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Google Classroom for third grade writing

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GOOGLE CLASSROOM FOR THIRD GRADE WRITING

by

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Dedications

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my fiancé Dan who supported me through all the intense times and stood by me through it all. I would also like to dedicate this thesis to my parents who always pushed me to be my absolute best and reminded me about "school books and studies", and to the numerous friends who endured this long process with me, always offering support and love.

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Abstract

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GOOGLE CLASSROOM FOR THIRD GRADE WRITING
2015-2016
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Master of Arts in Reading Education

The aim of this thesis is to investigate and evaluate the effects of using the

technology of Google Classroom in writing personal narratives in a third grade classroom.

Specific aims of the study are to analyze how the technology will affect students'

motivation, engagement, and overall writing skills. Previous research indicates that

integration of technology allows for more collaboration among students as well as an

increase in motivation in the classroom (MacArthur, 2009). This study advances our

understanding of technology to see how the application of Google Classroom will benefit

students in the capacity of motivation and writing skills due to the technology and

collaboration components. Using data from teacher research journals, observational notes,

students work samples, and a student questionnaire, the findings from the research illustrates

how Google Classroom impacts students positively by allowing them to work together to

edit narrative pieces of work, and motivates them to write more often. Students in this study

were more motivated during writing lessons and developed a higher set of writing skills**.**

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Chapter I

Introduction

"But I don't feel like it." This is a quote I heard too often in my third grade classroom, and one that I heard often during our literacy block of time. When I would ask students to take out a book to read independently or to begin our writing prompt for the day, I would hear groans from the room, along with the sight of eye rolls and heads laying on the desks, all from nine and ten year old children. These are students who become overjoyed when they can earn a sticker that smells like strawberries, yet when I mention we have to do a simple task such as writing a story, they turn into slugs: sliding into their seats, almost hiding under their desks as if they lost all movement in their bodies. What was the issue here with my students and writing? Many of the young children in my classroom who were so often full of light looked so dull when it came time to work on a writing assignment, regardless of the pomp and circumstance that I would try to use to spice up the lesson.

Not only were students lacking in motivation to complete the task, but they also lacked many important skills. Walking into my third trade classroom, I would meet students who were not able to capitalize letters where appropriate, use punctuation marks where needed, or organize a sentence in the correct sequence. How could I ask these students to craft an entire personal narrative, including vivid details and logical, sequential paragraphs, when they did not even know the basics? Teaching writing lessons was difficult when my students were so apathetic and put in very little effort, and yet they needed so much guidance in this area of literacy. I knew that I needed to bring these lessons into the student's world and relate to them on their level. I had to bring writing into

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their focus and think about what their lifestyles looked like, in order to know what writing would like for them.

During indoor recess in early September, before the study began, I looked around to see almost all students working on some sort of electronic device. Students were gathered around handheld games like PS Vitas, or playing music on their iPods, and some were even looking at pictures on their iPhones. It hit me that these students were in a generation where technology was their own language. They drank in technology like water, and if I wanted to bring writing onto their level, I needed to bring technology into writing. For these reasons, I decided to focus my research on the area of writing and technology in the Third Grade classroom. Specifically, I studied what happened when I incorporated the technology of Google Classroom into the writing curriculum to see if it impacts students' motivation and writing skills.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research study is to analyze the effects of using the technology of Google Classroom in writing personal narratives in a Third Grade classroom. Google Classroom is an application that is able to organize assignments, documents, and projects for all students and is attached to the Google Drive application, making it easy for students to also create and collaborate on their own documents and projects. Specific aims of the study are to analyze how the technology will affect students' motivation, engagement, and overall writing skills. Looking deeper into the use of digital writing and how students react to this in their classroom will allow teachers to understand the value of technology and how to appropriately utilize it their own lessons.

With the new Common Core State Standards and the higher expectations on young students today, teachers are looking for more tools to utilize in the classroom. Teachers are looking for ways to engage students and support them in understanding the complexities of communicating in the twenty-first century world (DeVoss, Eidman-Aadahl & Hicks, 2010). Writing is evolving and becoming more than just pencil to paper; writing refers to a complex, metacognitive skill that requires the student to express thoughts and make thinking visible (Torrance & Gailbraith, 2006). This has pushed educators to search for new resources and strategies that will meet these changing English Language Arts standards.

One resource that is helpful to teachers and students is the use of technology. The presence of computers has rapidly increased in classrooms. From only one computer for every 125 students in 1983 to a student to computer ratio of 1:1, the increase shows that technology is becoming steadily more important in classrooms (Goldberg, Russell, Cook, 2003). According to Lankshear and Knobel (2011), teachers should be working towards enhancing traditional literacies through the use of technology, going beyond typographic construction, such as paper and pencil, and working with digital resources. Also, the National Assessment of Education Progress writing assessment in 2011 required all 8th to 10th grade students to write using word processors, and they will continue to raise their expectations (MacArthur, 2009). Educators should be preparing their students for these expectations. Students today are increasingly involved with technology, and their classroom life should mimic that in order to keep them engaged. To relate to the young students of the 21st century, teachers will need to take the digital lifestyles of their students and integrate those technologies into the lessons.

The application Google Classroom is one way to integrate these digital expectations in the classroom. The use of the word processing application on computers and other tools available on Google Classroom will be useful to students who are developing their writing skills, especially those struggling writers who are still developing beginning skills such as punctuation, spelling, and grammar. Google Classroom encourages better editing since is it easier and faster because there is no need for recopying. This will lead to an increase in engagement and an increase in overall revision for younger students (MacArthur, 2009).

The use of Google Classroom also allows students to work collaboratively with each other and reach a more global audience. Many teachers note that the use of the collaborative practice in writing allows students to reach a wider audience, which leads to higher motivation and engagement rates in students (MacArthur, 2009). Students that are allowed to share their ideas and opinions feel validated and therefore more passionate about their work. They can put more meaning behind their writing, and an increase in motivation in students may lead to an increase in writing skills. Currently, there is very little research done on using Google Classroom in the elementary classrooms and how this will impact student learning. I want to learn more about how this technology will affect student motivation as well as their overall writing skills.

Statement of Research Problem and Question

The purpose of this research study is to understand and analyze how Google Classroom affects students and how it may impact digital writing. The questions I will be investigating in this study are: What happens when Google Classroom is integrated into 3rd grade narrative writing lessons? Can the collaborative piece of Google Classroom

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promote student learning better than independent instruction? How will integrating technology in writing affect students and their overall motivation for writing personal narratives?

Story of the Question

Over my career as a teacher, I found that students lacked motivation in the area of writing. My district saw a steady decline in the area of literacy on state tests and also received feedback from teachers about students lacking skills in writing. Administrators tried different curriculums; some programs urged teachers to have more structure and gave teachers word for word daily lessons to go by, while others allowed for extreme freedom and flexibility. Teachers continued to see students struggle and I continued to be in meetings where the question was raised, "What do we do about writing?"

In looking in my own classroom and seeing many students who lacked passion in the area of writing, I knew that something needed to be done. What had to happen in order for these young students to love literacy and want to be aspiring authors? I wanted to learn more about writing in elementary classrooms and ways to engage students so that I could not only reach my own students, but could also help other educators in working with theirs. I wanted to find strategies and different solutions to the problem of students who lacked the necessary skills in writing as well as lacked motivation in this area. I wanted to know more about what could be done to help these kids who seemed to need additional help, but also didn't seem as though they wanted that help.

I began researching and immediately learned that this problem in my district was a much larger issue. When one begins a search for "motivation in writing", the articles, magazines, books, blogs, and resources that come through are overwhelming. I read

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through forums of teachers who were dealing with students who would not write, teachers sharing blog posts of their methods on how to motivate young students, as well as articles that shared 'research' which promised to help all students succeed in writing. The problem was, which method worked, who was right, and how would I have the time to try all of this in my own classroom? With such a large assortment of strategies on how to overcome writing issues in the classroom, I knew that I had to focus on the one that I felt would be most beneficial for my young students.

