability. What can be discerned from these marks is that students modified their ideas, made spelling or word form changes, or made their handwriting a little neater.

Generally, if students changed their ideas, it was a substantial amount of text, and the changes were made at the direction of the teacher. As such, they do not generally qualify as rehearsals. However, the other changes made while writing, such as to spelling, word forms, and handwriting are rehearsals. Students engage in the process of monitoring what they write and make the changes while they are composing.

Summary of Fixing Wrongs

The final category, *Fixing Wrongs,* explains what deaf middle school students actually do when they revise their writing. Three subcategories comprise *Fixing wrongs*: *identifying wrongs, making changes,* and *rehearsing. Identifying wrongs* is the process of evaluating text and finding errors to correct. Since teachers focused efforts on fixing mistakes in student writing, it follows that students put their revising energy here, too.

Making changes is the process of evaluating text for the purpose of improving it. These are changes that do not correct errors. Students typically engage in this type of revision when they are directed by the teacher, although some independent changes are made, usually to reflect personal preference (e.g., moving a favorite item to the first position in a list).

Rehearsing is the process of revising text while still in the composing process. Since students erased when they made changes, it is impossible to determine the types of rehearsals they made. However, I suspect the changes are primarily at a word or sentence level because the time erasing was usually two seconds or less. In addition, large chunks of text were not changed unless requested by the teacher.

Chapter Summary

Revising is a complex process over which the students in this study have little control. The process is a linguistic one at its core, and the students are required to work through it in a way that is not easily accessible to them, thus producing the core category of this grounded theory: *Living in Language.* There are four key categories that relate to *Living in Language* and also describe other aspects of the revising process: *Interacting with the Text, Interacting with Instruction, Interacting with Self as Reviser,* and *Fixing Wrongs.*

The categories illuminate the knowledge and experiences of the deaf middle school students in this study as they write and revise essays. *Interacting with the Text* illustrates how the students conceptualize and experience writing and revising. The students describe processes that are ambiguous and punctuated by the teacher. The teacher is focal to the ways in which the students in this study experience writing and revising and is represented in *Interacting with Instruction.* This category describes strategies used by the students as they negotiate the social structures in the classroom and work to complete texts acceptable to the teachers. The social structures in the classroom interact with the students' concept of self as they work toward constructing a text, and this is described in *Interacting with Self as Reviser.* Students experience tension in their attempt to locate their place as the author of a text while also struggling with the language used to compose.

Finally, all of these factors result in the students actually engaging in revision, which is described in *Fixing Wrongs.* Students conceptualize the process of revision as one of fixing the mistakes, and this notion is reinforced by the teachers. Most changes made to essays are error correction, but there are examples of changes made for other purposes and rehearsal. Chapter V describes the relationship of the emergent theory to the research questions. In addition, strengths and limitations of this study, implications for practice, and directions for future research are presented.

CHAPTER V:
DISCUSSION

The goal of this study was to use a grounded theory methodology to describe how deaf middle school students experience and engage in the revising of their own texts. Eight students and their teachers from two self-contained English classes participated in this study. Five of the students were in eighth grade and used ASL or MCE to communicate. The remaining three students were in seventh grade and used Cued Speech for academic work. Socially, they used a mix of spoken English, ASL, MCE, and Cued Speech.

Three types of data were collected: classroom observations, student and teacher interviews, and written samples. All of the data were analyzed, and a grounded theory that describes the experiences of the deaf students emerged. The theory consists of one core category and four key categories, which encompass three parts of writing: *Knowing, Experiencing*, and *Doing*. The core category, which captures the essence of what revision is to the students, is *Living in Language* and is the sole category in *Knowing*. Three of the four key categories fall under the *Experiencing* heading: *Interacting with the Text, Interacting with Instruction,* and *Interacting with Self as Reviser*. The final key category, *Fixing Wrongs,* is the sole category in *Doing*.

The resulting theory indicates that the students do not significantly engage in the production of their texts, and this is partly due to the fact that they do not have much control over their own writing. Teachers direct much of the processes for the students, to some extent because of the students' language struggles. The students' English skills are a concern to both teachers, who shared their opinions of each student's ability to write and revise. In this chapter, I discuss the emergent theory and its relationship to the

research questions. That discussion is followed by a consideration of the limitations and strengths of the study and implications for practice and future research.

Relationship of Emerging Theory to Research Questions

This study explored how selected deaf middle school students express meaning through the creation and revision of texts written as a response to their English teachers' assignments. The following questions guided the study:

1. How do deaf children in middle school construct meaningful texts?

    a. How do the texts that deaf middle school students write differ in their intended and conveyed meanings?

    b. How do syntactic features evolve as deaf students revise their writing?

In this section, the relationship between the emergent theory and the research questions is discussed.

How do deaf children in middle school construct meaningful texts?

This is the broad question which shaped the overall direction of the study. It was revealed that the deaf students in this study were not given many opportunities to construct meaningful texts independently, and therefore, they are much like the novice and struggling writers in other studies. The students in this study described a writing process that was not clearly defined, and they strove to produce a text that was acceptable to the teacher, which is similar to the struggling writers in Lin et al.'s (2007) study. They focused on surface features, such as spelling and grammar, as the children with learning disabilities in Wong's (1999) study did. The students in the present study demonstrated a lack of metacognitive awareness (e.g., Lin et al., 2007), and as such, remained at a knowledge-telling level in their writing (e.g., Wong et al., 1989). The students did not

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seem to view themselves as writers, and given how little control they had over their own texts, it is no wonder.

      Lack of control over the writing process. For the students in this study, the writing process was almost exclusively teacher-controlled. The teachers shared that their need to be involved was due to the students' English language levels. The core category, *Living in Language,* acknowledges the students' struggle with learning a language that is difficult to access, yet they were still being required to master and manipulate that language. The students found it difficult to *"Think English!"* as Ms. G directed Vivian to do. Students were unable to monitor their own writing, because they had not developed metacognitive strategies for recognizing and repairing gaps between what they intended to say and what was conveyed, thus impacting the overall quality of their writing, a finding that parallels research on the writing processes of children with learning disabilities (García & Fidalgo, 2008) and second language learners (Schoonen et al., 2009). The teachers assumed much of the cognitive burden of writing and revising. They wrote on students' papers, told students how to phrase specific sentences, and directed the revision process by locating and correcting errors.

