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The Role of Popular Culture in Preschool Children's Emergent Writing/Composing: An Exploration of the Writing Process and Tensions Surrounding One Preschool Writing Center

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The Role of Popular Culture in Preschool Children's Emergent Writing/Composing: An
Exploration of the Writing Process and Tensions Surrounding One Preschool Writing
Center

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ABSTRACT

Over the last several decades research has been conducted surrounding popular culture and children's writing/composing. Much of this research focused on children in early elementary school classrooms. I discovered, when preparing for this project, that there was very little published research (written in English) surrounding preschool-aged children's compositions (with or without the emphasis on popular culture), and what happens in the writing center. This study helps fill the gap in the research by documenting how preschool children in a mixed-age (ages three to five years) classroom, who attend a public school in an urban, Midwestern area, write/compose when given the chance to use materials that feature their favorite popular culture icons. It also provides increased understandings of the tensions and joys surrounding children's writing and composing surrounding popular culture in the preschool classroom for both the teacher and the children. This basic qualitative study uses the tenets of action research and thematic analysis to analyze the data collected in the writing center (via observations and work samples) over the span of twelve thirty-minute sessions and the teacher-researcher's reflexive journal. Five teacher interviews were conducted to help the teacher-researcher understand the teachers' perceptions of their preschool writing centers. Additionally, pre- and post-test journaling samples were collected from two classrooms (one was the teacher-researcher's classroom comprised of 18 children and the other, a control group in the same building comprised of 8 children). These provided evidence that the children in the intervention group demonstrated more growth than those in the control group.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

As a society, we are inundated with the influences from popular culture. From the programs that children watch on television, to the snacks they consume, to the clothes they wear, to the school supplies they use, to the books they enjoy, there is no escaping the power of popular culture (Hade, 2001). Preschool children cannot escape their favorite characters. The youngest members of society are the emergent writers, and this study seeks to discover the ways in which these children appropriate and engage with popular culture materials in their writing and composing via observations in the writing center. It also seeks to explore the tensions and joys surrounding popular culture and this act of composing.

Emergent writing is considered a spectrum that goes from scribbles to letter-like forms to random letters in a line to sound spelling, and eventually to writing some basic high-frequency words such as “the” and the child’s own name (Coates, 2002). The work samples from children in this stage of writing often encompass several of these “forms” in the same sample. Emergent writers often use the words “write” and “draw” interchangeably, as they relate to and talk about their own compositions. As such, all drawings should be considered as “writing” until the child states otherwise (Yang & Noel, 2006; Ray & Glover, 2008). The most common way emergent writers in the preschool setting get their message across is by “reading” it to an adult, who takes dictation. This dictation shows the child that his/her words are important and that these words can be written down (Tunks & Giles, 2009 as cited by Dennis & Votteler, 2012).

According to Korat, Shamir and Arbiv (2011), emergent writing “demonstrates the constructive evolution based upon the child’s native language system that moves from scribbling to symbolic representation to random letter writing, and finally to sound spelling” (p. 302). It has also been noted that young children’s writings and drawings look very similar (Treiman & Yin, 2012).

A writing center in a preschool classroom is typically a place that encourages children to write by containing items of interest that stimulate the writing process. Rowe (2008a) recommends having different types of pencils, crayons, markers, papers, hole punches, envelopes, stickers and greeting cards in the writing center, among other items of interest to the children available for use (p. 73-74). Gerde, Bingham & Wasik (2012) advocate for adding word cards to the writing center for children to copy. Gerde et al. (2012) believe that these word cards that begin in other places throughout the room during a unit, and eventually end up on the word wall or on cards in the writing center, provide useful words to write and remind children about their past learning. It should be noted that not every writing center has every single one of these items. Some teachers introduce the items little by little, and others put everything out at once. In this area of the room, children are encouraged to sit, explore and write about anything they choose during center times (Rowe, 2008a).

When children go to the writing center, much like when they write/compose independently during Writers’ Workshop (for an explanation of Writers’ Workshop see Kissel, 2009; King, 2012), they are allowed to write about anything they choose [excluding the writing about guns and weapons, which are a taboo topic in public schools (Dyson, 2001)], with the stipulation that they must come and read their work to an adult

(conferencing), so that an adult may help them write their message (taking dictation) (King, 2012). Depending upon the ability level of the child, he/she is encouraged to write some of the words he/she dictated to the adult, while the adult stretches out the word. Punctuation at the end of the sentence is also pointed out. The adult also reads back the message while showing the child the left to right progression of his/her words written on the page to ensure that the message is correct. It is important to note that grammar is not challenged nor corrected, and that grammatical errors are not pointed out when reading back a child's dictation, as this leads to the reduced inclination to experiment with writing (Wohlwend, 2008). Additionally, when children are asked if their message "sounds right," meaning "is it grammatically correct," they often silently stare at the adult who asked that question as though they do not understand the problem the teacher has with their writing (Dyson & Smitherman, 2009).

While dictation is an important component of most preschool classrooms, it is not without its criticisms. Ray and Glover (2008) point out the need to listen to the children's stories and ask clarifying questions. They do not believe that it is beneficial to take dictation when preschool children make books. Rather, the child should be encouraged to "read" the story with whatever words or pictures he/she puts in the book. Ray & Glover (2008) found that overall; children can retell the basic meanings of their stories over long periods of time without dictation. The researchers claim that children do not feel like writers when an adult takes dictation for them. All children have important stories to tell, and it is part of a teacher's job to not only let them tell these stories but also assist in writing down these stories so that they can be read and/or

evaluated without the child having to be present to read. This will be discussed in more detail in chapter two.

For this study, “popular culture” is defined as “a discourse, or set of discourses, which are shared by a group of people; discourses which are complex in construction and often contradictory in the messages they give or reading they offer” (Marsh & Millard, 2000, 19-20). The popular culture references may include current superheroes, princesses, cartoons, television shows (including, but not limited to, cartoons), movies, music and video games. Because popular culture is different from classroom to classroom, and region to region, there are multiple constructs of it. In Dyson’s 1999 study, for example, there were five major sources of popular culture/media used by the first-grade children participating in her study. They were in the form of content, for example, team and player names, sporting events and the knowledge of each sport; communicative, such as upcoming game announcements and results of the game; graphic conventions, such as the symbols of each team; voiced utterances, such as words spoken by commentators and players; and ideologies of gender and power, which included how the players were drawn and discussed. In another study, Dyson (2001) additionally found that children can and do appropriate a range of materials from the popular media they view at home, such as 1) conceptual content --“including names (e.g., of characters, of a media show itself), theme (e.g., being powerful), plots or plot segments, and the actual watching of the show itself as a reportable event”(p. 421); 2) communicative forms-- “including entire textual forms (e.g., a superhero story) and discourse or aesthetic features of those forms (e.g., heavy use of exclamations ['AAAAH!' or 'Help!'])” (p. 421); 3) borrow graphic conventions--“(e.g., stylized print, directional indicators, symbols or

potential and enacted power [jagged lines, swirls]" (p. 421); 4) "revoice actual lines spoken by characters" (p. 421); and 5) recontextualize ideologies themselves..." (p. 421).

In a more recent study, Kissel (2011) found that prekindergarten children use popular culture in the following ways,

- (a) children naturally incorporate popular culture into their writing;
- (b) children include popular culture in their writing based on conversations with peers,
- (c) children use popular culture topics to teach peers specific writing features, and
- (d) children use popular culture to gain power over peers during writing (p. 23).

The Problem

Dyson's seminal studies examined early elementary school-aged children's appropriations of popular culture/media into their writings. As mentioned in the previous section of this chapter, Dyson (1999 & 2001) found that children appropriate popular culture into their writing in many ways. This work has shown that children's common knowledge of popular culture/media has helped them bond with each other through both writing and play (Dyson, 2003). Additionally, her work illustrates the interplay between the official and unofficial curricula in many schools. She also noted the need children feel to include their peers in their writing process and compositions to maintain their status in the peer group (Dyson, 2013a).

Children write about what they know, and most of what they know comes from their home experiences (Rowell, 2006). Much of what children know, their funds of knowledge (which is discussed in more detail in chapter two), they learned about from

different cultural texts, such as, television, video games and other such popular culture items in their homes. Cultural text refers to items from children's home and school cultures are textual in nature and as such, give children something to write about. Rowsell (2006) argues that all of these texts from the children's homes help children to make meanings which teachers need to build upon (p. 46). While teachers may not like some of the popular culture influences that come into the classroom, their duty is to investigate them to understand where children extract their thoughts when they write and talk about different topics to help them grow as literacy learners (Rowsell, 2006).

The act of writing and/or composing around and with popular culture is not without its tensions. Some of the tensions are between the children, and others are adult issues. Among other tensions, the most common tensions associated with popular culture and writing relate to gender, violence, and power struggles between the official and unofficial curricula, as well as between teachers and administrators (Wohlwend, 2009; Willet, 2005; Fletcher, 2006; Newkirk, 2002; Dyson, 2001; Dyson, 2003; Kissel & Miller, 2015; and Marsh, 2000). These will be discussed in detail in chapter two. It should be noted that these tensions have been found primarily in the primary and upper elementary grades, but not mentioned in the preschool years.

Purpose Statement

This study aims to contribute to the literature by exploring how preschool children in a mixed-age classroom, who attend a public school in an urban, Midwestern area, write/compose when given the chance to use materials that feature their favorite popular culture icons. It also, in this setting, aims to provide increased understandings of the

tensions and joys surrounding children's writing and composing. Most of the literature that addresses these tensions revolves around children in kindergarten, first, second, and third grade and beyond (Dyson, 2001; Dyson & Smitherman, 2009; Willet, 2005; and Wohlwend, 2009). With the increasing pressures of forcing young children to develop literacy skills faster and faster, empowering them to write, and showing them that their words have meaning is becoming more and more pressing. This study will add to the base of knowledge about how young children use popular culture to tell their stories and enhance their emergent writing or composition.

Research Questions

Due to the qualitative nature of this study, the research questions provide guidance as to what is observed when the preschool children in one urban, Midwestern area classroom write during center times. The research questions for this study are:

1) In their emergent writing/composing with popular culture materials, in what ways do three-, four-, and five-year-old children engage with the materials, their peers and/or the adult(s) in the preschool classroom writing center?

For this study, composition is defined as the multimodal process of combining illustrations, text, and talk to tell a story (Ray & Glover, 2008).

2) What does it mean to bring popular culture into a preschool classroom as a teacher?

The teacher-researcher hypothesized that the quality of expression (as determined by the DRDP (2015), Language and Literacy Development measure 10: Emergent Writing and the Missouri Early Learning Goals for Literacy: Writing (2013)) will be

higher in the intervention group than in the control group as evaluated by pre-and posttest journaling samples.

Significance

Children's writing has been examined for references to popular culture and media dating back several decades. As the literature review in chapter 2 will demonstrate, very little research published in English was found on the writing processes and experiences that take place in preschool writing center with or without the addition of popular culture themed writing materials. Additionally, there was no research located that addressed the tensions surrounding adding popular culture to the preschool writing center. Instead, the research focused on the works of primary-aged children and Writers' Workshop.

Delimitations

This study took place in one urban, Midwestern area, Title I-funded preschool classroom from February 2018 through May 2018. According to the U.S. Department of Education, Title I is a program that gives financial assistance to local educational agencies (LEAs), and schools that service families from low socioeconomic backgrounds to ensure that children meet state academic standards (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). According to Preis (2017), a family of four was considered to be in poverty in 2016 if the gross family income per year was \$24,300 or less. A family of four was eligible for the free lunch program if the gross yearly income was \$31,590 or less. A family of four making \$44,955 or less was eligible for the reduced lunch program. Altogether, this information suggests that the children serviced by the Title I program in

preschool (and beyond) do not have a gross yearly income of more than \$44,955 for a family of four.

The reason for beginning the study in February was that, usually by that time of the year, much of the ice and snow have melted, and the children's attendance is typically better. There were also fewer school breaks during this time frame. This preschool classroom was housed in a building that contained children from preschool through fifth grade. Generally, the Title I program pays for preschool classrooms that educate children of low socioeconomic status. The Title I program also supports reading and/or math specialists to work with the older children in the building. The vast majority of the children in this elementary school building were participants of the federal free-and-reduced-lunch program.

The limitations of this study are addressed in Chapter 5.

Preview

There are four additional chapters in this dissertation. Chapter Two is a review of the literature on the impact of adding the children's favorite popular culture icons to their writing, and the tensions that are observed in preschoolers writing about popular culture. Chapter Three describes the methodology of this study, including detailed information about the sample and population, the methods used to collect the data, and how the data was analyzed. Chapter Four presents the study findings. Chapter Five reexamines the overall study and discusses the conclusions, implications, and recommendations for further research.

Definition of Terms

Emergent writing: a spectrum that goes from scribbles to letter like forms to random

letters in a line to sound spelling and eventually to writing some basic high-frequency words such as “the” and the child’s own name (Coates, 2002). It also includes talking about one’s writing during and after the writing process.

Composition: the multimodal process of combining illustrations, text, and talk to tell a story (Ray & Glover, 2008, p. 52)

Popular Culture: “a discourse, or set of discourses, which are shared by a group of people; discourses which are complex in construction and often contradictory in the messages they give or reading they offer” (Marsh & Millard, 2000, 19-20)

Title I: a program that gives financial assistance to local educational agencies and schools who service families from low socioeconomic backgrounds to ensure that children meet state academic standards (U.S. Department of Education, 2015)

Preschool: a school-based program for children ages three to five years old (Schickedanz & Collins, 2013)

Appropriate: a verb, meaning to take and make one’s own

Writing Center: a location in the room specifically used for children to write and compose while they explore literacy tools (Rowe, 2008a; Rowe,2008b; Bay, 2015; Ray & Glover, 2008; Project Construct National Center 2005)

Inclusion: including children of all needs in a classroom

Poverty: living in a household of 4 with a gross annual income of \$24, 300 or less (Preis, 2017, February)

Urban: a metropolitan region

At-risk: children deemed as needing remediation to be successful in the official school world

Low socioeconomic status: those families whose income is at or below the poverty level

DRDP (Desired Results Developmental Profile, 2015) (California Department of Education, 2015): the assessment used by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) for preschool-aged children

MELGs (Missouri Early Learning Goals) (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2013): Learning goals set up by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to guide teachers' lesson planning

Individualized Education Program (IEP): a document that spells out the goals and modifications for a child determined to have special education needs)

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The goal of this literature review is to show the state of knowledge of popular culture into young children's emergent writing. This review will begin with a brief discussion of emergent writing, followed by the social aspects of writing; also, writing center materials, motivations and enhancements will be discussed. The link between young children's writing and playing will be addressed, as well as its link to popular culture. The last category of discussion focuses on the tensions surrounding popular culture in children's writings.

Emergent Writing

Emergent writing falls under the umbrella term of emergent literacy. It is traditionally considered the beginning phases of writing. Emergent writers are said to be learning how print works, retelling events in sequence, seeing the permanence of writing, using simple sentence construction, and using known words prominently (Fisher & Frey, 2013). Also, importantly, the term "emergent writing" should include that it is a social and multimodal process that encompasses talking, play, digital constructions, popular culture artifacts, and movement (Dyson, 2001; Mackenzie, 2011; Kissel, 2009; Wohlwend, 2009; Rowe, 2008b; Yoon, 2014).

Teachers and researchers need to be cognizant of the concept that young children are authors and, as such, whatever they state they "wrote" or "drew" on their papers is fact. Meaning-making is arguably the most important component to emergent writing (Genshi & Dyson, 2009; Kissel, Hansen, Tower, & Lawrence, 2011; Hall, Guo & Wang, 2015; King, 2012; Bradford & Wyse, 2012; Kennedy, 2013). According to Genshi and Dyson

(2009), “From an adult perspective, children’s written symbols may clearly differ from their drawn pictures, but both are graphic means representing and communicating meaning. Those shared features may help explain why children who distinguish pictures from print in a book, for example, may still use the word ‘writing’ to refer to the act of ‘drawing’...” (p. 8). According to Bradford and Wyse (2012) children actively participate in the construction of their knowledge about writing. They choose what they want to represent, and find the best possible way to do so considering their comprehension of literacy (p. 11).

Currently, the focus of emergent writing research is based on emergent spelling, name writing, the other emergent literacy factors that influence emergent writing, and on the development of writing models/curricula (Welsh, Sullivan, & Justice, 2003; Puranik & Lonigan, 2012; Puranik, Lonigan, & Kim, 2011; Korat, 2011; Lonigan, Farver, Phillips, & Clancy, 2011; Bus & Out, 2009; Puranik & Apel, 2010; Niessen, Strattman, & Scudder, 2011; Neumann, Hood, & Ford, 2012; and Matera, 2012). Much of the research also includes discussions of Writers’ Workshop (King, 2012; Kissel & Miller, 2015; and Dennis & Votteler, 2012). It appears that technology studies are seeping into the emergent writing curriculum, such as using e-books (Korat, Shamir & Arbiv, 2011). An additional trend is that children as young as two-years-old write for a reason or specific purpose (Rowe, 2008a). Another trend that is beginning to receive attention is writing across the curriculum (science writing) (Wilson, Trainin, Laughridge, Brooks, & Wickless, 2011). Additionally, researchers are beginning to include how children who are designated as English Language Learners, speech and language delayed and/or have other learning issues can be included in the emergent writing classroom (McCloskey,

2011; McGinty & Justice, 2009; Cabell, Justice, Zucker, & McGinty, 2009; Matera, 2009; Pilonieta, Shue, & Kissel, 2014; Yaden & Tardibuono, 2004).

This section is of importance, because preschoolers are emergent writers. It not only describes what emergent writing is, it also describes the current state of the research. This current state of the research demonstrates that few studies have been conducted in the preschool classroom writing center and those that have been conducted were with two- and three-year-olds. This presents a gap in the literature that the proposed study hopes to address.

The Social Aspect of Writing/Peer Influence

When young children write stories, it is rarely done in isolation. They interact with others to not only collaborate but also to support each other (Mackenzie, 2011; Kissel et al., 2011). In conversations with peers during the writing process, children negotiate their literate roles as idea generators, scribes, audience members and illustrators (Rowe, Fitch, & Bass, 2001). Peers can be a source of help in the writing process (Rowe, Fitch & Bass, 2001; McCloskey, 2013; Kissel et al., 2011), when more knowledgeable peers help others to stretch their words, draw illustrations, and demonstrate how to write particular letters (McCloskey, 2013; Kissel, 2011; Kissel et al., 2011). McCloskey (2013), for example, found that the peer group of a prekindergartner with special needs worked together to sound-spell words, such as “Lightning McQueen.” In this instance, the child with special needs was able to assist the others because of the sounds he learned in speech class. This helped to elevate his social position within the community of writers. There are other instances in the literature that show that peer groups around

writing help to elevate the status of those deemed to have “lesser” abilities (Dyson, 2016; Rowe, Fitch & Bass, 2001).

Peers hold a great deal of power and control over each other during the writing process. It has been found that children feel the need to respond to their peers and friends when they write. For example, if I write about my friend in my story, that means my friend should also include me in his/her story (Dyson, 2013b; Kissel et al., 2011). Additionally, if my friend wants to be in my story, I must put him/her in it, whether I like it or not (Dyson, 2013b). Yoon (2014), however, found the opposite to be true in his study of kindergartners; the children informed each other that they did not have to include someone in their writing if they did not want to at that moment (p. 115).

Children use their writing to gain access to affinity groups. To gain entrance into an affinity group, children must write about a popular culture topic that is of interest to the group (Boldt, 2009; Vasquez, 2003). For example, Boldt (2009) found that when Kyle wrote a statement about the basilisk (a snake from the Harry Potter movies), and shared it with his tablemates, he gained entrance into their affinity group. Sometimes, children’s messages must change before a child can gain entrance into the affinity group. For example, in Kissel’s (2011) study of prekindergartners, he discovered that boys working at the table were insistent that their friend did not “write” a Ninja Turtle, despite his claims, because he was not using the correct color. After trying multiple different colors, they finally agreed that he did, in fact, “write” a Ninja Turtle. In this interaction with his would-be affinity group, the child not only gained entrance but also made revisions that made his “writing” more acceptable to his intended audience. Newkirk (2001) also found

that the fifth graders in his study focused on their audience when they were writing. Their intended audience determined the level of gore they put into their compositions.

Young children are social beings and, as such, it should be no surprise that they use and feed off each other for ideas while moving through the emergent writing process (Kissel, 2011). As the research above demonstrates, the social interactions, such as talking with peers about their own personal writing process is of vital importance to the growth of the community of writers (McCloskey, 2013, Rowe et al., 2001; Kissel et al., 2011). This growth is one of the aspects of emergent writing/composing that will be examined when looking at the engagement of the preschool children surrounding their favorite popular culture icons in the writing center. The knowledge gained from the previous research should also help the teacher-researcher to explain and validate what she is observing in the writing center.

Revising, Editing, and “Reenvisioning”

Children can and do mix or reenvision genres when they write. Several researchers agree that children are capable of such actions with the correct amount of scaffolding from adults and peers (Kissel et al., 2011; Kissel & Miller, 2015; Kissel, 2008; Vasquez, 2003; Wohlwend, 2009; Dyson, 2000; Dyson, 2001). Kissel (2008) described “reenvisioning” as children’s ability to consider new possibilities by remembering their previous theme and adding something new to it. An example of popular culture being used in this reenvisioning process occurred when one of the prekindergarten children in Kissel’s (2008) study composed several days’ worth of family portraits, and then decided one day to add Shrek to her family portrait. Since Shrek was an important figure in her

conversations with her friends, he became a component to add to her family portrait composition (p. 30). While not identified by this terminology, it is not uncommon for children to add popular culture to their compositions in a similar manner, such as making popular culture icons play games, or do “normal” kid and parent activities (Anggard, 2005; Rowe, Fitch, & Bass, 2003; Henward & MacGillivray, 2014).

Children have also been found to mix their popular culture icons with school-based icons. For example, Dyson (2001) found that Noah, a focal child in her study of first graders, put Donkey Kong in “Little Bear Country.” He used the story structure from the Little Bear texts to help him write about the video game Donkey Kong, and eventually combined the characters into one story. His story continued with multiple chapters over time.

Children often edit or revise their work due to questions and comments from their peers and adults. For example, Kissel (2009) found that when one of the prekindergarten children mentioned that he was afraid of the big horse another child described in his writing, his friend drew a circle that his friend could be in to be protected from the horse (p. 161). Also, Ray & Glover (2008) found that children often noticed elements of their stories were missing when they “read” them to others. More often than not, the child stopped immediately and added the missing element before continuing with the story. Revisions were also made when the adult “re-told” or “re-read” the story back to the child.

While revisions and reenvisioning are wonderful, they are not always used by the majority of young children. It is of note that not ALL children are able or desire to revise

their work (Boldt, 2009; Kissel, 2008). For example, Boldt (2009) found that Kyle, her focal child (age 6), wrote about the snake from the Harry Potter movie he viewed, and once he wrote his brief message, he had no desire to add more to it. It served his intended purpose to gain cultural capital, or an “in,” to the affinity group, and that was all he desired. Kissel (2008) also found that, while some prekindergarten children were able and willing to reenvision and revise their texts, the majority did not do this, and instead wrote about different topics each day. Of additional interest is the concept that children may not feel that what they have written needs revision, because of the dialect in which the words are written (Dyson & Smitherman, 2009). This concept will be addressed in discussing the tensions around language later in this chapter.

Whether children actively revise, edit, or reenvision their texts is a point of discussion. Some do, and some do not. It is important to realize that the children need scaffolding to help them to see the need for revision, and the words to say, “No, I like it the way it is,” when they do not feel the need to revise their texts. This research is important because it demonstrates the ways that children work together to revise, edit and reenvision their compositions. Additionally, it demonstrates what potentially could be observed in the proposed study.

The Writing Center

In order to understand why data was taken in the preschool writing center, it was considered important to understand what the literature stated that such centers should look like. The writing center in a classroom is a specialized area where children are encouraged to write and compose. In the classrooms previously studied, they offered a

table with three to four chairs, and materials provided for the express purpose of writing and composing (Rowe, 2008a; Rowe2008b; Bay, 2015; Ray & Glover, 2008; Project Construct National Center 2005). Rowsell & Pahl (2007) discussed how the setup of the classroom depicted the habitus (the ways of doing, being and acting in the world across time, space and generations) of the teacher. The choice and placement of the materials helped to define the teacher's identity. Booth (2006) discussed how teachers needed to create time for children to spend writing and talking about what they wrote (p. 23). The writing center was deemed as the perfect place for this to occur.

Adult Participation

Adult participation in the writing center is a vital component to making the center work for the children. Whether the adult is physically at the writing center, or just available to listen to the children's stories and/or take dictation, the role of the adult is deemed as vital important (Ray & Glover, 2008; Rowe & Neitzle, 2010; Rowe, 2008a; Rowe, 2008b; Bay, 2015; Schickedanz, 2013; Kennedy, 2013; King, 2012). It is not under dispute that the caring adult should be around to scaffold children's emergent writing, but his/her exact role is not agreed upon by all. Oral language development and content knowledge are built when adult-child conversations occur around children's compositions (Schickedanz, 2013; Kennedy, 2015). In a two-year-old classroom, it was observed that when children were left alone at the writing center, they engaged in parallel exploratory activities and did not converse; however, when an adult joined them, conversations took place, and the children participated in literacy-based activities (Rowe, 2008a; Rowe, 2008b).

Some take the point of view that one of the adult's jobs in the writing center (or any time a story is brought to an adult) is to take dictation. Schickedanz (2013) viewed this as an important way to link writing with the message the child conveyed. Children often have wonderful stories to share; however, they have difficulty when they do not have the motor skills, or even the literacy skills, to write their own stories (King, 2012; Rowe, Fitch, & Bass, 2003). The opposing side of the argument states that it is not the adult's job to take dictation of child writing, and the work of Ray & Glover (2008) falls into this opposing camp. They report that we can better honor children's stories by listening, asking questions, responding to their books and retelling their stories back to them. This is probably true; however, in the experience of the teacher-researcher, preschool children are able to read back their journal entries to their families with the dictation present after a significant time elapsed between the actual composing and reading of the entries.

While they make some excellent points, they neglect to address the issue of accountability regarding preschoolers' compositions. In the school where the data was taken, the administrator was one of the researchers, so he already had an enlightened point of view regarding preschool children's writing; not all teachers were this fortunate. When dictation is not taken, the child must be present to read the story. This does not show an administrator, who may or may not understand preschool composition, looking at work in the hallway what is going on in the classroom and/or with the child's writing/compositional development. In their book, examples with notations under the photographs explain what the child wrote. However, according to the text, this is only done to show the readers of the book the child's thinking. Kissel & Miller (2015) discussed the problem of accountability in a prekindergarten writers' workshop. They

stated that notations about what the children did with a composition should be placed under it to explain the writing process.

A hybrid between taking dictation and not taking dictation may be what is best given amid the climate of accountability in the teacher-researcher's school. In the Missouri Early Learning Standards (MELS) for Literacy, it is noted in the "Reading" section that dictation helps children to develop a sense of story (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2009, p. 9). One of the many strategies to help to promote writing in young children is to take dictation on their writings and drawings, and then read the words back to them (p. 12). Given that the MELS were the mandated standards for teaching preschool in a public-school setting in the State of Missouri, dictation was a must in the teacher-researcher's classroom. Dictation *was* required during our formal writing times (journaling). The children often carried this expectation with them to the writing center. It should be noted that in the writing center, the children were not expected or required to share their work. This did not mean, however, that the children are expected to dictate to an adult *everything* they composed at the writing center. It simply meant that the option was available. Regardless of whether or not the child chose to dictate his/her story, the teacher-researcher needed to document the story for purposes of analysis.

That a responsive adult is in or around the children's writing center was not determined as disputed, but the role of that adult had been disputed. Popular thought holds that the adult should just be there and listen, yet many otherwise support that the adult needs to take dictation (Ray & Glover, 2005; Schickedanz, 2013). One thought that

was agreed upon was that the adult would engage the children in conversations about their writing. The reason that this body of research was considered important to the proposed study, was because the teacher-researcher was a constant in the writing center during the data collection process.

Writing Center Items and Child Participation

The items in a writing center are crucial to the development of motivation for young children to write. There are many writing tools that can and should be included in the writing center, such as: paper, pens, markers, pencils, crayons, dictionaries, picture books, hole punches, dry erase boards, tape, scissors, and staplers (Bay, 2015; Project Construct National Center; 2005; Rowe, 2008a; Rowe, 2008b). Gerde, Bingham, and Wasik (2012) advocated for adding word cards into the writing center for children to copy. Gerde et al. (2012) believe that these word cards that begin in other places throughout the room during a unit, and eventually end up on the word wall, or on cards in the writing center, “not only stimulate children’s reflection on their previous classroom experiences but provide a useful set of words to write” (paragraph 18). The Project Construct National Center (2005) seemed to agree that charts and word walls are important additions to any writing center.

When “fun,” or novel items, such as stickers, magazines, and tools with pictures of popular culture icons are included in the writing center, the children can seem more interested and motivated in participating in the writing process on their own time. Bay (2015) conducted a study about how preschool children participated in the writing center during free choice time. He found that when the teacher added “encouragement

materials” or “remarkable materials,” that is, items that were new and of interest to the children, more children came to the writing center. Rowe (2008a & 2008b) found that urban, European American preschoolers (ages 2-3) maintained interest in the writing center when new items, such as newspapers, envelopes, greeting cards, glue sticks, markers, and stickers were added (p. 408). Vera (2011) advocated for adding popular culture items to the writing center, but did not state what items or how to present them. Marsh (1999) brought in Teletubby-themed materials, and added them to the writing center after making “Tubby Custard” with the children. She found children who had never shown an interest in the writing center before (as reported by their teachers), came when Teletubby recipe cards and notes were added to the center. Marsh and Millard (2000) also endorse a rationale for adding popular culture items into the writing center. Placing popular culture-themed materials in the classroom, in the case of the proposed study, in the writing center, creates a space where children can feel more comfortable in school, and embrace that their home cultures are also valued (p. 183). By recognizing the children’s interests (and allowing them to write about them), such as, “Digimon, as well as dinosaurs,” we are allowing the children to engage in pleasurable literacy activities.

Rowe (2008b) found that “a central part of children’s participation at the writing table was playing with writing materials to explore what kinds of physical actions produced different graphic effects” (p. 426). She further found that this playing with materials produced physical texts that were “the central focus in learning-to-write events” (p. 426). This leads the teacher-researcher to believe that it is essential for children to have the opportunity to explore the tools in the writing center and to “play” with them. Similarly, Rowe and Neitzel (2010) found that, while two- and three-year-old children are flexible,

and adapted their play participation to particular events, they had definite preferences to some writing activities, materials, and interactions, based on their personal interests that were consistent with their profiles of play behaviors. They found that children acted out patterns of personal interest that endured throughout the year. The children with conceptual interests focused on generating ideas, and exploring ways to get ideas on paper. The children with creative interests focused on the open-endedness of materials and how to use them. The children with procedural interests appreciated the conventions of writing and doing what their teachers did, such as writing their names and letters. The socially-oriented children were focused on ways to engage in social interaction with others during the writing process.

If, as teachers and researchers, the goal is for children to be engaged in the writing process and at the writing center, there is a need to provide materials that not only encourage children to write and create written masterpieces but also let them play their way through the writing process (Rowe, 2008a; Rowe, 2008b; Bay, 2015; Project Construct National Center, 2005; Bay, 2015). Motivation to write is a huge issue for many schools and classrooms. This literature suggested that supplying popular culture-themed items can help motivate children to write about what they know and love (Marsh & Millard, 2000; Vera, 2011; Marsh, 1999). It also served as a rationale supporting the research questions.

Play as Writing or Storying

The most popular vehicle of learning for young children is play (Project Construct National Center, 2005), so there should be no doubt that they play their way through literacy. The research regarding play also showcases that children will change their

“stories” from the time they initially write them, to the time they actually put words on their paper for the teacher. Drama or play is an editing tool (Wohlwend, 2009; Vasquez, 2003; Rowe et al., 2003). Wohlwend (2009) found that children, specifically girls in a kindergarten classroom, not only played with Disney Princess dolls during Writing Workshop but they also composed stories and plays about the adventures of these dolls. These stories were often edited as the play continued. Vasquez (2003) repeated similar results when Curtis, her focal child, and his friends made their own Pokémon cards, and then acted out the game to learn whether their changes were acceptable to the game.

Continuing the social aspect of writing/peer influence theme, children are found to use play, while writing, to join social groups (Boldt, 2009). Play is also used as a negotiation technique. For example, when co-creating text in a first-grade classroom, children were found to work together to create stories. When one child was reported to propose a change, it was okay for the other to say, “no,” and then negotiation over how the story should be presented ensued (Rowe et al., 2003). Wohlwend (2012) also found that the boys in her focal group on princess play had to go through negotiations in order to turn the play, and subsequent writing, into their own works.

Children often use textual toys to play their way through writing (Dyson, 2003; Dyson, 2008; Wohlwend, 2010). For example, the first-grade children involved in “The Pine Cone Wars” brought conventions, such as speech bubbles, to their written war play (Dyson, 2008). Wohlwend (2010) found that her focal children used writing to enact their video game playing, making it into a text. While the researcher could not fully understand their co-constructed meaning, the children certainly could understand it. The

marks the boys made on their paper were interactive and playful. Other textual toys included children pretending to be on the radio doing an interview, while they wrote the interview (Dyson, 2003).

Children use writing and play to reenact and work through their disagreements (Yoon, 2014; Dyson 2008). For example, two kindergarten boys were playing a game of what they called “tic-tacs and toes,” using letters. They disagreed over how to play the game (the rules kept changing). One of the boys drew a drain, as the other quipped, “Have a good day in the drain,” breaking the tension between them (Yoon, 2014).