I decided to focus in on the area of technology and found that there was a lot to be said about students and how they interact with digital learning. Students in the 21st century speak a language different than before, and teachers will need to learn that language. Students are so engrossed in the technology that is available to them, and teachers will need to integrate that technology into daily lessons so students will stay engaged and motivation to learn. With so many electronic devices at our fingertips, students today have never known anything different. They communicate with each other via social media, through emojis, and can talk to people through Skype from around the world. If we want students to communicate their own thoughts and opinions through their writing, we as teachers need to bring their 21st century communication methods into our classrooms. This is why I chose to look at technology and how it may impact students and their writing.

Organization of the paper

Chapter two provides a review of the literature surrounding the use technology integration with writing in the classroom. Chapter three describes the design and context of the study, including my plan for implementing the technology of Google Classroom, as well as vital facts about the class in which the study will be conducted. Chapter four

reviews and analyzes the data and research and discusses the findings of the

study.   Chapter five presents the conclusions of this study and implications for teaching

and learning as well as suggestions for further research regarding the use of digital writing

and technology integration in elementary classrooms.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Digital writing is not simply a matter of learning about and integrating new digital tools into an unchanged repertoire of writing processes, practices, skills, and habits of mind. Digital writing is about the dramatic changes in the ecology of writing and communication and, indeed, what is means to write- to create and compose and share. (DeVoss, Eidman-Aadahl & Hicks, 2010, p.4)

Due to the change in technology, the economy, and the media, new and changing social practices came about through the use of digital-electronic technologies, which yielded new "ways of producing, distributing, exchanging, and receiving texts by *electronic* means" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011, p. 28). This chapter will discuss literature that informs this study of writing and technology. The research question was the following: What happens when Google Classroom is integrated into third grade narrative writing lessons? In order to answer this question, it was necessary to examine a variety of literature related to writing in classrooms as well as technology in education today. The first section of this chapter discusses the ideas relating to the terminology behind technology and writing and analyzing what they mean in today's world. It was important to understand exactly what was meant by these two terms in order to understand where the study would be heading. The second section looks at how technology may impact writing instruction for students who are struggling in the area. If there are students who may struggle due to lack of motivation or lack of skill in the area of writing, how would technology aid them? The third section examines why digital writing skills matter for today and the future of our

students. With technology changing so quickly, students will need to be at the forefront of the technical world and understand how to move and change with it. Educators will need to understand how technology will help students with their writing not just for the current grade level, but also for their futures. The chapter ends with a summary of the literature and how this study may help in finding the ways technology and Google Classroom can aid elementary students with their writing in the classroom.

Google Classroom and Technology

When looking at Google Classroom, I decided to look at the broader term of technology as a whole. What does technology mean in the classroom? What does it mean to be technologically literate as an elementary school student? According to Lankshear and Knobel (2011), the technical "stuff" in literacy is the use of digital or electronic devices in order to access software or the Internet. The primary goal is to enhance traditional literacies through the use of technology, going beyond typographic construction, such as paper and pencil. Therefore, students in classrooms will need to have access to and instruction with technology such as laptops, computers, the Internet, and other such devices. Being technologically literate also implies a socio- cultural connection. Lankshear and Knobel's belief is that education is now in a shift from the "individuated" and "author-centric" landscape of printed materials toward a more "participatory," "collaborative," and "distributed" approach with technology. Schools are moving away from conventional literacies with written word towards electronic and digital means of communication. Students are able to collaborate and share thoughts across various types of media, instead of focusing on their own beliefs and using just the written word to express that belief. Lankshear and Knobel (2011) emphasize the importance of utilizing both technological

"technical stuff", and collaborative, participatory "ethos stuff", in order to truly embody new literacies (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011; 2014). They discuss that in the twenty-first century, it is not about technology development, but more about relationship development (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011). Being technologically literate is more than learning the skills and the knowledge of literacy, but also being able to address the socio-cultural implications that come along with technologies and being able to collaborate and participate in digital tasks on a more global scale (Norris, 2012). Google Classroom enables students to do just that with tools such as Google Docs, which allows students to share documents, presentations, and more, in order to simply view or to collaborate on the piece together. Google Classroom also allows teachers to share writing prompts or other assignments with the class that students can work on together and turn into the teacher as a group (Izenstark & Leahy, 2015). This gives students a chance to work on their digital skills as well as their collaborative working skills.

Writing: What Does it Mean?

In our society today, young students have a greater level of access to a wider range of content and connectivity than ever before, yet these students still need their teachers to support them in understanding the complexities of communicating in the twenty-first century world (DeVoss, Eidman-Aadahl & Hicks, 2010). With the new Common Core State Standards and twenty-first century learning skills, the idea of writing is evolving. It no longer is simply the physical act of writing words on paper, but instead is viewed as a "complex metacognitive skill that requires an individual to express him or herself in a manner that makes thinking visible (Torrance & Gailbraith, 2006). Writing is the process of composing ideas and making them available to share with others, and students will need

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instruction on how to successfully organize their thoughts, use devices to make these thoughts visible, and share these with others on a large scale.

Narrative writing is one particular genre of writing that allows the writer to be open, creative, and express themselves through their work. When a student works on a personal narrative, the story often will revolve around important events in life and is personally meaningful to the child. This allows the students to become emotionally attached to their writing and pour themselves into the story. Students also learn the important aspects of storytelling, such as introducing characters, the setting, and the correct sequencing of the plot, while acquiring the basic skills necessary for producing a quality piece of writing (Martin, 2010). Narrative writing give students creative expression, and through personal narrative writing instruction, students are able to learn the proper use of mechanics, word choice, organization, editing/revising, and sharing (Martin, 2010).

Even though writing is so important to a student's education, educators often feel that students are unmotivated towards writing and have difficulty with writing tasks. However, many American youths write regularly via instant and text messages, blogs, wikis, emails and across other social media platforms (DeVoss et al., 2010). Writing today is both personal and relevant to students since they are able to communicate with others in immediate ways at all times of the day (Ramsay, 2011). Working with narrative writing and integrating digital literacy will help to connect the motivation of telling their own story with the motivation of using the technology. There is rarely a time when students, and adults, are disconnected from friends, family, and the world around them. Instead of unplugging during school, educators will need to use this knowledge to their advantage and use students' strengths in digital communication to aid in their writing skills.

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Technology is influencing the way in which our students communicate and share messages for increasingly broader audiences, and the devices used in classrooms, such as laptops and iPads, have become tools for writings; publishing, distributing, collaborating, interacting, and remixing together image, word, sound, video, and motion to become more than the original vision (DeVoss et al., 2010). Educators will need to change their thinking from writing as words printed on paper using a writing utensil to any way in which students can compile their ideas into an organized, thoughtful manner that they can share with others.

Technical Writing Instruction for Struggling Writers

Since many classrooms contain a wide range of diverse students, including a variety of skills, abilities, strengths, and weaknesses, one important aspect of technology is the tools it provides for struggling writers. Digital texts enable young writers to quickly access information and utilize that information for their task, as well as respond to any critique in their writing and make necessary changes (Martin & Lambert, 2015). Teachers and administrators are expected to implement evidence-based practices in the classroom as a tactic for raising academic achievement, and many of the technical tools used for writing, such as online daily prompts, spell checker, voice recognition, digital planning tools, and more, help students to reach their writing goals no matter their skill level (Edyburn, 2013). The use of word processing applications such as Google Classroom, encourages more and better revision with students since editing is easier and there is no need for recopying. This leads to an increase in engagement and an increase in overall revision for younger students (MacArthur, 2009). Students who have difficulty with the revision stage of writing will be able to use the tools available to them, such as the spell checker, and also will be more motivated to revise since they are able to simply add into the original document as opposed

to recopying the document as a 'draft'. This leads to less frustration in the classroom, especially in students who struggle or are less motivated in the area of writing. The ability to share their documents in real time, with peer editors or teacher editors, is also a way to collaborate and help writers in need. This type of software allows teachers or peer editors to catch errors quickly and allows students to fix their work, enabling them to focus on content rather than error. Teachers are also able to view the student's text on their screen simultaneously, so they can work together and edit in real time (Norris, 2012).