      Students would physically construct the texts and engage in activities when requested by the teachers, but the texts held little meaning for them. For example, consider Ms. L rewriting Ramona's BCR for her. Ramona had little stake in the text, since she had no real input. Yet, Ramona returned the next week with a copy of the BCR in her own handwriting and tried to turn it in. Apparently, she did not understand Ms. L when she explained that Ramona did not need to rewrite the BCR or turn it in. The purpose of the activity from Ms. L's perspective was for Ramona to watch and learn in

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order to apply the learning to her next BCR. Also, Ramona knew the BCR was an assignment she was required to complete. Therefore, it should be written by her, which, in this case, meant in her handwriting since Ms. L had done the content and the structure. If asked, Ramona would likely assert that Ms. L's version of the BCR is "better," but she would be unable to explain how it is better than her original draft. Ramona would cite grammar and spelling as concerns in her own BCR, but she would probably only identify one or two items to change or fix and completely overlook organization and content in her discussion, which is what she did during her interview. This emphasis on form over content has been found by researchers examining the writing of students who are in the process of developing their skills (Kellogg, 1996; Lin et al., 2007; McCutchen, 1996; Schoonen et al., 2009; Van Gelderen & Oostdam, 2004; Wong, 1999).

Despite the lack of opportunities to exert control over their own texts, students did engage in composition and meaning-making. They asserted their responsibilities in *sense-making,* even though they did not always know how to ensure the text made sense to an audience, a phenomenon witnessed by other researchers (Hayes et al., 1987). In fact, the concept of writing for an audience was not a part of the instruction they received, and thus it remained a nebulous idea for the students. There was a vague notion of some "other" potential reader.

The students' understanding of how to write and revise was formed by their experiences *Interacting with the Text.* In this key category, students described their perceptions of the purpose for writing and their procedures for constructing a text. Despite the fact that students were in one of only two English classes for this study, no two students outlined a similar process for writing or revising. Like the less skilled

writers in Saddler and Graham's (2007) study, the students in the present study did not describe substantive procedures for writing, and they did not typically include planning or revising unless prompted by me. The students put a substantial focus on product, as evidenced by Vivian's remark that the essay was not "real" until she began working on the final draft. Additionally, the students included the teacher in their descriptions of the writing process. It was as if writing did not exist unless the teacher was involved.

This sentiment may not be too far off the mark. I suspect that if it were not required, the students would not engage in much construction of text. Overall, some students expressed an enjoyment of writing, but they shared their opinions about what the writing should be. Writing should be short, easy to complete, and creative. Students enjoyed writing stories, but they disliked essays. They did not generally engage in writing long stories, notes to friends, or journal-writing on their own.

Playing the game. Since the writing and revising processes were highly teacher-driven, it is inevitable that students' experiences were shaped by *Interacting with Instruction.* Students constructed texts using a process that required them continually to engage in *deferring to authority* and *overdepending* on the teacher. The students did not fully understand the content or the structure of the assignment, and they frequently requested support from the teacher in order to construct the text, as did the students in other studies (Graham et al., 1993; Saddler & Graham, 2007). When students began *seeking assistance* on their essays, or *performing disengagement*, the process became choppy. Students did not engage with their writing for a prolonged period of time, a phenomenon also seen in the literature on students with learning disabilities (García &

Fidalgo, 2008). They spent much of their dedicated time in class on waiting for assistance or socializing with their peers.

This dependence on the teacher for assistance and to complete various tasks in writing took its toll on the students' conceptions of themselves as writers and revisers, which is described in the key category, *Interacting with Self as Reviser.* Students were *negotiating expectations* to ascertain what the teacher wanted from them, and these expectations translated into actions that reflect an internalization of the expectations. When teachers took on most of the cognitive work in writing, the students began *wrestling with confidence.* If the teacher does the work, students do not have opportunities to develop their skills. Thus, students do not develop the confidence in their own abilities to write, which leads them to rely on the teacher for help with writing and revising tasks. It becomes a cyclical process, and the students come to expect and desire that the teacher continue to carry the cognitive load (Lee, 2008).

After the teacher told the students what to change and explained why the changes were necessary, the students then moved forward to make the changes and were able to speak confidently about why they made certain changes. However, until the teacher provided feedback on the essays, the students struggled with working confidently. Copying changes requested by a teacher has not been shown to translate into learning (Truscott, 2007; Truscott & Hsu, 2008). Thus, the students did not have strategies in place for identifying and making changes. As a result, students expended a lot of effort in *keeping up appearances.*

Hiding uncertainty. The students wanted to disguise the parts of writing with which they were not confident. For example, the students spent a lot of energy on

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ensuring their handwriting was perfect on an essay (regardless of whether it was a first or a final draft) and relatively little time on ensuring that syntax and form were correct. Students did not have much control over the content of their writing, thus, students focused their attention on the areas they could confidently control, such as appearance (Lin et al., 2007). To illustrate this point, students never crossed out their own writing; they always erased. Cross outs were messy and indicated mistakes, whereas erasing eliminated the evidence of being wrong and appeared neater.

Part of keeping up appearances includes masking how difficult and frustrating the writing process and revision can be. Consider Kenny's exchange with Abha after his frustrating conference with Ms. L when she requested he make significant changes to his character change essay. Kenny asked Abha if the essay was easy or hard. He waited for her response before sharing his opinion. When Abha said that it was easy, Kenny then agreed. He stopped and considered a moment before asking her if she had met with the teacher about the essay yet. When she replied affirmatively, Kenny returned to work on his essay. He did not want to admit to the difficulty he was facing with his own essay.

Students may also attempt to use words that they do not really understand ("big words") in their writing as a way of writing like other students and to give off the appearance of knowing more. Several of the students used unfamiliar words in their writing, often at the direction of the teacher. However, they were unable to explain what the words meant when asked at a later time, as with Corinne's treatment of the word *ardent*.

Error correction. When the students and the teachers in this study talked of revising, it was almost always in terms of *Fixing Wrongs.* When students discussed

revisions, they typically spoke of finding mistakes in the essay and correcting them, as did the struggling or less skilled writers in other studies (Lin et al., 2007). The teachers not only talked about fixing mistakes in their interviews, they did it on students' papers and in conferences. Students specifically mentioned grammar and spelling as areas in need of monitoring and adjusting, and they remained focused at a local level in the text without considering global concerns (García & Fidalgo, 2008; Hayes et al., 1987). They also shared their reliance on external sources, such as the teacher and the computer, for help in these areas. Students did mention other aspects of writing as well, such as ensuring their essays had sufficient details and make sense. Again these activities were done with the help of, and often directed by, the teacher.