Children use play for a variety of reasons when they write. Play can be used as an editing tool. It can be used to help form and work through relationship issues. Children also bring their dramatic play into their compositions. This body of research demonstrates how children engage with materials and their peers in the writing center.

Popular Culture

Children’s choices in what they write about have a special significance. They have the tendency to write about what they know and enjoy, and like it or not, children love popular culture characters. Popular culture is not an easy term to define; it is a very fluid concept, and as such, varies from region to region, school to school and, more interestingly, from classroom to classroom (Marsh & Millard, 2000). Children’s writing has been examined for references to popular culture and media dating back several decades. Most of the research to date focuses on the writings of children ages five-years-old and up; however, within the last decade, there are a few examples of studies based on prekindergarten children’s (ages four and five) writing regarding popular culture/media

(Kissel, 2011; Yoon, 2014; Wohlwend, 2012). To follow, popular culture has been broken down into three sub-categories: 1) Popular culture themes and/or definitions; 2) popular culture's place in the classroom, and 3) copying popular culture in writing.

Popular culture themes and/or definitions. What is popular culture? As Alvermann & Xu (2003) stated, "Trying to define *popular culture* is like nailing gelatin to a wall" (p. 146). It is a fluid and changing construct. From superheroes to princesses, from sports stars to cartoon characters, popular culture is everywhere and of interest to our children. According to Marsh and Millard (2000), a working definition of popular culture is: "a discourse, or set of discourses, which are shared by a group of people; discourses which are complex in construction and often contradictory in the messages they give or reading they offer" (p. 19-20). When examining and unpacking popular culture, they also found that the concept, for children, includes comics, games, toys, cards, stickers, clothes, accessories (hair and jewelry), sporting goods, wordplay, oral rhymes, jokes, and food. Kissel (2011) defined popular media as, "[c]artoons, television shows, video games, and music" (p. 16). This is further evidence that children are inundated with their favorite popular culture icons, as referenced in Chapter 1.

Dyson found in her studies that, depending upon the group of children, the popular culture references are different. Children appropriate concepts from football games, songs and superhero stories. They also appropriate concepts from video games and popular classroom storybooks (Dyson, 2001). Children appropriate textual styles from the popular culture they watch at home (Kissel, 2011; Dyson, 2001). For example, Dyson (2001) found children borrow the heavy exclamations from superhero texts. Children also learn writing ideas from movies (Kissel, 2011).

Popular culture's place in the classroom. Popular culture is a powerful motivator in classrooms, specifically in relation to the writing curriculum. It allows children the opportunity to challenge their perceptions and engage in critical discourse (Willett, 2005; Ashton, 2005; Vasquez, 2003). Children also learn many skills via the integration of popular culture (Vasquez, 2003; Arthur, 2001; Kissel, 2011). Using popular culture in the classroom also helps to bridge the gap between home literacies and school literacies (Marsh, 1999b; Marsh, 2013; Arthur, 2001; Ashton, 2005). One can try to keep popular culture out of the classroom, but it is not successful (Henward, 2015).

Children are motivated by the playful aspect of popular culture in their writing. Marsh (2000) studied four- and five-year-old children in which the “Batcave” was set up as a dramatic play center, with writing tools to encourage the children to write stories and journals. She found that the children wrote for a variety of purposes, such as storytelling, maps, and directions. Additionally, she stated that children who were normally reluctant writers came to the center and wrote. Marsh (1999b) also found this to be true in her study of nursery children when she brought recipe and note cards with the Teletubbies on them to the writing center. Willett (2005) found similar results when she allowed her eight- and nine-year-old students to write about popular culture. She found that the boys were especially motivated to get back to their stories about superheroes saving the world from aliens.

Following up on the previous example, children engage in critical discourse about their popular culture writings. Willett (2005) stated that the eight- and nine-year-old children in her study cited and explained that genre is a primary reason for including violence in their popular culture writings. Further, her students explained that you cannot

write a story about aliens without including someone in the story to kill them. Vasquez (2003) found that her focal child and his friends learned about the genre and understood it via their re-creations of Pokémon cards. Arthur (2001) appeared to agree with this sentiment, by suggesting that teachers use a range of popular culture texts (as well as more traditional canons) to discuss issues of power, gender, and violence with children, and encourage the writers to think about other ways to otherwise revise the characters' roles and plots.

Children learn a variety of literacy and social skills by integrating popular culture into their writing. For example, Kissel's (2011) studied prekindergartners, and found that children become experts using and teaching their peers writing and literacy skills. His findings described the children using each other as resources for their writing via asking their friends how to write a needed letter, or improving a particular illustration. The questioning of peers' writings also challenged the status quo of the peers considered "experts" on certain genres. Vasquez (2003) found that, through the developing of Pokémon cards, her focal child and his friends were challenged to adapt and shift their roles from expert to novice each time a new card was created. Additionally, the boys learned principles of design and understood the interrelatedness of and across multiple-sign systems. They also built their knowledge and meaning-making skills about the multimodality of texts discovering that they could use texts, images, sounds, symbols, and interactions to make meaning with their texts.

Popular culture texts can bridge the gap between home-based literacies and school literacies. Teachers and schools disserve children by marginalizing the popular culture literacies they enjoy at home when they come to school (Arthur, 2001; Marsh, 2003;

Ashton, 2005). As popular culture is deeply embedded into children's home literacy experiences via multimedia and trade books, parents view it as a way to engage their children in literacy (Marsh, 2003). Arthur (2001) found that the popular culture icons from his four- and five-year-old focal children's homes helped them form identities as writers. His data showed that the popular culture texts of the children's homes provide children with a shared frame of reference from which they can transform texts and characters. He argued that children rapidly learn that their funds of knowledge, that include popular culture texts, are not welcome in the classroom, thus putting them at a disadvantage. Funds of knowledge are the histories and culturally developed knowledge that comes from the home (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). These histories are what the children bring to school with them and try to apply to the school's primary discourse. Since all children have different histories and experiences, their discourses may be difficult to navigate through the school's discourse. In their research on funds of knowledge, Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzales (1992) paid special attention to, "...how families develop social networks that interconnect them with their social environments (most importantly with other households), and how these social relationships facilitate the development and exchange of resources..." (p. 133). Each family, and in turn, each child, comes into the school system with certain funds of knowledge. Hedges (2011) argued that popular culture is a form of funds of knowledge. Her research found that the three- and four-year-old children in her study's interest in popular culture was not all about the popular culture, but also about the funds of knowledge-related behaviors, actions, and values appropriated from popular culture.

Arthur (2001) additionally stated when children's funds of knowledge are welcomed, it opens the door to expanding literacy learning. Ashton (2005) agreed that literacy cultural capital is built through these interactions that are not part of the "preferred literacies" in classrooms. All three scholars acknowledged that there is a disconnect between the schools' literacy canons and those of the home. The culture of the school is supposed to be welcomed into the home, but this is not always the case for the culture of the home being welcomed into the school.

Even though teachers have the best intentions by resisting or blocking the popular culture of the children's homes, doing so will backfire, and the children will find a way to bring it in. Henward (2015) studied three completely different classrooms and suggested that preschool children will bring to school the popular culture of their homes, whether it is sanctioned or not. One of the classrooms she referenced was an upper-middle-class Montessori preschool in the Southwestern United States. In this school, NO references to popular culture were allowed, including icons or statements on the children's clothing. This was done as an attempt to avoid the "negative forces of the media." Subjects of the second preschool in her study were children from poor and working-class families. This school allowed talk of popular culture to enter, as it helped to increase the vocabulary of the children who did not speak fluent English. However, popular culture toys were not permitted. Additionally, the "killing talk" that often accompanies superhero talk was prohibited. The third school, a Christian preschool serving children from lower-middle-class families, allowed popular culture toys, but only those that the teacher sanctioned, and only when the teacher introduced the theme. Popular culture was viewed as a distraction if it was not the focal point of the lesson being taught. The researcher found

that the children circumvented the rules of their schools about popular culture play by 1) pretending to do the teacher sanctioned activity while covertly constructing their own play agendas (such as playing Pokémon scenes); 2) hiding popular culture contraband in their pockets (such as pulling out little toys, and whispering about them when the teacher was not looking); 3) using toys for “killing” or harmful play (for example, using the Ken doll to inflict violence on Barbie during play time); 4) slightly changing their answers about what they would like to be when they grow up, to include both popular culture references and school-sanctioned references, such as, changing the job from being “Princess Belle” to “a mother named Belle” (p. 219). The study stated that the children knew exactly what they were doing, and chose to bring in to the classroom their unsanctioned and unwelcome popular culture interests, whether the teachers wanted it there or not. She suggested that, instead of banning these popular culture items, which clearly did not work for the schools, teachers should acknowledge and engage in meaningful discussion about popular culture. This would be one way that children could be taught to critically examine the messages in their favorite popular culture play.

Children are motivated when popular culture is present in the classroom. These include the motivation to write and engage in literacy activities (Marsh, 1999b; Marsh, 2000; Willett, 2005). Popular culture gives children the chance to critically analyze and question their perceptions (Willett, 2005; Vasquez, 2003; Arthur, 2001). Additionally, using popular culture in the classroom teaches children a variety of needed social skills, such as how to adapt and learn from more knowledgeable peers (Kissel, 2011; Vasquez, 2003). Popular culture also bridges the gap between school literacies and home literacies by building upon children’s funds of knowledge (Arthur, 2001; Marsh, 2003; Ashton,

2005). Finally, the excitement that popular culture brings to the class is so vast that even when it is not welcome, children find methods to bring it into the classroom (Henward, 2015). This body of research is critical in explaining why it is important to include popular culture into the classroom and is linked to the second proposed research question.

Copying popular culture in writing. Willett (2005) argued for the need for using popular culture in the classroom. Her argument supported that popular culture gives children the opportunity to engage in experiences, and show competencies that do not fit with traditional school and literacy skills. She noted that children are not just copying the “text” of popular media, but are producing and refining their own media texts. In her study, Dyson (2001) also discovered that, “Football heroes, soul singers, and cartoon characters, among other popular figures, mingled in children’s imaginations, their talk, and often their writing” (p. 417). It was further discovered that children could appropriate different concepts from animation, including content, names, and plots. They also appropriated communication forms, such as superhero stories, and used heavy forms of exclamations, just like the media they watched. Further, they borrowed and utilized the symbols of power from these popular culture status symbols.

Additionally, Dyson (2013a) discussed this concern about “copying” from popular culture. She stated that “...one reason that writing and play, influenced by popular culture is often officially discouraged is that it is viewed as mere imitation” (p. 14). Likewise, Willett (2005) concluded that, if teachers allow children to tap into their favorite popular culture texts, which the children view as important and meaningful, they will then be able to become more confident in their learning, and make better sense of the world around them.

Children have been known to transform the storyline of their favorite princesses. Anggard (2005) found that her girls contradicted the damsel in distress and waiting for the prince storyline, and took the characters to another level. The girls put the princesses in more modern family roles that made them active participants. Wohlwend (2009) offered similar findings, in that the girls in her kindergarten study made the princesses the heroines of the compositions on more than one occasion. Per Wohlwend (2012), the boys appropriated the princess theme turning the princesses into karate fighting queens, pizza flinging princesses, demented fairy godmothers, and sky-diving mermaids.

Popular culture has many facets in children's writings. Since popular culture has no one precise definition, and varies from place to place and person/group to person/group, it is a very complex construct. While it is certain that children can have critical dialogues, and learn much from popular culture, it is still not always a welcome addition to the classroom (Henward, 2015; Willett, 2005; Marsh, 2003; Arthur, 2001). It is also clear that whether it is welcome or not, it will still be part of the classroom environment. Understanding the many facets that popular culture has in children's writing directly speaks to a reason why it should be included and studied in the preschool writing center.

Tensions Surrounding Popular Culture in Children's Writings

There are tensions that surround writing in the school setting. Some stem specifically from issues concerning popular culture, while others are tensions surrounding writing overall that included those concerning language, curriculum, violence, and/or gender. These issues will be discussed in this next section.

Language. There are tensions in writing that surround language. In the United States of America, children are expected to speak and write in Standard English (Dyson,

2004; Dyson & Smitherman, 2009). There are also documented instances in other countries of children speaking one language or dialect at home, only to be told the dominant discourse at school does not look like that (Tibi, Joshi, & McLeod, 2013; Linsanza, 2016). Tibi et al. (2013) stated that the dialect of the spoken language (Arabic) did not match that of the formal school written language, so the children had to rely on prompts they did not understand to write. Linsanza (2016) found that, due to the language of written examinations, the children in her focal classroom in Kenya had to speak English, and that their own home language of Kamba was banned. In both of these cases, the children brought in the language of their homes, and used it anyway when the teachers were not within earshot.

There is a “linguistic disrespect” occurring for many children, as written language is an extension of cultural speech. Most schools in the United States allow accommodations for children who speak a different language; however, different dialects, such as African American Language (AAL, formerly known as Ebonics, and sometimes called “ghetto speak”) are expected to change. Dyson & Smitherman (2009) found that the children who use AAL are often asked if what they wrote “sounds right.” One of the goals of written language is to find your voice on paper (Dyson & Smitherman, 2009). Different dialects are considered an extension of children’s home culture. When it is desired that children find their voice in writing, and are then expected to figure out what needs to be “fixed” to make it sound right, teachers are disrespecting the children they are trying to help. The researchers argued that many times, when teachers demand the child fix the writing, the true message is not conveyed due to the teachers’ misunderstanding of the message. Take, for example, the phrase in Tiana’s, (their focal child’s) composition,

“...if you be bad she will Put your name on the bord...if you don’t bee there you will loos the honwork chret [treat].” Tiana is using the phrases “be” and “don’t be” to explain the conditional nature of her statements. Dyson (2004) also found that the official school world dictates that there are better ways to say things; however, she questioned who decides which language and dialect are allowed in the classroom. For the proposed study, this means that honoring children’s words and writing/compositions in whatever form they are given, including non-standard English, is a must. To do anything less would not only be disrespectful, but also defeat the purpose of exploring young children’s writing and composing efforts.

Official versus unofficial curriculum. The official curriculum for teachers of low-income students in “failing” schools is the back-to-basics approach. It is a set of prescribed activities that must be taught in a scripted way. The unofficial curriculum is what the children bring into the school, including (but not limited to) their experiences with popular culture, and what they do while they are supposed to be focused on the official curriculum (Dyson & Smitherman, 2009; Dyson, 2003; Dyson, 2004; Dyson, 2013a; Dyson, 2013b).

Back- to-basics approach. The current era of accountability, where children from “failing” schools are forced to learn via a back-to-basics approach, is perplexing. This approach forces teachers to focus strictly on the basic conventions of literacy and procedural knowledge (Wohlwend, 2008; Dyson, 2000; Dyson, 2003; Dyson, 2004; Dyson, 2013b; Ackerman, 2016). The focus is on low-level skills and the drilling of such skills. It is assumed that children from at-risk schools need this type of instruction. Further, the children receiving back-to-basics instruction are not being given the

opportunities to pursue inquiries, practice negotiating and thinking critically (Leland, Harste, & Shockley, 2007). Writing in this area is defined as, “a universal set of skills and benchmarks” that devalue developmentally-appropriate literacy instruction and exploration (Wohlwend, 2008). In the official writing curriculum, children are only allowed to write about “real” stories that happened to them (Dyson, 2013b), communicated to the children as: Do not write about Spider-Man, he is not real, and; Do not write about being a superhero, and flying through the air, it is not real and you cannot do it; or Do not write about going to the zoo, if you did not go.

The back-to-basics approach also assumes that children come to school with no prior experiences in literacy, as literacy is defined as, “a set of prescribed skills, rather than experiences,” and popular culture texts are not viewed as such. In the back-to-basics approach, young children are also expected to be able to write letters before they can compose stories (Ackerman, 2016). The teacher’s ability to teach has also come into question when he/she wants to incorporate anything other than the back-to-basics curricular approach to literacy learning (Kissel & Miller, 2015).

The back-to-basics approach causes tensions for both the teachers and, more importantly, the children. Children’s unofficial cultures that they enact during writing time often are supported by the official resources of writing such as seatmates, writing tools and guidance on how to write (Dyson, 2013b). For example, when first-grade children were writing during Writers’ Workshop, two of the focal children were sitting together officially writing, but unofficially making their schedule for their professional football games (Dyson, 2003).

Part of the problem with the back-to-basics approach to teaching skills in isolation is that skills and understanding do not each exist in isolation; rather, they are both embedded into children's experiences with literacy. Children link their experiences with popular culture to their academic culture. The children can negotiate multiple media and multiple voices into their writing and sharing by frame-shifting. That is, talking about what they like, and writing about something slightly or extremely different. For example, while children are composing, they have conversations and sing songs from their favorite singers, but end up writing short frame sentences, such as "I went to my grandma's" (Dyson, 2000).

In the official structures of writing time, first-graders are supposed to have their own topic; however, they talk and play their way through topics of interest with their peers as they write, thus bringing in their unofficial curriculum. Their conversations help them to get stories down on paper, even if the stories were sometimes exaggerated and probably did not happen. The irony of children following the ethical rules of the official curriculum is that their stories were not unique, and were less elaborate than the ones they played out in their unofficial curriculum (Dyson, 2013b).

The tension surrounding the official curricula for the teachers is fueled by their pedagogical stance that may or may not match the curricula. For example, the prekindergarten teacher who wanted the children to experience Writers' Workshop, because she knew it honored and humanized her children, had to work harder than she should have to prove to the administration that her children were learning literacy skills in a room where the back-to-basics curriculum was modified (Kissel & Miller, 2015).

In sum, the tensions surrounding the official, back-to-basics curriculum are student engagement or buy-in (topic choice), how the final product looks in comparison to the process the students went through to write, and the teachers' own pedagogical stances.

Violence. In this day and age of school violence, it is no surprise that school personnel and families are concerned about their children expressing in writing the violence that comes from many popular culture games and shows. Thomas Newkirk (2002) emphatically stated, "...there is no clear or logical line connecting reading and writing about violence with acting violently in the 'real world'..." (p. xvii). Researchers claim that children *can* distinguish between writing about fighting, versus really fighting (Newkirk, 2001; Newkirk 2002; Willett, 2005; Marsh & Millard, 2000). Marsh and Millard (2000) also point out that those who are upset about popular culture causing children to become more violent are ignoring the fact that, for many children, violence is a natural part of their daily lives.

There are two main tensions surrounding the use of writing about violence. The first one stems from the fact that children cannot distinguish how much is too much. Children, as young as second and third graders, are able to act as critics of their own "appropriation of media violence" in their stories (Newkirk, 2001; Willett, 2005). The children can distinguish between what is too much violence, and what is acceptable. The students involved in these studies also had an unofficial standard about the level of violence in their writing. For example, the children in Willett's (2005) study developed a strict code for how much is too much violence. The children decided that gruesome and excessive violence should not be allowed. They cited that every single detail about the violence should not be written, everyone cannot die when aliens attack, and someone has

to save Earth (p. 146). This is similar to what Newkirk (2001) found in his interviews of upper-elementary-aged children. They also had a code for how much blood was too much blood. The children in both of these studies also argued that a certain level of violence had to exist in their writing in order to stay in the genre.

Newkirk (2001) argued that many of the popular culture programs that are credited with giving children the violent themes for their writing are about so much more than the actual violence. The “violent” themed popular culture programs are more about teamwork, perseverance, loyalty, courage, and problem solving than actual violence. It can be inferred that the same can be said for the children’s writing surrounding these topics.

The second tension around writing about violence is created by school and classroom policies that dictate that children cannot write about guns or war. Dyson (2001) documented the tension of the child wanting to write about shooting scenes, and the school not allowing it. She found that the first-grader she was studying found a way around the no-shooting rule. He stated that, instead of using it to kill people, it was just a water gun. Dyson (2008) also found that the children could write about pinecone wars (throwing the pinecones at their friends and play fighting) to a point. However, when they decided to start writing about killing each other, the teacher banned all “war” writing. From a school’s perspective, writing about violence can be an issue.

There are two main tensions surrounding writing about violence. The first is that children may not know how much violence is too much. The second tension revolves around school policies focused on writing about guns and war, and the children’s desires to do it anyway.

Gender. There are several tensions surrounding writing through the lens of gender in the literature. Most of them revolve around the idea that the topics boys like to write about do not follow the traditional school canon of acceptable stories. The argument that teachers and schools are disadvantaging boys by restricting their topic choices is well documented (Wohlwend, 2012; Fletcher, 2006; Newkirk, 2002; Ortiz, Ferrell, Anderson, Cain, Fluty, Sturenbecker & Matlock, 2014). The topics that girls traditionally write about are accepted by schools. Newkirk (2002) referred to this as “gender privilege.” However, the choice of topic was not the only tension surrounding gender and writing. There was also the issue of gender bias in children’s compositions.

Topic choice. There are topics about which boys traditionally write and topics about which girls traditionally write. Research informs us that boys like to write about violence, superheroes, monsters, space stories, video games humor, sports, science fiction, and gross bodily functions (Dyson, 1994; Wohlwend, 2012; Fletcher, 2006; Newkirk, 2002; Ortiz et al., 2014). Additionally, boys preferred the genre of horror (Newkirk, 2002). Girls, on the other hand, have a more privileged status. They tended to write about topics, such as friendship and emotions (Fletcher, 2006; Newkirk, 2002). These topics are closer to the school canon of acceptable compositions. Fletcher (2006) argued that boys writing about violence provides them with bonding experiences, and helps them to show friendship; so, violence is social capital for them. Newkirk (2001) had similar findings. It has also been found that girls, while they do not traditionally write horror compositions, do not mind hearing about them, as long the boys keep the gore to a minimum (Newkirk, 2001). Fletcher (2006) also reminds us that, as teachers,

even though the boys' choices of genres may create tensions in the classroom, we need to negotiate to allow boys the chance to write on their favorite topics.

Gender bias. There is a distinct gender bias when it comes to children's writing. Wohlwend (2009) found that the girls challenged the right of boys to participate in the "princess play" that occurred during Writers' Workshop. Dyson (1994) found that the boys did not allow the girls to have roles in their Author's Theater when the topic was superheroes. Anggard (2005) similarly found that the teacher and the boys in the group all expected one of the five-year-old focal girls to choose a different topic to write about than the two focal boys chose (the boys' writing topic was heroes and the little girls were not expected to enjoy this topic). Additionally, she found that when all four focal children were present, the girls both chose to write about Barbie Princesses, and the boys both chose to write about heroes. The writing pairs split by gender, as well.

The girls writing about princesses and superheroes had a difficult time reconciling the original storylines with their preferred characters' actions. Marsh (2000) declared that, based on superhero play and writing, the girls continually put Batwoman in a subservient role to Batman and the police. This aligns with the storyline in the traditional Batman themes, where Batman saves the day, and protects the women and children. Wohlwend (2009) also found that the girls grappled with wanting to stay with the traditional-gendered Disney Princess, damsel-in-distress storylines, transforming it into a story where the princesses were powerful. The difference between these two studies is that the girls in Wohlwend's study eventually did transform their princesses into more powerful beings, and the girls in Marsh's study did not.

In children's writing, it has been found that gendered characters are supposed to be represented in a certain way (Dyson, 2013b; Wohlwend, 2012). For example, in Dyson's (2013b) study of Mrs. Bee's kindergarten, one little boy became very upset when he was drawn as a "girl" mermaid, even though he specifically stated that he wanted to be included in the story. He made it clear that he wanted to be a "boy mermaid," and did not wear a dress (which happened to be what he interpreted his friend's drawing of him to be wearing). It is also noted that the kindergarten children in this class differentiated gender by drawing different hair lengths, regardless of how long a particular child's hair actually is in reality (Dyson, 2013b). There is also a bias in the way Disney Princesses are supposed to be drawn. In Wohlwend's (2012) study, she found that the boys involved princess play, and writing created comical parodies that emphasized the "sexuality" of the princesses. It was believed that this was done to critique the gender stereotypes of the princesses. Wohlwend (2012) also noted, "The boys used the context-shifting power of play to appropriate and exploit the contradictions among identity texts. The need to negotiate and maintain shared meanings prompted by boys playing hyper-feminine Disney Princess identity texts made gender constraints more visible and available for critique" (p. 607).

There are certainly many tensions surrounding gender and writing. Most prevalent in the literature are topic choices and gender biases. Per the concept of gender biases, there are tensions that surround girls sticking to the storyline of traditional popular culture texts, while wanting to empower the characters as well. Additionally, there is tension surrounding what popular culture characters, specifically princesses, are supposed to look like. This research project aims to see if similar tensions exist in a preschool classroom.

Being aware of these tensions will help support, and potentially explain what may happen when a teacher brings popular culture into the preschool writing center.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided information regarding the state of knowledge surrounding popular culture and children's emergent writing. Researchers have found that emergent writing includes not only the physical marks on the paper, but also the social and multimodal processes, including play, talking, popular culture artifacts, movement, and digital constructions. In addition, researchers have found that writing at this stage is a very social process, and that peers influence children's writings/compositions. Children have also been found to edit, revise, and "reenvision" their writing and/or compositions. This chapter discussed the writing center, the importance of adult participation, and the importance of adding novel items to the writing center. Play, as writing or storying, was also addressed. Researchers have found that children play their way through the writing process.

Popular culture was addressed by themes and definitions, its place in the classroom and the concept of copying popular culture. Researchers have found that there are tensions surrounding popular culture in older children's writings. The tensions that surround popular culture and writing are language, curricula (including the back-to-basics approach), violence, and gender (which included topic choice and gender bias). There are gaps in the research surrounding how three-, four-, and five-year-old children engage with popular culture materials in the writing center and the potential tensions faced by

both the teacher and the children surrounding this engagement. This study aimed to address these gaps.

This chapter has provided the foundational literature to support a study addressing the following two research questions:

- 1) In their emergent writing/composing with popular culture materials, in what ways do three-, four-, and five-year-old children engage with the materials, their peers and/or the adult(s) in the preschool classroom writing center?
- 2) What does it mean to bring popular culture into a preschool classroom as a teacher?

Chapter 3: Methodology

Purpose

In this chapter, the methods employed in conducting this qualitative study are outlined. The chapter begins with a description of the research design. Next, the site and sample are addressed, as well as the role of the researcher. The data collection procedures and data analysis follow, and the chapter closes with the foreshadowed problems of this study.

Research Design

This study followed a basic qualitative research approach with an added control group design that included the analysis of pre- and post-test journal samples that generated a quantitative quality of expression score.

Basic or generic qualitative studies do not strictly adhere to a single established methodology (Kahlke, 2015; Merriam, 2009). Instead, they borrow from the tenets of two or more other qualitative research methodologies. Basic qualitative research focuses on understanding, “(1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attribute to their experience” (Merriam, 2009, p. 23). While these characteristics apply to all forms of qualitative research, there are additional dimensions to other qualitative research (Merriam, 2009). Approaches that do not have an additional characteristic feature are called basic or generic. Percy, Kostere, and Kostere (2015) stated that generic qualitative research is appropriate for use when the researcher has a body of “pre-knowledge/pre-understandings” about the topic and he/she wants to be able to add to that knowledge base. Since the study focuses on adding to the

knowledge base (as identified in the literature review) by addressing how preschool children engage with popular culture materials in the writing center, as well as, the tensions surrounding adding and utilizing popular culture in the preschool writing center, a basic qualitative study is appropriate. This basic qualitative study borrowed from the tenets of action research and thematic analysis.

Table 3.1 provides the data collection and analytic methods of the research design.

Table 3.1 Data Collection and Analytic Methods

Data Sources	Data Collection	Purpose of data collection	Analytic Methods
Children, intervention group	Field notes	Document changes in the writing center from before adding popular culture items and after adding them.	Coding procedures borrowing from the tenets of Thematic Analysis
Children, intervention group	Work samples	Document children's writing	Coding procedures borrowing from the tenets of Thematic Analysis
Children, control group & intervention group	2 journaling samples, one in March and one in May 2018	Document and compare children's writing progress	DRDP (2015) Language and Literacy Development measure 10: Emergent Writing and Missouri Early Learning Goals for Literacy: Writing
Self as a Teacher	Field notes journal including practices surrounding the writing center and activity	Document tensions and joys observed in the classroom around writing/composition and popular culture	coding procedures borrowing the tenets of Thematic Analysis; thick descriptions borrowing from the tenets of Action Research
Teacher Interview	Interviews regarding teacher perceptions of the Writing Center	Document teacher perceptions of the Writing Center	Coding procedures borrowing from the tenets of Thematic Analysis; thick descriptions borrowing from the tenets of Action Research

Tenets of Action Research. The goal of action research is to improve the research subjects' lives, and to enact social change. Action research is a fluid process in which the research participants are active in all the phases of the project. Those conducting action research are stakeholders and intrinsically engaged. Their questions should guide the inquiry (Esterberg, 2002; Zeni, 2009). The process of action research involves three phases: look, think, and act. In phase one, the problem and the stakeholders must be identified. In phase two, the group, comprised of the researcher and the participants, needs to interpret the problem and fully explain it. In phase three, an action plan is developed and put into place. It should also be noted that action research does not involve a particular data collection strategy; instead, it utilizes many qualitative and quantitative strategies, depending upon the identified problem (Esterberg, 2002).

There are branches or traditions of action research. Some of them are participatory action research, feminist action research, and evaluation research (Esterberg, 2002). The branch of action research utilized in this study was teacher or educator action research. While the literature frequently used the terms interchangeably, their meanings are not identical.

Mohr, Rogers, Sandford, Nocerino, MacLean & Clawson (2004) define teacher research as, "inquiry that is intentional, systematic, public, voluntary, ethical and contextual," as included into one's own practice (p. 23). When teacher research is referred to as systematic, it means that information is gathered in an ordered fashion, and a written record is kept of how the research was completed. This type of research is fundamentally a constructive and social activity. Teacher research includes an examination of the students' learning, as well as an explanation of the practitioner's own

practices, reactions, vision, and interpretations. The teacher-researcher keeps a journal which provides insider information about the teacher's actions, dilemmas, and the consequences for student learning (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993).

Edwards and Burns (2016) have described the process involved in teacher research as a sequence of recurring cycles, with each cycle offering four steps: planning, action, observation and reflection (p. 108). The goal of teacher research is to develop an accurate and complete picture of a phenomenon existing within the context of a setting. The context of teacher research is vital. The research is context-dependent, context-responsive, and context-relevant. Teacher research utilizes thick descriptions, talk among peers, journal writing, informal interviews, oral inquiries, and student work as data sources (Mohr et al., 2004; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Zeni, 2009).

This research style helps teachers to become more conscious of themselves as important tools in the process of teaching, as well as to build their knowledge about children's learning and their own practices in their classrooms (Mohr et al., 2004; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992). Teacher research utilizes an "organizing principle," which is a framework "from which to try out new practices and collect new data." The researcher takes on the role of a participant observer (Mohr et al., 2004), and there are two types of participant observers. The participant-as-observer is a member of the group and is focused more on observing than on participating in the activities. The observer-as-participant is an observer collecting data and is not strictly a member of the group (Shank, 2002; Merriam, 2009; Kawulich, 2005).

A basic tenet of teacher research is that data is analyzed as the researcher conducts the study. There is no waiting until the end to analyze the data. It should be noted that, while teacher research begins with research questions, these questions may be modified and/or have additional questions added as the project unfolds. Teacher research is systematic, in that the researcher collects data from a variety of sources and triangulates it, engages in constant comparison with it, and checks for interpretations with interested others (Mohr et al., 2004; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993).

Another tenet of teacher research is that it examines relationships and tensions that form while the research is occurring. The researcher must decide when to intervene, and when to simply observe the phenomenon (Mohr et al., 2004). Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) discussed the need for teacher-researchers to keep detailed journals, which will provide insight into the issues they are experiencing while they are conducting the research.

Tenets of Thematic Analysis. This basic qualitative research design utilizes tenets of thematic analysis. According to Braun & Clarke (2012), thematic analysis is a “method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set” (p. 57). The analysis is conducted with the purpose of identifying relevant data sets to answer particular research questions.

According to Braun & Clarke (2006 & 2012), thematic analysis is flexible and consists of six phases or steps. The first phase is “familiarizing yourself with the data.” In this phase, the researcher reads and rereads the data set (for example an interview transcript) at least twice and makes brief notes reflecting the potential information learned from the data set.

Phase two is called “generating initial codes.” In this phase, the researcher begins the process of assigning codes to each piece of the data set. These codes may be descriptive and taken directly from the participant’s words, or they may be more interpretive. It should be noted that a combination of these two types of codes is generally used. Coding may occur in large or small chunks based on the researcher’s preference. It is important to note that each data set should be coded before moving on to the next set.

Phase three is called “searching for themes.” In thematic analysis, the researcher constructs themes. In this phase, the data is reviewed and placed into broad ideas or topics. These ideas are then refined as codes that share characteristics that are clustered to help describe a pattern. This phase typically ends with a thematic map or chart.

Phase four is called “reviewing the themes.” In this phase, the potential themes are examined in relation to data sets and coded data. This is the point where themes are refined, and codes are shifted as needed.

Phase five is called “defining and naming themes.” In this phase, themes are defined by specific characteristics. And finally, Phase six is called “producing the report,” and as the title suggests, it involves writing the report about your data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2012).

Quantitative Data. To enhance the validity of the study, the teacher-researcher added a control group with no intervention, in order to support the conclusion that potential changes in the intervention group were actually due to the 12-session program. The control group was comprised of the children in the other preschool classroom in her building. Pre- and post-test journal samples were collected for analysis using the DRDP (2015) standard for Language and Literacy measure10: Emergent Writing and the

Missouri Early Learning Goals Literacy: Writing. The teacher-researcher hypothesized that the quality of expression score or assessment result (as determined by the DRDP 2015), Language and Literacy Development - Measure10: Emergent Writing and the Missouri Early Learning Goals for Literacy: Writing would be higher in the intervention group than in the control group, as evaluated by pre-and post-test journaling samples.