In the real world, people write for others to read, and since motivation and engagement is such a large problem for young elementary students, collaborating, sharing, and publishing for an audience is a primary motivator for many students (MacArthur, 2009). Technology, specifically Google Classroom, is a way to have students share on a large scale in an easy, effortless manner. Therefore, students who are unmotivated to write will have a goal to work towards knowing that they will be able to share their thoughts with others, not just their peers in their own classroom. Sharing across classrooms and even on a large, global scale enables students to participate in the socio-cultural movement, meaning they are able to make sense of their own literacy experiences based on their schema and literary skills, as well as those experiences and skills of others (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011). Students will feel more connected to peers in their own classroom, but also more connected to the outside world through their writing, which will increase their motivation and potentially increase their desire to produce well-developed writing. As noted in Mitchell's (2014) case study where she analyzed the digital-related writing practices of a classroom of fifth-grade boys, her findings suggested that engagement in digital tasks extended beyond the inclusion of technology tools in the classrooms, and

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included peer interaction as a significant factor for participation. When the fifth grade students in her study collaborated and interacted with peers while utilizing the technology tools, she found the biggest increase in motivation. This demonstrated that students need to build relationships and feel connected to their work, while knowing that there is an audience at the end of their task (Mitchell, 2014). When students are motivated towards their task, there will be an increase in writing as well as more of a desire to put effort into the final product.

Caprino (2015) conducted a qualitative case study with four middle school English school teachers who were integrating digital writing for students, and analyzed how that technology may help students with their writing skills. The four-month study showed that digital writing allowed teachers to communicate with students quicker and easier than face-to-face conferences. Being able to respond back electronically and students being able to see either teacher or peer comments and make revisions allows for more social collaboration in writing as well as more efficient lessons. Participants in this study also found that students who had no voice were free to express themselves through a different platform with digital writing. One participant stated that students were able to, "focus less on skills deficits and express themselves in ways that they normally can't" which allowed them to be liberated and creative in their writing (Caprino, 2015, p.112). Caprino felt the important part of technology integration is to work with teachers so they fully understand the appropriate ways to implement digital writing in the classrooms. She stated that teachers need to "reflect on what counts as 'real' writing, reflect on writing assignments, analyze new literacies practices within digital writing spaces, and engage in digital writing with a critical stance" (Caprino, 2015, p.1).

Why Does Digital Writing Matter?

Students will need to become literate in digital writing and prepared for high school, college, and the career world by becoming familiar and competent with technical tools, genres, discourses, and the digital environments they use to plan, compose, revise, and publish their digital texts (Martin & Lambert, 2015). Due to the increase in technology in the world around us, students need to have a deeper understanding of how this relates to them and their education, and how they can use their daily technology knowledge to increase their academic ability.

In their study of digital literacy in adolescents Lewis and Fabos (2005) examined the use of instant messaging and the correlation it has with digital literacy in school. They were interested in if young students transferred the reading and writing skills they learned in the classroom to their online lives. Their research focused on digital literacy as socially mediated (online communication) and multimodal (cell phones, text messages, video attachments, emoticons). This study included seven participants; four girls and three boys between the ages of 14 and 17, and all participants were European American from working or middle class families. In order to obtain data, individual and group interviews were conducted, videotapes of active IM conversations between participants and their peers was gathered, and transcripts of these conversations were analyzed. From this information, it was found that students use instant messaging as an extension of their school literacy. The participants used features such as voice, tone, word choice, subject matter, and structure of messages in order to sustain interesting conversations with their peers (Lewis & Fabos, 2005). Students needed to find ways to be engaging and interesting, and evaluate different narrative strategies in order to maintain conversations and keep a certain social status in the

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online communication world. The instant messaging phenomena created social connections, fostered communications across social classes, and allowed students to communicate and bond over shared interests at times outside of school. The students integrated the writing lessons they learned in school with the technology they used outside of school. In order for students to be prepared for the ever-changing world, they will need to have a variety of skills and knowledge in both technology and literacy, not just for school but also for their futures. The NCTE standards suggest that students need digital skills to be considered "literate" in the twenty-first century. According to their 2008 position statement on twenty first century literacies, the NCTE stated that, "because technology has increased the intensity and complexity of literate environments, the twenty-first century demands that a literate person possesses a wide range of abilities and competencies, many literacies." Their standards states that, "Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge". Students and teachers should have knowledge of a variety of literacies- including digital literacies- in order to be considered literate in our twenty-first century education (Norris, 2012). The economy has expanded to include jobs that require a vast knowledge of technology, and our students will need to be not only competent in that area but knowledgeable and confident in order to be relevant in the job market of the future.

Conclusion

Upon reviewing all of the literature, it is clear that technology and writing go hand in hand in allowing students to work together and develop their writing skills for the twenty-first century. Lankshear and Knobel understand the importance of integrating both

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collaborative, social aspects of education along with the technical, digital means of instruction so students can be successful for whatever the future may hold (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011; 2014). It is imperative that students have knowledge of how to grow and change with technology since it is evolving so fast, and they need to be flexible with these changes. Students struggling with writing will have tools necessary to help them, such as voice recognition and editing tools, to motivate them to succeed, as well as the ability to share their documents with others to help with their revising skills (MacArthur, 2009). Although it may be a tough transition for many educators who are comfortable with teaching writing as the standard method of pencil and paper, these educators will need to evolve to include their students' knowledge base of technology and use their twenty first century skill base to help further their writing development. Students who communicate daily through social media platforms, emails, and the internet will need educators who understand their world and can mash their outside life into the classroom, in order to increase motivation and engagement, and in turn increase their writing skills (DeVoss et al., 2010).

As students work through school in elementary, high school and college, students will be utilizing technology in instruction and will need to be prepared for the technology demands of their future job market. This need can translate to everyday instruction as well as evaluation and assessments. Although the use of multimodal and digital text production in standardized English assessments is growing in many schools, it is an exception to the standard practice of pencil and paper assignments. To meet the demands of the twenty-first century shift in schooling, digital formats and technical written communication needs to become the fundamental part of instructing and evaluating students, including statewide

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assessments (Mills & Exley, 2014). To prepare students for their future, schools need to be on board with technology and the changing definition of digital writing. Educators will need to instruct students on how to collaborate with others on tasks and how to work with the technology tools in their writing instruction, as well as their assessments, to be ready for their continued schooling, as well as their future in the economy.

This study in particular will look more closely at Google classroom and how teachers can use the application to share assignments and media with students in order to analyze their work in narrative writing in the third grade classroom. Students will be able to view assignments, work on documents both independently and collaboratively, write using a variety of medias, and publish their work for others to view. The goal is to see how using this in the classroom affects students' motivation towards writing as well as their writing skills, and if students themselves can see a change in their own feelings towards their writing.

Chapter III

Research Design/Methodology

Research is the process of discovering essential questions, gathering data, and analyzing it to answer those questions. (Shagoury & Power, 1999, p.2)

This study is framed in the qualitative research paradigm. Qualitative research involves documenting data in written form and investigating a research question in a natural setting. Teachers conduct research in the natural setting of their classroom in order to uncover questions about their own teaching and discover ways to better educate and meet the needs of their students. Teacher research refers to the inquires of K-12 teachers, often times in collaboration with colleagues and other educators, when examining their own assumptions, developing local knowledge, posing questions and analyzing data that they have collected in their classrooms, and using their inquiry to ensure educational equality and social justice for all students (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). When teachers come across a question in their classroom, they are able to develop and fine tune that question, collect data, and analyze that data in order to come to a conclusion and share their findings with others and better help students.

While some may find research intimidating or believe it to be impossible to conduct while being a full time teacher, in truth teacher research is essential to education and important to complete while teaching since many aspects of this research are aligned with real classrooms, schools, and students. Teacher research is a natural extension of good teaching because this research includes observing students closely, analyzing their needs, and adjusting the curriculum to fit their strengths and weaknesses, which are all important

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skills of good teachers (Shagoury & Power, 1999). When teachers are able to work in their own schools and classrooms, it makes the act of research more attainable. This type of work is initiated and carried out by educators in their own classrooms or schools when they use their own questions to study anything from how to teach reading to their students to the best way to work with manipulatives in math or how to integrate the newest technology in their classroom (Shagoury & Power, 1999).