When students were asked to identify changes to their writing, they generally tackled the task as one of *identifying wrongs,* which refers to the identification and correction of all errors in the text. They looked at grammar and spelling, or they considered things their teachers had told them in the past, such as adding details, without providing a clear explanation of what or why those elements should be changed. In class, they did not make changes to their writing unless the teacher requested them and specified how the changes should be made. Instead, students sat and talked with their peers or waited until the teacher was able to come over. When they had the teacher's attention, the students would say they were finished and handed the paper to the teacher, who then reviewed the paper and offered feedback.

Even though students did not initiate substantial revision independently, they did engage in *rehearsing* when they wrote in class. If they were making a change to the writing, students tended to erase in order to make changes. They were never observed

crossing things out on their papers. The time erasing was generally very short, less than five seconds, thus indicating rehearsal at a surface level as opposed to more substantive changes. Most likely, students were correcting spelling or making their handwriting neater. Overall, the students composed texts by waiting for teacher direction, engaging in activities requested by the teacher, and trying to make sure their writing appeared neat. Many of the students' writing activities seemed to stem from struggles with English, which may be why the teachers are so involved.

How do the texts that deaf middle school students write differ in their intended and conveyed meanings?

The answer to this question is difficult to discern for the particular group of students in this study, given that the meaning to be conveyed was determined by the teacher. The students generally did not determine the topic, text, or purpose for writing the essay. In addition, the students were not always required or encouraged to assume responsibility for the sense-making task in their writing. Students shared that they were not sure how to determine if the text made sense, and they relied on the teacher for assistance. Despite these issues in examining intended meaning and conveyed meaning, some of the interview questions helped to uncover this phenomenon.

In the interview, students were asked to write a brief text on any topic of their choosing and summarize it. They were also asked to summarize a revised essay that was written for English class. Interestingly, students did not summarize their writing, with a few exceptions. Students either summarized the story they were writing about (in the case of the essay), provided such a short summary that it was impossible to discern what the text was about, or they read back what they wrote. When students were asked additional questions about their writing, it became clear that they generally write what they mean.

However, the students self-selected the topic and the structure of their texts, allowing them to remain within their comfort zones. When writing essays required for English class, there were sometimes gaps in what the students intended to say and what they actually said.

One such example is Corinne's persuasive essay, with her assertion about which shoe brand was number one: Nike or DC shoes (see the section *making changes* in the previous chapter). Initially, I understood the sentence to mean that Nikes are popular shoes that many people buy and are the top sellers. The final draft indicated that people buy Nikes, but it was not clear if Nikes are the best selling shoe in DC, if the store is called DC Shoes, or if DC shoes are another brand of shoes that are now the top seller. It seemed that the changes made from draft to draft had actually increased the possibility for confusion by the reader, as it did for me. In the interview with Corinne, I asked her about this, and she explained that DC is a type of shoe. Her sentence claimed that DC shoes are the number one shoes, but in the interview she did not explain whether she meant that they were top sellers or if they were her favorite. My suspicion is that DC shoes were her favorite shoes, and she was trying to express as such, but the sentence did not clearly convey that intent. Corinne expressed in her interview, that when she writes, it makes sense to herself, but she is unable to determine if it would make sense to someone else. I suspect in this situation, Corinne knows what she intends, but it is not what she wrote in the essay.

How do syntactic features evolve as students revise their writing?

Again, this question does not have a straightforward answer, especially since every aspect of the students' writing and revising processes was heavily teacher-directed. Hayes (1996) posits that in order to effectively revise a text, the writer must have an

ability to process language, which is an area of tension for the students in this study. In addition, Hayes et al. (1987) suggest that writers must have knowledge of the task definition, the structure of the text, a representation of the problem that needs to be remedied, and possible strategies for modifying the text in order to revise a text. The students in this study had limited access to these types of knowledge, because the teacher controlled when and how much to share with them. Despite this, there were some data that support understanding of how the deaf students treat syntactic features.

First, students usually identify syntactic features to change only if they know how to correct them. They may not be able to explain the grammatical rule, but they know how to fix what is wrong. The exception to this is spelling. Students know which words they are unsure how to spell, but they do not know how to correct the spelling. The syntactic features that students point out to fix are generally low level, such as capitalization and punctuation (also seen in García & Fidalgo, 2008; MacArthur et al., 2004).

Students generally wrote simple and compound sentences. To a lesser extent, complex sentences were used, and the dependent clause almost always served the purpose of transitioning from one idea to another. Additional elements of a sentence (such as adverbial and adjective phrases) rarely served to add description to the students' writing. For the students in Ms. L's class, the adverbial phrases (i.e., "At the beginning,") were not included in initial drafts, but they were added at Ms. L's request in later drafts. Every instance of an adverbial phrase in the texts composed by students in Ms. L's class was for transition purposes; adjective phrases were not used by Ms. L's students.

In Ms. G's class, Joshua and David included adverbial phrases for transitioning in their initial drafts, which were maintained in later drafts. Vivian added adverbial phrases for transition at the request of Ms. G. Ms. G's students were the only ones in this study to include adjective phrases (i.e., "the cunning mischievous elf"). Those phrases were added at the teacher's direction and in conjunction with an emphasis by the teacher on improving word choice in their essays. The descriptions that were added did not always lead to an improvement in understanding the text or seem to serve any purpose other than appeasing the teacher. Lin et al. (2007) make the same observation of the struggling writers in their study. The struggling writers viewed writing as a vague process through which a text is created to meet the demands of the teacher, and any changes that are made are typically to conventions.

If students are particularly insecure about their ability to identify what is wrong and fix it, then they focus their attention on semantic features. Either way, revisions tend to stay at a surface level and do not significantly change the message when students are asked to do it themselves.