Description of Site and Sample Selection

The teacher-researcher chose her Title I preschool classroom as the intervention site of the study. The classroom was located on the first floor of a school that served children in grades preschool through fifth grade. The teacher and her teaching assistant worked with 18 children. The ages of the children ranged from three to five years old. There were eight P3s (those children who were age three on July 31, 2017), and ten P4s (those children who were age 4 on July 31, 2017). Seventeen of the children were identified by their parent(s) as being African American, and one was identified as being “mixed.” There were ten boys and eight girls participating in the intervention group. All the children qualified for the free-and-reduced-lunch program. The children were perceived to have varying academic and social needs. One child, a P3, received an Individualized Education Program (IEP) during the course of this study.

The participants of this study were chosen based on parental consent, and the child’s willingness to go to the writing center.

The children in the control group varied in age from three to five years old. The control classroom was located in the same building as the intervention classroom, but on the second floor. The children in the classroom were of African American descent.

By the conclusion of this study, there were only eight participants in the control group, based on parental consent and the child's willingness to let the teacher-researcher copy their writing. There were five P3s and three P4s participating in the control group. The total number of children in the classroom used for the control group was thirteen. Of the five children who did not participate, one parent did not give consent, and the other four did not respond to any of the three written requests for participation.

Despite this, the sampling was purposeful, in that the teacher-researcher only took participants from her own classroom for the intervention group, and went to one other preschool classroom as the control group.

The five teachers interviewed regarding their perceptions of the writing center were chosen based on the teacher-researcher's knowledge of their vast ranges of experiences in the preschool classroom. These interviews helped the teacher-researcher to validate her own ideas about the writing center.

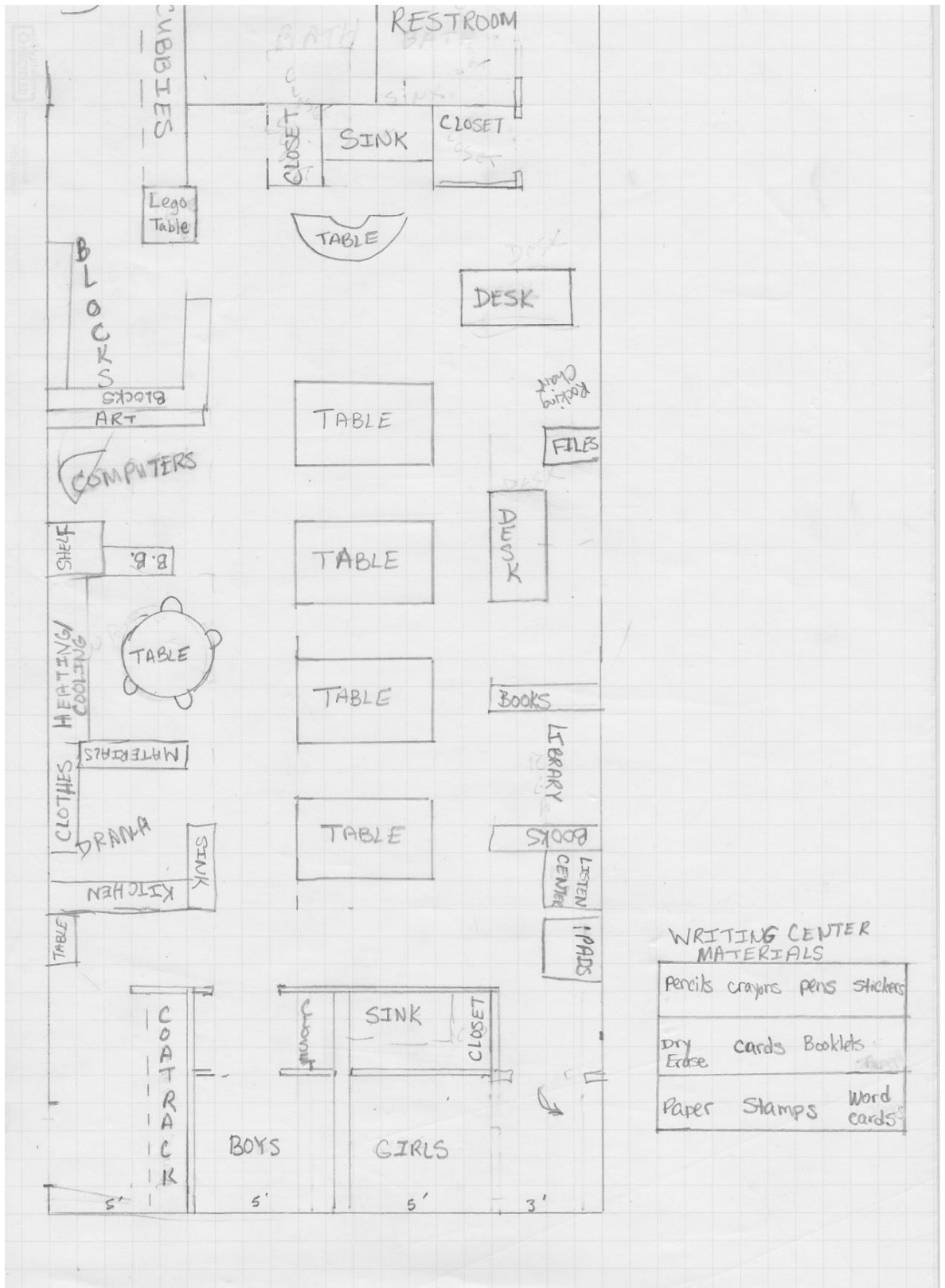
Description of the Writing Center

At the Writing Center, various tools were available for perusal and use by the children. They were not told they must use certain objects. The only restrictions in the Writing Center were that the children were to use the tools safely, and that dry-erase markers/crayons were the only things children used to write on the dry-erase boards. The Writing Center was located next to the air conditioning/heating unit, with commercially-made alphabet cards with the letters and photographs on them (they were magnetized and placed on the surface of the unit). There was also a bulletin board above the heat/air conditioning unit to post the children's writings (they chose if their work went "on the wall," home with them, or somewhere else in the classroom). The Writing Center had

various writing materials available for child use. The children had access to golf pencils, colored pencils, large crayons, ink pens, various types of paper, and stencils. They also had paper booklets (two 8 ½ X 11 pieces of paper folded and stapled together), and generic stickers and stamps. Additionally, the children had access to dry-erase boards and dry-erase markers.

The center on the other side of the shelf was called Dramatic Play. On the opposite side of the Writing Center, there was a tall, four-sided corner bookshelf (the teachers can see over it; however, the children cannot). The sides facing part of the Writing Center had student-made books, commercially-produced books, and a Clifford dictionary that was produced by Scholastic. There were also two bulletin boards attached to the shelving unit that were readily accessible for children to post their own work. The aquarium with the classroom Beta fish sat on top of this shelf. There was a circular table, and four child-sized chairs at this center (thus limiting the number of children allowed there at any one time). On the other side of the bookshelf was the Computer Center. This center had one computer. On the other side of the computer sat a beanbag chair and a basket of books and a notebook with a pencil for children to enjoy when they needed to take a break from the busy and sometimes chaotic life in the preschool classroom. Figure 3.1: Sketch of the Classroom presents a sketch of the layout of the classroom

Figure 3.1 Sketch of the Classroom



Description and Role of the Teacher-Researcher

As a Caucasian teacher of African American children, the teacher-researcher played the role of both an insider and an outsider in her research. On the one hand, she had insider knowledge about the workings of the classroom and had influence over its design, and was also accepted as a member of the learning community that she helped to develop. However, she was an outsider, because she was not a child, did not live in the community in which she taught, and referenced a different home culture than the children. Her history, home culture, and the values attached to this culture occasionally appeared to be differ much from the children and staff with whom she worked daily.

The teacher-researcher grew up in a two-parent, middle-class household with her older brother. Both of her parents were college graduates; her house was located just down the road from several farms in a borderline-rural/suburban region where most of the residents chose to live, while they worked and played in “the city.” In this household, as well as at the local elementary school, the value of education was instilled from an early age. It, as well as the value of a hard day’s work, was viewed as a means to help you get what you wanted from life. She was taught that she was not better than anyone else, and that everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity (sentiments echoed in her Sunday School classes). Such values seemed typical of the people she encountered throughout her elementary and secondary education. While the residents in her community were a relatively homogenous group, and also experienced racial and ethnic diversity therein, the schools and her family seemed focused on the similarities of the people in the community (rather than on the differences). That focus on the similarities

between the work and home community continued to be the focus of the teacher-researcher.

Prior to her current teaching position, the teacher-researcher worked for five years in the school district in which she grew up - a district that traditionally achieved solidly-strong test scores, and therefore was considered a desirable district, according to DESE's (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) accreditation standards; such a description was not expressed by DESE relative to the current school district in which she was employed. The schools in this particular district had more money invested in them, due to their accreditation status and the taxes paid by the community. Further, the three buildings she worked in housed an "abundance" of low-socioeconomic status families.

Due to the teacher-researcher's experiences growing up and working, currently living within that district's borders, and currently employed by an urban district, her perspective has been that children are children, in that they act in similar ways, regardless of the color of their skin and/or ethnicity and/or where they live. She perceived that many of the issues encountered in her experiences in her undergraduate work and beyond pertained more to socioeconomic status than to concerns about race and/or ethnicity.

While the teacher-researcher had not intended to live in the neighborhood where she worked, she was not specifically apprehensive regarding that neighborhood. Since 2006, she had been working at the same north-side school, where over the years, she was informed to be cautious. The school staff was reminded that for evening events, the police should be alerted and patrolling the streets around the school to enable adequate safety precautions.

The teacher-researcher was well aware of the strong influence she had as the classroom teacher; for example, she typically had the final say in the classroom when disputes occurred. She could also stop anything she did not feel was appropriate (whether it was in the children's writing activities or in outdoor play). However, she was also aware of the need to be sensitive in her verbal and written discourse with students and families.

The school staff was more diverse than the student population of the school, in that there were both African-American and Caucasian staff members. Per her classroom experiences in the school district, the teacher-researcher found that no family had overtly drawn attention to her race, nor used that as a reason not to believe what she informed them about their children.

Biases

As a teacher-researcher, there was an obligation to report on the children's work as it took place, and record how it took place. The issue that came into play was the biases of the teacher-researcher. She believed that children should be able to write about whatever topic they deemed fit; however, current school policies dictated otherwise. For example, as a researcher, it was her bias that any writing topic was acceptable, which did not mesh with school policy regarding children's choice of writing topics. Children in her school were strongly discouraged to write in school about weapons of any kind, even if done in an innocent manner. Teachers were advised to inform children that writing about weapons was unacceptable; such writing was to be changed to more positive topic selections. Per this research project, the teacher-researcher made note of, and discussed, any instances of this phenomena in the analysis. The child may have had to change the

topic message due to school policies, and the teacher's request. However, the message still needed to be recorded, so that a complete picture of the child's writing interests and message could be formed. It was also noted in Chapters 4 and 5 as a tension pertaining to students' writing about popular culture.

The teacher-researcher also was biased regarding her views of certain television programs, video games, and movies that preschool-aged children should not watch due to their specific ratings (R, V, and M rated programs and games, for example). She tried to eliminate judgment, because, during this study, she did not perceive it as her right to determine developmentally-appropriate programming for the children in their homes. She could report what was viewed in her classroom via books about popular culture characters, supplies with these characters' representations, etc.

Another bias that the teacher-researcher held was that when the preschoolers wrote, whatever they recorded was acceptable. All ranges of expression were acceptable, from Standard English to other languages, and to another dialect of English. The children's words were deemed important and to be respected, not corrected. Per such a bias, she could accurately write down the children's words for the record.

Data Collection

To fully address the first question of this study, it was imperative to know the children's favorite popular culture icons. This was gleaned from talks with the children at group time about their favorite popular culture icons (a list of each icon suggested by the children was made), and the teacher-researcher's general observations of the popular culture icons on the children's backpacks and clothing. They were prompted for ideas

based on television, movies, and video games. The data from group discussion(s) and the teacher-researcher's observations were triangulated to ensure that there was an agreement between the children's perspectives of their favorite popular culture icons, and the perceptions of the teacher-researcher prior to developing picture/word cards.

For the first three weeks of the study, the teacher-researcher took field notes and collected work samples (either photocopies or photographs of the children's work). Fieldnotes were identified as a researcher's written account of what was heard, seen and experienced in the research setting (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). Fieldnotes contained "descriptions of social interactions and the context in which they occurred" (Montgomery & Bailey, 2007, p. 67). Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw (1995, 2011) recommended that researchers take note of their first impressions in the field, which include anything sensory, and focus on key incidents or events. They specified that fieldnotes were not simply the personal reflections of the researcher, but were accounts to be read by a wider audience. They also recommended taking jottings, or writing down in shorthand what was observed in the field. Directly after the field experience, the researcher returned to her notes to fill in the blanks while composing the actual field notes. The field notes included thick descriptions of the events that took place in the writing center. According to Creswell & Miller (2000), a thick description provides rich details into the phenomenon observed.

The work samples cited above had notations/dictations describing what the child recorded on them. This process continued through the duration of the study. Picture/word cards, indicating the children's favorite popular culture icons, were created, laminated, and placed in the writing center prior to the fourth observation. Other

materials identifying their favorite popular culture icons, such as dry-erase boards, crayons, markers, stamps, and stickers, etc., were also added to the Writing Center.

Fieldnotes were taken based on the observations of the children's writing and composition at the writing center, both before and after the children's favorite popular culture icons were added. The teacher-researcher was in the center not only to take field notes, but also to assist the children in their composing process, as requested by the children themselves (helping to write words, taking dictation, locating requested popular culture icons in the center, etc.). For each of the research questions in this study, the teacher-researcher took and analyzed fieldnotes based on the observations recorded in the Writing Center. These field notes were placed in an electronic journal format.

Additionally, the teacher-researcher wrote a reflexive journal, detailing her impressions of the experience of bringing popular culture into the preschool writing center. She documented the perceived tensions and joys experienced during data collection days. An explanation of why she decided to proceed as she did, in relation to this project, was also included in this journal.

Instrumentation

There were two instruments used in this study. The first were five teacher interviews, used to gain insight into other teachers' perceptions of their writing centers. The list of interview questions is included in Appendix A. The second instrument was used to facilitate the teacher-researcher's knowledge of the children's favorite popular culture icons. It included a list of discussion prompts for the children during their group session(s). The teacher-researcher created this "instrument" during her coursework. As

this study focused on popular culture in one urban, Midwestern preschool classroom, different popular culture icons were to be identified for possible study replication.

The discussion prompts for the children are provided in Appendix B. These types of prompts were field-tested in a pilot project conducted for one of the teacher-researcher's earlier graduate courses. Results of the pilot project yielded that the children responded well to the prompts, and other prompts were added based on the children's discussions. As a check for accuracy, the teacher-researcher read back what she wrote, and asked the children if the record was correct. If something was not correct, changes were made, and re-read until it was accurate information.

Appendix J provides the Missouri Early Learning Goals for Writing (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2013) and the DRDP (2015) standard for Language and Literacy measure 10: Emergent Writing (California Department of Education, 2015), as these documents were used to score the children's pre-test and post-test writing samples. Their scores are located in Table 4.7.

Data Collection Procedures

In early February 2018, the teacher-researcher began her teacher interviews. The children in the intervention group engaged in conversations with the teacher about their favorite popular culture icons on February 26th, February 28th, March 1st, and March 2nd. Data was collected in the Writing Center on February 23rd, February 28th, March 6th, March 14th, March 20th, April 3rd, April 11th, April 13th, April 17th, April 24th, May 1st, and May 3rd during morning literacy centers. Each session lasted approximately thirty minutes. To ensure the accuracy of the results, the teacher-researcher was at the Writing Center to collect the data each time. Journaling samples were collected from the control

and intervention groups during the week of March 5th and May 7th. As some children were absent on the data collection day(s) in their classrooms, a journaling sample was taken upon the child's return to school.

Pre-test and Post-test Journals

Journaling samples were collected from both the control and intervention groups twice during this research study. During the week of March 5, 2018, the teachers in both rooms collected one pre-test journal sample from each child in the classroom. The journals were collected at this time as the intervention of adding popular culture themed writing materials had not yet been implemented. Notations were made on the samples if the children sound-spelled with the teacher, copied words from the room, or wrote words independently. The teacher-researcher then color-photocopied each writing/journal sample for analysis, and returned the original writing sample to the children's journals. The writing/journal sample was then scored using the DRDP (2015) standard for Language and Literacy Development measure 10: Emergent Writing and the Missouri Early Learning Goals for Writing. The scores were written on the back of each journaling sample.

During the week of May 7, 2018, the teachers in both rooms collected a post-test journaling sample. The procedures outlined above were also used to analyze the post-test sample. At the end of the study, the work samples for the children in the control classroom whose parent(s) did not consent were shredded and not compared. The results of the participants are displayed in Table 4.7.

Data Analysis

The teacher-researcher used an inductive approach to analyze each of her field notes and reflexive journals. Inductive analysis is the “process of coding the data *without* trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 83). Using an inductive approach or process for both research questions, the teacher-researcher was able to read through the field/observational notes, and identify themes using the coding methods from thematic analysis.

The teacher-researcher began the process of reading through her first three field notes twice. After she read each fieldnote, she made notes about what she was seeing. Next, she began doing initial coding (phase two of thematic analysis). This initial coding involved a detailed, line-by-line analysis of field note data (this was not a requirement of thematic analysis), which resulted in making codes using the participants’ own words. The phenomena observed were compared, contrasted and grouped into similar events, objects, and classroom happenings under a common heading or classification. The labeled phenomena were the initial concepts of the study. The teacher-researcher put her data onto a chart or codebook which assisted her in organizing her findings. The data was moved on the chart (in this case a codebook) as the themes were reviewed, revised and defined.

At the same time, the teacher-researcher began to compare the data sets, search, and form potential themes and subthemes. These themes were refined as she continued to take data, code the data, and place it under an appropriate theme, as applicable. As she read through and coded each new data set, in this case, fieldnotes set or journal entry, she continuously went back and read the previous data sets and compared them to each other.

Quality Standards

The issues of validity and reliability are important to address in any study. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), “Since there can be no validity without reliability, a demonstration of the former [validity] is sufficient to establish the latter [reliability] (p. 316)” (as cited by Golafshani, 2003, p. 601-602). Validity was addressed by the construction of an audit trail, and by using researcher reflexivity. Other measures of validity, such as triangulation and thick description, were described in previous sections of this chapter.

An audit trail was conducted to illustrate the validity of the study. According to Creswell & Miller (2000), an audit trail “is established by researchers documenting the inquiry process through journaling and memo-ing, keeping a research log of all activities, developing a data collection chronology, and recording data analysis procedures clearly” (p. 128). The teacher-researcher maintained a log of all the dates and themes established for the analysis of the data for this project. The use of an audit trail was also mentioned as a form of reliability in Merriam (2009).

It was also recommended that researchers practice researcher reflexivity as a validity procedure (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Creswell, 2012; Kennedy-Lewis, 2012). By providing information about the teacher-researcher’s background and potential biases in the section, “The Role of the Teacher-Researcher,” she reflected on the forces that shaped her interpretations. Miles, Huberman & Saldana (2014) agreed that clearly defining the researcher’s role and status were important issues in the quality of the study, however, they view it as a measure of reliability (p. 312).

External validity was measured by documenting the demographics of the classrooms studied, so that another researcher could make his/her own interpretations as to whether the sample studied could be compared to his/her own sample, as suggested by Miles, Huberman & Saldana (2014). Additionally, in Chapter 5, the teacher-researcher suggests other settings in which this study could take place (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014).

Foreshadowed Problems

The foreshadowed problems that the teacher-researcher anticipated were attendance and attrition, identification of popular culture references, the potential biases of the teacher-researcher, and school district policies on writing.

The issue of attendance and attrition might have been considered a problem. Many of the school children suffered from recurring illnesses (asthma and sickle-cell anemia, for example), and others had transportation issues. Families tended to daily emergencies. The teacher-researcher planned to address a variety of issues when analyzing the data, on a case-by-case basis. Some children were likely to be excluded, due to lack of attendance on data collection days. The school is transient, so some children who began the study were not enrolled at the end of the study. This was addressed when analyzing the data. Each child's attendance was discussed on a case-by-case basis to help ensure the data was not skewed.

There were many different forms of popular culture that the children were exposed to daily, which may or may not have differed from the teacher-researcher's own popular culture experiences. Brief conversations with parents were utilized for clarification regarding each child's writing.

The school's policy stated that children were not to play "games," nor draw or write about guns, knives, or other weapons. As a teacher, she acknowledged the need for this policy; however, as a researcher, she grappled with it. For example, it seemed unfair to the teacher-researcher to tell a child that he/she couldn't write about a superhero who saved someone by shooting a villain, or writing about the themes from "Grand Theft Auto." While the teacher-researcher may not have agreed with the children watching certain programs and/or playing certain video games, she was puzzled with the notion of discouraging children from their writing about their chosen topics. The school's policy on violence was to be respected, such that off-limits pieces of evidence of popular culture were extinguished per that school policy.

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

This study explored how preschoolers in a mixed-age urban Midwestern classroom wrote/composed when given the chance to use materials with their favorite, popular culture icons. It also explored the tensions and joys surrounding this writing/composing. This chapter begins with the demographic information of the participants. Next, the results of the teacher interviews were examined. Then, each research question and hypothesis were addressed per the findings relating to it. Finally, the findings are summed up.

Demographics

The teacher-researcher conducted five interviews to assist her with identifying the joys and struggles preschool teachers face in the Writing Center. She chose participants from a variety of schools within her large urban district with a variety of experiences, as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Demographics of Teachers Interviewed

Teacher	Classroom Setting	Years Teaching Experience in preschool	Total Years Teaching Experience
I1	Early Childhood Special Education (north-side, neighborhood)	6	15
I2	General education (south-side, neighborhood)	1 st year	10
I3	General education side of inclusion classroom (south-side, magnet)	More than 10; last 8 in current position	42
I4	General education (north-side, neighborhood)	9	21
I5	General education (north-side, magnet)	18 in current position	26 all in preschool

The children in the intervention group were from the teacher-researcher’s own classroom. Table 4.2 shows their demographic characteristics. They were given pseudonyms to protect their identities. The children in the control group were from the second preschool classroom in the teacher-researcher’s school. The demographic information for these participants is included in Table 4.3. Per the table, the children in this group are identified by numerals to protect their identities.

Table 4.2: Intervention Group Demographics

Name	Age	Sex	Race/Ethnicity	IEP status at the end of study	Returning or 1 st year in program
Becca	P3	Female	African American	No	1 st
Sam	P3	Male	African American	No	1 st
Shay	P3	Female	African American	No	1 st
Joe	P4	Male	African American	No	1 st
Jane	P4	Female	African American	No	Returning
Cory	P3	Male	African American	No	1 st
Kyra	P4	Female	African American	No	1 st
Michael	P4	Male	African American	No	1 st
Kelly	P4	Female	African American	No	Returning
Auggie	P3	Male	African American	No	1 st
Tina	P3	Female	African American	No	1 st
Kevin	P4	Male	African American	No	Returning
Star	P4	Female	African American	No	1 st
Jacob	P3	Male	African American	No	1 st
Cole	P4	Male	African American	No	1 st
Mary	P4	Female	“Mixed”	No	1 st
Tim	P3	Male	African American	Yes	1 st
Greg	P4	Male	African American	No	1 st

Table 4.3 Control Group Demographic Information

Numeral	Age	Sex	Race	IEP status at the end of the study	Returning or 1 st year in program
1	P4	Male	African American	No	Returning
2	P4	Male	African American	No	1 st
3	P4	Female	African American	No	1 st
4	P3	Female	African American	No	1 st
5	P3	Female	African American	No	1 st
6	P3	Female	African American	No	1 st
7	P3	Male	African American	No	1 st
8	P3	Male	African American	No	1 st

Teacher Interviews. Table 4.4, located in Appendix K, shows the results from the teacher interviews. During the course of the teacher interviews, teachers were asked if their students frequently visited the writing center. The writing center was typically open during center times, and the children generally chose to go to more active centers to play. Overwhelmingly, the teachers stated that the children seldom went, or only particular children chose to play, at the writing center. For example, as I5 stated, her children used it as a "...last choice activity when they run out of choices..." (Interview 5, 26 Feb. 2018). The interpretation that can be drawn from the responses to this question is that the children in four of the rooms were not choosing to play at the writing center.

The follow-up question asked them why they thought their students enjoyed or did not enjoy going to the writing center. Again, the responses from four of the five teachers were similar. They thought that their students did not choose to go to the writing center, because it was not fun, and/or it was deemed as more work than play. For example, "When they go to the writing center it's more like work...I think they look at it more as work instead of play. It's not as fun as the other centers" (Interview 2, 15 Feb. 2018). Additionally, the teachers expressed that those children who did occasionally come to the writing center were those who already had the skills to conventionally write. As I4 succinctly put it, "...the one who enjoys going, she can write. She can write letters and she likes to write" (Interview 4, 16 Feb. 2018). The takeaway from the teachers' statements about going to the writing center is that the children who were able to write conventionally tended to enjoy the center more, and those who struggled to write conventionally did not readily choose to go to the writing center. Maybe teachers need to reframe their ideas of what should happen at the preschool writing center. For instead of

focusing on what the children cannot or will not do, the focus should be on what the children are willing and able to do.

The teachers seemed to have ideas about how they would change their writing center, if they could. Some felt that more interesting objects needed to be added, but seemed a bit uncertain about what they should add. Others wanted more space, so that they could expand the center. As I4 stated when asked how she could change the use of her classroom writing center, “Add some more writing utensils...changing the materials, like giving them something new...making it more interesting for them” (Interview 4, 16 Feb. 2018). She was vague about what kinds of materials she would like to add; however, she certainly wanted to make the center more inviting and interesting for her students. This information informed the teacher-researcher that teachers may need additional resources to give them ideas of what they should include for students in the writing center.

All the teachers interviewed agreed that their students would be more inclined to go to the writing center if they added the students’ favorite popular culture icons to it. I1 stated, “I think they would drift over there to the center and utilize that center more” (Interview 1, 3 Feb. 2018). I5 also offered a valid point, in stating that she would probably learn a lot more about her students, but was not certain if they would actually choose to write when they went to the center. I5’s comment refers to the teachers’ goal and vision for the writing center. If the goal is for pre-writing and writing skills to be developed, then it should not matter if the children have conventional writing on paper. Perhaps the goals and vision for this center need to be revised.

13 responses tended to be the outliers. She stated that her students loved the writing center, and go: “Every day, all the time (Interview 3, 16 Feb. 2018).”

Research Question 1

The first research question posed in this study states: In their emergent writing/composing with popular culture materials, in what ways do three-, four-, and five-year-old children engage with the materials, their peers and/or the adults in the preschool writing center?

Identification of popular culture icons. To fully address this research question, it was first necessary to identify the children’s favorite, popular culture icons. This was primarily done by four group discussions with the children on 26 February 2018, 28 February 2018, 1 March 2018, and 2 March 2018. The charts were compiled into a master list (see Appendix H) to review with the children prior to adding anything new to the Writing Center. They expressed that they were satisfied with the list (Reflexive Journal 2 March 2018). However, the teacher-researcher also collected data on what the children were wearing (shirts), coats, hoodies, backpacks, shoes, blankets, lunch boxes, and purse(s) during the week of 26 February 2018. As Table 4.5 shows, each day she documented a different item, and if someone was absent on the day she collected data, she collected it upon the child’s return to school. The teacher-researcher then triangulated the information collected from Table 4.5 with the list in Appendix H.

The following groups (and characters) were established to put on picture/word cards: Paw Patrol (Rubble, Chase, Zuma, Rocky, Skye, Everest, Marshall, Ryder); Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (TMNT or Ninja Turtles) (Raphael, Donatello, Michelangelo,

Leonardo, Master Splinter, Shredder, and Kraang); PJ Masks (Catboy, Owlett, Gekko, Romeo, Night Ninja, Ninjalinos, and Luna Girl); Lion Guard (Kion, Simba, King Mufasa, Nala, Rafiki, and Kiara); Superheroes (Harley Quinn, Joker, Supergirl, Catwoman, Batgirl, Bumblebee, Wonder Woman, Captain America, Ironman, Thor, Wolverine, Batman, Flash, Spider-Man, Superman, Spider-Girl, and Hulk/Incredible Hulk/Hulk Smash); Bubble Guppies (Molly, Oona, Bubble Puppy, Deema, Gill, Gobby, and Nonny); Princesses (Rapunzel, Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Snow White, Princess Tiana, Frog/Prince Naveen, Ariel, Belle, Maurice, Mrs. Potts, Beast, Maui, and Moana); Frozen (Elsa, Anna, Olaf, Sven, Kristof, Marshmallow, Snowgies, and Prince Hans); Smurfs (Smurfette, Clumsy, and Papa); Pokémon (Pikachu, Poke Ball, Fennekin, Froakie, and Chespin); Super Mario (Mario, Luigi, Princess Peach, and Bowser); Peppa Pig (George Pig, Mommy Pig/Mummy Pig, Daddy Pig, Pippa Pig, Chloe, and Suzy); Mickey Mouse Clubhouse (Mickey Mouse, Minnie Mouse, Pluto, Donald Duck, Daisy Duck, and Goofy); Power Rangers (Blue Ranger, Red Ranger, Pink Ranger, Green Ranger, Yellow Ranger, Black Ranger, White Ranger, and Gold Ranger); SpongeBob (SpongeBob, Patrick, Plankton, Mr. Crab, Squidward, and Plankton Robot); Trolls (Princess Poppy, Queen Gristle, Chef, Bridget, Branch, DJ Suki, Cooper, Guy Diamond, King Gristle, King Gristle Jr., and Biggie).

Table 4.5 Popular culture items brought into the school

Backpacks	Coats	Shoes	Blankets	Shirts	Hoodies	Lunch boxes/purses
1 Minions	16 generic	14 non-popular culture	1 Tinkerbelle	1 Pokémon	2 Bubble Guppies	1 Peppa Pig
2 Disney Princesses	2 Hello Kitty	2 Hello Kitty	1 Cars	1 Superheroes	4 generic	1 SpongeBob
1 Emoji		2 Paw Patrol	1 Frozen	1 Looney Tunes	1 superhero	1 Lion Guard
5 Superheroes			12 generic	1 Disney Princess		
2 Paw Patrol			1 Fairies	1 Donkey Kong (Super Mario franchise)		
1 Minnie Mouse			1 Trolls	7 school uniform		
1 TMNT				6 generic		
2 PJ Masks						
1 Shopkins						
2 generic						

The teacher-researcher brought to the Writing Center materials based on the triangulated data - with one exception. The exception was Smurf stationary. This theme was added to the list in mid-March, after the children voted on a movie/cartoon for their marble party (they chose Smurfs).

Each session, the teacher-researcher brought in different, popular culture icon materials to add to the Writing Center. No items were removed from the center by the teacher-researcher during the course of the study, meaning that the materials introduced each session stayed there. Table 4.6 shows the chronology of when specialized materials

were added to the Writing Center. The items were added in this particular order, based upon the teacher-researcher's preference. Items were added, so that, to quote the children, "all boy stuff" or "all girl stuff" were not added on the same day. For example, she added all of the superheroes at the same time, instead of adding Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (all male characters) one session and DC Superhero Girls in a separate session. The goal was to add materials that would be more inclusive to all the children's interests each session.

Table 4.6 Materials introduced to the writing center

Date	Materials Added
2/23/18	Paper—lined, XL dot matrix green and white lined printer paper, roll paper, notebooks; envelopes; Booklets (2 pages of pink, blue, yellow and/or green paper stapled in the middle); 2 magnetic writing boards; dry erase boards with markers and erasers; mail carrier costume; Plastic Crayola mailbox; crayons; colored pencils; pens; golf pencils; alphabet (on heating and cooling unit); Books—2 class made books and 7 commercially produced books (including 3 dictionaries); Assorted stencils—animals, letters, numbers, etc.; Cards with student pictures and names written on them; Pictures on shelves to show where the supplies belong.
2/28/18	See 2/23/18
3/6/18	See 2/23/18
3/14/18	Trolls stationary set (notepad, stamp, gel pen, and stickers), a generic washable black stamp pad, Paw Patrol supplies (stickers, 2 notepads, large crayons, wooden stamps, paper in a shaped notebook with color Paw Patrol illustrations, and a Paw Patrol dry erase board), and ALL of the laminated picture/word cards she made of their favorite popular culture characters (separated in rings by type of show, for example superheroes, princesses, video games, etc. housed in a plastic tub with handles). The stamps were in a plastic pencil box, the stickers were set on the table, the Paw Patrol crayons were in their own separate plastic pencil box and the notebooks were on the shelf with the other notebooks.
3/20/18	superhero supplies: 2 packs of Spider-Man large crayons; different sizes of Spider-Man, TMNT (Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles), DC Superhero Girls, LEGO Harley Quinn, LEGO Batman and PJ Masks notepads; stickers of TMNT, Spider-Man, Batman, LEGO Batman, DC Superhero Girls, Ironman, Thor; a few superhero stationary sets (including previously mentioned paper, stickers and stamps all in the male superheroes); superhero male and female pencils and gel pens; Spider-Man and TMNT small dry erase boards (1 of each); 1 full sized PJ Masks dry erase board; Spider-Man metal mailbox; a Superhero Girls ruler; and a Trolls lunch box (to hold all of the stickers).
4/3/18	Disney Princess themed items (dry erase board, different sized paper pads, composition notebook, stamps, pens, crayons, and stickers); “Mickey Mouse Clubhouse” themed items (dry erase board, pencils, stickers, crayons and small paper pads)
4/11/18	Smurf stickers and Smurf stationary (envelopes and paper cut to fit in the envelope after folding in half with matching stickers).
4/13/18	Lion Guard themed items (ruler, mini paper pad, and stickers)
4/17/18	Peppa Pig themed items (stickers and self-inking stamps)
4/24/18	video game themed items (Super Mario stickers and self-inking stamps, a dry erase board with Super Mario on it, and Pokémon stickers)
5/1/18	Bubble Guppies cards (with envelopes); Bubble Guppies bucket Since the only thing resembling writing materials in Bubble Guppies the teacher-researcher could find was a coloring book, she copied images from the book, cut them out, and glued them to store purchased cards (a total of 25 notecards).
5/3/18	SpongeBob themed stickers, a ruler, a small notepad, and a pen (the kind that you can change the ink color by pushing down on the lever of the color you want).