This study analyzes how the integration of the technology Google Classroom will impact third grade students in the narrative writing unit. The purpose of this is to see if this technology will allow students to collaborate more with their peers, increase their motivation, give them opportunities to be creative in their writing, and potentially increase their writing skills. The qualitative method will be used as framework since data collection will be observational notes, interviews from students, as well as student artifacts; all data is filtered through myself and I will be analyzing each piece using my own thoughts and reflections. Discussions between myself and the students as well as between students and peers, my own self-reflections of the daily lessons, and other observations are all key aspects of practitioner inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). I will also utilize the student questionnaire as an added piece to see how they reacted to Google Classroom with their writing.

Context

The study took place over a three week time period in a suburban school district in a third grade classroom. The following sections describe the community's demographics, the school setting, as well as the students and classroom in which the study took place.

Community. Countryside Elementary is one of six schools in the public school district of Mount Laurel, New Jersey. This school is located in South New Jersey in a Suburban area. There are approximately 41,864 people residing in Mount Laurel and the median household income for this town is $84,632, with approximately 3.0% of families and 3.6% of the population below the poverty line (according to 2010 Census). The racial makeup of the township was 79.42% White, 9.70% Black or African American, 0.16% Native American, 7.26% Asian, 0.04% Pacific Islander, 1.00% from other races, and 2.42% from two or more races. Hispanics or Latinos of any race were 4.56% of the population. There were 17,538 households, of which 28.9% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 51.0% were married couples living together, 10.5% had a female householder with no husband present, and 35.6% were non-families. 30.4% of all households were made up of individuals, and 11.8% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.38 and the average family size was 3.00.

School. Countryside Elementary School is home to 335 students in Grades Pre Kindergarten to fourth, and 70 staff members each school day. This school met all of its' NCLB targets. During the 2014-2015 school year, 7% of the tested students scored Advanced Proficiency on the NJASK Literacy test, 80% scored Proficient, and 13% scored partially proficient. On the Math portion of the NJASK test, 44% of students were Advanced Proficient, 48% scored Proficient, and 8% scored Partially Proficient.

Most of the students (84.5 %) speak English, 2.1% speak Spanish, 2.1% speak Chinese and 6.4% speak "other". A large majority of the student body is White (67.7%), followed by Asian (14.4%) and Black (9.7%). 23% of the students in this school are

labeled as Students with Disability, while 19% are considered to be Economically Disadvantaged and 4% Limited Proficient in English. Students considered to have a learning disability are mainstreamed, and this school uses a "push in" approach to learning. There is approximately one special education Co-Teaching classroom per grade, which allows students with extra needs to be serviced by both a regular education and special education teacher as well as an aide. There are aides in approximately 1-2 classrooms out of each grade level (each grade has 2-3 classes), depending on the needs of the students.

Classroom. My classroom is made up of eighteen students, including eight boys and ten girls. There are fourteen White students, two Asian students, and two mixed race students. As of now, there are no students with any 504 Action plans or Individualized Education Plans; however, there are four students in the classroom who are currently being discussed by the school's Intervention and Referral Services due to low academic achievement and behavior problems in the classroom.

All eighteen students participated in this study in order to get an accurate representation of how this technology affects third graders in their writing. The classroom make up of students is very diverse, with varying levels of writing and literacy skills. Three of students in the class are in the Gifted Academic Program (GAP) and are high achieving writers in the classroom. There are five other students who are strong writers in content, and they able to use correct mechanics as well with little assistance from myself. These students require some help in editing skills and some assistance with adding more details to their story, but overall are strong writers. Four students in the room are able to produce writing that is on topic and includes appropriate content, but lacks details or voice, and they require some assistance with mechanics. These students sometimes work with

myself in small groups or will work together collaboratively with other students in order to push their work to where it should be for Third Grade Common Core expectations. The other six students in the room require a lot of assistance from myself in order to produce a narrative story, as well as extra attention in the area of technology. Four of these students are currently being brought up to the I&RS team, while the other two are in need of writing assistance but not as severe as the others. These students work in groups when possible, but also require teacher check in to be sure they are staying on task, they are focused on the prompt, and they are using the technology appropriately. They are sometimes partnered with a student who is a technology "expert" and can help assist them through the steps we are taking during the day's activity if they are not working with me.

The classroom is equipped with an Epson Activboard, which allows students to interact with the board and be involved with their learning. It also makes showing the students how to access their laptop tools, such as Google Classroom or documents, a lot easier since everything can be projected and used through the Activboard. The classroom also contains a Chromebook cart containing 18 Chromebook (laptops), one for each student. Each student is able to have their own Chromebook, which allows them to personalize it and bookmark important internet resources and websites used most often.

Students. The behavior in the classroom suggests that these students are still transitioning from second grade into third grade and learning how to become independent and responsible for their learning. Out of the eighteen students, five students need my assistance with simple tasks such as signing in or opening a new tab. Hannah, Luke, Wesley, Olivia, and Nona are students who need more guidance with technology. Rachel, Lana, Matt, Yuina, Dan, and Victor are students who say that they use technology, such as

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the internet, iPads, laptops, and Google Docs, at home both independently and with their parents very often. Baylie, Ryan, Joe, Stacey, Katie, and Brian use some technology at home, but only with parent assistance and only use it for games. Branden, Wesley, Olivia, Hannah, Luke, and Nona do not use technology at home at all. This is a hurdle that is being crossed in the classroom by having some students become "experts" in the room and helping others in order to make the technology transition a bit easier on everyone.

This translates into the writing lessons as well since there are many students who require extra attention during their writing lessons. Hannah, Olivia, Wesley, and Darryl are pulled back into small groups or sometimes need one on one instruction for writing lessons since they are missing some of the skills during whole class lessons. Hannah and Darryl also tend to lose focus easily and need extra attention, requiring more practice in skills and also extra time and assistance in order to fully understand a concept. Hannah requires additional support when it comes to spelling and mechanics in her writing, and often lacks the focus and attention during class time needed to fully comprehend the lesson. Darryl struggles with crafting a detailed, full length story and can be a behavior challenge at times due to a disinterest in school and in writing. He can become a challenge when he loses motivation in a lesson, and will refuse to continue to work or he will disrupt the learning of others by talking, calling out, or being inappropriate.

Students in the classroom are generally very kind to one another and understand how to work well together in a group, so therefore they are receptive to help from peers. Olivia, Wesley, and Matt came to our school in September, and Wesley and Olivia are still struggling with socializing with others. Olivia and Wesley are also low achieving in academics and in the use of technology, and they are having difficulty with accepting help

from others. They tend to work closer with myself during lessons and need more individualized attention. Since Darryl can be a behavior issue in the classroom, he requires individualized attention as well since he can be a distraction to others and cause disruptions throughout class. Often during writing lessons, I will have a small group of students who require extra attention to their writing needs, while other students are able to work independently or in pairs. Due to most of the students being able to work so well together, this system works well.

Procedure of the Study

Before beginning the study, the students in this classroom began their writing with their standard form of pencil and paper in narrative writing lessons. Instruction in the classroom was based on the Writing Workshop model. The lessons would begin with a ten to fifteen minute whole class mini lesson based on a writing strategy, then move into student work time with independent work, small guided writing groups, teacher conferences, or collaborative group work. At the conclusion of the lesson, there would be approximately ten minutes of share time, and a few students could share a piece of their writing or something they learned during the lesson. I observed students in this time period and documented the behaviors and reactions of students to this standard way of writing in order to analyze it and note any differences once Google Classroom was introduced. Once the technology was introduced, I then observed and took notes to see if students were any different to this new way of writing.