Summary of Relationship of Emerging Theory to Research Questions

The deaf students in this study did not have much control over the construction of their own texts, and as such, did not view themselves as writers. They described a writing process that was not clearly defined, and they strove to produce a text that would be accepted by the teacher. The students' revisions remained focused on a local level throughout the process. They identified items for revision that they knew how to fix, but most changes were initiated and dictated by the teacher. In addition, the students demonstrated a lack of metacognitive awareness and remained at a knowledge-telling level in their writing, which became evident in some discrepancies between the intended

meaning and the written text. The students were not always able to explain how what they wrote and what they meant to write were different.

Limitations of the Study

As with all research, there are limitations to this study. The first concerns my role as researcher. It was noted in Chapter III that I taught in the school previously, and it turns out that I was the English teacher for all of the eighth grade participants in this study when they were in sixth grade. This may have impacted how they viewed me and influenced the types of responses they provided in the interviews. However, this limitation was minimized through the use of writing samples and classroom observations, which provided data that were less filtered.

The second limitation is the potential for researcher bias. Since I developed the interview protocol, collected the data, and analyzed the results, there were ample opportunities for my bias to enter the equation. This possibility was mitigated, however, through the use of an inquiry auditor and several peer debriefers who reviewed the procedures and content of the data collection and analysis.

A third limitation lies in the literature about deaf education that was used in this study. Much of this research has compared bilingual deaf children to monolingual hearing children. It is not an equivalent comparison, because the characteristics of bilingual children and those of monolingual children as they learn to be literate in English are different. However, since the majority of literature in deaf education has made these comparisons, there is little else to draw from. Where possible, I have attempted to cite research studies that use samples that are more balanced.

A fourth limitation is that this study only examined deaf middle school students in one school. The experiences of students attending residential deaf schools, attending

private schools, or who are fully mainstreamed without other deaf children have not been considered as part of this study. It is impossible to know whether including students from other types of educational settings would result in the emergence of the same themes and categories.

A fifth limitation is that the sample of students in this study does not reflect the larger population of deaf students. For example, no deaf children who have deaf parents were included in the sample. Since deaf children with deaf parents often show typical language development in both ASL and English, including students with deaf parents may have impacted the emergence of the theory.

A final limitation is that this study did not assess students' developmental levels. As such, it was not possible to determine exactly how much of their behaviors and experiences are due to the fact that they are in early adolescence. Despite the limitations presented here, the grounded theory that emerged reflects the knowledge and experiences of deaf middle school students as they engage in writing and revising texts.

Strengths of the Study

Despite the limitations inherent in this study, there are still valuable data that add to the sparse knowledge base on deaf students' revision processes. Previous studies on the revision practices of deaf students have focused on the types of changes made between drafts, whereas the present study has focused on what the students actually know, experience, and do as they engage in revision. I examined how students determine what needs to be changed and how they go about making those changes.

Given how little research has been done on deaf students' revision, this study adds important insight into what students do when faced with the task of revising their writing.

The findings suggest that teachers can work to improve instruction in order to strengthen students' revision skills and ability to work independently.

Another strength of this study lies in the data collection. Data were collected from a variety of sources: written texts, observations, and interviews with students and teachers. Data were not limited only to products created by the students, but also included observations of them engaging in the process, as well as conversations around what they do and how they approach revision tasks. Previous studies focused on the physical products and counted and categorized the revisions that deaf students made in their writing. The present study aims to move beyond the product to examine processes, thus adding depth to the knowledge of deaf students' revising. In addition, the use of multiple data sources increases the credibility of the findings as the data are compared with each other. An inquiry auditor and three peer debriefers reviewed the methods and the findings to ensure fidelity to the grounded theory methodology and an uncovering of assumptions and biases.

Implications for Instruction

The emerging theory presented here adds to the knowledge base on deaf students' writing and revising processes. It provides new insights into the dynamics of the processes as experienced by the students. The findings of this study suggest important recommendations for how teachers can promote the development of independence with writing and revising for deaf middle school students. This section provides recommendations to help foster the development of independent skills and procedural knowledge, while also continuing to be supportive of the students as they struggle with language and language learning.

Mode of Address

Perhaps the greatest implication for teachers is the need to stand back and examine how instructional practices impact the students. To do this, it might be helpful to draw on the work on modes of address done by Ellsworth (1997). In this work, Ellsworth examines curriculum by using a question from the film studies field, "Who does the film think you are" (p. 1), and applying it to pedagogical situations. She explains that mode of address "is one of those intimate relations of social and cultural power that shapes and misshapes who teachers think students are, and who students come to think themselves to be" (p. 6). By asking themselves this question, teachers can begin to analyze the impact of classroom practices: Who do I (the teacher) think the students are?

In this study, the teachers demanded that students think English, which is extraordinarily difficult for children who have never heard the language. If the students had been hearing, would a statement such as "Think English!" have been made? This type of instruction indicates that the teachers are addressing deaf students who are not thinking English. Likely, that is not how the students see themselves to be. Ellsworth explains that there is always a mismatch between who the teacher expects the students to be and who the students see themselves as being.

In addition to considering the students as non-English thinkers, the teachers thought the students were incapable of assuming most of the cognitive tasks involved in writing because they took over most of the tasks that required deep engagement in the text, such as determining the topic, form, and audience. Not only that, but teachers expected students to understand them, even when the expectations they set were not clear.

Consider the examples of Joshua with the thesaurus and Ramona trying to understand *swing.* In Joshua's case, Ms. G gave him directions about substituting a word in his essay by using a thesaurus. She showed him how to locate and swap words, but she did not explain the considerations of context in determining a suitable substitution for the word. When Joshua made the swaps in his essay, many of them did not make sense, because he did not understand the nuances of the words he was using. In this example, either Ms. G thought that Joshua was incapable of using context to determine which word was appropriate, or she thought that he would know to do that. Given that she had to explain how to use a thesaurus, I suspect her mode of address was addressed to Joshua in the former place. In Ramona's conference with Ms. L, it was unclear to me what the teacher wanted from Ramona when she was explaining the word *swing.* However, from her persistence in finding examples and spelling the word, it was clear that Ms. L thought that Ramona did not "get it." What that "it" was, remained unclear.