Themes and subthemes. The process of generating codes began after the first three sessions. This process of generating codes, as explained in Chapter 3, was used with the other nine sets of field notes, as well. The codes were then reread, and collapsed into potential themes. Next, the themes were named and defined as follows: peer interactions, excitement/pride in composition, playing, materials/supplies, revises or edits composition, attention, stating intentions, paying attention, using an adult as a resource, and asserts own knowledge (verbally and/or nonverbally).

Peer interactions. Peer interactions took several forms during this study. This first theme describes the types of interactions that the children had with their peers in the writing center. The children had discussions, told peer(s) what to do and/or corrected peers, identified peer(s) likes and/or dislikes, asked peer(s) questions and offered assistance, and followed the writing theme of peers.

Discussions. The children had many discussions with their peers over the span of twelve sessions. Some surrounded popular culture themes, and others did not. The popular culture discussions are reported in this section. Several of their discussions were about their favorite programs, as they composed (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 75-85, 169-185; Field notes 14 March 2018, lines 113-121; Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 136-141; Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 75-76). One example of such a discussion surrounded the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, and is depicted below.

Kyra to Sam: What is that?

Sam: Ninja Turtle

Kyra: His big head

Kyra: Don't forget to write the girl

Sam: I'm not gonna write the girl 'cause she's a bad person.

Jane joined in the discussion.

Jane: No, she's not.

Kyra: She's not really a Ninja Turtle, only the boys are Ninja Turtles

...they then moved into a discussion of an episode of the TMNT (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 42-51).

On May 3, 2018, Cole decided to do a composition about SpongeBob with his hair on fire (or maybe it was SpongeBob's brother's hair on fire, it was hard to follow). His dictation led two of the girls at the table into a discussion of "grown-up" movies, see excerpt below.

Kelly: I watched a grown-up movie and his body was all on fire.

Jane: I seen that movie too (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 127-128).

This was not the first time scary movies came up in their discussions. On 6 March 2018, three of the four children at the Writing Center engaged in a conversation about scary movies that began with a composition of hair on fire (lines 169-180).

The children also had discussions about the names of their favorite characters (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 72-73 and 83-84) and those that they saw on the cards (Field notes 24 April 2018, line 89; Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 75-76).

Telling peers what to do/correcting peers. The children were very good at telling their peers what to do and how to do it. Sometimes this went by unchallenged (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 108-110; Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 88-91; Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 52); however, more frequently, their peers had something to say about it (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 192-193; Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 77-78).

An example of unchallenged corrections occurred when Cole was dictating his composition to the teacher-researcher. Tim said, “SpongeBob no have a brother.” Cole ignored him, and continued on with his story (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 120-121). Other examples occurred when a child told his/her peer to stop doing something, and the peer stopped without comment (Field notes 24 April 2018, line 106; Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 108-110; Field notes 28 February 2018, lines 225-227).

An example of the peer(s) challenging the correction occurred on 14 March 2018, when Star tattled on Michael for doing something she felt he should not be doing.

Michael: Stop tellin’ on me! You getting on my nerves!

Star: You don’t got no nerves!

Michael: Yes, I do!

(Field notes 14 March 2018, lines 130-132).

More examples of this occurred and devolved to the children calling each other “mean” (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 142-147; Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 105-106; Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 135; Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 196-197). For example,

Star: That's NOT fair!

Shay: You act like Greg!

Star: NO! That's mean (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 73-75)!

Identifying peers' likes and/or dislikes. The teacher-researcher observed many instances of children investigating and commenting about what their peer(s) liked (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 143-144; Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 63; Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 184-185) and/or disliked. An example of a child investigating his peers likes occurred on 17 April 2018. Joe said, "You like Peppa Pig? You like George?" to the group of children sitting at the table with him (line 41). Another example occurred when he went to ask Jacob about his favorite stickers, presumably so that he could add them to the "mail" he was "making" (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 166-167).

Sometimes the children handed their peers materials that they knew were of their favorite characters. See the excerpt from 3 May 2018 below:

Kelly handed each person at the table something she thought that they would like. She gave Jacob a Spider-Man notepad, Jane a DC Superheroes Girls notepad, and me a Princess Belle composition notebook...

Kelly: Who wants Paw Patrol.

Tim: Me hate Paw Patrol.

Winters: You don't like Paw Patrol, Tim?

Tim: No! Me like Ninja Turtles!

Kelly: Do you like Paw Patrol?

Cole: Yes, but I'm not ready for that yet (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 86-96).

The children also recalled their peers' favorite characters, and reminded them that we had materials matching those characters. For example, "When another child noticed Tim using the Mickey Mouse crayon, he reminded him that we have TMNT (Tim's favorite characters of all time) crayons. He quickly set it down, and began looking through the crayons until he found Raphael" (Field notes, 3 May 2018, lines 51-53).

There are a few examples of the children identifying what their peers do not like (Field notes, 1 May 2018, line 40; Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 92-93). One of them is below:

Kyra: I gotta do another one, he didn't like that one (she sighed as she said it)

...

Kyra (to me): The problem is he wanted it all red (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 180-182).

Asked peer(s) questions and offered assistance. In the course of this project, the teacher-researcher witnessed many instances of children asking their peers questions (Field notes 28 February 2018, lines 236-237; Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 99-102; Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 72-74). For example, on 3 April 2018, this occurred:

Kevin: Cole, what is you drawing?

Cole showed him.

Kevin: Just like Ms. Winters (lines 63-65).

Some of the questions were more challenging in nature (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 151-155; Field notes 1 May 2019, lines 125-127). For example, see the excerpt from 20 March 2018 below:

Mary to Star: Why you putting those stickers in there?!?...

Mary: You can't mail it to them (friends in Dramatic Play)

Star: I'm not! But I could if I want to (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 151-155).

The teacher-researcher also observed instances of the children assisting their peers in many different ways. One way was supplying the character's name (Field notes 14 March 2018, lines 34-37), a letter name, and spelling their own name for the peer requesting it (Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 62-63). For example, on 13 April 2018, the teacher-researcher was helping Jane sound spell the word flower. "I stretched out the first sound. She wrote it. When I went to stretch out the next sound, Cole gave the letter name as Jane thought about it for a moment (Field notes 13 April 2018, lines 41-42)."

There was also one instance where the teacher-researcher observed the children working together to figure out how to write a name. On 11 April 2018, "Meanwhile, Cory and Jacob were working together to write. Jacob pointed to a letter on the name cards and Cory said, 'How do you write that again?' The boys figured it out together (lines 77-78)."

Another way involved helping the peer to open objects (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 25-28) and sealing envelopes (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 169-170).

Followed peer(s) writing theme. There are a few examples of children noticeably following the writing theme of their peers (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 61-64; Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 109-115; Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 67,74-76, 79). On 3 April 2018, Kevin composed a Spider-Man car. Shortly thereafter, two of his peers followed suit.

“He then erased it and began copying Spider-Man’s name...He then drew his car...

Becca: Spider-Man’s car. I gotta draw” (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 74-79).

Excitement/Pride in composition. The second theme is described by the children’s excitement/pride in their compositions, and explained how it looked. It is always great to see preschoolers show excitement and pride in their composing efforts. Many children showed immense pride in writing what they believed to be their names (Field notes 11 April 2018, line 42; Field notes 28 February 2018, line 190). For example, “Tina wrote an ‘i’ on the Super Mario dry erase board, and proudly said, ‘I make my letters!’ while showing it to me. I asked her what letter she made. Tina said, ‘My name!!!’” (Field notes 23 April 2018, lines 23-25).

Other children showed excitement and pride when they were composing, and did what they set out to do (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 52-53; Field notes 3 April 2018, line 67; Field notes 28 February 2018, lines 70-74). As an example, at Greg’s only appearance at the Writing Center during this twelve-session study, I asked him about his work. He said, “A picture. I made Catboy’s face by myself” (Field notes 11 April 2018, line 28)! Another example came from Auggie’s first visit to the Writing Center on 23 February 2018.

Auggie: Look what I made!

Winters: What did you make?

Auggie: Scrabble _____!... (Field notes 23 February 2018, lines 95-97).

The children also showed excitement when they put mail in the mailbox for their friends (Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 118-119, 123-125). The most prominent example of this occurred per the excerpt below:

Cory: Kyra, your mail in here! It's here, I put it in here!

Kyra: I'm gonna get it in a minute (Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 123-125).

Playing. The third theme was playing, which was described as the ways the children played and interacted in the writing center. There were several examples of children playing during these twelve sessions. Some involved entertaining oneself (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 77-78; Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 141-142; Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 69-70), others involved peers (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 156-160; Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 99-102), and still others involved their playful songs, as they composed (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 185-190; Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 139-142).

A prime example of entertaining oneself through play in the Writing Center was the expressions offered by Tina on 1 May 2018. "Tina turned backward in the chair and began playing with the card by moving it through the hole in the seat, and bringing it back around, giggling and saying 'Boo!' the entire time" (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines

77-78). The children also frequently moved the stickers and erasers around the table to drive cars and dance.

An example of playing with peers in the Writing Center occurred when Kevin picked up a Lego Batman mini-notepad and a pen, and walked over to Cole (see below).

Kevin: You gonna get a ticket.

Cole: Why?

Kevin: You speedin'! (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 29-31).

An example of play that the children shared, that the teacher-researcher did not quite understand, is noted in the passage below.

Sam walked over and put a dry erase board with a TMNT still drawn on it in the rack...

Jane: He gonna put it in the microwave to make gummy bears.

Winters: What? I'm confused.

Sam: They goin' in the oven to bake like gummy bears (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 122-126).

During the observation of the Writing Center on 3 May 2018, the children began a playful song as they wrote.

Kelly began singing a song with words that I could not make out, and did not recognize the tune. Cole joined in tapping the table along with the beat.

Cole (in a sing-song voice): Ooh, yeah! Ooh, yeah!

Kelly: I be a superstar.

Cole: Ooh, yeah! Ooh, yeah!

The children at the table began laughing.

Kelly: Cole stop makin' me laugh.

He did one more round of the song before stopping (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 64-71).

Materials/supplies. There were many subthemes under the fourth theme. The theme, materials/supplies, described the interactions the children had with and surrounding the popular culture-themed writing materials added to the writing center. The subthemes include: excitement, exploration, issues, taking materials from others, locating and location, negotiating, word/picture cards, requests, and mail.

Excitement. Anytime something new or novel was brought into the classroom, there was a certain level of excitement that joins it, as was certainly the case each time the teacher-researcher added to new materials to the Writing Center. Sometimes the excitement manifested itself is squeals of delight (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 149-151; Field notes 20 March 2018, line 47; Field notes 24 April 2018, line 97), as when Shay squealed, "I got Ninja Turtles! (dry erase board) (Field notes 20 March 2018, line 42). Other times it emerged with a look of awe, admiration or light in the child's eyes (Field notes 13 April 2018, lines 63-64; Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 102-103) as in the following selection with Tim upon discovering the TMNT pencil.

Tim: Oh, Ninja Turtles pencil.

He began writing his name inside the card with it, looking at it admiringly.

Tim (to me): Me want to keep this pencil.

Winters (with a laugh): You may use the pencil in the Writing Center. It needs to stay at school. (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 109-112).

A final way that the excitement of the materials manifested was the satisfaction of the materials working the way the children thought they would (Field notes 24 April 2018, line 32; Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 42-43). For example, when Sam was working with the Peppa Pig stamps he exclaimed,

Sam: Ms. Winters, look, it make a stamp!!!

Winters: Is that what you wanted it to do?

Sam: Uh-huh (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 42-43).

Exploration. Exploration of the old and new materials took many forms. The children spent a lot of time exploring the new materials, as I expected them to do (Reflexive Journal, line 187). Sometimes, it involved the characteristics of the ink pens (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 149-151). The segment below is an example:

Jane: Aw, it's gold (talking to me about the gel pen she was using). It's gold!

Winters: Is it?

Jane: Yeah and it's glittery.

Jane: Look it's got glitter (as she shows me the markings the pen made)

...

Jane: I never knowed that” (Field notes 28 Feb 2018, lines 53-60).

Other times it involved the way materials were put back into the box. For example, “He picked up different crayons and dropped them a few at a time back into the supply box” (Field notes 23 Feb. 2018, lines 133-4). But most often, it involved the variety of stamps and stickers in the center (Field notes 14 March 2018, line 53; Field notes 14 March 2018, line 77; Field notes 20 March 2018, line 122; Field notes 20 March 2018, line 188). An example of this exploration occurred when Cory wanted to explore the Peppa Pig self-inking stamps.

Cory (to me): I’m gonna need the black stamp pad.

Winters: No, you don’t, try it first and see.

When he tried it, he observed that it did, in fact, work. Kyra was also concerned that the stamps (self-inking) wouldn’t work. I encouraged her to try it and see what happened (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 35-38).

Issues. Using materials in the Writing Center are not without their own set of issues. The issues encountered ranged from stamps, erasers, pens, and stationary “not working.” The biggest issue related to the washable stamp pad, and a child bringing it into the restroom the previous day and saturating it, as depicted below:

I wondered aloud what happened to the stamp pad.

Mary: Jane brought it in the bathroom and got it wet.

Winters: Do you know why she did that?

Mary: Her just did it.

Winters: Okay, I will investigate that later (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 92-97).

The outcome of the stamp pad saturation was that the stamps did not come out clearly, and the kids' hands were dripping with ink as described below.

I sent Shay to wash her hands as she was dripping with ink, a washable ink.

Shay: Again.

Winters: Yes again, with soap and water. That stamp pad is not working for us today (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 175-178).

There were a variety of reasons that the stamps and ink pens did not work for the children, and a slight redirection from the teacher-researcher cleared up the confusion, most notably, identifying that pens and stamp pads do not work when you don't take the lids off (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 89-91; Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 40-43). For example, "Greg was trying to write with the pen cap on. When that didn't work, he flipped it over and tried to write with the opposite end of the pen. I could see he was getting frustrated by the look on his face, so I asked him if I could help him. He said, 'Yes' in his frustrated tone. I showed him how to take the cap off the pen, and then write on the paper" (Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 57-61).

It also had to be explained several times that dry-erase erasers only erased markers on the boards, and that the other erasers only erased pencil marks (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 110-114; Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 99-108). Sometimes this concept

took a bit of time to get through, as with Jacob's experience noted in the following example:

Jacob (to me): It NO work!

Winters: What doesn't work?

He showed me that he couldn't erase the pen mark. I told him that the eraser was for the markers on the board and would not work on paper. He tried to erase the pen mark again with a superhero eraser.

Jacob: It NO work too!

I then explained...I showed him what I meant on a different piece of paper. He then switched to writing with a pencil (Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 99-108).

There were also occasions where the children did not know how to use the stationary, and were confused when their methods did not work (Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 126-128; Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 155-157; Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 49-50). The most interesting predicament was demonstrated again by Jacob. While he was not the only one with this issue, he was the only one who had the courage to ask for help.

Jacob handed me the envelope and paper, while stating, "It too big."

Winters: It's not too big, you need to fold the paper like this (I modeled folding a blank piece of paper [no stickers], and putting it into the envelope) (Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 126-128).

Taking materials from others. There were several instances of children taking materials from each other. Usually this occurred when they felt their peers were taking too long with the materials, or they just wanted the materials immediately (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 57-58; Field notes 24 April 2018, line 33; (Field notes 28 Feb 2018, lines 158-161; Field notes 23 Feb 2018, line 177). For example, “Kyra took them out of his hands...he tried taking them back from across the table. She took the sticker she wanted and handed them back to Joe” (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 101-104). Another example occurred when Joe took the Bubble Guppies word/picture cards from in front of Kyra (Field notes 1 May 2018, line 51).

Locating and location. This subtheme is defined by two major characteristics, finding wanted materials and knowing where to place the materials once they have them. Unfortunately, despite the picture labels in the center showing where things belong, the children often did not recall where items were located (Field notes 23 Feb 2018, lines 167-169; Field notes 28 Feb 2018, lines 145-149; Field notes 3 April 2018, line 53; Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 124-126; Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 128-129). One example of this occurred when Mary wanted to write Harley Quinn and her name on a dry erase board, as depicted below:

Mary looked for the word cards, so she could find Harley Quinn, instead, she found a notebook (with a Lego Harley Quinn), which she took back to her dry erase board. I showed her where the box with the word cards was located. She flipped through the cards, and then told me she couldn't find Harley Quinn. I

helped her find Harley Quinn. She cheered when she saw it (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 44-47).

The younger children in the room appeared to be the ones with the most difficulty remembering where to place the stickers and stamps (Field notes 11 April 2018, line 56; Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 181-183). For example,

Tina tried to stamp on the dry erase board. I reminded her that stamps were for use on paper.

Kevin: She don't know the rules yet (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 112-113)!

Negotiation. Most of the negotiations took place when the children thought that they could convince a peer to give them a requested item. Sometimes, it worked for them (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 48-49; Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 80-84), and other times, it did not (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 103-108; Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 79-80).

One time it worked was when Becca wanted her marker back from Kevin. Earlier in the observation, he convinced her to switch markers with him. When she told him she wanted it back, he returned it to her without a complaint, which is rare for him (Field notes 3 April 2018).

An example of when a child was not successful in getting what he wanted when he wanted occurred in the following excerpt:

Joe picked up his stencil, and tried to switch it for the one in Jane's hand. She did not allow that to happen.

Joe: I can let you get this one (as he tried to take the one she was using).

Jane: No, you can use it when I'm done.

Joe (to me): Her won't give it to me...(Field notes 28 Feb 2018, lines 167-172).

Word/picture cards. Almost exclusively, the children used the cards to help them with their compositions for both writing and drawing. They primarily copied the names (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 53-54; Field notes 20 March 2018, line 57; Field notes 3 April 2018, line 71; Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 74-76). One prominent example occurred when Mary wanted to work with the Harley Quinn card, per below:

She pointed to the two names on the word card, and asked, "Which one's her name?"

Winters: Both are her names. It says, "Harley Quinn," as I showed her the left to right progression of each word.

Mary: Ugh!! I'm only gonna do one!

Winters (laughing): Okay...

Mary began copying the word Harley from the cards (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 102-109).

Occasionally, the children also used the cards to help them with their illustrations (Field notes 14 March 2018, lines, 108-110, 140), as depicted in the following segment.

Becca copied DJ Suki (both picture and name from the cards into another page of the notebook (Field notes 14 March 2018, line 140).

They also had moments where they competed over the cards, leading to the teacher-researcher intervening before such tensions escalated (Field notes 14 March 2018, lines 87-91; Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 102-104). For example, “Kyra, Star, and Michael all were pulling the video game cards. I intervened (before one of them hit or tore the cards), and reminded them that Michael had it first, and that they could take turns” (Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 102-104).

Additionally, the children appeared to forget about the existence of the word/picture cards, and appeared shocked when reminded (Field notes 3 May 2018, line 40; Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 87-88). For example, when I reminded Michael that he could use the Pokémon word cards to write their names, he responded in the following way:

Michael: You have Pokémon cards?

I nodded, and showed him. Michael switched pages in his notebook before he began writing (Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 87-88).

Requests. The children made many requests from their peers for materials, as well as from me. The requests were generally for specific word cards (Field notes 14 March 2018, line 71; Field notes 14 March 2018, lines 39-43; Field notes 13 April 2018, lines 72-73), as when Star requested that I hand her the Power Rangers cards (Field notes 20 March 2018, line 50).

Other requests included asking for stickers (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 54-55; Field notes 24 April 2018, line 44; Field notes 24 April 2018, line 47; Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 81-82), such as when Kyra wanted to use the new Lion Guard stickers.

Kyra: Where's the new Lion stickers?

Winters: They are in the Trolls lunchbox with the other stickers (Field notes 13 April 2018, lines 95-96).

Mail. Sending and getting letters, or "mail," as the preschoolers referred to it, was always an exciting event.

Occasionally, the children mailed items that were not specifically "mail" (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 148-150, 151-155). For example, "Star and Mary took all the stickers out of the Trolls lunch box, and placed them in the mailboxes (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 165-166)."

The problem with mail was that if you did not let your friends know of its existence, they would not claim it (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 136-145; Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 147-150), as evidenced by the following passage:

Cole put Jane's mail in the dramatic play mailbox. Clean up time was announced. I checked the mailboxes to make sure they were empty, since the kids were writing to their friends that day. I noticed that both boys had put mail in for two of the girls in the dramatic play center. I went to inquire about it with the boys.

Winters: Did you put Mary's mail in the mailbox today?

Kevin: Yes, is it still in there (he was shocked she didn't take it out yet)? ...

Kevin: No, could you give it to her?

(Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 136-145).

The follow-up discussion the teacher-researcher had with the children helped them get an idea of how to address this problem. From the day of the class discussion and beyond, the children excitedly announced to their peers that they had mail (Field notes 17 April 2018, line 97; Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 83-91), per the following example: He complied and began stating, “Mary, you got some mail,” until she answered him. Cory did the same for Jane’s “mail” (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 138-139).

It should also be noted that near the end of the study, the children figured out that a letter was not “mail” if it didn’t have an envelope (Field notes 1 May 2018, line 181, 199-200), as illustrated below, when Tina brought me her sister’s card with some information:

Tina to me: You forgot the mail (envelope)!

Winters: How can we fix that problem?

Tina handed me an envelope from the bucket, and told me to “Write Majai (what she calls her sister) name” on it. I complied (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 199-202).

Revises or Edits Composition. There are a few factors that led to the children’s revising or editing their compositions, the fifth theme. This theme explores how and why the children made revisions or edits to their compositions. Sometimes, it was because they “messed up” (Field notes 28 Feb 2018, lines 42-44; Field notes 13 April 2018, line 84; Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 97-98). For example:

Sam: This not a puppy (as he erased his work) (Field notes 6 March 2018, line 116).

The children also have begun to edit or revise work that they feel they “messed up,” after they brought it to the teacher-research to discuss (Field notes 28 Feb 2018, line 240; Field notes 28 Feb 2018, lines 267-269).

For example, when Shay wrote her baby sister (non-existent), this conversation occurred:

Shay: I almost done. I draw a baby. This is my Mama’s baby. I forgot her arms.

She went back and drew the arms, and then erased the board (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 58-59).

Sometimes, the children added to their compositions without stating why (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 122-123), such as when Tim went back and added characters to the dry erase board several different times after showing it to me, as depicted below:

Tim wrote some TMNT on his board. After talking to me about it, he decided to go back and add Master Splinter (Field notes 6 March 2018, line 195). He then added Shredder (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 219).

In two instances the child was just not happy with his/her composition (Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 146-149; Field notes 23 Feb 2018, lines 148). For example:

Michael: I’m gonna erase it ‘cause I don’t like it.

Winters: Why don't you like it?

Michael: ‘Cause I just don’t like it.

(Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 146-149).

Once a child even edited her composition after talking with a peer.

Sam to Jane: That don't got no legs.

Jane erased her board (2 people) with her hand, and continued working. She then erased the rest (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 196-198).

Seeking Attention. Seeking attention, the sixth theme, is defined by the attention-seeking behaviors the children demonstrated at the writing center. The children did things to gain peer attention and adult attention.

Peer attention. Most of the attention that the children requested was generalized. They did not specifically call any peer's name before speaking to the group (Field notes 3 May 2018, line 126; Field notes 28 Feb 2018, line 266; Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 126-130). For example:

Cole colored over the top of Gekko's eye on the dry erase board.

Cole: I gave him a black eye (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 72-73).

Another form of peer attention was by speaking directly to a peer. For example, when Kyra stated, "Star, look what I made" (Field notes 24 April 2018, line 138)! Other examples of this peer attention-seeking intersected with the "mail" subtheme, listed earlier in this chapter.

Adult attention. The children attempted to gain adult attention in two ways. The first way they received attention was by saying, "Look, Ms. Winters!" followed up by whatever they wanted to show the teacher-researcher (Field notes 28 Feb 2018, lines 70-

74; Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 26-32; Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 144-146; Field notes 3 April 2018, line 135). An example is in the following passage:

Mary: Look! (while holding up the Spider-Man dry erase board).

Winters: What does it say?

Mary: My Mama bought me an Ella L doll.

Winters: She did, that was nice of her.

Mary: And some more. My Mama bought me American (girl) doll (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 139-143).

An additional example of gaining the teacher-researcher's attention by saying her name first occurred when Michael wanted to have a conversation.

Michael: Hey, Ms. Winters.

Winters: Yes, Michael?

He rapidly began telling me all about Pokémon (Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 54-56).

The second way they received attention was by being persistent and putting objects in front of the teacher-researcher's face (Field notes 3 May 2018, line 64; Field notes 3 April 2018, line 97-101). For example, "Auggie held up his work, and when I did not immediately acknowledge it, he moved it closer to my face" (Field notes 23 Feb 2018, lines 109-110).

Stating intentions. The children stated their intentions to anyone who was listening. Stating intentions is the seventh theme, and described the ways in which the children

stated what they were going to do, and when they were going to do it. There were many examples of this process, as in the segment below:

Some of the stated intentions related to what the children wanted to write (Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 115-116; Field notes 13 April 2018, lines 26-29; Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 149-151), such as when Becca stated, “I’m going to draw a rainbow” (Field notes 23 Feb 2018, line 149).

Others surrounded the use of stamps and stickers (Field notes 13 April 2018, line 46; Field notes 1 May 2018, line 133), such as when Cory said, “Kyra, I’m gonna do Mommy Pig” (Field notes 17 April 2018, line 40).

Still, others stated for whom the composition was being made that day (Field notes 11 April 2018, line 140; Field notes 11 April 2018, line 146). An example is in the selection below:

Jane: I’m gonna make something for Ms. Winters.

Winters: Really, okay.

Jane picked up the Frozen pen, and began to work.

Jane: I’m gonna draw a huge flower (Field notes 13 April 2018, lines 26-29).

Paying attention. It was surprising how much attention the children paid to the small details surrounding their writing in this eighth theme. This theme is defined by the ways in which the children focused or paid attention to the details in their compositions, their peers’ compositions, and their classroom teacher’s compositions. This is not only in their own compositions, but also in those of others in the classroom. For example, “In our

guided writing sessions, they are forever telling me that characters have to look a certain way (for example, Batgirl **HAS** to wear purple, yellow and black; Catboy must be blue and **MUST** have a cat emblem on his shirt, etc). Every once in a great while we may change the color of a Disney Princess's dress or have her hair up instead of down (or vice versa) at the request of the child making the character suggestion. The child who makes this decision does have to defend it...Please note that I am not the one who makes them defend their position, the other children tend to shout out their opinions on what a character is supposed to look like" (Reflexive Journal, lines 561-570).

The children seemed to lack the inclusion of details when it came to the Bubble Guppies note cards (Field notes 1 May 2018, line 52; Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 103-104; Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 123-125; Reflexive Journal, lines 554-557). For example, on 1 May 2018, as Kyra was coloring the Bubble Guppy on her card, the following conversation took place:

Joe: It's pink (pointing to the hair)

Kyra: I know.

Joe: You need to write it pink (pointing to the hair on the card and her picture).

Kyra: I got it pink. LOOK! (points to the part of the hair that is in fact pink).

Joe: No, it all gotta be pink!

Kyra: No, it don't! I can make her hair all colors (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 71-76).

There are also a few isolated examples of the children's attention to detail on other compositions (Field notes 28 Feb 2018, lines 267-269; Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 223-227). One example of this occurred with Kyra's ever-changing composition (first it was Ninja Turtle girl and then it evolved to Harley Quinn).

Kyra's picture included a plug in her phone, numbers on the phone, earphones and earring, and ears

...

Kyra: Harley Quinn have gold lip gloss (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 223-227).

Using adults as a resource. The children used the teacher-researcher as a resource, the ninth theme, in a variety of ways. This theme describes how the children utilized the adults, specifically the teacher-researcher, to assist them in their writing. She was used as an all-knowing authority, to help with dictation, to help with sound-spelling, to discuss compositions, and to ask for overall help in the writing process.

Adult as all-knowing authority. The children in most preschool classrooms are taught that the adults are in charge early in the school year. Therefore, there is no doubt as to why they feel the adult is an all-knowing authority. As the all-knowing authority, it is assumed that the teacher-researcher knew what the children drew/wrote, as evidenced by the following passage:

Sam: Ms. Winters knows what it is I think.

Winters: I want you to finish it and tell me about it.

Sam: It's already done!

Winters (as I pulled the board toward me): You want me to guess? But what if I guess wrong?

Sam: You not gonna guess wrong, you gonna know (with a smile).

Winters: Well, I know earlier...

Sam: Um, I made a uhm magnet.

Winters: Oh, a magnet? Okay I can see it now (not really)

Sam: Y'all didn't know what I made, and Ms. Winters knew most of it (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 156-166).

As the all-knowing adult, the children also expect that I knew how to spell their parents' and siblings' names (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 107-111; Field Notes 1 May 2018, lines 249-254; Reflexive Journal, lines 590-592), as illustrated by the following excerpt:

Joe: I'm done. Now can you write my brother's name?

Winters: Okay, where?

He pointed and said, "Write Jaylen". I asked him how to spell it, and he just repeated the name (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 175-178).

Sound-spelling. Just as the words imply, the children use the adults as a resource to help them stretch out and sound spell some of their words (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 87-88; Field notes 3 April 2018, line 96; Field notes 11 April 2018, line 76; Field notes 13 April 2018, lines 49-50). They usually chose the words they wrote. For

example, “Cole wrote the letters, while I stretched out the words for my house” (Field notes 23 Feb 2018, line 188). Another example of this occurred when Jacob wanted to write the word castle, per the passage below:

Winters: Would you like my help (he nodded again)? What are we writing?

Jacob: My castle.

Winters: My castle?

Jacob nodded. I wrote the word my and then stretched out the word castle for him to write...

Winters: What is this last letter you wrote?

Jacob: I don't know [Even though he didn't know what letter was associated with the last sound, he still put a mark on the page to hold its place. Wow!]" (Field notes 23 Feb 2018, lines 236-238).

On a rare occasion, a child's sound spelled an entire thought or sentence (Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 151-154; Field notes 13 April 2018, lines 67-69) with me, as this next passage shows:

“I stretched out the sounds while Jane wrote a sentence on her paper to match her picture. ‘TATSUGIVENMGAPILOW!’ which reads: ‘That’s you, giving me a pillow!’ The G after the M is actually an upside-down e” (Field notes 13 April 2018, lines 67-69).

Dictation. The children dictating the words for the teacher-researcher to write was optional. Most the dictations taken were requested (photograph from Field notes 20

March 2018; Field notes 28 Feb 2018, line 263; Field notes 3 April 2018, line 102; Field notes 11 April 2018, line 145), such as when Tina brought the teacher-researcher her Bubble Guppies card:

Tina: You write “Bubbles Splash”?

Winters: Yes, I will. Bubbles Splash (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 114-115).

Other dictations were read to the teacher-researcher (Field notes 11 April 2018, line 74; Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 129-132), such as when Michael brought a note stating, “It says, ‘Ms. Winters this is a note for you’” (Field notes 24 April 2018, line 162).

There were a few instances when the children chose to have words written with their writing, “so that people can read it when I’m not here” (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 79-82; Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 135-138). One example of this occurred when Cole wrote a note to post near the girls’ restroom, reading, “It says don’t go into the girls’ restroom unless you a girl” (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 134-135).

He told me he needed me to put the words under his, so “everybody who comes in can read it” (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 135-138).

Discussing compositions. Discussions about the children’s compositions came from a variety of outlets.

One of these outlets was the teacher-researcher asking questions about individual compositions (Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 156-158), as illustrated below:

Winters: What are you making today?

Auggie: An island

Winters: An island?

Auggie: and my Mama

Auggie: This you (pointing at me)...(Field notes 23 Feb 2018, lines 77-82).

A second outlet was from the children volunteering information about their compositions, but not having it written down on their dry-erase boards (Field notes 28 Feb 2018, lines 245-246; Field notes 23 Feb 2018, line 186; Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 207-218). The conversation with Kevin (below) is a good example of this:

Kevin to me: This my house, and this my sister bed that I sleep in. I don't sleep in my own bed.

Winters: Why not?

Kevin: 'Cause I watch scary movies on my Mama's tv at night (Field notes 14 March 2018, lines 136-139).

The third outlet for this was when the child just wanted to tell the story, as Mary did on 13 April 2018:

I asked if she wanted me to help her write her words, or just tell me about it.

Mary: I just want to tell you the story.

Winters: May I write it in my notebook?

Mary: Okay (with a shrug).

Mary: The little girl was going to pick a lotta flowers. And found a bow. Then her sister came and they saw a bat. And then they saw all beautiful flowers. They picked them and ran home. They ran into the wonderful. The End!...

She was touching the stamps on her page as she read the story (Field notes 13 April 2018, lines 50-60).

Asking for help. The children asked the teacher-researcher for help with many different things. Most of these requests were situational, specific, and not generalizable.

The most asked-for assistance was for help writing particular letters or friends' names (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 162-162; Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 111-112; Field notes 11 April 2018, line 52-53, 57; Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 85-86). One example of this occurred when Jacob requested some assistance:

Jacob (to me): I can't do it (while pointing to the C).

I helped him write a C (Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 111-112).

The teacher-researcher was also asked to help draw particular objects, such as a Ninja Turtle mask (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 35-6) and a speech bubble (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 146-149).