During the first week of the study from October 26 to October 30, students were introduced to the Google Classroom and added the Google Classroom Writing class to their Chromebooks for easy access. They took a guided tour with myself using the

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Activboard of the website and were taught how to view assignments, how to turn in assignments, and how to create new documents. Students were taught writing lessons including how to hook your readers into your writing and how to proofread your work for capitals and punctuation. I use mentor texts and authentic literature in order to teach these lessons and students also worked together in groups looking through picture books and chapter books to find examples of good "hooks" in writing. This first week students were assigned a narrative writing prompt about something they have learned in their life. They were required to type an organized story about a time they learned something in their life, using a proofreading checklist.

The second week of the study, students were taught how to add exciting details to their narrative writing. They were given models from mentor texts and worked together to find examples of authors using details in authentic literature. These students then had to take a piece of writing and used strategies such as similes, onomatopoeia, personification, and more, in order to make the piece more interesting for the reader. Students were also taught how to collaborate with others on editing their work. They worked in partners, small groups, and one group worked with myself in order to help each other revise a past narrative writing assignment from Google Classroom. Students worked on Chromebooks and helped each other to revise their own writing. At this point, some students were also taught how to use voice typing. The students in the classroom who have difficulty with typing skills, organization skills, and behavior and attention problems, often struggled with the assignments. The voice typing application was utilized to see if it could help these particular students in overcoming some of their frustrations during the writing portion.

These particular students often became frustration during all writing lessons, even paper and pencil, and I was intrigued to see if the voice typing would be beneficial to them.

The third week of the study, students were taught how to utilize Google Classroom to create Google Slides in order to craft a narrative story about an important moment in their lives. Students were told to include writing on each slide as well as a picture from online that would be embedded and add to their story. This would allow students to be creative in their narrative writing, as well as become more proficient in their technology abilities. I read mentor texts to students; *Fireflies* by Julie Brinckloe, *Shortcut* by Donald Crew, and *Owl Moon* by Jane Yolen. These mentor texts not only showcased life experiences by zooming in to a small moment, but also exemplified writing strategies the students had been working on such as similes, hooks, vivid details, and more. We discussed the strategies from each book as well as how the stories were organized before students began their pieces and would refer back to these as students worked on their projects. Students needed to include a beginning, middle, and end to their story and were able to include colored backgrounds, different fonts, as well as headings to go along with each slide. Students were taught how to include each portion of the slide, and then worked on each part independently but were able to receive help from myself or a peer "expert" in the classroom.

Data Sources

To establish data for the research portion of this study, I used multiple qualitative research techniques. I began with keeping observational notes to see how students reacted to the technology integration in writing as well as any changes in their overall writing skills. I noted students' discussions, behavior, conversations, and more in these notes.

Throughout the study I also kept a teacher research journal in which I recorded my own personal thoughts and feelings about the students' interactions with the technology and how their writing was coming along with each lesson. As I collected data, I recorded thoughts in my journal and reflected on the data and why I felt students may have been improving, what may have caused changes in their writing, as well as what may have caused any changes in their behavior. I also reflected on my own behavior and any changes in my teaching due to the integration of Google Classroom in the narrative writing lessons. Student samples were also collected, with allowed me to gain insight into the students and how they changed as writers. I ended this study by giving students an open-ended, narrative style questionnaire discussing their thoughts about Google Classroom. Students answered how they felt using Google Classroom, if they liked it better than paper and pencil and why, and if they felt it helped their writing and how it may have helped it.

Data Analysis

The observational notes were brief snapshots of what I saw and heard happening in the classroom during the writing portion of the day. The notes gave me insight into what I heard students talking about during these lessons, if groups or students were on or off track, who was working well and who was having trouble, and helped me to reflect on what needed to be changed or added to the lesson as we went through the study. The journaling was used to help me reflect on the process to see how students changed based on the technology integration. Journaling allowed me to analyze how this technology may have affected students' motivation in the classroom and how it may have changed their writing skills. It also forced me to sit and consider the thesis question at hand and think about how it affected the classroom climate. Analyzing the student samples from Google

Classroom showed me how students made progress with their writing skills. I also saw how collaboration worked in the classroom by seeing how groups and partners were able to share documents and work together on editing and revising work together. Gathering the data from the questionnaire and compiling the answers to compare how students felt about the experience helped me to see how students felt about the process. It gave me more insight into their feelings and thoughts and knowledge of how they thought during the study.

Chapter Four of this thesis discusses the results of the student questionnaires, my personal teacher observations and journaling, as well as student artifacts and student samples from Google Classroom. Chapter Five will present the conclusions and implications of the study as well as recommendations for further topics of study.

Chapter IV

Data Analysis

Chapter four discusses the findings of my study, focusing on answering the question, "What happens when Google Classroom is integrated into third grade narrative writing lessons?" As I sorted and categorized my data sources (teacher observation notes, teacher-research journal, student samples, and student questionnaires) I identified key data to report. After analyzing the data, I identified the areas of motivation and skills in writing as the two important factors that appeared to show the most significant changes. Students appeared to grow in the area of mechanics as well as content, perhaps because their motivation also grew as a result of the integration of Google Classroom in their narrative writing. These data results are explained further throughout the chapter.

Revisiting the Study

As chapter three explained, I collected data over a three-week period during which I integrated the technology of Google Classroom into the personal narrative writing lessons. Students learned how to use this technology to effectively write and revise their stories, as well as publish these stories onto Google Slides. I recorded brief observation notes during these lessons that helped me to analyze students' discussions, behavior, conversations, and more and kept track of what was happening during the course of the study. Using my teacher research journal, I recorded and analyzed student behaviors to look for changes in motivation as well as any growth in their writing skills. This journal also allowed me to reflect back on my own practice and reflect on the research question throughout the three-week time. Additionally, I analyzed student samples from the study in order to gain insight into the students and their work and how they changed as writers. At

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the conclusion of the study, students completed a questionnaire about their feelings towards this technology, which allowed me to understand their feelings towards Google Classroom and how it affects their writing.

Motivation with Google Classroom

When I first began my study, I explained to my third grade students that we would be using the laptop for our writing lessons. Immediately, I noticed a sense of excitement in the room. Students sat up a little straighter, I could see their eyes getting bigger, and I heard a few of them making comments such as, "Really?" and smiling to their friends. I thought back to my first reflection in my teacher journal, which discussed my classroom environment before technology was integrated in the writing lessons. One excerpt follows:

Handwriting during personal narrative lessons leaves many students with little to no motivation. Some of my higher skilled writing students are able to write with stamina (maybe for about 20 minutes) but the majority of my class struggled with writing for even 10 minutes. They were unable to come up with ideas for their prompt about something they like to do in the fall, and they wrote very short paragraphs. Three students came up with stories that had less than five sentences and when I asked them why, they explained that they did not know what to write. (Reflection journal, October 23, 2015).

I was hopeful at that time that this technology integration would motivate my students to want to write, and eventually create a more positive atmosphere for writing. During the first few days of the study, some students took some time getting used to this new technology of Google Classroom. I would assign a writing prompt on Google Classroom, and students needed to not only sign into the laptop and go to the classroom

website, but also click the link for the assignment and then complete the task. This was simple for those students who were digital experts and had these electronic devices at home, but for a select few students with little experience, this task was challenging. I set aside some time to work one on one with these students on the basics of how to use the laptop, but I also had some of those digital experts in the room act as helpers to guide the students along in the first beginning days. By day three of the study, students were more excited about writing, as noted in my observational notes:

> The students are working hard and seem to be more motivated when I tell them it's time to work on writing. If I say, "Writing time!" it is usually followed with the question, "Are we using laptops?!" That shows that this technology is as least motivating students to WANT to try (Observational notes, October 28, 2015).

This observation showed how students were beginning to relate writing to technology, and the excitement in their voices that I heard during this exchange was more positive than what I would have heard previously during our writing lessons.