In both of these examples, the teacher was positioned in a place of power, as the person who knows. They transferred their knowledge to the students, who were the power-less people that needed to learn. In order for this to happen, both teachers and students must engage in the mode of address. The students must accept their roles as much as the teachers accept theirs, a concept on which both Ellsworth (1997) and Foucault (1975) agree. Foucault's notion of "the gaze" is important here, as the ways in which the teachers view the students eventually become the ways in which the students see themselves. As such, students accepted the role of the not-knowing participant and came to over-rely on the teacher for writing. The students explained that they did not feel

confident with English, and they were not sure how to make it clear for an audience. In this way, the teacher's vision of who the students are had become self-fulfilling.

However, teachers can change their instruction by reconsidering what it means to be a deaf student (Who is it they are teaching?), and in what ways students can be repositioned to become knowledge-full and in control of their own texts.

> All these findings confirm that without extensive writing practice, text features cannot be transformed from…'declarative knowledge (verbalizable data gathered from previous experience)' to become 'procedural knowledge (internalized knowledge about working within a specific domain)'…knowledge becomes proceduralized through 'engaging in the target behavior' (DeKeyser, 1998: 49), and then the procedural knowledge can be refined and automatized through repeated practice. (Rinnert & Kobayashi, 2009, p. 39)

The first recommendation for practice is for teachers to empower the students in their writing by allowing the students greater control over aspects of the assignments and the writing process. Teachers need to escape the lock-step approach to the writing process that forces children to work at each stage following the same pace (Calkins, 1986). This may mean providing additional time to allow children to engage with the text, but good writing is not a process that happens overnight. It must be nurtured and developed.

Teaching Students to Think English

Rote practice and automatization do not address the students' confusion when it comes to English. Students are trained to look for the "right answer" by their teachers. The teachers in this study spoke of students not finding the mistakes in their own writing, which indicates the teachers' focus on the right answer. This emphasis on being right seems to stem from the curriculum that teachers are required to teach. Both teachers shared in their interviews that they felt the curriculum required by the school did not allow them to engage in a lot of writing in class. In fact, they told me that what I was able to observe only happened once a quarter, at most. The teachers seemed to feel

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constrained by the curriculum, but they accepted that it was part of the job. The curriculum has likely been established in order to ensure that students perform well on the state-mandated high-stakes tests that must be administered in compliance with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). Due to the high-stakes testing and accountability in NCLB, many schools and teachers have narrowed the curriculum to focus instruction on tested items (Jerald, 2006).

Despite the pressures that NCLB places on teachers, the instructional practices that have since developed are not ideal in helping children develop their written language potential. Perhaps teachers can open a space in the classroom where the students are free to explore language and to experiment with it. Students are not always clear on what makes "good" grammar or "clear" writing. They need to engage more with the language in order to develop a sense of what it means to think English. One example of how to approach this can be found in Wolbers' (2008a) study on the use of balanced and interactive writing instruction.

In this study, Wolbers (2008a) describes how Morning Message was implemented with deaf students in two elementary classes and one middle school class. Morning Message is typically a 15 to 30-minute daily writing activity where the students and teachers collaborate in the writing of a text by choosing a lead author who suggests a topic for the day. Initially, the teacher may serve as a model for how the activity runs and actively thinks-aloud the entire process. Later, the teacher may move into a supportive role by stepping into and out of the conversation to provide guidance on elements of writing for the students, thus transferring the control of the activity to the students. As the text is constructed, students examine the phrases and sentences. They decide when things

are written following an ASL structure and not English. Then, a discussion of how to translate the construction into English occurs, and the English construction is included in the text. In this way, students have conversations about the structure of English, and they are better able to begin to apply it in their writing, as Wolbers has noted.

Another benefit of this type of instruction is that the responsibility for the writing task is transferred from the teacher to the students. The students assume control in determining the topic, form, and audience of the text.

Strategy Instruction

Similar to Lee's (2008) findings, the results of the present study indicate "that teacher-dominated feedback practices are likely to produce passive and reliant learners" (p. 158). Students can engage more actively in revising if they understand the purpose of revising. Graham's (1997) study uses the Compare-Diagnose-Operate (CDO) procedure developed by Scardamalia and Bereiter (1983) to teach 12 fifth and sixth grade students with learning disabilities how to revise. The CDO procedure breaks revision into smaller components, thus enabling students to grasp the process easily. Students composed and revised two stories, one under "normal revising conditions" and one in which the CDO procedure was applied. One of Graham's findings is that the students indicated that using the CDO procedure helped them revise. Graham also found that asking students to use the CDO procedure resulted in greater nonsurface revisions that improved text quality. One downside to the CDO procedure as observed by Graham, is that students also increased the number of word-level revisions that impacted the text negatively. The CDO procedure may be helpful for providing the students in the present study with a less abstract notion of what revision is and how to do it. Thus, they can approach the process

with more understanding and confidence. It also supports the use of metacognitive strategies, which is something the students in the present study are lacking.

Using the CDO procedure is one way of making revision more accessible for students. Cognitive strategy instruction focuses instruction on process as opposed to product. Strategy instruction teaches students how to use and apply strategies to improve their writing. Two examples of strategies that are taught for revision are: using specific criteria to evaluate the composition (e.g., Appanah, 2007) and using interactive writing instruction (e.g., Wolbers, 2008a,b). Graham (2006) describes "The purpose of such instruction is to change how writers' [sic] compose by helping them employ more sophisticated composing processes when writing" (p. 188).

Graham (2006) conducted a meta-analysis of 39 studies that examined the impact of cognitive strategy instruction. The studies included students with a range of skill levels; some studies focused on students with learning disabilities, others with average writers, and others with high achievers. To be included in the analysis, the studies needed to include a demonstration of the strategy for the students, require a minimum of three days of instruction on the strategy, and move students toward independence. Overall, Graham found that strategy instruction is an effective way to improve writing performance, but it does not have a large impact on mechanics. Despite the proven benefits of strategy instruction, Graham notes that it is not commonly used in classrooms. Given my observations, strategy instruction is not implemented in these two classrooms, and students could benefit from instruction that focused on teaching strategies that emphasize metacognition.

Developing Metacognition

The final main implication for practice is that teachers should work to build metacognitive skills in the students. Rijlaarsdam, Couzijn, and Van den Bergh (2004) explain that writing has two aspects, one of production and one of reflection. Production refers to the creation of text, and reflection involves the monitoring of one's writing and making changes accordingly. Thus, teachers need to ensure that their instruction encourages students to reflect throughout the process.