Additionally, the teacher-researcher was asked to intervene when a child took materials from another child (Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 36-39). The children also asked for help opening dry-erase markers (Field notes 23 Feb 2018, lines 188-9), stapling together two pages to make a book (Field notes 14 March 2018, line 149), getting a

particular page a child wanted to work on (Field notes 23 Feb. 2018, lines 72-75), and making a list, per below:

Every once in a while, she would stop and ask me if a certain friend had been there [to the sensory table]. She specifically stated (accurately, might I add) which friends had not yet gone to that center (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 161-163).

Asserts own knowledge (verbally and/or nonverbally). This tenth theme illustrates two ways that the children showed or asserted their knowledge of popular culture and of writing conventions.

Asserts knowledge of popular culture. The children asserted their knowledge of popular culture when they identified their favorite characters in the writing center. For example, when Tim found the cards with the Ninja Turtles, he discovered Shredder's name.

Tim: Shredder name.

Jane: He's a villain (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 220-221).

Typically, the children identified the characters with single utterances (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 128; Field notes 17 April 2018, line 79; Field notes 17 April 2018, line 87; Field notes 17 April 2018, line 114), such as when Joe located a Mickey Mouse crayon:

Joe: Mickey Mouse (holding up a Mickey Mouse crayon) (Field notes 1 May 2018, line 29).

Once, even the “classroom authority” on Pokémon got confused, but rapidly fixed his error, per below:

Michael, upon finding the Pokémon logo said, “This is not Pokémon.”

Winters: Are you sure about that? Check the letters. That’s the logo for Pokémon.

After checking each letter, he looked at me and stated, “Oh yeah, it is” (Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 93-95).

Asserts knowledge of writing. Children assert their knowledge of writing both by speaking and by showing it in their compositions.

Some of the children are very confident and verbal in what they can write (Field notes 13 April 2018, lines 42-44; Field notes 6 March 2018, line 205). For example, Sam said, “I know how to write everything” (Field notes 6 March 2018. Line 139).

Others are a little more reserved, and show what they can do. For example, “Joe copied Tim’s name perfectly, and wrote his own backward (he started in the correct place on the paper, but wrote the last letter of his name first and continued on)” (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 146-148). Another example is when Cole drew a heart, and wrote “Mom” by himself (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 88-89).

The children also showed the strategies they knew, such as copying words from cards (mentioned previously in this chapter), and copying words from the word wall, as Kyra demonstrated on 17 April 2018:

When Kyra did not find Shay's name (the cards were stuck together), she got up, and walked over to the word wall (by the library center less than 300 steps away and directly in front of us) to copy Shay's name (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 127-129).

There were ten themes and a variety of subthemes identified through the first research question. Some of the themes had subthemes, and others did not. The first theme was "peer interactions," which encompassed the subthemes of discussions, told peers what to do and/or corrected peers, identified peers' likes and/or dislikes, asked peer(s) questions and offered assistance, and followed the theme of peers. The second theme was excitement/pride in composition, which had no subthemes. The third theme was playing, which included the subtheme of singing. The fourth theme was materials or supplies, and included the subthemes of excitement, exploration, issues, taking from others, locating and location, negotiating, word/picture cards, requests, and mail. The fifth theme was revises or edits composition. The subthemes for this theme were ugly/messed up and additions to composition. The sixth theme was seeking attention, which included the subthemes of peer attention and adult attention. The seventh theme was stating intentions, which had no subthemes. The eighth theme was paying attention, and had no subthemes. The ninth theme was using adult(s) as a resource, which included the subthemes of an adult as an all-knowing authority, sound-spelling, dictation, discussing compositions, and asking for help. The tenth and final theme for this research question was asserts own knowledge (verbally and/or nonverbally). The subthemes for this theme were asserts knowledge of popular culture and asserts knowledge of writing.

Research Question 2

The second research question posed in this study states: What does it mean to bring popular culture into a preschool classroom as a teacher? This question was answered by analyzing the reflexive journal entries and field notes. Significant focus was placed on contents recorded in the reflexive journal. The themes and subthemes were found during initial coding. This process of generating codes, as explained in Chapter 3, was used with the other nine sets of field notes, as well as the teacher-researcher's reflexive journal entries. The codes were then reread, and collapsed into potential themes. Next, the themes were named, and defined as follows: surprises, joys, tensions and frustrations, and issues for group discussion.

Surprises. Throughout this project, the teacher-researcher found many things that surprised her, as depicted in this theme. The surprises fall into the subthemes of kids' knowledge, characters, and words and actions.

Kids' knowledge. The children demonstrated their knowledge in many ways. They showed that they could do things never before demonstrated in class. For example, "Cole and Jacob have come a long way in their letter-sound correspondence skills. Granted, I am stretching out the words for them to write what they hear...I am especially impressed that Jacob (a P3) put a squiggly line as a placeholder for a sound he could not identify..." (Reflexive Journal, lines 16-23).

The teacher-researcher also found that the more reluctant writers came to the writing center and made attempts to copy word cards. For example, "...Becca (P3), a reluctant writer at best, was writing the Trolls characters' names by herself without much

prompting” (Reflexive Journal, lines 183-184). Additionally, those children with lower motor skills - who traditionally had not come to the writing center - were coming there, since I added popular culture items, as evidenced by the following statement: “It appears that my children with lower fine motor skills are coming to the writing center just as much as those who have higher motor skill levels.” (Reflexive Journal, lines, 420-421).

She also found that the children were using resources to help them write that they did not use earlier in the study. For example, “I noticed that the kids are using word cards more during center times than they did during early parts of the study...” (Reflexive Journal, lines 415-416).

Additionally, the children who were choosing to write sentences did not leave space between words (Field notes 13 April 2018, lines 106-107; Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 154-157; Reflexive Journal, lines 380-382) until the very end of the study. As evidence of this on 20 May 2018, the teacher-researcher noted, “I noticed in the collection of the final writing sample, that Jane shook her head and put her finger on the paper to remind her to leave a space when writing her sentence. It appears that our classroom modeling worked for her” (Reflexive Journal, lines 756-758).

Some of the surprises also related to the children not remembering where materials were, or that the center offered particular materials (Reflexive Journal, lines 502-504; Reflexive Journal, lines 373-374). One such example occurred on 3 May 2018 with Jane, per her inquiring, “We have SpongeBob word cards? (I nodded)” (line 40).

Characters. The surprises surrounding the popular culture characters primarily focused on what was not included based on teacher observations. For example, “I was

surprised that Fairies, Tinkerbelle, and Jake and the Neverland Pirates were not on any of the lists so far as they are relatively frequent mentions during our guided writing activities...and/or during center times” (Reflexive Journal, lines 83-86).

She was also surprised when a child brought in her own popular culture themed notepad (My Little Pony) to share with the class toward the end of the study. On 24 April 2018, the teacher-researcher noted, “Admittedly I was surprised when the children did not mention My Little Pony Friendship is Magic during their favorite show as they have talked about it amongst themselves many times” (Reflexive Journal, lines 512-514).

Words and actions. The teacher-researcher was surprised when the children did not challenge each other or respond to a challenge about their own writing, such as when, “...no one got upset when Sam took five of our dry erase boards for his work and did not erase them when he was finished, rather he moved four of them to the side and began working on something else” (Reflexive Journal, lines 142-143).

It was also surprising that the teacher-researcher was brought into the children’s discussions to educate her on their favorite programs (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 207-218; Reflexive Journal, lines 732-734). The passage below demonstrated one such example:

Star: when he was singin’ and his grandma died and he, that big ole girl, he cried
and his Grandma

Kevin: And that’s when he stopped singin’.

Winters: Oh, that is sad when that happens. Sometimes you don't feel like singing...The kids then began discussing how Branch was singing in the movie and stopped when his Mama died (Field notes 14 March 2018, lines 113-121).

The teacher-researcher was also surprised by the number of times the children insisted their work was going home with her. For example, on 20 May 2018, the teacher-researcher stated, "...the children frequently wanted me to take their work home with me. They often stated, "It's goin' home with YOU..." (Reflexive Journal, lines 726-727).

Joys. In the Writing Center environment, there are many things to celebrate, as this second theme for research question two demonstrates. This theme identifies the sources of joy the teacher-researcher experienced during this research project. The subthemes for this theme were good problems that excited, impressed, and amazed me.

Good problems. Not all problems were considered "bad." Some were just situations that arose and necessitated reflection. There were two main good problems that were encountered on this journey, described as follows:

The first came at the beginning of the study, when the children brainstormed their favorite popular culture icons. The teacher-researcher noted, "I had no idea they would come up with so many characters" (Reflexive Journal, line 71). She also noted when making the character cards, "...we had way more characters than I had word cards for, which is not a bad problem to have..." (Reflexive Journal, lines 117-118). This was considered a problem, because the teacher-researcher had to return to the store to purchase more blank cards on a different day, as the store was closed when she made this discovery. It was not deemed to be a massive problem.

The second good problem emerged later in the study. The problem was that the children produced several compositions, and wanted them on the walls, such that the teacher-researcher was running out of display space. This was a new problem for her. On 13 April 2018, she first mentioned this great problem: “I noticed today that I have a problem. My walls are starting to fill up. I am going to have to decide which writing products are going to be up and which ones will come down. What a wonderful problem to have” (Reflexive Journal, lines 357-359)! This was followed by a concern of the walls being bare, but should not have been. as demonstrated on 24 April 2018 when she wrote, “I was a little concerned that it would look bare for a while. I should not have been as, after today’s morning centers, it is almost full again. I guess this is a good problem to have, although most of the work on the front of my desk belongs to Michael. When I began this project, I never imagined that I would have a display issue (too much work at one time) ...” (Reflexive Journal, lines 446-450).

Excited, impressed, and amazed. There were many moments of teacher-researcher excitement over the twelve study sessions. One such moment occurred on 24 April 2018, when she wrote, “I was excited to see that a few of my older children requested to go get certain cards from the Writing Center during our Journaling time. This is especially exciting since I have only modeled using the cards a few times during our Guided Writing lessons so far” (Reflexive Journal, lines 499-501).

Excitement also occurred when she finally engaged a child to voluntarily come to the Writing Center. On 11 April 2018, she wrote, “I was excited to do today’s observation

for a few reasons. One, I finally got Greg to come to the Writing Center!” (Reflexive Journal, lines 323-324).

The same level of excitement occurred when she observed that the children were beginning to edit their own work in developmentally-appropriate ways, both in the Writing Center and in their daily journals (Reflexive Journal 3 April 2018).

The teacher-researcher was impressed when a child found another way to write her friend’s name. “I love that Kyra found an alternate way to locate Shay’s name for her ‘mail’. Even though I referenced the Word Wall during the day, I think this is the first time a child has actually used it for writing” (Reflexive Journal, lines 410-412).

She was also impressed when she noted that, “Since adding in the popular culture materials, I have noticed a few changes in my children at the Writing Center. I’ve been impressed by the sheer amount of time the children are spending in the writing center now that we’ve added some of their favorite popular culture icons to it. In the past, they only came to do one writing sample (see first three sets of field notes) and now they are coming for longer periods (most the entire center time) of time. I love this” (Reflexive Journal, lines 213-217).

The teacher-researcher was amazed on more than one occasion, for example, noting: “I find the level of details this group included in their drawings/writings amazing. They wanted to make sure they were accurate in their work...” (Reflexive journal, lines 152-153).

Another example of the teacher-researcher’s expressed amazement was per the children’s statements regarding race clean up time. The teacher-researcher wrote, “I

found it interesting to note...Kyra informed me that she was dark-skinned, Jane was light-skinned, and I was even lighter-skinned. Jane and I both agreed. I asked if it mattered. Both girls said no and Jane said, ‘ ‘cause we all friends’. With all the fuss being made over Caucasian teachers teaching African American children, I found this interesting. Here you have two African American preschoolers, taught by a Caucasian teacher, who noticed that our skin is different shades and it didn’t matter to them” (Reflexive Journal, lines 190-197).

Tensions and frustrations. The teacher-researcher observed her own tensions and frustrations, as did she observe them as demonstrated by the children. This theme of the tensions and frustrations observed in the classroom is broken down into subthemes: speaking of conflicts, teacher debate, assumption that adult knows all/is all powerful, materials, and gender.

Speaking of conflicts. There were a few times when the teacher-researcher had to demonstrate sensitivity when deciding on intervening or not intervening.

Some days she did not choose to intervene. The most notable example of this was when Tina pushed her way into the Writing Center when it was full, and refused to leave until she wrote. The teacher-researcher noted, “I probably did not do myself any favors by taking Tina’s dictation; however, I truly wanted to see what she would have to say about her work. On the one hand I want to keep the number of children at the center to a manageable 4 (that way they are not in each other’s way) but on the other hand, I want to encourage them to write and express themselves. I suppose that battling a three-year-old

over writing was not something I really felt like doing today” (Reflexive Journal, lines 49-54).

She also did not choose to confront other children, when some of them heatedly conferred over materials. However, knowing the children, she chose to intervene when necessary (Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 184-185; Field notes 14 March 2018, lines 157-160). She noted: “I may have intervened too quickly on Michael and Kevin’s argument, but as both have been known to hit when they don’t get what they want (and once hit, the other would not have been pacified until he returned the hit and there would have been more hitting), I tried to help them solve the problem peacefully” (Field notes, 14 March 2018, lines 157-160).

One disagreement where she did choose to intervene occurred when Kevin did not want Kyra’s card. She wrote:

... Kevin gave Kyra’s card to Auggie since he didn’t want it, he only wanted one that was ‘all red’. Last week Kyra tried to give me the picture he had given to her and he objected stating that if she didn’t want it, she should have given it back to him...however, he tried to give away her work without a second thought. He and I discussed this briefly. It did not do much good since he still felt that he could do whatever he wanted with something that was given to him (and that she should still take his “picture I made for her” home). Sigh, at least I tried to help him see the other side of this issue” (Reflexive Journal, lines 581-589).

Teacher debate. A few notable, internal debates took place throughout this research project. One debate led the teacher-researcher to second-guess her decisions (Reflexive

Journal, lines 526-536; Reflexive Journal, 696-699). For example, she wrote, "...I find myself questioning some of my decisions (not that they were right or wrong at the time that I made them), such as, deciding which characters to add in the span of a week through discussions with the kids....I chose to do it as a one and done activity since I knew I would have to purchase and/or prepare the materials ahead of time. I also question my decision not to include anything more than the cards with the Power Rangers' names on them was a good one. I did not include them because...and 3) I could not find anything on them, not even a coloring book at my local stores..."(Reflexive Journal, lines 526-536).

The teacher-researcher also debated whether or not to, "... leave the writing, pictures, stamp, and sticker explorations in the books or remove them...(Reflexive Journal, lines 278-279).

Assumption that adult is all-knowing/all-powerful. Part of the reason that the adult in the room is deemed all-knowing or all-powerful is due to the role of the teacher in a preschool classroom, which is deemed similar to the role a parent takes in the home. The assumption that the adult is all-knowing (as discussed in Research Question 1) provided a source of tension for the teacher-researcher (Reflexive Journal, lines 464-469; Reflexive Journal, lines 590-592. This frustration is noted in her reflexive journal, "...the children automatically think that I should know how to spell **EVERYTHING**, including their family members names and nicknames without the benefit of having the information in front of me" (Reflexive Journal, lines 590-592).

Materials. There were a few frustrations for the teacher-researcher regarding the materials. One of the frustrations was not being able to initially find the characters on the children's lists. Some of this stemmed from a lack of understanding, as she stated, "I discovered part of the problem was that I did not correctly hear him (or he did not correctly pronounce the names, either way, it was an issue) on any character other than Pikachu. It would probably help if I knew something about this game..." (Reflexive Journal, lines 60-63). This happened more than once as she continued, "...the characters that were on my list were not actually in the programs (probably because I did not understand some of the names the children said)...I also found out that some of the character names were not spelled the way I thought they should be spelled. I did better after a break and searching for shows instead of the characters" (Reflexive Journal, lines 106-114).

Another issue was that some of the items the teacher-researcher searched for in the stores were nonexistent, and she had to explore further those purchases; as she stated, "Next week I plan on adding cards with Bubble Guppies pictures (copied from a coloring book) and envelopes into the Writing Center. Since the only preschool-friendly Bubble Guppies merchandise I was able to locate at Party City, Target, Wal-Mart, and Dollar Tree were coloring books and a pail (which I will put the cards and envelopes in), I had to get creative regarding what I could add in" (Reflexive Journal, lines 515-519).

Gender. Gender appeared to be of concern for this group of children. The lack of compromise on the part of many of the children was cause for tension between the

teacher and the classroom. As the teacher wrote, "...they all want to participate, but do not want all 'Girl stuff' or 'Boy stuff'" (Reflexive Journal, lines 178-179).

The teacher-researcher wrote, "I have noticed that gender and writing (as well as toys) is an issue for Joe. He has distinct ideas about what he and the girls should or should not be allowed to do in the Writing Center (and in other areas of the room)...Point of information, there are NO boy toys or girl toys in our room, there are simply toys. It has been this way since day one in our program. Somehow this message as not fully gotten through to him yet" (Reflexive Journal, lines 611-616).

It is apparent to the teacher-researcher that the consideration of "boy" materials/toys and "girl" materials/toys is also a consideration in the control group's classroom. She wrote, "When I went to deliver to the control group, the teacher told me she had six girls...and seven boys...I sent up ten of each to allow the kids to pick and she sent back four Princess Palace Pet sets and 3 superhero sets telling me she chose, and her girls got the former and her boys got the latter" (Reflexive Journal, lines 749-753).

In spite of the gender issue within the classroom, an intriguing discussion is illustrated in the next passage below:

Joe: It disgusting!

Winters: What's disgusting about Supergirl?

Joe: I don't like girls, I like boy!

Cory: I like girl

Kyra: Girl stickers you mean?

Cory: Yeah

Joe and Sam: Uggh

Cory: Why you all keep saying “Ugh!”?

Kyra: Cause you keep sayin’ you like girl stickers.

Cory: The stickers are for everybody.

...

(Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 60-69).

Issues for group discussion. This research led to four class meetings to discuss a few items of concern. These concerns are defined in this theme. One discussion revolved around our stamp pad in the writing center. Two centered around the construct of getting mail. The final discussion centered on reminders to follow procedures when the teacher-researcher was in a small group.

It was discovered that a child brought our stamp pad into the restroom, and saturated it. This was a particularly concerning event for the teacher-researcher, as she wanted to be diplomatic, but also state the expectations of behavior to prevent this inappropriate activity from reoccurring. She wrote, “We discussed that someone, and I did not need to be told who, because I already knew, used great problem-solving skills. She got the stamp pad really wet when it wasn’t working correctly. I let the children know that when the stamp pad gets too wet it doesn’t work quite right. I also let them know that there is a special solution that is used to get stamp pads wet. We discussed what we could do if the stamp pad was too dry. The child suggestion that we agreed on is that if you need help

making something work, go talk to an adult. My assistant and I agree that if the children bring us the stamp pad that is too dry we will let them help fix the problem” (Reflexive Journal, lines 248-254).

In the first instance regarding the mailbox use, the teacher-researcher wrote, “I told the children about my observation that the children in Dramatic Play really seemed to want to use one of the mailboxes. I asked the children what they thought we could do about it. One child suggested that we put the small box into the big box (not really sure how this will help but I rolled with it). The group asked him if that would solve the problem. He said, no. Another child suggested that we turn the big mailbox (put it facing the Dramatic Play center) to Dramatic Play and use the Spider-Man one in the Writing Center. We took a quick vote (thumbs up if you agree, thumbs down if you disagree) and decided that we will give Dramatic Play the big mailbox (Crayola) and Writing the smaller mailbox (Spider-Man). I love it when they come up with solutions to problems instead of leaving it to me” (Reflective Journal, lines 255-264).

The second discussion about mail and mailboxes was based on the idea that our friends did not know that they had mail, and it was upsetting to the person who “made” the “mail.” The teacher-researcher wrote, “After the shock and confusion about the girls in Dramatic Play not getting the mail the boys in the Writing Center put in the Dramatic Play mailbox for them, we had an immediate discussion before lunch. I started out by telling the children we had a slight problem with our friends’ not knowing they had mail. I requested that they let the person they wrote a letter to know that they had mail”

(Reflexive Journal, lines 285-290). This discussion was more of a reminder of what to do than an actual discussion.

Our last class discussion was also more a reminder of procedures to follow during small group time/centers. After the discussion, she wrote, “I am so glad my plan worked. I reviewed the procedures for centers when I am with a group and had the kids tell me what they are supposed to do if they have a problem or need something during center time when I am with other children (see entry for 17 April 2018 for details on the procedure). Today’s session was much smoother because of it” (Reflexive Journal, lines 442-445).

The group discussions served as a way to share information, and to bring some concerns about our Writing Center to the forefront. In all the illustrated cases, the follow-up group discussions helped immensely.

This research question had four central themes, and a few subthemes. The first theme was surprises, that included the subthemes of kids’ knowledge, characters, and words and actions. The second theme was joys, that included the subthemes of good problems, and excited, impressed, and amazed. The third theme was tensions and frustrations, that included the subthemes of speaking of conflicts, teacher debate, assumption that the adult is all-knowing/all-powerful, materials, and gender. The fourth was issues for group discussion, and it had no subthemes.

Quality of Expression: Group Comparison

The hypothesis posed by this study stated: The quality of expression (as determined by the DRDP (2015) standard for Language and Literacy Development measure 10:

Emergent Writing and the Missouri Early Learning Goals for Literacy: Writing) will be higher in the intervention group than in the control group as evaluated by pre-and posttest journaling samples. Table 4.7 supplies the scores on these two measures. Each child's pretest journaling sample was analyzed using the DRDP (2015) standard for Language and Literacy measure 10: Emergent Writing first. The DRDP (2015), the official document title, stands for "Desired Results Developmental Profile." The child's developmental level was decided based on the descriptors and examples found for each level (see Appendix K for the descriptors).

Next, the teacher-researcher looked at the Missouri Early Learning Goals for Literacy: Writing. This section of the Missouri Early Learning Goals included five indicators at the preschool level (listed by letters a-e). Indicator "a" was: "Experiments with writing tools and materials" (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2013, p. 8). While the teacher-researcher was relatively certain that each child in the two groups demonstrated this, it was not measured for the purpose of this study. Appendix K included a scanned page of the Content Component for the rest of the indicators under the MELG for Literacy: Writing. It should be noted that indicator "d," "Uses a variety of resources to facilitate writing," was demonstrated by the children's copying words from the environment; and indicator "e," "Converts speech to writing," was demonstrated by the child's sound spelling and/or writing some of his/her own words (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2013, p. 8).

The pre-test journal samples indicated that six of the children in the control group were at the DRDP (2015) developmental level of Building Early, and two were at the

DRDP developmental level of Building Middle. All of the children in the control group met the Missouri Early Learning Goals for Literacy: Writing indicators “b” and “c.” The pre-test journal samples for the children in the intervention group indicated that seven children were at the Building Earlier developmental level, three children were at the Building Middle developmental level, and eight children were at the Building Later developmental level. Eighteen children in the intervention group met indicators b and c for the Missouri Early Learning Goals for Literacy: Writing. However, one of the children also met the indicators d and e.

In May 2018, the post-test was collected, and the same procedures detailed above were used to analyze the data. The control group showed growth on the DRDP (2015). Four of the children were at Building Early developmental level, one was at the Building Middle developmental level, and three were at the Building Later developmental level. The control groups’ scores on the Missouri Early Learning Goals for Literacy: Writing indicators remained the same as they were in the pretest, so no growth was noted on that assessment. The children in the intervention group also demonstrated growth on the DRDP (2015) scores. Four of the children in the intervention group scored at the Building Early developmental level, one at the Building Middle developmental level, six at the Building Later, and seven at the Integrating Earlier developmental level.

There were some fluctuations in the Missouri Early Learning Goals for Literacy: Writing scores. The child who demonstrated indicator e in the pre-test did not demonstrate to that level in the post-test. All of the children in the intervention group

demonstrated skills at the indicators b and c levels. Six of the children also demonstrated indicator d, and one child demonstrated indicator e.

This data confirms that the hypothesis was correct. The intervention group, overall, scored higher on both the DRDP (2015) standard for Language and Literacy Development measure 10: Emergent Writing *and* the Missouri Early Learning Goals: Literacy indicators for Writing. A caution to observe regarding this pre-test and post-test data is that preschool children are known to demonstrate different indicators on each writing sample. The teacher-researcher can state that the children in the intervention room typically displayed the developmental levels and indicators presented in the chart, and that, after talking with the teacher in the control group's classroom, the scores were also what were typically demonstrated.

Table 4.7 Control and Intervention Groups Scores of Writing Development

Name or Participant # and Classification	Control or Intervention Group	Pretest DRDP Emergent Writing Score	MO Early Learning Goals (2013) for Literacy Writing Pretest Score	Posttest DRDP Emergent Writing Score	MO Early Learning Goals (2013) for Literacy Writing Posttest Score
1 (P4, R)	Control	BE	b, c	BE	b, c
2 (P4)	Control	BM	b, c	BE	b, c
3 (P4)	Control	BE	b, c	BL	b, c
4 (P3)	Control	BE	b, c	BE	b, c
5 (P3)	Control	BE	b, c	BM	b, c
6 (P3)	Control	BM	b, c	BL	b, c
7 (P3)	Control	BE	b, c	BL	b, c
8 (P3)	Control	BE	b, c	BE	b, c
Becca (P3)	Intervention	BE	b, c	IE	b, c, d
Sam (P3)	Intervention	BL	b, c	BL	b, c, d
Shay (P3)	Intervention	BE	b, c	BL	b, c
Joe (P4)	Intervention	BE	b, c	BE	b, c
Jane (P4, R)	Intervention	BL	b, c	IE	b, c, d, e
Cory (P3)	Intervention	BL	b, c	IE	b, c, d
Kyra (P4)	Intervention	BL	b, c	IE	b, c
Michael (P4)	Intervention	BL	B, C	BL	b, c
Kelly (P4, R)	Intervention	BE	b, c	IE	b, c
Auggie (P3)	Intervention	BE	b, c	BE	b, c
Tina (P3)	Intervention	BE	b, c	BE	b, c
Kevin (P4, R)	Intervention	BE	b, c	BL	b, c
Star (P4)	Intervention	BL	b, c	IE	b, c, d
Jacob (P3)	Intervention	BM	b, c	BL	B, C
Cole (P4)	Intervention	BL	b, c, d, e	IE	b, c, d
Mary (P4)	Intervention	BL	b, c	BL	b, c
Tim (P3, IEP)	Intervention	BM	b, c	BE	b, c
Greg (P4)	Intervention	BM	b, c	BM	b, c

Key: BE=Building Earlier; BM=Building Middle; BL=Building Later; IE=Integrating Earlier

Summary

This chapter addressed the findings of a study that explored how preschoolers in a mixed-age, urban Midwestern classroom wrote/composed when given the chance to use materials of their favorite popular culture icons. The themes established in relation to the first question of the study were: peer interactions, excitement/pride in composition, playing, materials/supplies, revises or edits composition, attention, stating intentions, attention to detail, using an adult as a resource, and asserts own knowledge (verbally or nonverbally).

This chapter also demonstrated the teacher's perspective of bringing popular culture into the writing center of her classroom. The themes established in relation to the second research question were: surprises, joys, tensions and frustrations, and issues for group discussion.

Also addressed were details of the participants in the control group, the intervention group, and the interviewed teachers. In sum, the children in the intervention group showed more growth in their writing development than the children in the control group.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

This study was an investigation into what happens when popular culture items are added to the preschool writing center, and what bringing popular culture icons into the writing center demonstrates to the teacher. This chapter will present a summary of the study, and detail the conclusions addressed in the previous chapter, linked to the literature reviewed, when/where applicable. A discussion of the implications for actions and recommendations for further research will also be provided.

Overview of the problem. Research has been conducted on the ways popular culture is appropriated into early elementary school-aged children's writing. Dyson's seminal studies examined these children's appropriations of popular culture/media into their writings. Dyson (1999 & 2001) found that children appropriate popular culture into their writing in a variety of ways. Children's common knowledge of popular culture/media has helped them bond with each other through both writing and play (Dyson, 2003). Her work illustrated the interplay between the official and unofficial curricula in schools, as she also noted the need children feel to include their peers in their writing process and compositions to maintain their status in the peer group (Dyson, 2013a).

Such peer-reviewed literature documents many tensions associated with popular culture and writing. These tensions primarily relate to gender, violence, and power struggles between the official and unofficial curricula, as well as between teachers and administrators (Wohlwend, 2009; Willet, 2005; Fletcher, 2006; Newkirk, 2002; Dyson, 2001; Dyson, 2003; Kissel & Miller, 2015; and Marsh, 2000).

Purpose statement. The purpose of this study was to contribute to the literature by exploring how preschool children in a mixed-age classroom, who attend a public school in an urban, Midwestern area, write/compose when given the chance to use materials that feature their favorite popular culture icons. Additionally, it aimed to provide an increased understanding of the joys and tensions surrounding bringing popular culture into preschool children's writing and composing.

Research questions. The teacher-researcher posed the following questions for the basis of this study:

1) In their emergent writing/composing with popular culture materials, in what ways do three-, four-, and five-year-old children engage with the materials, their peers and/or the adult(s) in the preschool classroom writing center? For this study, composition is defined as the multimodal process of combining illustrations, text, and talk to tell a story (Ray & Glover, 2008).

2) What does it mean to bring popular culture into a preschool classroom as a teacher?

The teacher-researcher hypothesized that the quality of expression (as determined by the DRDP (2015) standard for Language and Literacy Development measure 10: Emergent Writing (2015) *and* the Missouri Early Learning Goals for Literacy: Writing (2013)) will be higher in the intervention group than in the control group, as evaluated by pre-and post-test journaling samples.

Review of Methodology. This project relied on the data collected in basic qualitative studies that took the form of field notes, work samples, and teacher interviews. The teacher-researcher utilized the tenets of action research and thematic analysis to

collect and analyze the data. Data was collected via work samples and observations. The teacher-researcher observed and recorded the popular culture icons on the children's belongings brought from homes, such as their clothing and backpacks. This data was triangulated with the popular culture icons, and programs that the children stated they consume at home during guided writing lesson(s) to check for accuracy. The popular culture icons were made into cards for the writing center and familiar writing objects with these icons were added to the writing center.

Interviews in the form of dictations and clarifying questions were conducted with the children as they dictated and discussed their written works to clarify what was said. The teacher-researcher's observations and work samples were checked by immediately re-reading what she wrote during the dictations with the children, to ensure that she accurately recorded their words and messages. Any changes that needed to be made were made on the spot. Photocopies and photographs were taken of the student work for analysis. The teacher-researcher focused on how the children interacted with the materials and documented, via a field note journal, what tensions appeared to exist around writing/composing in the preschool classroom.

The control group consisted of eight preschool children in the other preschool classroom in the teacher-researcher's building. Two journaling samples were collected from the children in both the control and intervention groups, one as a pre-test and the other as a post-test. The journaling samples were analyzed using the DRDP standard for Language and Literacy measure Development 10: Emergent Writing (2015) and the

Missouri Early Learning Goals for Literacy (2013) under the subsection of writing.

Scores were established based on these criteria.

Five interviews were conducted with preschool teachers with varied levels of experience teaching preschool and to gain an understanding of their perceptions of what happens in the preschool writing center.

Findings Related to the Literature

There were some findings that supported what the teacher-researcher discovered in the literature review, and others that did not. There were findings that supported the inclusion of popular culture writing materials to the writing center, findings that supported the concepts presented in the literature surrounding peer interactions, and findings that supported the construct that young children edit their compositions. Additionally, the findings of this study supported the assumption that gender tension exists. On the other hand, this study also did not support other professed constructs identified in the literature review, in that many of the tensions associated with writing and bringing popular culture into children's compositions were not observed in this study. There were no significant surprises in the findings of this study (i.e., things that the teacher-researcher observed that the literature review did not address or proclaim).

The teacher-researcher found that the children had many kinds of peer interactions, as the literature suggested, including discussions, telling peers what to do and/or correcting peers, identifying their peers likes and dislikes, and following the writing theme of peers. In keeping with findings in existing research, peers are found to be a great source of help in the writing process (Rowe, Fitch, & Bass, 2001; McCloskey, 2013; Kissel et al., 2011).

One way that this was demonstrated was by more knowledgeable peers helping others to draw illustrations, stretch out words, and write letters (McCloskey, 2013; Kissel, 2001; Kissel et al., 2011). The findings of this study confirmed that the children in this preschool classroom helped each other through the writing process by supplying character names, spelling their own names, and giving letter names when peers appeared to need such help. The teacher-researcher was also utilized as a peer in this regard, as the children often solicited her assistance to write letters.

The teacher-researcher placed herself in the writing center to not only observe, but also to assist the children in any way possible, including taking dictation and discussing the children's work with them, as supported by the literature (Ray & Glover, 2008; Rowe & Neitzle, 2010; Rowe, 2008a; Rowe, 2008b; Bay, 2015; Schickendanz, 2013; Kennedy, 2013; King, 2012). Additionally, the teacher-researcher helped the children to stretch out/sound spell words upon request, and assisted the children in a variety of ways, such as helping to make the materials work, and intervening to prevent possible altercations.

This study found a few rather surprising roles for the teacher-researcher in the writing center. Many of the discussions that took place at the writing center surrounded popular culture, and what the children did at home. The teacher-researcher tried to be as unobtrusive as possible; however, she was often brought into these discussions. A few of the discussions that took place surrounding popular culture were initiated by the children to educate the teacher-researcher about their favorite movies, television programs, and video games.