Motivation with struggling writers. It was at this time in the study that I noticed an issue coming up with students who struggled with typing. Hannah and Darryl often struggled with many facets of writing, such as content, mechanics, and organization. They lacked experience with digital writing, and therefore they became frustrated by the amount of time it would take for them to complete a simple writing task. I decided to try another feature on Google Classroom, which was voice typing. Students would be able to use this application and speak clearly into the laptop and the laptop would type what students would say. Students still were required to organize their narratives, and needed to go back and revise any errors. I noticed that when I introduced this technology for some of the

struggling typers in the classroom, their stories really flourished. They were no longer bogged down with searching for letters on the keyboard or frustrated by the time constraints of typing. They also were still excited to be using technology and be able to be a part of the classroom like their peers. The one downside to the voice typing was the fact that it correctly spelled almost all of the words the student spoke. I was not able to get a clear representation of students spelling in the writing in which they used voice typing.

Seed Story

A lite ywel ago I went to Ocen Citty we went on the bord wallk   we wallked and wallked intel I wunted to go on the roler coster my mom hade lite bit of the tickits .So my mom sed thay I cud go on one ride .Then I haed to go to the bahtroolk.So my mom tolk me to the bathroom.Fter that I when to no dubelshot|

Figure 1. Hannah's sample of writing without voice typing, including spelling errors.

I was so shocked at my sister
for stealing my pink bubble
gum.My heart was beating so
fast. My face turned red and i
even put my hands on my hips. I
had tears in my eyes i was
waiting for her to give it to me.
she gave it to me i said thanks
then i walked away happy.

Figure 2. Hannah's sample of writing with voice typing, with no spelling errors.

As seen by the Hannah's samples above, the voice typing allowed her to focus on adding vocabulary and writer's risks to her writing, but it also corrected her spelling. In the first sample, Hannah misspelled many words, even those considered to be on or below 'grade level' words such as *said*, *could*, *took*, and *had*. For this reason, I used a balanced approach of allowing students to use voice typing only at times, but requiring them to type certain portions in order for me to have assessments on their spelling if needed. Overall the voice typing application allowed both Hannah and Darryl to focus on the content of their story, which gave them freedom to add details and stretch their story more than what I had seen in their handwritten stories and the stories in which they needed to type.

Engaging students with Google Slides. One project that created the most engagement for my students was during week three when students were required to publish a story about an important moment in their life on to Google slides. Students were allowed to work with different themes, backgrounds, and fonts, and were required to embed pictures or photographs onto each slide for their story. I began with walking students through each step in the process as well as modeling what a finished product would look like in the end. Students were extremely motivated to begin this process as noted in my observation notes:

> One student in particular, Matt, was extremely excited and continued to call out during the lesson about how he wanted to get started. He grabbed his laptop right away and started without hesitation, and I noticed other boys joined in with his enthusiasm (Observational notes, November 13, 2015).

Matt was previously a student who could care less about writing and was never that involved with the process. To see him become so enthusiastic and willing to begin a new

assignment was not only different, but also impressive. I noticed that Matt, and others as well, began to write narratives that were more detailed and utilized more strategies from our mentor text lessons than before. Because of the motivation, the students were using the lessons more effectively and producing more work. Even the next day during indoor recess I wrote a note in my observations that two students, Lana and Rachel, wanted to write stories during recess time instead of play games. They wanted to be able to write these stories on the laptops and when I explained that they could, they gathered more students to work on this recess time project. I overheard during this time an exchange that showed how this writing not only motivated students to want to write, but also to want to be better writers:

> Lana: Can I read your story?
>
> Rachel: Yeah but I am not done yet.
>
> Lana: That's cool! I like how you used the word *raced*.
>
> Stacey: That's a vivid verb! I want to use one in mine, too.

It was so interesting to see students praising each other's work, and to be doing it during free time was quite surprising to me as a teacher. It exemplified how motivated they had become as writers due to this integration of technology.

Collaboration with Google Classroom. Another aspect of this project was for students to become peer editors to each other and work in partners. In order to do this, partners would share their Google Slides narrative story with each other and write comments on the slides with both positive feedback and constructive criticism. After a class discussion on how to give thoughtful feedback, students began working together on editing each other's slides and continued for a few writing classes. They used their lessons

on details, writer's risks, mechanics, and more in order to help push each other's stories to be the best, and I noticed how involved students became in this project. Students began sharing other writing projects with each other so they could help each other and peer edit their work. This demonstrates the excitement the students felt about the collaborative aspect of Google Classroom. I collected student samples from this project that showed students helping one another.

Just Learning By Watching

"Wow" I said out loud that's so cool. My friend was teaching me how to do a flip on the trampoline. I had no idea how to do it but she does gymnastics so she had to now at least one thing. she wanted to teach me more than a flip but I said no because I woulded understand and get hurt.

Resolve

Also in the first slide when you said Wow can you put it like this "Wow"

Resolve

Also every title in the begging you need a capitle letter

Resolve

When you said "she" can you make it a capital letter

Figure 3. Student sample showing peer editing.

TWO FRIENDLY GIRLS

Then two friendly girls came to me and said to me " Do you want to play freeze tag and family with us?, you look lonely." so I said " Yes, but can you be my friends? " but I was afraid that they were going to say NO! but they said" Yes, it would be very nice being your friend ." So I played freeze tag with them. When I played I thought that they were really good at playing freeze tag because they ran fast like a race car!

Resolve

You should add some more detail here. Like how were we good at the game? did we run fast?
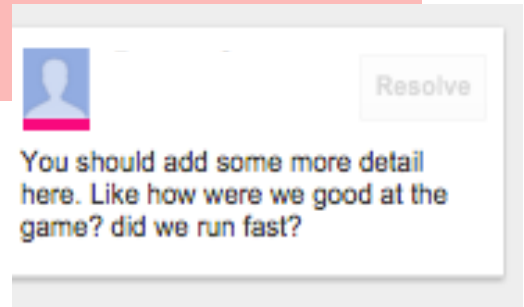
Figure 4. Students helped each other with their writing skills.

Asking my mom

I woke up yelling, "I can't wait to go get my new dog".
I ran to ask my mom when we were going. We were on
the way to adopt our new dog. My heart was pounding
really fast because I was running as fast as a lighting.
My mom said not until after diner.

> Resolve
>
> when you seed when are we going
> were are you going?

> esolve
>
> Maybe after "running as fast" you
> could add a simile like running as fast
> as lighting or running as fast as a
> cheetah

Figure 5. Students followed the advice of their peers

These samples display how peer editors help the student writers to add more details to the writing as well as working on fixing any errors in the mechanics of the story. These student samples demonstrate students being motivated to help one another on their project and push each other towards success. The student samples show that these students responded back 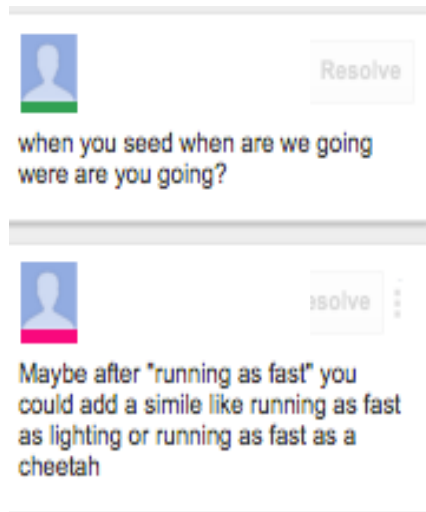to the peer editing and took the advice of the comments. They changed what needed to be changed in the eyes of the peers. This was an aspect of writing that I did not see in the classroom before integrating this technology.

Data from student questionnaire. Students also completed a post study questionnaire that was developed to determine how students personally felt about Google Classroom. The questionnaire was done independently and asked students how they felt about Google Classroom, if they preferred this technology to the original paper and pencil way of writing, and if they felt if this technology helped them with their writing. Out of the 18 students who participated in the study, all 18 noted that they preferred typing on laptops, with the exception of one student who said they would like to use both paper and pencil as well as use the laptops so they could practice their handwriting skills, too. When asked how students felt about Google Classroom, students shared:

Yuina: I like that I can share my writing with my friends and I can comment.

Hannah: It has so much fun stuff I can use on my stories.

Lana: I feel excited when I use Google Classroom

Matt: It was a new experience for me and I learned how to animate, use fonts, and more.