Finally, teachers need to consider the feedback they provide to students. Ferris (2003) reviewed research on feedback in second language writing and found nine issues and implications for teachers. Two of these are particularly relevant to this study: "Teachers should provide feedback on all aspects of student texts, including content, rhetorical structure, grammar, and mechanics" and "Teacher feedback should be clear and concrete to assist students with revision. At the same time, teachers need to be careful not to appropriate (take over) student texts" (p. 122).

This is particularly important when teachers conference with students. Both Ms. G and Ms. L did most of the talking when they conferenced with students, and the conferences focused on what the teachers wanted the students to do with the texts. Researchers in the field of writing instruction suggest that teachers do less talking and more listening during conferences with students (Anderson, 2005; Calkins, 1986; Graves, 1983). Graves even notes that if the writing conference is predictable, then students are able to conference with their peers and can learn from each other. Students need to be given the authority to author their own texts. As Calkins notes, "When Sangwa realizes her choices, she also realizes her power as a writer. The structure of a piece is determined not by the topic but by the author" (p. 146). In short, students need to be provided with

ample opportunities to practice and control every aspect of their texts while receiving guidance from the teacher.

Implications for Future Research

This study presents valuable data in understanding the experiences of deaf middle school students as they write and revise. However, the existing knowledge base on the topic is sparse and leaves many unanswered questions. This study has attempted to answer some of those questions, but it has also developed new questions to answer. This section provides recommendations for future research that may find answers to some of these questions.

The first suggestion is to test the emerging grounded theory that is presented in this study further by broadening the scope of the participants. The participants in this study were limited to one school and were all in self-contained English classes. Future research can examine the processes and experiences of students in mainstream classes, who follow an oral philosophy for communication, and who attend schools in other types of settings (e.g., urban, rural, West Coast). It may also make a difference if the students are attending a program with several other deaf students in a school or if they are the only deaf person in the building.

A second recommendation for future research is to study the teachers' experiences and perspectives on teaching revision to deaf students. The present study included teacher perspectives, but the focus of the study was on the students and their knowledge, experiences, and actions. It would be beneficial to understand why teachers teach the way they do and what factors impact their decisions. Both teachers in this study described the curriculum they were required to teach as an important factor in their instructional decisions. This seems to be an avenue needing further exploration.

The present study used a grounded theory methodology to examine the processes used by deaf middle school students as they write and revise texts. Future research can continue to examine these processes by using other types of methodologies to explore other aspects that may not have come to light in the present study. For example, ethnography could explore more of the social structures and provide greater insight into the actions of both teachers and students. Phenomenology could uncover the lived experience of children who struggle with language as they engage in language-based tasks.

Conclusion

This study explored the knowledge, experiences, and actions of deaf middle school students as they composed texts, with particular attention paid to the process of revision. The emergence of each element in the grounded theory was simultaneously surprising and not. The struggles of the students as they are *Living in Language* are all too familiar to anyone in deaf education. Despite these struggles, students are still expected to perform in English and demonstrate their knowledge through it.

Results indicate that students have little control over the writing process, a position likely resulting from their inability to think English. As such, they "play the game" being run by the teachers by doing what teachers ask, even though they may not understand the purpose of the task. Students attempt to hide their uncertainties with the task by ensuring a physical perfection in the text and fixing as many mistakes as possible (at a syntactical level). If students were given more control over their own work, they might be able to develop the ability to consider their texts on a more global level.

The findings and implications of this study provide valuable insights for educators. By exploring their own practices through the lens of the grounded theory

presented here, teachers can modify their approach in teaching writing and revising. Of particular interest, is that teachers need to evaluate who they think students are and reconsider how students are situated in the classroom context. Teachers can empower students to own their texts and begin thinking English through the use of strategy instruction that promotes metacognition. Perhaps this will lead to improved educational outcomes for deaf students, particularly if the skills to work independently are built and encouraged. In order to achieve this outcome, the way in which deaf students are instructed needs to be revisited and revised.

Appendix A:
Approval Letter from School District

February 20, 2009

<u>MEMORANDUM</u>

To: ███████████████████████████████████

From: ███████████████████████████████████

Subject: Approval of Request to Conduct Research

The attached request to conduct research is approved. Mrs. Christina Yukinis, graduate student, requests permission to conduct a research study titled *Revision Processes by Deaf Middle School Students* that examines the writing processes used by students who are deaf and hard of hearing to better understand how deafness impacts students' writing skills. The students are enrolled in the ███████████████ School deaf and hard of hearing program. The research is part of the requirements for a doctoral degree in the Department of Education Policy Studies, University of Maryland.

Data collection activities, scheduled between February and June 2009, include classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and copies of students' writing samples. Participation in the study is voluntary. Parents of students and teachers will receive information that explains the study, the confidentiality of the data collection, and a consent form. Only students whose parents sign and return a consent form agreeing that their children may participate will be included in the study. Teachers also will be asked to return a signed consent form indicating their agreement to participate. ███████████████ supervisor, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program, supports the study.

All data will be reported in summary format. Names of schools, participants, and the school district will not be used in the summary of results. Mrs. Yukinis agrees to provide the ███████████████████████████████ a summary of the results.

If you have questions regarding this request, please contact ████████████████████████████
██

████████████

Attachment

Copy to:
██
██
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<u>TEACHER CONSENT FORM</u>

Project Title	Revision Processes Used by Deaf Middle School Students
Why is this research being done?	*This is a research project being conducted by Christina Yuknis, advised by Francine Hultgren, at the University of Maryland, College Park. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you teach English to at least one student who receives services in the deaf and hard-of-hearing program. The purpose of this research project is to understand the process used by deaf middle school children to revise texts.*
What will I be asked to do?	*The procedures involve collecting data regarding the processes used by deaf children to revise their writing over the next three months. You will be asked to provide copies of all drafts of the student-participants' written work, allow the researcher to observe and videotape your English class, and to participate in one 60 minute interview at the school.* *This research project involves making videotapes of you during the interview. The videos will help the researcher to understand how deaf children approach revision and their attitudes toward revising. The interview will be semi-structured, some questions are created beforehand, and others are asked as topics come up in the discussion. A list of questions to be asked is included with this form. Throughout the data collection, the researcher may ask additional questions as part of a continuing dialogue to fully understand the processes used by students. The researcher will observe and videotape your English class when your students are working on revising their writing for a minimum of three class periods.*