The teacher-researcher was expected to play the role of the all-knowing authority on all things. In this all-knowing capacity, she was expected to know what the children composed without being told, the names of all the characters they referenced, and how to spell their family members names. In her role as the all-knowing authority, the teacher-researcher felt tension. On the one hand, she knew many things about the children and their families, yet on the other hand, she did not know how to spell every family member's name (and there were many variations to how those names were spelled). This was slightly stressful for her, because she did not want to teach the child an incorrect spelling of his/her family member's names.

This study demonstrated that the preschool children revise and edit their own work for a variety of reasons, such as for peer feedback (as the works of Kissel, 2009; Kissel, 2011 suggest) and discussions, telling their stories (as Ray & Glover, 2008 also found), and just not being satisfied with their compositions. There was a level of joy and excitement on the part of the teacher-researcher when a child went back and revised his/her compositions on his/her own accord.

The teacher-researcher was surprised to observe the level of attention to detail the children demonstrated. The literature hints that young children write about their favorite popular culture characters in a particular way, such as by focusing on the color of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle and the way Disney Princesses were drawn (Kissel, 2011; Wohlwend, 2012). The findings from this study supported this notion. The children in this study were particularly attentive to the color of the hair created for drawings of the Bubble Guppies. The color had to match the character cards and/or television show in

order for the other children in the group to accept that they were Bubble Guppies. It should be noted that, while most children cared about keeping the color the same, others did not, and were unaffected by their friends' informing them otherwise. Additionally, the youngest members of the class were not held to the same standard as their older peers when it came to the characters being accurately represented, as they were never challenged about it.

Young children do many things in their quest for attention. The pride in their work commanded the attention of not only their peers, but also the teacher-researcher. The literature reviewed for this project did not show the levels of pride and excitement in their compositions that this teacher-researcher found. Their sources of excitement and pride came in the form of what they were able to do independently, such as write letters, their names, and make materials work; and in the announcement to their friends, they had "mail." Allowing a child to show what he/she can do independently fosters this great sense of pride.

The literature suggested that young children maintain interest and motivation when new and interesting objects are added to the writing center (Bay, 2015; Rowe 2008a; Rowe, 2008b; Marsh 1999). The interest is further ignited, and reluctant writers are more inclined to participate when popular culture items are added to the writing center (Marsh 1999b; Vera 2011). Based on this research project, the teacher-researcher was entirely confident in asserting that the children came to the writing center, even the most reluctant writers, on a relatively regular basis when their favorite popular culture icons were placed with the writing materials. The teacher-researcher was pleasantly surprised when some of

her most reluctant writers came back multiple times to the center, and engaged in the writing process by not only exploring materials, but also by using popular culture word cards to copy their favorite characters' names.

Previous research has indicated that an important part of children going to the writing center is to explore and play with the materials (Rowe, 2008b; Rowe & Neitzel, 2010). It is the teacher-researcher's conclusion that this was most certainly the case with the three-, four-, and five-year-old children participating in this study. The children were excited to learn what the different stamps and stickers could do for them. They were also excited about how they could use such objects to assist them in composing. Additionally, they gained access to affinity groups with their peers by using the same materials, and having discussions about the characters that were represented on the materials. While their compositions did not look the way they were described in the existing literature (Boldt, 2009; Kissel, 2011), they certainly helped the children gain access to peer groups.

In the literature, it was found that children borrow or appropriate writing ideas from other places, such as movies, video games, songs, and superhero stories (Kissel, 2011; Dyson, 2001). This study found this to be true in a few cases. The children appropriated the themes of horror movies into their compositions. The teacher-researcher found this as the children discussed elements of horror movies (or scary or adult movies to use their words), and as they wrote about people on fire. The two times this phenomenon was observed, the teacher-researcher requested to know where they saw someone with hair (or whole body) on fire. This led the children into discussions, primarily among themselves about the scary movies they liked to watch.

Rowe's (2008a) research discussed the nature of nine social contracts that included: "socially shared understandings" (p. 70) of written texts in a two-year-old classroom writing center. The teacher-researcher found that the children in her preschool room primarily used two of the identified social contracts: the text centrality ownership contract and the text centrality contract. The text-ownership contract in Rowe's (2008a) study pertained to the children writing on their own papers and owning their own compositions. In the current research, the teacher-researcher found that the children had distinct ideas about where their papers should be displayed or travel, for example, up on the wall, on the teacher's desk, home with them, home with their peer(s), and/or home with the teacher-researcher. The text centrality contract stated, "Texts mediate social interaction in literacy events" (Rowe, 2008a, p. 78). In Rowe's (2008a) research, the children explored the process of "mail" by trying to mail toys and giving particular people "mail" both in and out of the mailbox. In the current study, the teacher-researcher found that the children told each other what could and could not go in the mailbox. Additionally, in order for something to be "mail," it had to be in an envelope, with their peer's name on it. The children also navigated their way through making sure their mail got to the correct recipient.

The teacher-researcher also found many things that were a pleasant surprise for her, such as the children's demonstrated knowledge, and their words and actions. The teacher-researcher found children asserted their own knowledge to anyone who would listen. They asserted their knowledge of popular culture by identifying the characters in the writing center, and they asserted their knowledge of writing conventions both verbally and nonverbally. The teacher-researcher was surprised that the children sought

out various forms of supports to help them write, such as the word wall, word cards, and peers. Additionally, the children were very intentional in their composing efforts. They shared with their peers and the teacher-researcher their composing plans.

In the review of the existing literature, the teacher-researcher discovered that gender was a source of tension. It manifested in the forms of topic choice via which genres boys traditionally write about versus the genres that girls traditionally write about (Newkirk, 2002; Dyson, 1994; Wohlwend, 2012; Fletcher, 2006; Ortiz et al., 2014). The teacher-researcher found that the children's writing topic was part of the gender tension, in that some of the children wanted to write "the boy one" or "the girl one."

The children's choice of materials was a greater source of tension in the classroom. The children certainly felt that there were "boy" and "girl" materials (such as Wonder Woman stickers were for girls, and Pokémon stickers were for boys). The teacher-researcher found that the girls pushed back, and let the boys know that they could write about whatever they wanted, and explained their decisions (for example, when a little girl put a Pokémon sticker on her card, she explained simply that it was for a boy in the room).

The literature also suggested a bias on the part of the teacher as to the children's choice of topics (Anggard, 2005). This bias was not supported by the research reviewed and reported in this study. The teacher-researcher specified that there were no "boy" or "girl" materials, and that they were just "materials," which she emphasized as the children chose their incentive for participation.

Additionally, the literature suggested that there were tensions surrounding gender in the form of gender bias, such as putting female characters in subservient roles (Marsh, 2000), not allowing girls and boys to engage in group play that traditionally favors one gender over another (Wohlwend, 2009; Dyson, 1994), and representing characters in a particular way based on their gender (Dyson, 2013b; Wohlwend, 2012). The teacher-researcher's findings do not support the assumption of the children putting girls in subservient roles. The findings of this study support that children have expectations for how the popular culture characters are supposed to look (as referenced earlier in this chapter); however, this was not based on gender, but rather, on an accurate representation of the characters, both male and female.

The literature hinted that children relied on adult support when they did not have the motor or the literacy skills to write their own stories (King, 2012; Rowe, Fitch, & Bass, 2003). The teacher-interviews supported this concept, in that four of the five teachers interviewed believed that the issue of fine-motor skill development kept children from desiring to go to the writing center. Further, the children who typically attended the writing center were those who are already able to write their letters. The teacher-researcher found evidence to dispute this claim. The children in her room visited the writing center at least one time during this study, regardless of their level of fine-motor development; even the youngest members of the class found a way to use the materials.

The literature review led the teacher-researcher to believe that certain tensions might manifest, such as those of language, and official versus unofficial curricula, violence, and gender issues. Gender was the only avenue where tensions existed in this classroom, and

not in quite the same ways that the literature hinted. Instead, she found other issues and tensions existed in her classroom surrounding popular culture and writing, referencing conflicts, internal debates, and materials. Additionally, no findings were located that discussed the joys, fun, the group discussions, and the “did that really just happen” moments wonderfully gleaned from the teacher-researcher’s perspective.

Based on her review of peer-reviewed literature, she expected that she may have to confront the tension of violence topics. Much of the literature hinted that older children realize just how much violence they can include in their writing before it becomes an issue (Newkirk, 2001; Newkirk, 2002; Willett, 2005; Marsh & Mallard, 2000). The literature also hinted that children want to write about violence, but the schools will not allow it, so they have to find ways around the official policies (Dyson, 2001; Dyson, 2008). However, she did not observe this as an issue in her classroom per this study. A possible reason for this may be that, in Guided Writing lessons early in the year, norms were established for writing. The class discussed, as it came up around October, that in the show and movie, the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles may carry swords and knives. The class brainstormed other more acceptable objects that the favorite characters could hold, such as pizzas, cookies, and soda. It appeared to be preferable to them to see what else the Ninja Turtles could hold – replacing less-desired, violent tools.

The preschool curriculum for writing in the teacher-researcher’s school was comprised of a Balanced Literacy Framework and the commercial handwriting curriculum ABC, 123. There was no statement in either of these programs as to what children could or could not write about in their stories. That was saved for the

kindergarten writing curriculum. The children were free to compose in any way the teacher deemed appropriate. This was why the teacher-researcher felt that the children and teacher did not have the tensions with the curricula that the children and teachers expressed in the studies she researched for this project (Dyson, 2013b; Ackerman, 2016; Dyson, 2000).

She expected that she may have difficulties regarding the compositions themselves, and what building administration did not comprehend (Kissel & Miller, 2015). This was also, thankfully, not the case. Her building principal and academic instructional coordinator read the signs she had posted, and enjoyed the compositions the children produced. She feared she may have to explain the rationale for her spending twelve, thirty-minute sessions in the writing center - an unfounded fear. Because data collection was part of her daily job, no one thought twice about where or how she collected the data, provided that it could be used for the mandated assessment, as well (DRDP (2015)); and it most certainly applied.

The teacher-researcher also did not experience language (Dyson, 2004; Dyson & Smitherman, 2009) as a source of tension. This may be due, in part, to the fact that she did not challenge what the children stated as they wrote/drew/composed. She did not correct their grammatical errors (some due to using African American Language, and others due to their young ages and early stages of language development), or even point them out. She simply acted as a scribe and listener to the stories as told.

Rather, the teacher-researcher found other tensions in her classroom surrounding popular culture that the literature she reviewed had not addressed. She found that she had

to be sensitive to concerns regarding when the children could come to the writing center, and about how they treated one another. It was conclusive that group discussions helped to ease the tensions she observed, and addressed issues of concern surrounding the materials in the Writing Center. She also found herself reflecting on her decisions about how she conducted the study, and if she should have done things differently.

The literature did not address some of the teacher-researcher's many sources of joy realized in this study. She did not read any researcher findings and/or comments regarding the good problem of having abundant student work to display, yet not enough places to display those writings. She had not read of research that discussed the level of excitement the teacher feels when the children show interest in coming to the Writing Center for an extended amount of time due to the presentation of their favorite characters, and their editing their work without prompts from her.

Conclusions

In sum, the teacher-researcher completes this study by closing with implications for practice, recommendations for further research, limitations observed, and remarks.

Implications for practice. This study may benefit not only the teacher-researcher, but also other preschool teachers interested in enhancing their writing center participation and learning. It gives insight into how to go about getting children interested in the often-ignored, preschool writing center. The study provides a basis for teachers to proclaim that popular culture does have a place in the writing center, as it motivates even the most reluctant writers to come to the writing center and practice their literacy skills.

The teacher-researcher embarked on this study with the goal of providing evidence as to why teachers should bring popular culture-themed writing materials into their writing centers. It is important to note that the children demonstrated growth in their writing due to the word cards created/provided them there. This can be stated with confidence, given that when the children wrote their journals for the last work sample (post-test), many of them went to get the cards from the writing center to help them. A note of consideration should be made that a hybrid approach to dictation, storytelling, and sound-spelling will take place, if allowed, and that this can help to scaffold the emergent writer. Another note of consideration is that the children may or may not choose to talk to the teacher, or give dictations about every piece of writing they do in the center. As a teacher, you need to accept that, since this is the child's free choice activity at center time. Additionally, children do not typically write for the adult audience, but rather for themselves, and sometimes for their peers.

Recommendations for further research. There were many things about this study that made it successful. The teacher-researcher had an awesome teacher assistant/co-teacher who contained all the other issues that would occur during center times, so that the teacher-researcher could devote her concentration to the children in the Writing Center, especially to conduct this research. The cooperation of the parents, building administration, and the teacher-researcher's colleagues helped pave the way for a great research experience. Most importantly, the children were delighted to be allowed to do what they do best with their favorite, popular culture characters, and helped the teacher-researcher to "do her homework." (Young children can find it hilarious that the teacher has homework.) She recommends approaching the study with the children in this

manner. With few exceptions, the intervention room received good attendance on data collection days. The only major break during this study was the week-long spring break.

Data collection was a smooth process on most days for several reasons. First, the teacher-researcher always let the children know before they chose where they wanted to “play” that she was going to be at the writing center doing her homework. Second, the norms were reviewed every data collection day, so that the children would recall what they could and could not do at the Writing Center. For example, stamps and stickers were for paper, and the provided markers were the only materials used on the dry-erase boards. After a few sessions, this became common knowledge, and the teacher-researcher began sentences that the children completed.

It was also helpful to show (not just tell) the children what new items were being added on the data collection day. Third, the teacher-researcher took the time to develop an organizational system for where the materials should be placed when not in use (i.e., pictures and word labels taped to the spot where the items belonged just before literacy center time began; it helped that she had a planning period before literacy center time on most data collection days). The fourth and final initiative that helped make data collection run smoothly was that the popular culture items were not all added at the same time. For each session, something new was added, and nothing was removed. The key to the success of adding new materials was to make sure to balance themes that boys suggested with themes that girls suggested (for example, Superheroes was one of the themes; both the Male Superheroes and the DC Superheroes Girls were introduced at the same time, to avoid “all boy stuff” or “all girl stuff” introduced in the same session). The

teacher-researcher did replace stickers from the previously introduced themes, as the children let her know (or she noticed) they needed replenishment. The “new” stickers from previous themes were not introduced.

If the teacher-researcher had the opportunity to complete this study again, there would be changes. The teacher-researcher would have started the study earlier in the semester. Due to the school district approval process, the start of the study was delayed by one month. The proposals were all submitted in a timely manner; however, situations occurred in the office evaluating the proposal that set them back a month on the approval process. Taking data in May was difficult in most school settings, due to the sometimes chaotic end-of-year activities that took place in the month of May.

The teacher-researcher would spend more time “pre-training” the children how to open and close the lids and caps on the materials used in the center. Such initiatives would have helped the children feel that the items were more commonplace, and more time for writing could have been allowed some of the children. It would also have lessened some of their confusion and frustration.

In a future study, the teacher-researcher recommends taking data about the number of times the children visit the writing center during the week before the first observation begins. She recommends taking this strictly quantitative data in the middle of the study and during the last week of the study, as well. This data would demonstrate that the children were coming more frequently to the writing center, due to the popular culture materials being added, and it could give more evidence than what was documented in the reflexive journal.

Additionally, the children could be asked their opinions about the writing center before and after the study took place. This would give additional evidence as to what motivated them to write during their free choice literacy center time.

Another modification would be to re-evaluate the favorite popular culture icons of the children half-way through the study, and revise the items included in the center. The current study was not long enough to make this feasible; however, lengthening the study by four more sessions might have made this a feasible consideration.

Replication of this study would help to verify the results. The study could be conducted in the same classroom with different children. It could be conducted in the fall semester, instead of the spring semester, and last longer, potentially giving the researcher a long holiday or break to acquire the materials with the popular culture icons the children suggested in the second round of group discussions (as mentioned above). It could also be replicated in other urban schools in different states across the United States. An additional course of action might be to replicate this study in a rural and/or suburban school setting to identify if comparisons and/or differences exist in children's desires and demonstrated efforts.

The responses to the teacher interviews indicated that the preschool teachers felt that the children who could already write letters were those who went to and enjoyed the writing center. It appeared to the teacher-researcher that four of teachers interviewed viewed the children's writing from a deficit base instead of focusing on the children's strengths. Following this line of thought, a study could be designed to specifically identify the teachers' perceptions of what emergent writing looks like at the writing

center, and if they perceived the children they work with to indeed be writers. The children could also be interviewed to identify their perceptions about writing (for example: What makes a good writer/author? Are you a writer/author? How do you know?) This study would help to potentially identify why children do or do not choose to write during center time.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study. These limitations included the size of the sample, the size of the control group, time, and the lack of interrater reliability.

Much of this study was limited to the focus of one classroom (the intervention classroom), in a low-socioeconomic region of a Midwestern city; thus, the results are not likely to be easily transferable to other classrooms within the region or other regions. This study was a snapshot of the life of one urban, Title I preschool classroom, which limits the study result's generalizability to other such school districts' population.

The control group was very small, with eight children, due to attrition. When the study first began the class size of the control group classroom was the same as the class size of the intervention group classroom. However, as the study progressed, attrition occurred, as several children and their families moved, or children stopped attending school. While one child did enroll the day before the pre-test journal sample was taken, no other children were added to the classroom. It should also be noted that daily attendance was also a concern for many of the children in the control group. For example, one child was absent for the middle portion of the study, due to being displaced by a house fire. He returned to school a few weeks before the study ended. Due to the

sample size of the control group, the results of the pre-test and post-test data may not likely be generalizable.

This study was brief: twelve sessions long; so the results would not be as reliable as a long-term study. However, the study was conducted in the time frame allowed.

The teacher-researcher did not utilize interrater reliability, as she was the only person conducting the study.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter discussed and concluded the results of a twelve-session study exploring the ways preschool children ages three-, four-, and five-years-old engage with the materials, their peers and/or the adults in the preschool writing center when the materials have their favorite popular culture icons on them. This study also investigated what it means to bring popular culture into the classroom as a teacher.

The chapter reviewed the problem, purpose statement, research questions, and methodology used to conduct this study. It then presented, in detail, the findings of the study as they related or did not relate to the literature. This was followed by the implications for action and recommendations for future research. Finally, the study's limitations were mentioned.

The teacher-researcher concluded that, based on the study findings, the preschoolers participating in the intervention group of this study utilized many resources for their writing including, but not limited to their peers, the teacher-researcher, word cards and the word wall. They interacted with their peers on several levels. They also interacted

with the materials in different ways, such as playing with and exploring them.

Additionally, it was concluded that preschool children are capable, and do edit their own writing/compositions independently. These findings help to build a rationale for including the children's favorite popular culture icons on the writing center materials, including building motivation to come to the writing center.

The study further found that there were tensions and joys associated with bringing popular culture into the classroom. These tensions included gender bias, speaking of conflicts, internal debates, and issues surrounding finding the materials. The study also found joys associated with bringing popular culture into the writing center, such as the problem of having more compositions to display than places to display them, the changes in the children's writing behaviors (such as staying longer at the center and copying from word cards), and the children's abilities to edit their compositions without prompting from the adults in the room.

This study has not only changed the way the children demonstrate their abilities, it has also changed the way the teacher-research views the valuable processes they go through to write/compose.

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Appendix A: Teacher Interview Questions

1. Do your students frequently go to the writing center?
2. Why do you think that they enjoy or do not enjoy going to the writing center?
3. How could you change the use of your writing center?
4. If your students had access to their favorite popular culture icons at the writing center, what might happen?

Appendix B: Discussion Prompts for Children

Discussion prompts for children during group session:

- Tell me about the television programs you watch at home.
- Tell me about your favorite television shows or movies.
- Tell me about the video games you like to play.
- Tell me about your favorite cartoon character.

Appendix C: Child Participation Assent Intervention Group



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Assent to Participate in Research Activities (Minors)

The Role of Popular Culture in Preschool Children's Emergent Writing/Composing: An Exploration of the Writing Process and Tensions Surrounding One Preschool Writing Center

I want to talk with you about your favorite television shows, movies, cartoon characters, singers, and songs. Then, I will go to the Writing Center and watch how you write while you are there. If you choose to come to the writing center, I will take notes on your projects. Later, I will write a story for my other school about what I saw you and your friends do at the writing center, but I will not use your names. Just like always, if you want my help to write your words, you just need to ask me. I would also like you to talk with me about what you wrote. This will be a choice. I will let you know each day I plan to visit the Writing Center so that you can decide if you want to play there that day. Is this okay with you?

Appendix D: Child Participation Assent Control Group



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Assent to Participate in Research Activities (Minors) Control Group

The Role of Popular Culture in Preschool Children's Emergent Writing/Composing: An Exploration of the Writing Process and Tensions Surrounding One Preschool Writing Center

I want to look at some of the writing you do for your teacher during the day two times this year. I will copy your work and give it back to your teacher. Is this okay with you?

Appendix E: Parental Consent Intervention Group



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Informed Consent for Child Participation in Research Activities

The Role of Popular Culture in Preschool Children's Emergent Writing/Composing: An Exploration of the Writing Process and Tensions Surrounding One Preschool Writing Center

Participant _____ HSC Approval Number _____

Principal Investigator: Stephanie Winters PI's Phone Number: 314-383-2550

Your child is invited to participate in a research study conducted by Stephanie Winters under the supervision of Dr. Patricia Kopetz (faculty advisor). The purpose of this research is to examine what preschool children do in the writing center before and after materials with their favorite popular culture characters are added to the classroom writing center. Additionally, the children's work samples will be collected, examined, and compared to a control group (who did not have any changes to the writing center) at the beginning and end of the study for the growth of his/her story writing. To find out which popular culture characters are the classroom favorites and should be added to the writing center, the children will be asked during group time(s) about their favorite cartoon, movie, and video game characters.

Your child will not be asked to do anything beyond our regular classroom writing activities. I will observe and record in writing the children's interactions with materials in the classroom writing center one day per week from February through May 2018. With this consent form, I ask for your permission to use the recording for research purposes.

Approximately forty-one children may be involved in this research.

The amount of time involved in your child's participation will be determined by your child, however, the approximate weekly data collection will be 30 minutes each week over the course of twelve weeks (totaling 360 minutes) and all the children will receive a book with a toy and a picture for their time.

All notes may be shared with my dissertation committee and representatives of the University of Missouri-St. Louis, in accordance with their review policies.

There are **no** direct benefits for your child’s participation in this study. However, your child’s participation will contribute to the knowledge about popular culture in preschool children’s writing.

Your child’s participation is voluntary, and you may choose not to let your child participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent for your child’s participation at any time. Should you decided to withdraw your consent, the recordings will not be used as research data. You and your child will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to let your child participate or to withdraw your child.

We will do everything we can to protect your child’s privacy. By agreeing to let your child participate, you understand and agree that your child’s data may be shared with other researchers and educators in the form of presentations and/or publications. In all cases, your child’s identity will not be revealed. In rare instances, a researcher’s study must undergo an audit or program evaluation by an oversight agency (such as the Office for Human Research Protection). That agency would be required to maintain the confidentiality of your child’s data.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator (Stephanie Winters, 314-383-2550) or the Faculty Advisor (Dr. Patricia Kopetz, 314-516-4885). You may also ask questions or state concerns regarding your child’s rights as a research participant to the Office of Research Administration, at 516-5897.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records.

Yes, I consent to my child’s participation in the research described above.

No, I do NOT consent to my child’s participation in the research described above.

Parent’s/Guardian’s Signature

Date

Parent’s/Guardian’s Printed Name

Child’s Printed Name

Signature of Investigator or Designee

Date

Investigator/Designee Printed Name

Appendix F: Parental Consent Control Group



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Informed Consent for Child Participation in Research Activities

The Role of Popular Culture in Preschool Children's Emergent Writing/Composing: An Exploration of the Writing Process and Tensions Surrounding One Preschool Writing Center

Participant _____ HSC Approval Number _____

Principal Investigator: Stephanie Winters PI's Phone Number: 314-383-2550

Your child is invited to participate in a research study conducted by Stephanie Winters under the supervision of Dr. Patricia Kopetz (faculty advisor). The purpose of this research is to examine what preschool children do in the writing center before and after materials with their favorite popular culture characters are added to the classroom writing center. Your child's classroom will be the control group and as such will have no changes to their classroom writing center.

Your child will not be asked to do anything beyond his/her regular classroom writing activities. I will examine your child's writing at the beginning of the study and then again at the end of the study for the growth of his/her stories. With this consent form, I ask for your permission to use the recording for research purposes.

Approximately forty-one children may be involved in this research.

Your child will determine the amount of time involved in his/her participation, however, the approximate data collection will be fifteen minutes at the beginning of this study and fifteen minutes at the end of the study. All the children will receive a book with a toy for their time.

All notes may be shared with my dissertation committee and representatives of the University of Missouri-St. Louis, in accordance with their review policies.

There are **no** direct benefits for your child's participation in this study. However, your child's participation will contribute to the knowledge about popular culture in preschool children's writing.

Your child's participation is voluntary, and you may choose not to let your child participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent for your child's participation at any time. Should you decided to withdraw your consent, the recordings will not be used as research data. You and your child will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to let your child participate or to withdraw your child.

We will do everything we can to protect your child's privacy. By agreeing to let your child participate, you understand and agree that your child's data may be shared with other researchers and educators in the form of presentations and/or publications. In all cases, your child's identity will not be revealed. In rare instances, a researcher's study must undergo an audit or program evaluation by an oversight agency (such as the Office for Human Research Protection). That agency would be required to maintain the confidentiality of your child's data.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator (Stephanie Winters, 314-383-2550) or the Faculty Advisor (Dr. Patricia Kopetz, 314-516-4885). You may also ask questions or state concerns regarding your child's rights as a research participant to the Office of Research Administration, at 516-5897.

**I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions.
I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records.**

Yes, I consent to my child's participation in the research described above.

No, I do NOT consent to my child's participation in the research described above.

Parent's/Guardian's Signature

Date

Parent's/Guardian's Printed Name

Child's Printed Name

Signature of Investigator or Designee

Date

Investigator/Designee Printed Name

Appendix G: Teacher Consent

Department of Educator Preparation, Innovation and Research



College of Education

One University Blvd.

St. Louis, Missouri 63121-4499

Telephone: 314-516-6519

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Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities

The Role of Popular Culture in Preschool Children's Emergent Writing/Composing: An Exploration of the Writing Process and Tensions Surrounding One Preschool Writing Center

Participant: _____ HSC Approval Number _____

Principal Investigator: Stephanie Winters PI's Phone Number: 314-383-2550

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Stephanie Winters and Dr. Patricia Kopetz (Faculty Advisor). The purpose of this research is to identify your perceptions of your preschool writing center.

Your participation will involve answering some questions, either individually or in a group setting (it will be your preference) about your classroom writing center.

This interview will take place in late January 2018 and will last approximately fifteen minutes.

Anywhere between five and ten teachers will be involved in this research. The amount of time involved in your participation will be approximately fifteen minutes.

There are no anticipated risks associated with this research.

There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge of the preschool writing center.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. If you want to withdraw from the study, you can contact me at: (314-383-2550). You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or to withdraw.

By agreeing to participate, you understand and agree that your data may be shared with other researchers and educators in the form of presentations and/or publications. In all cases, your identity will not be revealed. In rare instances, a researcher's study must undergo an audit or program evaluation by an oversight agency (such as the Office for Human Research Protection). That agency would be required to maintain the confidentiality of your data. In addition, all data will be stored on a password-protected computer and/or in a locked office.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, (Stephanie Winters, 314-383-2550) or the Faculty Advisor, (Dr. Patricia Kopetz, 314-516-4885). You may also ask questions or state concerns regarding your rights as a research participant to the Office of Research Administration, at 516-5897.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above.

Participant's Signature

Date

Participant's Printed Name

Signature of Investigator or Designee

Date

Investigator/Designee Printed Name

Appendix H: Popular Culture Lists

The class lists were compiled on 26 February, 28 February, 1 March and 2 March 2018 (see below). We had multiple charts that I compiled into one master list after looking up all of the characters and shows (and correcting my errors). I ascertained that we reached saturation when the same names kept coming up over and over again. I double checked the list each day with the children before making the cards.

- Paw Patrol*
 - Rubble
 - Chase
 - Zuma
 - Rocky
 - Skye
 - Everest
 - Marshall
 - Ryder
- Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (TMNT or Ninja Turtles)*
 - Raphael
 - Donatello
 - Michelangelo
 - Leonardo
 - Master Splinter
 - Shredder
 - Kraang
- PJ Masks*
 - Catboy
 - Owlett
 - Gekko
 - Romeo
 - Night Ninja
 - Ninjalinos
 - Luna Girl
- Lion Guard*
 - Kion
 - Simba
 - King Mufasa
 - Nala
 - Rafiki
 - Kiara
- Superheroes*
 - Harley Quinn
 - Joker
 - Supergirl
 - Catwoman
 - Batgirl

- Bumblebee
- Wonder Woman
- Captain America
- Ironman
- Thor
- Wolverine
- Batman
- Flash
- Spider-Man
- Superman
- Spider-Girl
- Hulk/Incredible Hulk/Hulk Smash
- Bubble Guppies*
 - Molly
 - Oona
 - Bubble Puppy
 - Deema
 - Gill
 - Gobby
 - Nonny
- Princesses*
 - Rapunzel
 - Cinderella
 - Sleeping Beauty
 - Snow White
 - Princess Tiana
 - Frog/Prince Naveen
 - Ariel
 - Belle
 - Maurice
 - Mrs. Potts
 - Beast
 - Maui
 - Moana
- Frozen
 - Elsa
 - Anna
 - Olaf
 - Sven
 - Kristof
 - Marshmallow
 - Snowgies
 - Prince Hans
- Smurfs
 - Smurfette

- Clumsy
 - Papa
- Pokémon
 - Pikachu
 - Poke Ball
 - Fennekin
 - Froakie
 - Chespin
- Super Mario
 - Mario
 - Princess Peach
 - Luigi
 - Bowser (monster)
- Peppa Pig
 - George Pig
 - Mommy (Mummy) Pig
 - Daddy Pig
 - Pippa Pig
 - Chloe
 - Suzy
- Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
 - Mickey Mouse
 - Minnie Mouse
 - Pluto
 - Donald Duck
 - Daisy Duck
 - Goofy
- Power Rangers
 - Monsters
 - Blue Ranger
 - Red Ranger
 - Pink Ranger
 - Green Ranger
 - Yellow Ranger
 - Black Ranger
 - White Ranger
 - Gold Ranger
- SpongeBob*
 - SpongeBob
 - Patrick
 - Plankton
 - Mr. Crab
 - Squidward
 - Plankton Robot

- Trolls*
 - Princess Poppy
 - Queen Gristle (mean)
 - Chef
 - Bridget
 - Branch
 - DJ Suki
 - Cooper
 - Guy Diamond
 - King Gristle
 - King Gristle Jr.
 - Biggie

*=on multiple lists and/or mentioned by more than one child

Appendix I: Code Book

Code Book

Theme	Subtheme	Research Question Addressed	Examples
Peer Interactions	Discussions	1	<p>Jane: You know what I'm drawing. Ms. Winters. Kyra: I'm drawing too (Field notes 28 Feb 2018, lines 30-31).</p> <p>Kyra to Sam: What is that? Sam: Ninja Turtle Kyra: His big head. Kyra: Don't forget to write the girl. Sam: I'm not gonna write the girl 'cause she's a bad person. Jane then joined in the discussion. Jane: No she's not. Kyra: She's not really a Ninja Turtle, only the boys are Ninja Turtles...they discussed an episode of Ninja Turtles (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 42-51).</p> <p>Who are the TMNT discussion (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 75-85)</p> <p>Scary movie discussion prompted by writing (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 169-185)</p> <p>Star: when he was singin' and his grandma died and he, that big ole girl, he cried and his Grandma Kevin: And that's when he stopped singin'. Winters: Oh, that is sad when that happens. Sometimes you don't feel like singing...The kids then began discussing how Branch was singing in the movie and stopped when his Mama died (Field notes 14 March 2018, lines 113-121).</p> <p>Phone discussion (Field notes 14 March 2018, lines 143-144)</p> <p>Shay: Mary, you can be my friend... Mary: We're all friends. You can't <i>just</i> be one person's friend and not be anyone else's friend... (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 127-131)</p>

			<p>She walked over to Cole and began talking to him about the cards as he wrote with a pencil on his paper (Field notes 13 April 2018, lines 72-73).</p> <p>There was a discussion about which pigs were which (Field notes 17 April 2018, line 49).</p> <p>Cory got Kyra's attention and they began talking about the stamps (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 83-84)</p> <p>Star and Michael began discussing the characters they saw in the video game cards (Field notes 24 April 2018, line 89).</p> <p>Kyra: I will see you when I get back. Winters: Where are you going? Star: Bible Study Kyra: That's right, Star and me goin' to Bible Study and then to school (Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 123-126).</p> <p>Joe: This card's for Tim Tina: He got lunch (pointing to the card). Tina and Joe discussed the show Bubble Guppies while working... Joe: He got lunch Winters: What do you think is in his lunch? Joe: He got peanuts in there. Winters: Okay, sounds good. (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 136-143).</p> <p>The children began a discussion about a visiting child from the other preschool classroom who was having a temper tantrum in our restroom during center time. Cole (in a knowing, matter of fact tone): He gonna stop crying soon. He'll fall asleep like my big sister do. (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 47-50).</p> <p>The girls began a discussion about the villains in PJ Masks (Night Ninja, Luna Girl, and Romeo) (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 75-76).</p> <p>Kelly: I watched a grown-up movie and his body</p>
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			<p>was all on fire. Jane: I seen that movie too. (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 127-128).</p>
	<p>Telling others what to do or correcting peer</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Auggie: You're not over here! to Tina. Winters: Yes she is, she asked... (Field notes 23 Feb 2018, lines</p> <p>Kyra then proceeds to show Kevin how to work his pen and he allows it (he already knows how to work the ballpoint pen)...</p> <p>Kyra: You supposed to snap it back. Jane: I did...I didn't hear it click but it's on all the way (it was) (Field notes 28 Feb 2018, lines 38-41).</p> <p>Jane to Joe: You can't take that from Kevin! You have to give it back. Winters to Kevin: Did you need the pen while you're using the dry erase board? Kevin: No, I was tryin' to give it to him. But he snatched it outta my hands...(Field notes 28 Feb 2018, lines 219-222)</p> <p>(While in the search for the blue gel pen) Joe: I find it! Kyra: That's not blue, that's orange. Joe: Oh...(Field notes 28 Feb 2018, lines 225-227).</p> <p>Michael: What the... Star: Don't say that, you know Ms. Winters don't like that! Ms. Winters, he said, "What the..."(Field notes 14 March 2018, lines 127-128)</p> <p>Cole wrote a friend's name on an envelope with a dry erase marker. Kevin: Cole you can't draw on that! You supposed to use crayons on paper! Cole grabbed the crayons to finish his project (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 108-110)</p> <p>Cory took the mail out of the mailbox and asked (Kyra), "Where's my name? You didn't put my name on there!" Kyra told him to look inside. (She put his name inside of the "mail") (Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 93-95).</p>