Darryl: It was more fun to use the laptops.

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Victor: I can add pictures and the typing is neater than my handwriting.

Rachel: Google classroom allowed me to add pictures to understand what my writing was about.

These correspondences continue to demonstrate how students are positively reacting to the technology and are continually motivated by the integration of Google Classroom in their daily writing lessons.

Developing Writing Skills

As students' motivation grew, their skills in writing also began to develop. Due to students being more motivated by Google Classroom, they were more excited and therefore wrote more often and wrote longer narratives that are more detailed. They were able to practice their writing strategies, which they learned from mentor texts in their writing lessons. From the end of study student questionnaire, all eighteen students responded that they felt that Google Classroom helped them with their writing. Some of the students felt it helped with their typing skills, while others felt it helped with their writing content or their spelling. When asked to explain how they felt it helped them, students explained:

Lana: I think Google Classroom helped me because it in the last few days I have been amazing at typing!

Hannah: Yes it helped me because I learned new words.

Matt: It helped me because I learned spelling, new words and a lot more!

Luke: I think so because it tells me when I am wrong and I can fix it.

Ryan: It helped me because it helps me fix my words and I can do cool things with it.

Baylie: It helped me because I can type my stories faster so I can write longer and more words.

Rachel: It helped my writing because my teacher comments and tells me what to fix and add.

Brandon: I think it did. My friends helped me when they comment.

Nona: Yes. My friends can tell me what I need to fix and it helps me be better at writing.

This questionnaire demonstrates how students felt that they grew as writers due to Google Classroom. The collaborative aspect of Google Classroom allowed me, the teacher, to work with students more often because I could comment on students' stories and conference with them electronically. I was able to give positive feedback as well as share with students what they needed to fix. This was helpful for students who needed some guidance quickly while I was working with another student and was not able to meet with them. I could quickly scan over a student's story and give feedback, while meeting with another small group, and reach more students than if I had to walk around the classroom and read stories on paper. A sample below displays the comments given to students.

PERSONAL NARRATIVE PROMPT

Directions:

Write a seed story about the topic below. Be sure to include important details about the topic.

Learning is a part of life. Write about a time when you learned something new.

(Type your story below.)

Crash! I fell on my trampoline as my sister was trying to teach me how to do a front handspring. As I fell, I felt the bouncey trampoline under me. When I got up I could hear my sister say to keep trying hard. Then she showed me her front handspring again. As I was watching her I could tell she had been practicing. All the times she showed me she never fell! After I tried again, my sister told me that I wasn't doing it right. I did it a couple more times then we went in for a water break. It felt good because the water was cold and refreshing. When we just got on my trampoline, my mom called us inside. I hope to make more progress on my front handspring next time I try.

Jessi Fallon
4:38 PM Today — Resolve

Great use of onomatopoeia for your hook opening, and it's good that you explained the sound after you wrote it.

Jessi Fallon
4:39 PM Today — Resolve

Explain more here. Stretch it out. How did it feel to hear that you weren't doing it right?

Jessi Fallon
4:36 PM Today — Resolve

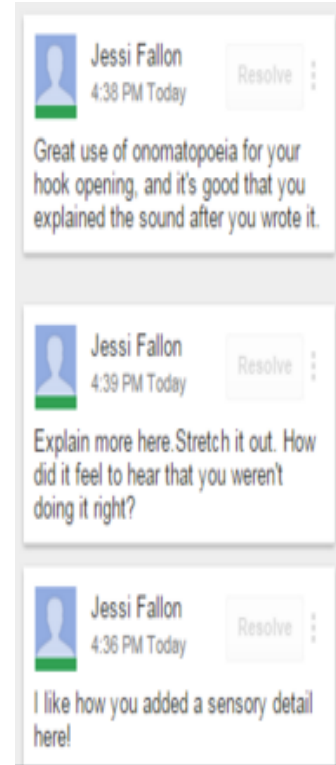I like how you added a sensory detail here!

Figure 6. Students worked with me to heighten their writing skills.

Struggling writers. Working with students with both Google Classroom comments as well as together one on one helped struggling writers to develop writing skills. One

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particular case was Darryl, who came into third grade with very little knowledge of writing mechanics and had an extreme low level of motivation for writing. He not only began to enjoy our writing sessions because he greatly enjoyed using laptops, and was one who was able to use voice typing when needed, but also grew especially in writing skills. His motivation to learn in the writing lessons really shows in these student samples. First his Important Object Writing narrative shows his struggle to organize his writing and my comments about wanting to work together to help him improve. The second sample is a narrative in which he starts to show growth in adding details and in his writing skills.

Important Object Writing

Baseball

Once when I played baseball I scored two home runs In a row. When we was playing baseball we had so much fun that we forgot all about it but we won And the next day I had a game this time we didn't win but we still won a trophy. It was so he could not stop playing it.

Jessi Fallon 2:49 PM Today   Resolve

Let's go back and reread the story and make sure it all makes sense. We will also add more details, like when you won we can write about how you felt. I bet it was exciting!

Jessi Fallon 2:48 PM Today   Resolve

Make sure to add your 5 senses to your writing.
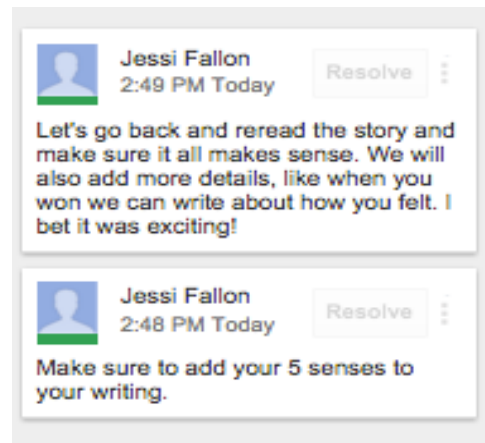
Figure 7. First Sample of Darryl's writing.

Important Moment Prompt

<u>Directions:</u>

Write about an important moment in your life. Be sure to include SHOW, DON'T TELL in your writing.

The most important moment is wen I went to Six Flags. The most important part was the ride the dark night. It was so dark that I couldn't see nobody. It was pitch black! Wen my cousin and I got above the track we got scared! I covred my eyes. Then we dropped and my stomach felt like all my weight was gone. The rollercoaster was as fast as a car and made a lot of hard turns. Wen it finally stopped we got off. It was so much fun that we went on again! Next time I won't be scared to go on a rollercoast!

Figure 8. Second sample of Darryl's writing showing progression.

After working with him both one on one, in small groups, and giving feedback through

teacher comments and through peer editing comments, Darryl took writing seriously and

wanted to highlight his talents. There is more room for growth and he will need to continue

to work on spelling, grammar, and adding more details to his narratives, however he grew tremendously in a few short weeks.

Many other students grew in their writing skills, adding more details to their stories, using the skills from mentor texts and taking risks in their writing, as well as growing in the area of writing mechanics. Another student, Hannah, began the writing lessons struggling with spelling, details, and with technology in general. I worked with her on using the laptops, and had some expert students helped her through the first few days on how to sign in and how to use the Google Classroom application until she felt more comfortable. After the first week, she was more confident and began to enjoy the laptop, but at times needed the voice typing in order to complete some assignments since her typing skills would leave her feeling frustrated and unable to complete tasks. Her writing skills still flourished. She began the study by writing short, unorganized narratives and by the end of the study produced a story that was more detailed and contained less spelling errors. She worked with me a lot in one to one meetings, in small groups, and with her peer editor to grow her skills. She was also able to use the tools Google Classroom gave her to help with her spelling skills. The samples below show her progression from the first sample about an important object to her most recent about an important moment in her life.

Important Object Writing

i luv my hart neklic that my mom gave me becus it is <mark>prety</mark> and she gave it yo me when i turnd 6 on my <mark>birthday</mark> it is <mark>nice</mark>

Jessi Fallon
1:15 PM Today
Resolve

It sounds like a nice necklace, let's work on describing what it looks like in detail.