Project Title	Revision Processes Used by Deaf Middle School Students
What about **confidentiality?**	*We will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. To help protect your confidentiality, (1) your name will be deleted from all copies of data used for analysis; (2) a pseudonym will be used to identify you; (3) all data in hard copy form will be stored using a locked storage area to which only the researcher has the key; and (4) all electronic data will be stored using a password encrypted file to which only the researcher has the password. Collected data will be kept for 10 years then destroyed. Hard copies of data will be shredded; electronic copies will be destroyed so as to be irretrievable.* *____ I agree to participate in the videotaped interview and observation for this study.* *____ I do not agree to participate in the videotaped interview and observation for this study.* *If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.* *In accordance with legal requirements and/or professional standards, we will disclose to the appropriate individuals and/or authorities information that comes to our attention concerning child abuse or neglect or potential harm to you or others.*
What are the risks **of this research?**	*There are no known risks associated with participating in this research project.*

Project Title	Revision Processes Used by Deaf Middle School Students
What are the benefits of this research?	*This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help the investigator learn more about how deaf children in middle school revise their writing. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of how deaf children approach writing tasks. Teachers may use this understanding to develop new instructional strategies that will assist them in teaching deaf children to write.*
Do I have to be in this research? May I stop participating at any time?	*Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.*
What if I have questions?	*This research is being conducted by Christina Yuknis under the advisement of Francine Hultgren at the University of Maryland, College Park. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Christina Yuknis at: 202-651-5137 or Christina.Yuknis@Gallaudet.edu.* *If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:* **Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742; (e-mail) irb@deans.umd.edu; (telephone) 301-405-0678 or Chairperson of the Gallaudet University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB) at 202-651-5400 (v/tty) or irb@gallaudet.edu** *This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB and Gallaudet University IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.*

Project Title	Revision Processes Used by Deaf Middle School Students	
Statement of Age of Subject and Consent	*Your signature indicates that:* *you are at least 18 years of age,* *the research has been explained to you;* *your questions have been fully answered; and* *you freely and voluntarily choose to participate in this research project.*	
Signature and Date	**NAME OF SUBJECT**	
	SIGNATURE OF SUBJECT	
	DATE	

Appendix C:
Recruitment Script

(This will be interpreted into American Sign Language by the researcher when presenting in class to students.)

Hello. My name is Christina Yuknis, and I am a doctoral student at the University of Maryland. I am required to complete a research paper (called a dissertation) before I graduate. Since you are in the DHOH (deaf and hard-of-hearing) program, I would like for you to participate in my research project. I am here to explain what the study involves and answer any questions you may have. After our conversation, I will send home permission slips for your parents to sign. Your parents can call me if they have any questions.

The purpose of the research is to discover the processes used by DHOH students as you revise your writing. This research will help your teachers improve how they teach writing. I will not be teaching any lessons or asking you to do any extra work. I will collect three types of data: writing samples, classroom observations, and videotaped interviews. Writing samples include all drafts of any writing assignments you complete in your English class. I will observe and videotape your English class to see how you revise your writing. The videotaped interview will be a half hour long, and you will help answer some questions about how you revise work and what it means to you. The interview might be done during lunch, before school, after school, or even at your house, if you prefer. We will work together with your parents and your teacher to decide the best place and time for the interview.

I will do my best to keep your personal information confidential. Your name will be removed from all copies of data used for analysis, and you will choose a pseudonym for me to use when I write about you.

You may choose to not participate in this study. If that is the case, you will not be penalized; your grades will not be affected. If you decide to participate in this study, you may stop participating at any time – again with no penalty.

What questions can I answer for you?

Appendix D:
Children's Assent Form

I am doing a study to try to learn about how you revise your writing. I am asking you to

help because I do not know very much about how students who are deaf or hard-of-

hearing revise their writing. If you agree to be in this study, I will interview you, collect

samples of your writing, and observe you in class. You will be videotaped during the

observation and interview.

You can ask questions at any time that you might have about this study. Also, if you

decide at any time not to finish, you may stop whenever you want. When the study is

finished, I will host a party during lunch to thank you for your help.

Signing this paper means that you have read this or had it read to you and that you want

to be in the study. If you do not want to be in the study, do not sign the paper. Your

grades will not be affected if you decide to participate or decide not to participate in this

research. Remember, being in the study is up to you, and no one will be upset if you do

not sign this paper or even if you change your mind later.

Signature of Participant _____ Date _____

Signature of Investigator _____ Date _____

Appendix E:
Letter of Invitation

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Hello. My name is Christina Yuknis, and I am a doctoral student at the University of Maryland. As part of my dissertation research, I am researching the ways deaf and hard-of-hearing (DHOH) middle school students revise their writing. Since your child is in the DHOH program at ████████████████ School, I would like for him or her to participate in this research project. This letter explains what the study involves; if you have no questions and will permit your child to participate in the study, please complete the consent form and return it in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided. If you have any questions, please call me at 301-776-4962 or email Christina.Yuknis@Gallaudet.edu.

The purpose of the research is to discover the processes used by DHOH students as they revise their writing. Although the study is not designed to provide an immediate or direct benefit to your child, a goal of this study is that the results will help teachers of deaf and hard-of-hearing students improve how they teach writing. I will work with your child's English teacher to impact the classroom environment as little as possible. I will collect three types of data: writing samples, videotaped classroom observations, and videotaped interviews. Writing samples include all drafts of any writing assignments your child completes in his or her English class. I will observe and videotape your child's English class to see how students approach revision. Your child will be asked to participate in at least one videotaped interview that will be approximately one half hour long, and will be asked questions about how he or she revises work and what it means to revise. The interview may be done during lunch, before school, after school, or at your home, if you prefer. I will work together with you, your child, and your child's English teacher to decide the best place and time for the interview.

I will do my best to keep your child's personal information confidential. Your child's name will be removed from all copies of data used for analysis, and your child will choose a pseudonym for use during analysis and any subsequent write-up.