			<p>Jane: Hey, you can't snatch that from him! Cole: I didn't. He gave it to me. Jane: Did you give it to him? Tim smiled and nodded (Field notes 13 April 2018, lines 33-36).</p> <p>Kyra (to Cory): Hey you stamped on the wrong part! You stamped it on the red...(Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 88-91).</p> <p>Star reminded Tina that stamps are for paper (Field notes 24 April 2018, line 52).</p> <p>Tina (to Kelly): MOVE, you not here (and kind of pushed her away). Star: Don't say just MOVE (Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 77-78).</p> <p>Star: Tina, stop bammin' the table! (Field notes 24 April 2018, line 106).</p> <p>Joe: It's pink (pointing to the hair). Kyra: I know Joe: You need to write it pink (pointing at the hair on the card and her picture). Kyra: I got it pink. LOOK! (points to part of the hair that is in fact pink) Joe: No, it all gotta be pink! Kyra: No, it don't! I can make her hair all colors! (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 71-76)</p> <p>Tina: Sit down, sit down, sit down (trying to move Joe). Sit down, Joe. Joe: I don't have to you stupid little girl! I corrected him for name calling and reminded him that we don't use that word in this room. I also reminded the children that sitting down was optional at center time (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 86-89).</p> <p>Kyra: He don't got peanuts in there (Field notes 1 May 2018, line 144).</p> <p>Star: Time to clean up Sweetie. Tina: It's not Sweetie in the classroom! (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 192-193).</p>
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			<p>Tim: SpongeBob no have a brother. Cole ignored him and continued on with his story...(Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 120-121).</p> <p>Mary: You can't mail it to them (friends in Dramatic Play).</p> <p>Star: I'm not! But I could if I want to. (Field notes 20 March 2018, line 151-155)</p> <p>...we discovered the girls had ALL the stickers. He walked over and took 3 different pages of Ninja Turtle stickers out of the mailbox (when he put the lunchbox away he got them), brought them back over to his spot and laid them out in front of him (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 168-170).</p> <p>Star tried to take the board from Tina. Tina said, "NO!" and looked at me for assistance (Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 25-26).</p> <p>Kyra: Hey, I'm not done with that! Give it back! You can't just snatch them from me! (Field notes 1 May 2018, line 53).</p> <p>Joe: Yes he is, 'cause it's mine! (Field notes 1 May 2018, line 145).</p> <p>Sam: You can't draw like me Jane: You bein' mean Sam: No I'm not Jane: Yes you is Sam: Why 'cause I said you can't draw like me? Jane: Yeah (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 142-147)</p> <p>Sam had the other kids guess what he was drawing and kept telling them NO! (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 148-155)</p> <p>Michael: Stop tellin' on me. You getting on my nerves. Star: You don't got no nerves! Michael: Yes I do!</p>
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			<p>Winters: Everyone has nerves. Kevin: And my Mama got nerves cause she just had a baby. A discussion ensued that all the children at the table Mamas' had nerves and why (Field notes 14 March 2018, lines 130-135)</p> <p>Star: That's NOT fair! Shay: You act like Greg! Star: NO! That's mean! Winters: Why is that mean? Star: She said I looked like Greg. Winters: She didn't say you looked like Greg, she said you were acting like him. Star: That's still mean (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 73-79).</p> <p>Kevin kept calling Cole's name and not saying anything else. Becca joined in... Cole: Becca, stop callin' my name! (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 84-87).</p> <p>Joe: You mean (to Kyra) Cory: My friend's not mean! Kyra, Kyra! He said you mean! (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 105-106)</p> <p>Star: Michael is too boring! (Field notes 24 April 2018, line 58).</p> <p>Star: Yeah, let me talk, you had a turn already! It Bowzer...(Field notes 24 April 2018, line 63).</p> <p>Tina: NO! ... Tina: Quit! Quit! Quit dumpin' all the crayons! Quit! (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 30-33)</p> <p>Kyra: You don't gotta be mean about it, Joe! (Field notes 1 May 2018, line 135).</p> <p>Star put a paper pad in her mouth and Kyra told on her. Star: Why you mean and always tellin'?' (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 196-197)</p>
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	Likes and/or dislikes	1	<p>Joe: You like Peppa Pig? You like George? (Field notes 17 April 2018, line 41).</p> <p>Joe: Who like Teddy Bears? Cory: Nobody (in a singsong voice) (Field notes 17 April 2018, line 92-93).</p> <p>Joe found some TMNT stickers and told me that he was going to make mail for Tim because “Tim my friend and he likes Ninja Turtles” (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 143-144).</p> <p>He went and asked Jacob which stickers he liked the best (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 166-167)</p> <p>Star: ...It Bowser, my cousin like Bowser (Field notes 24 April 2018, line 63).</p> <p>Star: I don’t think she likes Molly (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 40)</p> <p>Kyra: Jane gonna like my picture for her (Field notes 1 May 2018, line 70).</p> <p>Kyra: I gotta do another one, he didn’t like that one (she sighed as she said it)...</p> <p>Kyra (to me): The problem is he wanted it all red. (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 180-182).</p> <p>Joe: My brother like this (pointing) Winters: I am sure he will (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 184-185)</p> <p>When another child noticed Tim using the Mickey Mouse crayon, he reminded him that we have TMNT (Tim’s favorite characters of all time) crayons. He quickly set it down and began looking through the crayons until he found Raphael (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 51-53).</p> <p>Kelly handed Tim a TMNT dry erase board, which he set down beside him. (Field notes 3 May 2018, line 83)</p> <p>Kelly handed each person at the table something she</p>
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			<p>thought that they would like. She gave Jacob a Spider-man notepad, Jane a DC Superheroes Girl notepad, and me a Princess Belle composition notebook....</p> <p>Kelly: Who wants Paw Patrol? Tim: Me hate Paw Patrol. Winters: You don't like Paw Patrol, Tim? Tim: No! Me like Ninja Turtles! Kelly: Do you like Paw Patrol? Cole: Yes, but I'm not ready for that yet (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 86-96)</p>
	<p>Questioning and assistance</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Joe looked over at what Jane was doing. She told him she was using a gel pen (he had been using a blue gel pen earlier) (Field notes 28 Feb 2018, lines 162-3)</p> <p>Kevin to Kyra: What you draw? Kyra: None of your business (Field notes 28 Feb 2018, lines 236-237).</p> <p>Jane: What is their names? No response. Jane: What is there names? He answered her (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 99-102).</p> <p>Star: Look Ms. Winters! Winters: Who did you stamp? Star: I don't know Becca: Ryder (Field notes 14 March 2018, lines 34-37)</p> <p>Mary to Star: Why you putting those stickers in there?!?... Mary: You can't mail it to them (friends in Dramatic Play). Star: I'm not! But I could if I want to. (Field notes 20 March 2018, line 151-155)</p> <p>Kevin: Cole, what you tryin' to do? Cole: Open this. Kevin took it from him and said, "You gotta do it like this" as he showed him how to get it open (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 25-28)</p>

			<p>Kevin: Cole, what is you drawing? Cole showed him. Kevin: Just like Ms. Winters (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 63-65).</p> <p>Kyra (from the Dramatic Play Center): How do you spell your name, Cory? Cory spelled his name. She repeated back the letters as she wrote it (Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 62-63).</p> <p>Meanwhile, Cory and Jacob were working together to write. Jacob pointed to a letter on the name cards and Cory said, "How do you write it again?" The boys figured it out together (Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 77-78).</p> <p>I stretched out the first sound. She wrote it. When I went to the next sound Cole gave the letter name as Jane thought about it for a moment (Field notes 13 April 2018, lines 41-42).</p> <p>Star began trying to seal her card the way that Kyra did. Star: How you do it, Kyra? Kyra smiled and showed her how to do it (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 125-127).</p> <p>Star: You supposed to do more than one? Kyra (to Star): Ms. Winters said we can do as many as we want as long as we work on them (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 129-130).</p> <p>Kyra flipped the cards to Joe's name and handed them to him, reminding him to start with J (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 169-170).</p> <p>Kelly (to Jane): You drawin' Luna Girl? Jane: Yeah Kelly: She bad! (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 72-74)</p>
	<p>Followed theme of others</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Kyra: This is my Ninja Turtle. Jane: That's a little Ninja Turtle. Kyra: He can draw whatever he wants. Jane: I know... (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 61-</p>

			<p>64)</p> <p>Kyra: Look! That's me. I'm dressed up in a Ninja Turtle, a girl one, NOT a boy. Jane (who was still tracing letters): Why's everybody writing Ninja Turtles? I don't want a Ninja Turtle, I'm drawing my alphabet (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 109-115)</p> <p>Spider-Man's car Kevin: Look! I make a Spider-Man car (Field notes 3 April 2018, line 67). He then drew his (Spider-Man's) car (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 74-76). Becca: Spider-Man's car. I gotta draw (Field notes 3 April 2018, line 79)</p>
<p>Excitement/ Pride</p>		<p>1</p>	<p>Auggie: Look what I made! Winters: What did you make? Auggie: Scrabble _____... (Field notes 23 Feb 2018, lines 95-97)</p> <p>Joe: I did it! Winters: Well what is that? Joe: I did the letters! (Field notes 28 Feb 2018, lines 70-74)</p> <p>He then pointed to the H and said, "I had drew my name" (Field notes 28 Feb 2018, lines 190).</p> <p>He drew another Ninja Turtle and said to me, "Look! I did it" (Field notes 6 March 2018, line 39)!</p> <p>He excitedly told me he drew the mask again (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 52-3).</p> <p>Kevin: Look! I make a Spider-Man car (Field notes 3 April 2018, line 67).</p> <p>When I asked him about his work he said, "A picture. I made Catboy's face by myself" (Field notes 11 April 2018, line 28).</p> <p>Cory: (Cory spelled his name out loud). I'm done. I wrote my name! (Field notes 11 April 2018, line</p>

			<p>42)</p> <p>Cory (excitedly yelled to the friends in Dramatic Play): You got mail (Field notes 11 April 2018, line 64).</p> <p>Cory: Kyra, your mail in here! It's here, I put it in here!</p> <p>Kyra: I'm gonna get it in a minute (Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 118-119).</p> <p>Kyra (from Dramatic Play): Jacob, you got mail! He was so focused on his writing and did not answer her. When she looked at me, I told her that he would get it in a minute. She did not put his name on it (Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 123-125).</p> <p>Tina wrote an 'i' on the Super Mario dry erase board and proudly said, "I make my letters" while showing it to me. I asked her what letter she made. Tina said, "My name!!!" (Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 23-25).</p>
<p>Playing</p>		<p>1</p>	<p>Sam walked over and put a dry erase board with a TMNT still drawn on it in the rack...</p> <p>Jane: He gonna put it in the microwave to make gummy bears.</p> <p>Winters: What? I'm confused.</p> <p>Sam: They goin' to the oven to bake like gummy bears (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 122-126).</p> <p>The girls went back to their mailbox play ...Mary put sticker pages into the Spider-Man mailbox (Field notes 20 March 2018, line 156-160)</p> <p>Kevin: You gonna get a ticket.</p> <p>Cole: Why?</p> <p>Kevin: You speedin' (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 29-31).</p> <p>She lined them up in the box and moved them around making them talk and dance (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 69-70).</p> <p>Tina began dancing the Supergirl eraser across the table and giggling (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines</p>

			<p>76-77).</p> <p>Auggie came over and started playing with the lid on the Troll lunch box (for stickers). He was opening and closing it with a grin (Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 141-142).</p> <p>Michael played with the Lion Guard and PJ Masks rulers making noise (Field notes 24 April 2018, line 121).</p> <p>Tina turned backward in the chair and began playing with the card by moving it through the hole in the seat and bringing it back around, giggling and saying “Boo” the entire time (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 77-78)</p> <p>Kelly played with the My Little Pony notebook (dancing it) (Field notes 3 May 2018, line 54).</p> <p>Cole began driving the Batmobile sticker around in front of him (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 89-90).</p> <p>Kelly: Ms. Winters, I’m the sticker teacher. Cole: I’m the Art teacher A discussion ensued about which teacher each child was pretending to be today. (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 99-102)</p> <p>Tim began playing with the TMNT erasers by moving them around the table and then stated his intent to put them back. (Field notes 3 May 2018, line 113)</p>
	Singing	1	<p>I told her she did a wonderful job with her “ABC’s”. She then sang the ABC song (Field notes 28 Feb 2018, lines 248-9).</p> <p>Jane begins singing the ABC song as she touches each letter. Kyra walks over and joins in (Field notes 6 March 2018, line 31).</p> <p>As she stamped, she sang, “Spider-Man, Spider-Man, where are you? Here I am, Here I am, how do you do?” She made her voice deeper for Spider-Man’s response. She then sang the same tune</p>

			<p>replacing Spider-Man with baby finger. Star joined in the refrain of the song...</p> <p>Mary: I gotta find Mama finger. I can use you for Mama finger (Spider-Man stamp). She continued her song with Mama, Cousin, Brother, and Sister fingers (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 185-190).</p> <p>Sam started singing the PJ Masks theme song as he looked for stickers (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 58-59)</p> <p>Star came over by Kyra. She (Star) was singing the Moana song. Michael came over near the girls. Michael: Star what you singin’? Star: Moana (Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 139-142).</p> <p>They sang the lunch song from Bubble Guppies (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 138-139).</p> <p>Tina began singing Bubble Guppies while coloring her next card (Field notes 1 May 2018, line 170)</p> <p>Kelly began singing a song with words that I could not make out and I did not know the tune. Cole joined in. Cole (in a sing-song voice): Ooh, yeah! Ooh, yeah! Kelly: I be a superstar. Cole: Ooh, yeah! Ooh, yeah! The kids began laughing. Kelly: Cole stop makin’ me laugh (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 64-71)</p>
Materials or Supplies	excitement	1	<p>Shay (squealing with excitement): I got Ninja Turtles! (dry erase board) (Field notes 20 March 2018, line 42).</p> <p>She cheered when she saw it (Harley Quinn) (Field notes 20 March 2018, line 47).</p> <p>He then looked at them in awe and smiled (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 170-171).</p> <p>Winters: Would you like to write their names (TMNT)? Tim (his eyes lit up): Yeah! (Field notes 13 April</p>

			<p>2018, lines 63-64).</p> <p>Mary heard Tim and I say what the other cards in the box were as we were looking for the TMNT cards and got really excited when we said DJ Suki (Trolls) (Field notes 13 April 2018, lines 71-72).</p> <p>Sam: Ms. Winters, look, it make a stamp!!! Winters: Is that what you wanted it to do? Sam: Uh-huh (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 42-43).</p> <p>The kids were excitedly digging through the sticker box and listing the characters/shows they saw (Elsa, Lion Guard, PJ Masks, Spider-Man, Supergirl, etc.) (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 56-58).</p> <p>Joe: Look! It's sparkly. (He wrote with a gel pen) Winters: It certainly is sparkly. Do you like it? Joe: Yeah! (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 149-151).</p> <p>Michael: I stamped Super Mario! It's Super Mario! (Field notes 24 April 2018, line 32).</p> <p>Star: It's Princess Peach, my baby girl! (Field notes 24 April 2018, line 97).</p> <p>Jane and I switched pens so that Jacob could help write his words with the SpongeBob pen (she was okay with this and he was excited to use the pen) (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 102-103).</p> <p>Tim: Oh Ninja Turtles pencil. He began writing his name inside the card with it and looking at it admiringly. Tim (to me): Me want to keep this pencil. Winters (with a laugh): You may use the pencil in the Writing Center. It needs to stay at school. (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 109-112).</p>
	exploration	1	<p>He picked up different crayons and dropped them a few at a time back into the supply box" (Field notes 23 Feb. 2018, lines 133-4)</p> <p>Joe: Look! It's sparkly. (He wrote with a gel pen) Winters: It certainly is sparkly. Do you like it?</p>

			<p>Joe: Yeah! (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 149-151).</p> <p>“Jane: Aw, it’s gold (talking to me about the gel pen she was using). It’s gold! Winters: Is it? Jane: Yeah and it’s glittery. Jane: Look it’s got glitter (as she shows me the markings the pen made)... Jane: I never knewed that” (Field notes 28 Feb 2018, lines 53-60).</p> <p>He continued stamping all over both sides of the pages with different Paw Patrol stamps (Field notes 14 March 2018, line 53)</p> <p>The kids explored the Paw Patrol and Trolls stamps (Field notes 14 March 2018, line 77)</p> <p>Star discovered she could pull the eraser out of the dry erase marker and put it back in. When Shay finished with the ruler (Superhero Girls), Star used it to draw with the dry erase marker on her board (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 83-85).</p> <p>She then walked over and began exploring the superhero stamps (Field notes 20 March 2018, line 122).</p> <p>Tim, Mary, and Shay explored stamping (Field notes 20 March 2018, line 125).</p> <p>Star joined in the stamping exploration (Field notes 20 March 2018, line 188).</p> <p>Tim explored putting stickers on the paper he had previously stamped (Field notes 20 March 2018, line 192).</p> <p>Becca began by exploring a Minnie Mouse stamp in a small princess notebook (Field notes 3 April 2018, line 20)</p> <p>Tina explored using the stamps. She lined them up in the box and moved them around making them talk</p>
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			<p>and dance (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 69-70).</p> <p>Cory wrote on the PJ Masks dry erase board with a marker in each hand. He then dropped the marker from his non-dominant hand (Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 114-115).</p> <p>Auggie found his name/picture on the cards and yelled, “My name! My name!” while touching it. He then put a total of 7 Frozen stickers on the paper and left (Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 147-148).</p> <p>Mary explored stamping on her paper (Field notes 13 April 2018, line 45).</p> <p>The boys were all exploring the stamps (Field notes 17 April 2018, line 29)</p> <p>Cory (to me): I’m gonna need the black stamp pad. Winters: No you don’t, try it first and see. When he tried it, he observed that it did, in fact, work. Kyra was also concerned that the stamps (self-inking) wouldn’t work. I encouraged her to try it and see what happened (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 35-38).</p> <p>Sam was using the Lego Batman notebook to explore the stamps and stickers (Field notes 17 April 2018, line 56)</p> <p>Michael explored the Super Mario stamps (Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 28-29).</p> <p>The children spent a lot of time exploring the new materials, as I expected them to (Reflexive Journal, line 187).</p>
	issues	1	<p>“Auggie: It no work (pointing at board Becca is using)...” (Field notes 23 Feb 2018, lines 128-131)</p> <p>“Jacob: This one no work...” (Field notes 23 Feb 2018, lines 259-268).</p> <p>Shay: I can’t see it. Winters: Well maybe you can’t see it because it’s yellow. Would you like to try a different color pen?</p>

			<p>(Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 80-82).</p> <p>He put all the stamps into the stamp pad, pushed down hard and tried to stamp them into the TMNT notebook, carefully examining his work. When nothing happened, he gave me a quizzical look. I glanced at the stamp pad and reminded him that we need to take the clear plastic lid off first (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 89-91)</p> <p>I wondered aloud what happened to the stamp pad. Mary: Jane brought it in the bathroom and got it wet. Winters: Do you know why she did that? Mary: Her just did it. Winters: Okay, I will investigate that later (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 92-97).</p> <p>Shay picked up an eraser and began trying to erase her paper (which had no marks on it). She then grabbed a pen and wrote some lines, which she promptly tried to erase. Shay: It don't work! Winters: That's because you used a pen instead of a pencil. That kind of eraser only works with pencils (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 110-114).</p> <p>I sent Shay to wash her hands as she was dripping with ink (Thank goodness it is a washable stamp pad). Shay: Again. Winters: Yes again, with soap and water. That stamp pad is not working for us today (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 175-178)</p> <p>Mary: She stamped on me! Star: Not on purpose. Mary: It's too wet. Winters: I know, I will work on it later (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 193-196).</p> <p>Tina was trying to stamp the stamps without ink on them. She tested the stamp on 3 paper pads and looked confused. She did this with multiple stamps. I waited a few moments and told her that it might</p>
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			<p>help if she put the stamp in the pad first (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 40-43).</p> <p>Greg was trying to write with the pen cap on. When that didn't work, he flipped it over and tried to write with the opposite end of the pen. I could see he was getting frustrated by the look on his face, so I asked him if I could help him. He said, "Yes" in his frustrated tone. I showed him how to take the cap off the pen and then write on the paper (Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 57-61).</p> <p>Jacob (to me): It NO work! Winters: What doesn't work? He showed me that he couldn't erase the pen mark. I told him that eraser was for the markers on the board and would not work on paper. He tried to erase the pen mark again with a superhero eraser. Jacob: It NO work too! I then explained...I showed him what I meant on a different piece of paper. He then switched to writing with a pencil (Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 99-108).</p> <p>Jacob handed me the envelope and paper while stating, "It too big." Winters: It's not too big, you need to fold the paper like this (I modeled folding a blank piece of paper (no stickers) and putting it into the envelope) (Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 126-128).</p> <p>Kelly tried to seal the envelope by licking her finger and running it on the outside (non-sticky part) of the envelope. She looked at it quizzically when it didn't seal (Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 155-157).</p> <p>He showed me where the corner of the picture was coming off the card. I assured him we could tape it after he finished working on it (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 49-50).</p>
	<p>Taking from others</p>		<p>Jacob tried to move the word and picture cards toward him (Field notes 23 Feb 2018, line 177)</p> <p>When Kyra got up to look for the dry erase box, Kevin jumped up too. He took her marker while she</p>

			<p>opened the box and then dropped it on the floor. She just looked at him before going back to what she was doing (Field notes 28 Feb 2018, lines 158-161)</p> <p>Kevin to Becca (as he took the marker out of her hand): Let's switch. She allowed this to take place. I asked her if she was okay with trading markers and she nodded (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 59-61).</p> <p>Kyra took them out of his hands...he tried taking them back from across the table. She took the sticker she wanted and handed them back to Joe (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 101-104).</p> <p>Star took the board Tina was using (Tina went to get the dry erase box). (Field notes 24 April 2018, line 33).</p> <p>Joe took the Bubble Guppies word/picture cards from in front of Kyra (Field notes 1 May 2018, line 51).</p> <p>Tina was coloring her card with a two-sided Mickey Mouse crayon. Joe took it out of her hands (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 57-58).</p> <p>Tina tried to take the word/picture cards away from Kyra. I reminded her to wait her turn (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 165-166).</p> <p>She then set down the pen. Cole picked it up and began writing with it (Field notes 3 May 2018, line 107).</p>
	<p>Locating and location</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>"Winters: Do you remember where we put the cards with the names? I looked for a moment, located and picked up the name and picture cards and handed them to him. We found Jane's name..." (Field notes 23 Feb 2018, lines 167-169)</p> <p>Becca: Teacher, where the stamp pad? I pointed it out. Kevin asked where the stamps were. I pointed it out (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 32-33).</p>

			<p>Kyra: Where are the markers? Winters: That's a good question. Where do you think they might be?... (Field notes 28 Feb 2018, lines 145-149).</p> <p>Mary looked for the word cards, so she could find Harley Quinn, instead, she found a notebook (with a Lego Harley Quinn), which she took back to her dry erase board. I showed her where the box with the word cards was located. She flipped through the cards and then told me she couldn't find Harley Quinn. I helped her find Harley Quinn. She cheered when she saw it (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 44-47).</p> <p>I encouraged Tim to put the stickers on his paper, which he promptly did. Mary was reminded to put stickers on paper as she had several on her fingertips and appeared to be looking for a place to put them (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 181-183)</p> <p>Mary with a stamp in her hand asked, "Where's the Harley Quinn one (notepad)?" We looked around for it, she found it and began stamping (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 184-185).</p> <p>Becca asked where the markers were. I pointed them out (Field notes 3 April 2018, line 53).</p> <p>Tina tried to stamp on the dry erase board. I reminded her that stamps are for paper. Kevin: She don't know the rules yet! (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 112-113).</p> <p>Winters: Markers are for boards. Pens, crayons, and pencils are for the papers (Field notes 11 April 2018, line 56).</p> <p>Joe: Where da mail (with a TMNT sticker on his hand)? Winters: Are you asking where the stationary is at? He nodded, and I showed him the folder with the stationary. (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 124-126).</p>
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			<p>Michael: Where's the marker to this (Super Mario dry erase board). Kyra: Here go the Mario marker (Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 128-129).</p> <p>Cole: Where's the SpongeBob pen? Kelly: Jane got it. (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 21-22).</p>
	<p>Negotiating</p>		<p>Joe picked up his stencil and tried to switch it for the one in Jane's hand. She did not allow that to happen. Joe: I can let you get this one (as he tried to take the one she was using). Jane: No, you can use it when I'm done. Joe (to me): Her won't give it to me... (Field notes 28 Feb 2018, lines 167-172).</p> <p>Cole and Becca had a discussion about who had the word cards first. They eventually figured it out (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 48-49).</p> <p>Kevin: Cole, you wanna switch? Cole: Switch what? Kevin: The marker. Cole: I'm not done with it. The boys continued their projects (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 103-108)</p> <p>Cole (to Kevin who had picked up the marker he set down): I'm going to get that back when I'm done (Field notes 3 April 2018, line 118).</p> <p>Joe and Star began fighting over the bucket (pulling it between them) of Bubble Guppies cards. I intervened and helped them to lay out the cards on the table, so they could look through the cards together (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 24-26).</p> <p>She then asked if Jane was finished yet. Jane: I still need to write Luna Girl's name (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 79-80)</p> <p>Becca to Kevin: I want my pencil back. He gave her a quizzical look. Winters: Becca, do you mean your marker?</p>

		<p>Becca: Yes. They switched back (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 80-84)</p> <p>When Jane noticed that Cole had the pen she requested it back. He said, "I'm using it now. You put it down and was writing with something else (which she did)" (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 114-115).</p>
	<p>Word/picture cards</p>	<p>"...Cole copied a classmate's name from the word and picture cards" (Field notes 23 Feb 2018, lines 171-172).</p> <p>Michael and Kevin began arguing over who had the Power Ranger cards first. They were both trying to remove the cards from each other's hands stating, "I had it first!" I asked both boys which color Power Ranger he wanted to use and since both wanted a different card, I fanned the cards so that both had the card he wanted in front of him (Field notes 14 March 2018, lines 87-91).</p> <p>Kyra, Star, and Michael all were pulling the video game cards. I intervened (before one of them hit or they tore the cards) and reminded them that Michael had it first and they could take turns (Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 102-104).</p> <p>...I handed her the cards to find my name. Jane: I can't find it. I helped her find it to copy. She then decided to write Ms. Q' name as well (Field notes 28 Feb 2018, lines 269-273).</p> <p>...Michael copied the Gold Power Ranger's name into a plain notebook (Field notes 14 March 2018, lines 91-92).</p> <p>Becca took the Trolls picture/word cards and drew Branch. She then copied his name from the card. She showed me the paper. Winters: Wow, Becca! That looks just like him (Field notes 14 March 2018, lines, 108-110).</p> <p>Becca copied DJ Suki (both picture and name from</p>

			<p>the cards into another page of the notebook (Field notes 14 March 2018, line 140)</p> <p>Star used the cards and said the letters as she wrote Wonder Woman (Field notes 20 March 2018, line 57).</p> <p>She pointed to the two names on the word card and asked, “Which one’s her name?”</p> <p>Winters: Both are her names. It says, “Harley Quinn” as I showed her the left to right progression of each word.</p> <p>Mary: Ugh!! I’m only gonna do one!</p> <p>Winters (laughing): Okay...</p> <p>Mary began copying the word Harley from the cards (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 102-109).</p> <p>Cole began copying names from the Paw Patrol and Bubble Guppies cards on his board (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 53-54).</p> <p>Becca wrote Zuma’s name (Field notes 3 April 2018, line 71).</p> <p>...began copying Spider-Man’s name (He wrote it on the bottom of the board and ran out of space so he went up higher on the board and to write “Man”. He went from left to right). He then drew his (Spider-Man’s) car (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 74-76).</p> <p>Kevin wrote Cae’Lynn’s name from the word cards (Field notes 3 April 2018, line 134).</p> <p>Cory was trying to copy Kyra’s name on the envelope with a Spider-Man pen (Field notes 11 April 2018, line 49)</p> <p>Jacob: Now “a” (touching the next letter on the card for his friend’s name) (Field notes 11 April 2018, line 113)</p> <p>We found the superhero card ring and he found the characters’ names he wanted to write. He went back over to where he was sitting to write (Field notes 13</p>
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			<p>April 2018, lines 65-66).</p> <p>She picked up the name cards and began copying names (Field notes 17 April 2018, line 159)</p> <p>Michael: You have Pokémon cards? I nodded and showed him. Michael switched pages in his notebook before he began writing (Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 87-88).</p> <p>Star used the DC Superhero Girls pencil to copy “Princess Peach” (Field notes 24 April 2018, line 108).</p> <p>Jane: We have SpongeBob word cards? (I nodded). Maybe later. (Field notes 3 May 2018, line 40).</p>
	<p>requests</p>		<p>“Jacob: pencil” (Field notes 23 Feb 2018, lines 249)</p> <p>Winters: Who are you looking for? Star: I’m looking for someone else. Winters: Are you looking for Paw Patrol, Superheroes, or Trolls? Star: I want Trolls! Star: I want Princess Poppy! (Field notes 14 March 2018, lines 39-43)</p> <p>Star found Princess Poppy. Star: I’m ‘bout to write her name. I want the crayons (Field notes 14 March 2018, line 57)</p> <p>Winters: Do you want Paw Patrol crayons or the other crayons? Star: Paw Patrol (Field notes 14 March 2018, lines 58-59).</p> <p>Kevin began looking through the cards. He asked for the Power Ranger cards. I helped him find them in the tub (Field notes 14 March 2018, line 71)</p> <p>Michael asked me if there was another Paw Patrol board when he saw Kevin using it. I said no, but that we still had the other dry erase boards if he wanted to use one. He went back to his stamping (Field notes 14 March 2018, lines 78-80)</p>

		<p>Star requested that I hand her the Power Rangers cards (Field notes 20 March 2018, line 50)</p> <p>Star: I need to use that please (Field notes 20 March 2018, line 163).</p> <p>Sam picked up a double-sided TMNT crayon (one color on each end) and asked me if it was for paper. I said yes, and he began to work (Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 72-73)</p> <p>She asked for the “DJ Suki cards” (Field notes 13 April 2018, lines 72-73).</p> <p>Mary brought me her paper to show me that she wrote DJ Suki’s name and put some stickers on it (Field notes 13 April 2018, lines 82-83).</p> <p>Kyra: Where’s the new Lion stickers? Winters: They are in the Trolls lunchbox with the other stickers (Field notes 13 April 2018, lines 95-96).</p> <p>Sam: Where’s the sticker box? Winters: On the shelf (pointing to it) (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 54-55).</p> <p>Star: Can I get Princess Peach? (Field notes 24 April 2018, line 44).</p> <p>Michael: Can I get the Pokémon stickers, please? (Field notes 24 April 2018, line 47).</p> <p>Tim: Me need some TMNT stickers Cole handed them to him...(Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 81-82).</p>
	<p>mail</p>	<p>She then took it back to the mailbox once he set it down and brought it near Star who was putting stickers into the Crayola mailbox (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 148-150).</p> <p>Mary: You can’t mail it to them (friends in Dramatic Play). Star: I’m not! But I could if I want to. (Field notes 20 March 2018, line 151-155)</p>

			<p>Star and Mary took all the stickers out of the Trolls lunch box and placed them in the mailboxes (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 165-166).</p> <p>Cole put Jane's mail in the dramatic play mailbox. Clean up time was announced. I checked the mailboxes to make sure they were empty since the kids were writing to their friends today. I noticed both boys had put mail in for two of the girls in the dramatic play center. I went to inquire with the boys about it.</p> <p>Winters: Did you put Mary's mail in the mailbox today?</p> <p>Kevin: Yes, is it still in there (he was shocked she didn't take it out yet)? ...</p> <p>Kevin: No, could you give it to her? (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 136-145).</p> <p>When I checked with Cole on Jane's mail, he said that he told her. I went over to the girls (who still happened to be cleaning up the Dramatic Play center) and asked them if they knew they had mail in the box. Both seemed surprised and said no. I let them know that after they finished cleaning up they could take their mail out (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 147-150).</p> <p>Tina to me: You forgot the mail (envelope). Winters: How can we fix that problem? (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 199-200)</p> <p>Cory (excitedly yelled to the friends in Dramatic Play): You got mail (Field notes 11 April 2018, line 64).</p> <p>Cory: You all got some mail! Kyra: It's my mail! A discussion in Dramatic Play... Cory: Where's your mail, Kyra? He was checking to see if she got her mail from the mailbox (Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 83-91).</p> <p>Kyra: I have all mail! (Field notes 11 April 2018, line 139)</p>
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			<p>Sam: Dramatic Play, you have mail! (Field notes 17 April 2018, line 97).</p> <p>He complied and began stating, “Mary, you got some mail” until she answered him. Cory did the same for Jane’s “mail” (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 138-139).</p> <p>Joe: I need to make it mail and looked around for an envelope (Field notes 1 May 2018, line 181)</p>
Revises or edits composition	Ugly/messed up	1	<p>Becca: ‘That’s too ugly!’ while erasing her work on the magnetic writing board” (Field notes 23 Feb 2018, lines 148).</p> <p>Kevin: I messed it up (to Ms. Winters) Winters: So what can you do? Kevin: (shrug) Just throw it away and start over (Field notes 28 Feb 2018, lines 42-44)</p> <p>Sam: This not a puppy (as he erased his work) (Field notes 6 March 2018, line 116)</p> <p>Jane: I messin’ up (Field notes 13 April 2018, line 84).</p> <p>Michael: I’m gonna erase it ‘cause I don’t like it. Winters: Why don’t you like it? Michael: ‘Cause I just don’t like it. (Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 146-149)</p> <p>At the Writing Center, this is usually where I hear the “I messed up”. The other times I hear “It’s messed up” or “I messed up” are with letter writing formation. I also noticed today that Star explained to me that she put lip gloss on her character so that I would not think she gave her character the wrong color mouth (like I would really know the difference) (Reflexive Journal, lines 577-580).</p> <p>Jacob: I mess up, I mess up. Winters: You messed up, well, should you start over again up here pointing to the top of his paper)? Jacob: Okay (Field notes 23 Feb 2018, lines 273-276)</p>