Jessi Fallon
1:15 PM Today
Resolve

How did you feel when you opened that present? Were you shocked? Happy?

Jessi Fallon
1:16 PM Today
Resolve

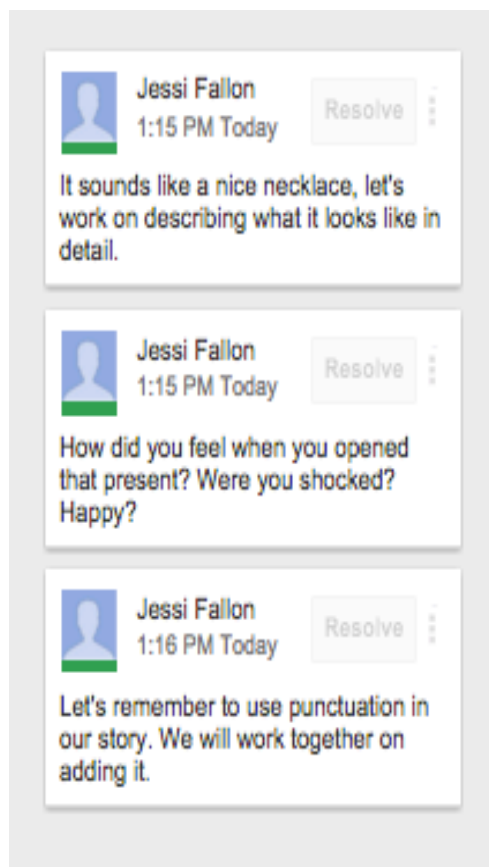Let's remember to use punctuation in our story. We will work together on adding it.

Figure 9. First sample of Hannah's writing.

Important Moment Prompt

Directions:

Write about an important moment in your life. Be sure to include SHOW, DON'T TELL in your writing.

Shhhh! When I got to Funplex it was like so quiet! I thought that now one was gunna come .But then someone walked in the door I jumped with excitmet and screamed so loud that I almost scared my friends mother. Then we were lauging. I was laughing so hard that my face turned red. After that we had lunch. Lunch was so good everyone asked where did you get this food. Then the cake came out. I was nervus at first then I hoped it would be good. And it wasn't as bad as I thught. When everyone arrived it was so loud!! I like it better when there was only a few people there. We started to play on the buncy house and went down all of the slides. It was so much fun and when we went down the slide, we loved it. There was a lot of screaming! It was a great birthday!

Figure 10. Second sample of Hannah's writing showing progression.

This data demonstrates that students are motivated by the technology of Google Classroom and also grew in their writing abilities. Google Classroom allowed students to be motivated enough to want to write more which allowed them to want to practice their writing, and also helped them with their spelling and mechanics. Students were able to become more confident and passionate about their narrative stories.

Chapter V

Conclusions

"At the heart of good teaching-and good teacher research-is the learning and growth of our students themselves." (Shagoury & Power, 1999, p.236)

In concluding my research, I found that students demonstrated growth in a multitude of ways after being exposed to Google Classroom in their narrative writing lessons. After spending time presenting the technology to the students and having the students work with the application, I found that this study benefited the children by introducing them to a new way of sharing their thoughts, motivating them to become better and more skilled writers, and allowing them to collaborate with others in new ways. When students are able to write to authentic audiences, they are motivated to write and provide useful responses to their writing or opportunities to collaborate (MacArthur, 2009). This was seen throughout my study when students were able to share their stories with their peers, as well as edit each other's work with partners and in small groups. Knowing that they were able to share work with peers pushed them toward their best writing.

After four weeks, I found that the children became more comfortable with the new technology in the classroom. Those who came in with previous background knowledge of this technology were now challenging themselves to see what else they could do in Google Classroom, while others who were novices were becoming increasingly more confident and independent with the laptops. The students showed through their conversations with me, each other, and also through their published stories that they enjoyed being able to show their thinking in writing in a new way, as opposed to the standard pencil and paper. They could now talk to the laptop through voice typing, they could create a slideshow and

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embed pictures to really display what they wanted to show in their stories, and they could be creative with their narrative stories in order to show their thinking to the reader. Students relished this idea and enjoyed being able to take their writing to new levels.

Additionally, students showed increased motivation throughout the study, which led to an increase in writing skills. As students became more engaged with the technology, they became more engaged with the writing lessons and transferred the skills to their narrative stories. They began writing longer narratives that included more details, and utilized the strategies from mentor texts. As the weeks progressed, I noticed an increase in writer's risks such as similes, sensory details, dialogue, and more, as well as a decrease in mechanical errors, such as capitalization and punctuation. Due to students being so motivated to write, at times wanting to continue to write at home or during recess time in order to finish or add more to their stories, they were able to grow as writers in both content and mechanical skills. This was especially important since students today need to develop a range of new skills with technology in order to be considered fully literate in our 21st Century (MacArthur, 2009).

Lastly, the findings of my research suggested that the children benefitted from the collaborative aspect of Google Classroom. For the final project, students were able to create Google Slide presentations of a story and then work with peer editors in order to improve their writing. Students were able to comment on the slides and discuss what they felt was positive about the slide, what could be improved about mechanics of the writing, as well as make any suggestions on the content of the story. The children learned the importance of giving positive but effective feedback, as well as taking constructive criticism from others.

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Limitations

Several study limitations should be noted. Data was collected from student writing samples during the three-week study during which students were taught how to use the Google Classroom technology. Writing lessons took place daily over approximately an hour time span for each lesson. However, the time available to conduct all of my research and collect the data was a major limitation. During the month of November, there were many days off and also half days due to holidays and conferences. Although students worked on their stories as much as possible, due to the hectic schedule, this caused some inconsistency since they had to start and stop so often in the middle of their work.

Another limitation was the varying levels of knowledge with technology and laptop usage. While some students worked with laptops and digital typing previous to this study, other students required additional time to adjust to the new technology integration due to a lack of background knowledge. Given that it may have taken some extra time for the students to get comfortable with this, the results may have been different if the study were conducted over a longer period of time, and those students had the extra time to feel comfortable with the technology before collecting results on how they did on their writing samples.

Also due to the time restraints, students were unable to discover different ways to utilize Google Classroom for the planning stage of the writing process. While many students use graphic organizers, webs, or other visual tools to help them to organize their thinking prior to starting a writing piece, with this study students were only able to focus on the drafting, editing, and publishing aspects of writing a narrative story.

Implications for the Field

The results of this study suggest several areas for future research. The demographic characteristics of the participants that took part in this study were restricted to third grade students in a regular education classroom setting in a suburban district. Participants with other demographic characteristics should be considered in future research such as students differing in abilities and disabilities, students at different grade levels, and students with different social and economic backgrounds. Conducting a study with a more diverse group of students would allow the researcher to acknowledge how this technology would affect students from various backgrounds and academic levels.

Another way to extend this study would be to collect student samples and other data intermittently over a longer period of time. While students learn and grow as writers and also become more comfortable and proficient with the technology they are using in the classroom, it may increase the positive effects of integrating Google Classroom into narrative writing lessons and teachers may see more prominent results. If there is a longer time period set aside for the study, students would be able to display how they grow as writers and how they become more proficient with all of the aspects of the technology. Students would also be able to utilize more tools in Google Classroom, such as using the voice recognition more often than what was seen in this study, more collaboration between peers and teacher, and more work in the planning phase of writing.

It is also imperative that research based in educational technology continues as technology and applications continue to evolve and change. Technology will shift and change continuously and it is important that as new applications are added to the classrooms, research is being done to account for its' efficiency and effectiveness. As new

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tools and upgrades are added to Google Classroom, students should be able to utilize those tools and research should be done to see how different upgrades in the technology world can help these students advance in their writing.

In summary, the implementation of Google Classroom in narrative writing can help increase motivation and strengthen writing skills for third grade students. The study suggests that the technology integration engages students with the lessons, and also helps students to collaborate with the peers in order to grow their skills in writing. By allowing students to work with this technology, we are preparing them for their role in the 21st century and keeping them motivated and interested in literacy in the classroom.

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