You may choose to not allow your child to participate in this study. If that is the case, your child will not be penalized; his or her grades will not be affected. If you decide to allow your child to participate in this study, you may stop him or her from participating at any time – again with no penalty.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Christina Yuknis
Student, University of Maryland

PARENT PERMISSION FORM

Project Title	Revision Processes Used by Deaf Middle School Students
Why is this research being done?	*This is a research project being conducted by Christina Yuknis and advised by Francine Hultgren, at the University of Maryland, College Park. We are inviting your child to participate in this research project because he or she is a student in the deaf and hard-of-hearing program and receives instruction in English. The purpose of this research project is to understand the processes used by deaf middle school children to revise their writing.*
What will my child be asked to do?	*The procedures involve collecting data from and about your child over the next three months. As a parent or guardian, you will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire providing some basic demographic information.* *All drafts of your child's writing completed in his or her English class will be collected for analysis.* *This research project involves making videotapes of your child. The videos will help the researcher to understand how deaf children approach revision and their attitudes toward revising. Your child will complete at least one half-hour (30 minute) videotaped interview at the school during a time that is agreed upon by the parent/guardian, the classroom teacher, and the researcher. The interview will be semi-structured, some questions are created beforehand, and others are asked as topics come up in the discussion. A list of questions to be asked is included with this form.* *The researcher will also observe and videotape your child in his or her English class for a minimum of three class periods.*

Project Title	Revision Processes Used by Deaf Middle School Students
What about confidentiality?	*We will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. To help protect your child's confidentiality, (1) your child's name will be deleted from all copies of data used for analysis; (2) a pseudonym will be used to identify your child; (3) all data in hard copy form will be stored using a locked storage area to which only the researcher has the key; and (4) all electronic data will be stored using a password encrypted file to which only the researcher has the password. Collected data will be kept for 10 years then destroyed. Hard copies of data will be shredded; electronic copies will be destroyed so as to be irretrievable.* *____ I agree to allow my child to participate in the videotaped interview and classroom observation for this study.* *____ I do not agree to allow my child to participate in the videotaped interview and classroom observation for this study.* *If we write a report or article about this research project, your child's identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your child's information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if your child or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.* *In accordance with legal requirements and/or professional standards, we will disclose to the appropriate individuals and/or authorities information that comes to our attention concerning child abuse or neglect or potential harm to your child or others.*
What are the risks of this research?	*There are no known risks associated with participating in this research project.*

Project Title	Revision Processes Used by Deaf Middle School Students
What are the benefits of this research?	*This research is not designed to help you or your child personally, but the results may help the investigator learn more about how deaf children in middle school revise their writing. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of how deaf children approach writing tasks. Teachers may use this understanding to develop new instructional strategies that will assist them in teaching deaf children to write.*
Do I have to be in this research? May I stop participating at any time?	*Your child's participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose for your child not to take part at all. If you decide to allow your child to participate in this research, you may stop him or her from participating at any time. If you decide not to allow your child to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you or your child will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify. Your child's grades will not be affected by his or her participation or non participation in this study.*
What if I have questions?	*This research is being conducted by Christina Yuknis under the advisement of Francine Hultgren at the University of Maryland, College Park. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Christina Yuknis at: 202-651-5137 or Christina.Yuknis@Gallaudet.edu.* *If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:* **Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742; (e-mail) irb@deans.umd.edu; (telephone) 301-405-0678** or **Chairperson of the Gallaudet University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB) at 202-651-5400 (v/tty) or irb@gallaudet.edu** *This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB and Gallaudet University IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.*

Project Title	Revision Processes Used by Deaf Middle School Students	
Statement of Age of **Subject and** **Consent**	*Your signature indicates that:* *you are at least 18 years of age and are legally responsible for the child whom you are authorizing to participate,* *the research has been explained to you;* *your questions have been fully answered; and* *you freely and voluntarily choose to allow your child to participate in this research project.*	
Signature and Date	**NAME OF SUBJECT**	
	SIGNATURE OF SUBJECT'S PARENT/GUARDIAN	
	DATE	

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Interview Questions

Prior to the interview, your child will be asked to free write a short essay on any topic of his or her choosing. The essay will be used during the interview to discuss revision. In addition, the researcher will bring a writing piece that your child has previously written and revised to ask them about the process he or she used to make changes to it.

The following questions will be asked during the interviews with your child. Other questions may be asked as topics arise during the discussion.

1. What do you do when you revise your writing?

2. Explain to me how you revised this essay. (Show the previously revised essay.)

3. How would you revise this essay? (Show the free write essay.)

    a. If I suggested you revise this to show your "best work" what would you change?

4. How do you feel about revising your work?

5. What is easy about revising your writing?

6. What is difficult about revising your writing?

Appendix G:
Interview Protocol Questions

Prior to the interview, you will be asked to free write a short essay on any topic of your choosing. The essay will be used during the interview to discuss revision. In addition, I will select a writing piece that you have previously written and revised and ask about the process you used to make changes to it.

The following questions will be asked during the interviews. Other questions may be asked as topics arise during the discussion.

1. What does "revision" mean to you?

2. What do you do when you revise your writing?

3. Explain to me how you revised this essay. (Show the previously revised essay.)

4. How would you revise this essay? (Show the free write essay.)

    a. If I suggested you revise this to show your "best work" what would you change?

5. How do you feel about revising your work?

6. What is easy about revising your writing?

7. What is difficult about revising your writing?

Appendix H:
Inquiry Auditor Letter

UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND

CAMPUS RECREATION SERVICES

1115 Eppley Recreation Center
College Park, Maryland 20742
301.226.4400 TEL 301.226.4455 FAX
301.226.4431 TTY

February 16, 2010

Christina Yuknis
c/o Francine Hultgren
3112A Benjamin Building
University of Maryland
College Park, MD 20742

Dear Chris:

After reviewing the grounded theory model, explanation derived from the results of your study, and our conversations regarding the process you followed, I can attest that the core category, key categories, and the relationships among them are grounded in the experiences of your participants as shared through their narratives and from your classroom observations.

Your theory represents a phenomenon previously overlooked and will add to the literature in writing instruction for children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Your ability to sift through the complexity of the data and make sense of it is a great achievement, especially in light of the approval seeking nature that is an aspect of those who live this phenomenon. Your contribution to the literature in your profession is important: it sheds light on an understudied phenomenon and asks educators to increase their empathy and demands expansion of their pedagogical repertoires.

Sincerely,

Wallace Eddy

Wallace Eddy, Ph.D.
Campus Recreation Services
University of Maryland
1115 Eppley Recreation Center
College Park, MD 20742

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