			<p>Again, he nodded and took a new piece of paper to start over (Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 110).</p> <p>Kyra: I think I messed up the J. I looked at it and assured her that she did not mess it up...(Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 97-98)</p>
	Additions to composition	1	<p>Kevin: I messed up (and immediately went back to fix it) (Field notes 28 Feb 2018, line 240).</p> <p>At clean up time Jane brought me her work for dictation and sound-spelling help. After I wrote down her words on the mermaid page she asked to go back and add the “bra” and swimsuit and eyelashes to her work. I consented (Field notes 28 Feb 2018, lines 267-269)</p> <p>Tim wrote some TMNT on his board. After talking to me about it, he decided to go back and add Master Splinter (Field notes 6 March 2018, line 195). He then added Shredder (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 219)</p> <p>Shay: I almost done. I draw a baby. This is my Mama’s baby. I forgot her arms. She went back and drew the arms and then erased the board (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 58-59)</p> <p>Sam to Jane: That don’t got no legs. Jane erased her board (2 people) with her hand and continued working. She then erased the rest (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 196-198)</p> <p>He added more to his work after his dictated words (Mom three times...once in black and twice in red, and his name in crayon). (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 122-123).</p>
Seeking Attention	adult	1	<p>Auggie held up his work and when I did not immediately acknowledge it he moved it closer to my face) (Field notes 23 Feb 2018, lines 109-110)</p> <p>Joe: Look Ms. Q! (to me...he frequently mixes up our names and we don’t know why). Winters: I’m Ms. Winters. What did you do, Joe?</p>

			<p>Joe: I did it! Winters: Well what is that? Joe: I did the letters! (Field notes 28 Feb 2018, lines 70-74)</p> <p>Jane: Ms. Winters, look at my A. Winters: Oh, good job! Jane: B... Jane: I learned that song when I was a baby (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 26-32).</p> <p>Mary: Look! (while holding up the Spider-Man dry erase board). Winters: What does it say? Mary: My Mama bought me an Ella L doll. Winters: She did, that was nice of her. Mary: And some more. My Mama bought me American (girl) doll (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 139-143).</p> <p>Tim handed me the TMNT notepad. Winters to Tim: What would you like me to do? Tim: Write and take a picture (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 144-146).</p> <p>Kevin, placing an envelope in my face said, "I'm finished". Winters: Good, now what would you like to write for her to put inside the envelope? He picked up the Frozen notepad and took out a piece of paper. He showed me his paper and let me know that he put his name on it, so she'd know it was from him. He put the paper in the envelope and walked over to the mailboxes. (Field notes 3 April 2018, line 97-101)</p> <p>Tina: I make my A (actually she made a T and M) (Field notes 3 April 2018, line 135).</p> <p>Greg: Look, Ms. Winters! Winters: I see it, nice writing. Jacob: I use this Ms. Winters. Winters: Yes, you may Jacob. Are you going to make some mail on there? He nodded and went to work (Field notes 11 April</p>
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			<p>2018, lines 67-71).</p> <p>Cory: Look Ms. Winters! I have 3 (stampers) (Field notes 17 April 2018, line 80).</p> <p>Michael: Hey Ms. Winters. Winters: Yes, Michael? He rapidly began telling me all about Pokémon (Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 54-56).</p> <p>Star: Ms. Winters, I know who this guy is! Winters: Okay, who is that guy? (Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 59-60)</p> <p>Jane: Look at all the SpongeBob people (showing me the pen). (Field notes 3 May 2018, line 38).</p> <p>Kelly: Ms. Winters, it's sparkly (referring to the ink in the pen)! (Field notes 3 May 2018, line 46)</p> <p>Joe: Lana! (his daycare provider). Winters: She's not here, try again. Kyra tried to tell him my name. Joes: Ms. Q! Winters: No, try again. Who am I? Joe: Ms. Winters! Winters: Yes, Joe. How many I help you? (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 42-47)</p> <p>Kelly showed me other things her brother made in the My Little Pony notepad. (Field notes 3 May 2018, line 64).</p>
	peer		<p>Cole colored over the top of Gekko's eye on the dry erase board. Cole: I gave him a black eye (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 72-73)</p> <p>Kevin: You speak Maniqua. You speak Maniqua Winters: I'm not familiar with that language, where did you hear it? He shrugged as his friends laughed. Kevin: You speak Spanish. Cole continued to laugh at Kevin's silly talk (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 126-130)</p>

			<p>Kyra: Star, look what I made! (Field notes 24 April 2018, line 138).</p> <p>Kyra: Look at my baby tail my tail my baby (Field notes 28 Feb 2018, line 266).</p> <p>Kelly: Look at what my brother did. He did it upside-down (Field notes 3 May 2018, line 37)</p> <p>Cole: This his hair on fire. (Field notes 3 May 2018, line 126).</p>
<p>Stating intentions</p>		<p>1</p>	<p>“Becca: I’m going to draw a rainbow.” (Field notes 23 Feb 2018, line 149).</p> <p>Kevin: I’m about to draw with both (as he put two black ink pens in his hand (Field notes 28 Feb 2018, line 76).</p> <p>Sam: I’m making a Ninja Turtle. He quickly erased his work. Sam: I’m gonna start over (Field notes 6 March 2018, line 23-25).</p> <p>Kyra: I’m drawing the girl from Ninja Turtles (Field notes 6 March 2018. Line 109).</p> <p>Jane: Now I’m gonna make a road (Field notes 6 March 2018, line 137).</p> <p>Jane: Okay, this time I’m gonna draw Moana and Maui. Moana little (Field notes 6 March 2018, line 200)</p> <p>Mary: Ugh!! I’m only gonna do one! (Field notes 20 March 2018, line 105)</p> <p>Shay: I’m gonna stamp Ninja Turtles! Mary: They’re boy one’s not girl ones. Shay: I know (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 117-119)</p> <p>Tina: I’m making a bus (Field notes 3 April 2018, line 119).</p> <p>Jacob: I need my name (Field notes 11 April 2018,</p>

			<p>line 122).</p> <p>Kelly: I'm gonna write something for Dramatic Play (Field notes 11 April 2018, line 140).</p> <p>Kelly: I need to erase it and make mail for my Mama (Field notes 11 April 2018, line 146).</p> <p>Kelly: I want to write on the paper that match. I showed her the folder with the stationary. She chose a Smurfette set.</p> <p>Kelly: I want to write, "I love my Mama" (Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 149-151).</p> <p>Jane: I'm gonna make something for Ms. Winters. Winters: Really, okay. Jane picked up the Frozen pen and began to work. Jane: I'm gonna draw a huge flower (Field notes 13 April 2018, lines 26-29).</p> <p>Cole: I'm about to do Ryder (as he picked up the Ryder from Paw Patrol stamp) (Field notes 13 April 2018, line 46).</p> <p>Cory: Kyra, I'm gonna do Mommy Pig (Field notes 17 April 2018, line 40).</p> <p>Kyra: Now I'm gonna measure her. She measured the Princess Peach sticker with the DC Superhero Girls ruler (Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 49-50).</p> <p>Star showed me her words from across the table and then said, "I'm gonna make Princess Peach" (Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 115-116).</p> <p>Kyra: This gonna be for Jane (Field notes 1 May 2018, line 28)</p> <p>Joe: Pokémon stickers! I gonna use all of them! (Field notes 1 May 2018, line 133).</p> <p>Kelly: I'm gonna ask Jane if I can have a turn when she's done (Field notes 3 May 2018, line 25)</p>
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			<p>Tim: Raphael Winters: You're going to draw Raphael? Tim: Yeah with his crayon (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 56-58).</p>
<p>Paying Attention</p>		<p>1</p>	<p>At clean up time Jane brought me her work for dictation and sound-spelling help. After I wrote down her words on the mermaid page she asked to go back and add the "bra" and swimsuit and eyelashes to her work. I consented (Field notes 28 Feb 2018, lines 267-269)</p> <p>Kyra's picture included a plug in her phone, numbers on the phone, earphones and earring and ears...Harley Quinn have gold lip gloss (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 223-227) Joe: I need green (for the Bubble Guppies' hair) (Field notes 1 May 2018, line 52).</p> <p>Joe: NO, it all gotta be pink! (Field notes 1 May 2018, line 75).</p> <p>Star (pointing to her work): Her teeth a little bit red, I tried to put lip gloss on her. Winters: It looks good to me. (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 103-104).</p> <p>Kelly began coloring a Bubble Guppies card with the SpongeBob pen. She colored the hair on the characters shades as close as the pen could get to their actual color (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 123-125).</p> <p>I noticed that when I went back to look at the photographs of the Bubble Guppies cards over the last two observations, most of them had the hair color of the characters' the same as the character cards/television show (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 162-164). ...he was very concerned about things being the correct color. He was adamant that the character looked the same way it did on television and on the picture/word cards. He was especially adamant about Kyra's picture, stating that she needs to make the character's hair all pink...(Reflexive Journal,</p>

			<p>lines 554-557).</p> <p>In our guided writing sessions, they are forever telling me that characters have to look a certain way (for example, Batgirl HAS to wear purple, yellow and black; Catboy must be blue and MUST have a cat emblem on his shirt, etc). Every once in a great while we may change the color of a Disney Princess's dress or have her hair up instead of down (or vice versa) at the request of the child making the character suggestion. The child who makes this decision does have to defend it...Please note that I am not the one who makes them defend their position, the other children tend to shout out their opinions on what a character is supposed to look like. (Reflexive Journal, lines 561-570)</p> <p>...most of them had the hair color of the characters the same as the character cards/television show (Reflexive Journal, lines 660-661)</p>
<p>Using adult as resource</p>	<p>Adult is all knowing authority</p>	<p>1 and 2</p>	<p>He then asked me if it was a puppy. I told him that he made it and he should know what it is (Field notes 6 March 2018, line 117)</p> <p>Sam: Ms. Winters knows what it is I think. Winters: I want you to finish it and tell me about it. Sam: It's already done! Winters (as I pulled the board toward me): You want me to guess? But what if I guess wrong? Sam: You not gonna guess wrong, you gonna know (with a smile). Winters: Well, I know earlier... Sam: Um, I made a uhm magnet. Winters: Oh, a magnet? Okay I can see it now (not really) Sam: Y'all didn't know what I made and Ms. Winters knew most of it (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 156-166).</p> <p>There was a discussion about which pigs were which. When the kids specifically asked me, I told them I was not sure and asked how we might find out. Cory suggested googling it. I said that we could but there was an easier way. I asked them what we had in the room that could help us. Kyra</p>

			<p>asked if there were cards with Peppa Pig on them. I said yes and handed her the box of word/picture cards (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 49-53).</p> <p>This was not the case for Tina's sister (who was in my class several years ago and whose name I could not for the life of me remember how to spell). I asked her at pick up time to spell her name for us and she did. She laughed when I apologized and said I knew I spelled it wrong but could not remember how to spell her name. Her mother pointed out that I've had a lot of kids in this room since then and both said not to worry about it (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 249-254).</p> <p>Star wanted help to write her mother's "real name" which she supplied for me. She got upset because "I don't know how to write it!" I reminded her that I would try to help and that she did not need to get upset. We sound spelled A_____ (only because I could not remember the way her mother spelled her name and would have had to look it up) (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 107-111).</p> <p>Joe: I'm done. Now can you write my brother's name? Winters: Okay, where? He pointed and said, "Write Jaylen". I asked him how to spell it and he just repeated the name. (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 175-178).</p> <p>It took a lot of explaining on the teachers' parts to get the understand the changes made to the schedule. One even told me he didn't like it and I should make them change it back as, "We supposed to go outside in the afternoon, not now! When is Gym?" I'm sure that this will be especially true tomorrow...If only I had the power he believes I have over the administration...(Reflexive Journal, lines 464-469).</p> <p>...the children automatically think that I should know how to spell EVERYTHING including their family members names and nicknames without the benefit of having the information in front of me (Reflexive Journal, lines 590-592).</p>
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	To understand peer		<p>Jane: I made a star. Kyra: I can't understand what you said. Jane tried again. Ms. Winters: A star Jane nodded (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 132-136)</p>
	Dictation		<p>Tina: My Daddy go to work. My Mama go to work (Field notes 28 Feb 2018, line 263).</p> <p>Tim: Ninja Turtle Tim: Turtle Shell (photograph from Field notes 20 March 2018)</p> <p>Kevin: I stamped them so everyone could see (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 51).</p> <p>Becca: I draw me and my Mom with the cover on me (Field notes 3 April 2018, line 102)</p> <p>Becca: I sleepin' on the mat (Field notes 3 April 2018, line 132).</p> <p>Greg: It say PJ Masks (Field notes 11 April 2018, line 74)</p> <p>Kelly showed me her writing. She said, "It's the dramatic play toys" (Field notes 11 April 2018, line 145).</p> <p>When she was finished he said, "Ninja Turtle" while showing me his notepad. Winters: Would you like to write their names? Tim (his eyes lit up): Yeah! (Field notes 13 April 2018, lines 61-64).</p> <p>On the page she wrote for Shay she wrote her name and Shay's name. On the second page, she dictated, "For preschool" (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 141-142).</p> <p>She confirmed that she wanted words on her paper. Kyra: Princess Peach is goin' home to take a nap with her dog (sticker of Fenniken). What's his name again (pointing to Luigi, I supplied his name)? Luigi is walking to the ice cream place to get him</p>

			<p>and his dog some vanilla ice cream (Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 66-69).</p> <p>Star: Kyra like Princess Peach (Field notes 24 April 2018, line 118).</p> <p>Michael: (dictating) Mario cart (Field notes 24 April 2018, line 135).</p> <p>Tina brought me her envelope to write her words. “I drew a house” (Field notes 24 April 2018, line 137).</p> <p>Michael brought me a note. It says, “Ms. Winters this is a note for you” (Field notes 24 April 2018, line 162).</p> <p>She began “spelling” (her word for it) the letters she wrote on the cover of the card. When asked what she wanted her message to say she stated, “Love you, Mama.” She asked me to write her message to show Mama what I want it to say when I’m not there. I complied (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 79-82).</p> <p>Tina: You write “Bubbles Splash”? Winters: Yes, I will. Bubble Splash (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 114-115)</p> <p>Kyra: Hmmm. I want YOU to write “Thank you!” I wrote her words in the speech bubble (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 152-153).</p> <p>Tina brought me an envelope and asked me to write “George” on it and stated her intent to take it home (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 163-164)</p> <p>Tina handed me an envelope from the bucket and told me to “Write Majai (what she calls her sister) name” on it. I complied (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 200-201)</p> <p>He dictated, “My brother hand and my name. (Field notes 3 May 2018, line 105).</p>
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		<p>Cole wrote for a few minutes and then dictated his SpongeBob story to me (he said he did not want to help or write SpongeBob’s name, he just wanted me to write it), “SpongeBob and his brother went to the park. His hair is on fire.” (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 117-119).</p> <p>Jane showed me her work with Luna Girl. We then added her words. She dictated, “That’s juice, orange juice,” “And that’s popcorn (we sound spelled while she wrote the word) with hot sauce.” “That’s me and my sister.” She also dictated what she wrote on the back of that page, “That’s my Mommy in her bed” (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 129-132).</p> <p>He told me he needed to put the words under his so “everybody who comes in can read it” (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 135-138).</p>
	<p>Sound-spelling</p>	<p>“Cole wrote the letters while I stretched out the words for my house” (Field notes 23 Feb 2018, line 188)</p> <p>“Winters: Would you like my help (he nodded again)? What are we writing? Jacob: My castle. Winters: My castle? Jacob nodded. I wrote the word my and then stretched out the word castle for him to write... Winters: What is this last letter you wrote? Jacob: I don’t know [Even though he didn’t know what letter was associated with the last sound, he still put a mark on the page to hold its place. Wow!]” (Field notes 23 Feb 2018, lines 236-238)</p> <p>Kelly: I want to write, “I love my Mama” Winters: Okay, would you like my help? Kelly: Uh-huh. We sound spelled the sentence one word at a time (see photograph) (Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 151-154)</p> <p>We sound spelled Leonardo’s name (he ran out of room and swept from right to left up to write the last letter) and then Sam decided to write the other names himself using random letters (Field notes 6</p>

			<p>March 2018, lines 87-88)</p> <p>We sound spelled his words (he’s sleepin’) (he wrote them from right to left) (Field notes 3 April 2018, line 96)</p> <p>Sam brought me his work and we sound spelled the dinosaur (Field notes 11 April 2018, line 76).</p> <p>She pointed to the stamped heart on her paper. I helped her sound spell the rest of the word (Field notes 13 April 2018, lines 49-50).</p> <p>I stretched out the sounds while Jane wrote a sentence on her paper to match her picture. “TATSUGIVENMGAPILOW!” which reads “That’s you giving me a pillow!” The G after the M is actually an upside-down e (Field notes 13 April 2018, lines 67-69)</p> <p>He helped write the word hand via sound spelling with me (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 104-105).</p>
	<p>Discussed composition</p>		<p>Winters: What are you making today? Auggie: An island Winters: An island? Auggie: and my Mama Auggie: This you (pointing at me)...: (Field notes 23 Feb 2018, lines 77-82)</p> <p>Becca: I write Clifford the Big Red Dog (Field notes 23 Feb 2018, line 186).”</p> <p>Kevin to me (he was working on a dry erase board): This a 4-wheeler. I got a 4-wheeler at home and this the kitchen (Field notes 28 Feb 2018, lines 245-246)</p> <p>Jane: Maui’s carryin’ like a lotta shells. He’s gonna turn into a bird. Winters: He’s going to turn into a bird, is that what you said? Jane: He gonna turn into a bird and into everything. Moana is an animal, I mean Maui is an animal. Kyra: He turns into all kinds of animals. Winters: That sounds like fun. I think I might like to try that sometime.</p>

			<p>Sam: But you can't. Winters: Why not? Sam: 'Cause you not him Kyra: You not dressed like Maui Winters: Because I'm not him (with a laugh) Jane: If you was him, you would be able to turn into a worm (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 207-218).</p> <p>Kevin to me: This my house and this my sister bed that I sleep in. I don't sleep in my own bed. Winters: Why not? Kevin: 'Cause I watch scary movies on my Mama's tv at night (Field notes 14 March 2018, lines 136-139).</p> <p>Star: I wrote Wonder Woman. Winters: Would you like to write her name? Star: Yes Winters to Mary: May we borrow the cards? Mary nodded (Field notes 20 March 2018, lines 52-56).</p> <p>Cole: He's sleepin'. Winters: Would you like to write that down?... Cole: Yes Winters: Would you like my help? Cole: Yes (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 89-95)</p> <p>Tina: And this a window (Field notes 3 April 2018, line 123).</p> <p>I asked if she wanted me to help her write her words or just tell me about it. Mary: I just want to tell you the story. Winters: May I write it in my notebook? Mary: Okay (with a shrug). Mary: The little girl was going to pick a lotta flowers. And found a bow. Then her sister came and they saw a bat. And then they saw all beautiful flowers. They picked them and ran home. They ran into the wonderful. The End!... She was touching the stamps on her page as she read the story (Field notes 13 April 2018, lines 50-60).</p> <p>Tim put PJ Masks stickers on his Ninja Turtle</p>
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		<p>writing (see photograph). He brought it over to read to me. Tim: Master Splinter (copied from the cards) (Field notes 13 April 2018, lines 90-92).</p> <p>She wrote her name and “APLUnt” on one line and then “Thvwh” under the Smurf stickers (see paper). When she brought me her paper she told me that she wrote her name and “Elsa family” (first line of text) and “Smurf family” (second line of text. She then dictated Lion Guard Family to me. She carefully looked over her paper as I read it back to her and said, “That’s it! You can keep the paper for the wall.” (Field notes 13 April 2018, lines 99-103).</p> <p>Winters: What do they say? Will you read them to me? Kyra: Yes, this one says, “The good team” (it had Batgirl, Supergirl, and Wonder Woman on it). This one says, “The bad team” (it had Bumblebee, Batgirl and Harley Quinn on it). (Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 156-158).</p>
	<p>Asking for help</p>	<p>Helping to get page child wanted (Field notes 23 Feb. 2018, lines 72-75)</p> <p>“He then walked around the table and handed me a dry erase marker to open” (Field notes 23 Feb 2018, lines 188-9)</p> <p>Sam to me: Can you help me draw his (made the motion for the band/mask). I showed him with my finger (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 35-6).</p> <p>Becca asked me to staple her two pages together to make a book (Field notes 14 March 2018, line 149)</p> <p>Kevin brought an envelope and crayon to me and asked, “Ms. Winters, how do you spell Makenzie’s name?” I referred him to the word cards (Field notes 3 April 2018, lines 85-86).</p> <p>Cory: I don’t know how to write that (lowercase e). Winters: Try (Field notes 11 April 2018, line 52-3). I helped Cory write an “e” (Field notes 11 April 2018, line 57).</p>

			<p>Jacob (to me): I can't do it (while pointing to the C). I helped him write a C (Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 111-112).</p> <p>Jane: I need a little help. Winters: What can I help you with? Jane: Spelling flower</p> <p>Sam asked for my help to take his work off the notepad. I helped him but assured him that he could try to do it too (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 107-108).</p> <p>Kyra: I making Shay mail. How do you write her name? Kyra answered her own question and go the cards (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 111-112).</p> <p>Every once in awhile she would stop and ask me if a certain friend had been there. She specifically stated (accurately, might I add) which friends had not yet gone to that center (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 161-163).</p> <p>Tina: Help, Ms. Winters (softly) Winters: What do you need my help with sweetheart? She pointed at Star. I reminded Star that Tina had the board first. Then I told Tina to tell Star, "I had that first, please give it back". She complied (Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 36-39).</p> <p>Kyra to me: Can you make a speech bubble? Winters: Yes, give me a moment to get a piece of paper. I modeled how to make a speech bubble on my paper. Joe stepped over to watch. She attempted to copy it on her card. She was pleased with her attempt (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 146-149).</p> <p>Kyra to me: I can't make the S. Will you help? Winters: Yes (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 162-162).</p>
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<p>Asserts own knowledge (verbally or nonverbally)</p>	<p>Popular culture</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Tim: It Donatello (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 128).</p> <p>Tim: Shredder name Jane: He's a villain (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 220-221)</p> <p>Joe: Lion Guard (holding up the stickers) (Field notes 17 April 2018, line 79). Joe: This Batgirl (Field notes 17 April 2018, line 87).</p> <p>Joe: Batman and here goes Joker (Field notes 17 April 2018, line 114).</p> <p>Michael: Bowzer (Field notes 24 April 2018, line 61).</p> <p>Michael: It's two Ashes, Chespins, 1 Squirtle, 1 Fenniken (Field notes 24 April 2018, line 83).</p> <p>Michael upon finding the Pokémon logo said, "This is not Pokémon." Winters: Are you sure about that? Check the letters. That's the logo for Pokémon. After checking each letter he looked at me and stated, "Oh yeah, it is" (Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 93-95).</p> <p>Kyra: I have Bowser (Field notes 24 April 2018, line 107).</p> <p>Joe: Mickey Mouse (holding up a Mickey Mouse crayon) (Field notes 1 May 2018, line 29).</p> <p>Star: This is Molly. It's not a different (Field notes 1 May 2018, line 41).</p> <p>Cole (to me): This Raphael. There's a lotta stickers like that. I nodded (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 63-64).</p>
	<p>Of writing</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Sam: I know how to write everything (Field notes 6 March 2018. Line 139)</p> <p>Jane: I already know how to draw the words (Field</p>

			<p>notes 6 March 2018, line 205)</p> <p>After we finished the word flower she said, “I need to write it again.” I reminded her with a smile that she just wrote it and she could write it by herself this time. She grinned and said, “Oh yeah, we did, and I can” I stretched out the first sound. (Field notes 13 April 2018, lines 42-44).</p> <p>When Kyra did not find Shay’s name (the cards stuck together), she got up and walked over to the word wall (by the library center less than 300 steps away and directly in front of us) to copy Shay’s name(Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 127-129).</p> <p>Joe copied Tim’s name perfectly and wrote his own backward (he started in the correct place on the paper but wrote the last letter of his name first and continued on) (Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 146-148).</p> <p>Kyra handed me her paper and let me know that she was going to write. She used random letter and preschool cursive to write her story (Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 109-110).</p> <p>Kyra: Star love Princess Peach (reading from left to right)... (Field notes 24 April 2018, lines 113-114)</p> <p>Jane showed me her work. She drew and tried to write Star (from My Little Pony). She and Kelly showed me that Star was the pony on the cover of Kelly’s notepad (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 34-35)</p> <p>He wrote a heart and “Mom” by himself (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 88-89).</p> <p>Cole wrote several letters on a larger Mickey Mouse Clubhouse notepad. He then brought it to me and read, “It says, ‘Don’t go into the girls’ restroom unless you a girl.” He told me he needed me to put the words under his so “everybody who comes in can read it”. (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 133-136).</p>
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<p>Attention to detail</p>			<p>At clean up time Jane brought me her work for dictation and sound-spelling help. After I wrote down her words on the mermaid page she asked to go back and add the “bra” and swimsuit and eyelashes to her work. I consented (Field notes 28 Feb 2018, lines 267-269)</p> <p>Kyra’s picture included a plug in her phone, numbers on the phone, earphones and earring and ears...Harley Quinn have gold lip gloss (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 223-227)</p> <p>Joe: I need green (for the Bubble Guppies’ hair) (Field notes 1 May 2018, line 52).</p> <p>Joe: NO, it all gotta be pink! (Field notes 1 May 2018, line 75).</p> <p>Star (pointing to her work): Her teeth a little bit red, I tried to put lip gloss on her.</p> <p>Winters: It looks good to me. (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 103-104).</p> <p>Kelly began coloring a Bubble Guppies card with the SpongeBob pen. She colored the hair on the characters shades as close as the pen could get to their actual color (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 123-125).</p> <p>I noticed that when I went back to look at the photographs of the Bubble Guppies cards over the last two observations, most of them had the hair color of the characters’ the same as the character cards/television show (Field notes 3 May 2018, lines 162-164).</p> <p>...he was very concerned about things being the correct color. He was adamant that the character looked the same way it did on television and on the picture/word cards. He was especially adamant about Kyra’s picture, stating that she needs to make the character’s hair all pink...(Reflexive Journal, lines 554-557).</p> <p>In our guided writing sessions, they are forever telling me that characters have to look a certain way (for example, Batgirl HAS to wear purple, yellow</p>
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			<p>and black; Catboy must be blue and MUST have a cat emblem on his shirt, etc). Every once in a great while we may change the color of a Disney Princess’s dress or have her hair up instead of down (or vice versa) at the request of the child making the character suggestion. The child who makes this decision does have to defend it...Please note that I am not the one who makes them defend their position, the other children tend to shout out their opinions on what a character is supposed to look like. (Reflexive Journal, lines 561-570)</p> <p>...most of them had the hair color of the characters the same as the character cards/television show (Reflexive Journal, lines 660-661)</p>
<p>Surprises</p>	<p>Kids’ knowledge</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>“Cole and Jacob have come a long way in their letter-sound correspondence skills. Granted, I am stretching out the words for them to write what they hear...I am especially impressed that Jacob (a P3) put a squiggly line as a placeholder for a sound he could not identify...” (Reflexive Journal, lines 16-23).</p> <p>Kids forgot where things are located</p> <p>We sound spelled the sentence one word at a time (see photograph). She did not leave any spaces between the words and I did not push the issue. Kelly tried to seal the envelope by licking her finger and running it on the outside (non-sticky part) of the envelope. She looked at it quizzically when it didn’t seal (Field notes 11 April 2018, lines 154-157).</p> <p>I’m noticing that the children who choose to write more than one word on their pages with my assistance (and sometimes without) are not leaving any space between words (Field notes 13 April 2018, lines 106-107).</p> <p>I noticed in the collection of the final writing sample, that Jane shook her head and put her finger on the paper to remind her to leave a space when writing her sentence. It appears that our classroom modeling worked for her (Reflexive Journal, lines 746-748)</p>

			<p>...some of the cards I made for a previous project were still relevant...(Reflexive Journal, lines 103-104)</p> <p>...Becca (P3), a reluctant writer at best, was writing the Trolls characters' names by herself without much prompting (Reflexive Journal, lines 183-184).</p> <p>It appeared he forgot we have word/picture cards, but he gladly attempted to copy what he read. (Reflexive Journal, lines 373-374).</p> <p>Today I also noticed a return to the kids forgetting what is in the center. It appears that with all of the new materials added to the Writing Center that some of my kids have forgotten that we have word cards to help us write the names of our favorite characters (Reflexive Journal, lines 502-504)</p> <p>I noticed that the kids are using word cards more during center times than they did during early parts of the study...(Reflexive Journal, lines 415-416).</p> <p>It appears that my children with lower fine motor skills are coming to the writing center just as much as those who have higher motor skill levels. (Reflexive Journal, lines 420-421).</p>
	<p>Characters listed</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>We had some that I completely expected based off of our clothing, backpacks, and requests for particular movies on marble party days. (Reflexive journal, lines 26-27).</p> <p>Others included Smurfs (I was surprised) (Reflexive journal, lines 28-29).</p> <p>I was surprised that Fairies, Tinkerbelle, and Jake and the Neverland Pirates were not on any of the lists so far as they are relatively frequent mentions during our guided writing activities...and/or during center times (Reflexive Journal, lines 83-86).</p> <p>Yesterday Kelly brought me a My Little Pony notebook and told me, "It's for you to have."</p>

			<p>...maybe I should check with her to see if she wants me to put it in the Writing Center so that she and the other children can use it. Admittedly I was surprised when the children did not mention My Little Pony Friendship is Magic during their favorite show as they have talked about it amongst themselves many times. (Reflexive Journal, lines 509-514).</p>
	Authority stayed out of discussion	2	<p>I noticed that Tim stayed out of the discussion, even though he is our classroom TMNT authority (Reflexive Journal, lines 126-127)</p>
	Kids words/actions	2	<p>...no one got upset when Sam took five of our dry erase boards for his work and did not erase them when he was finished, rather he moved four of them to the side and began working on something else (Reflexive Journal, lines 142-143)</p> <p>I was surprised that Tim's statement into the accuracy of Cole's story did not even elicit a response from Cole. Normally, when someone questions the accuracy of their friends' work there is some kind of verbal response...(Reflexive Journal, lines 667-669).</p> <p>Kyra has asked me every day this week if I'm going to be at the Writing Center before she picks her center...(Reflexive Journal, lines 712-713).</p> <p>...the children frequently wanted me to take their work home with me. They often stated, "It's goin' home with YOU"...(Reflexive Journal, lines 721-722)</p> <p>Additionally, I noted that the children frequently brought me into their discussions as a mediator. I also got the distinct impression that I was brought into some of the discussions with the goal of educating ME on their favorite shows...(Reflexive Journal, lines 726-728)</p> <p>Jane: Maui's carryin' like a lotta shells. He's gonna turn into a bird. Winters: He's going to turn into a bird, is that what you said? Jane: He gonna turn into a bird and into everything. Moana is an animal, I mean Maui is an animal.</p>

			<p>Kyra: He turns into all kinds of animals. Winters: That sounds like fun. I think I might like to try that sometime. Sam: But you can't. Winters: Why not? Sam: 'Cause you not him Kyra: You not dressed like Maui Winters: Because I'm not him (with a laugh) Jane: If you was him, you would be able to turn into a worm (Field notes 6 March 2018, lines 207-218).</p>
Joys	Good Problems	2	<p>I had no idea they would come up with so many characters (Reflexive Journal, line 71).</p> <p>...we had way more characters than I had word cards for, which is not a bad problem to have...(Reflexive Journal, lines 117-118)</p> <p>I noticed today that I have a problem. My walls are starting to fill up. I am going to have to decide which writing products are going to be up and which ones will come down. What a wonderful problem to have! (Reflexive Journal, lines 357-359).</p> <p>I was a little concerned that it would look bare for a while. I should not have been as, after today's morning centers, it is almost full again. I guess this is a good problem to have, although most of the work on the front of my desk belongs to Michael. When I began this project, I never imagined that I would have a display issue (too much work at one time)...(Reflexive Journal, lines 446-450)</p>
	Excited, impressed, and amazed	2	<p>...I wonder what will happen next week when I add in Paw Patrol and the word cards for all their favorite shows, characters, and movies. I am excited to find out.</p> <p>I find the level of details this group included in their drawings/writings amazing. They wanted to make sure they were accurate in their work...(Reflexive Journal, lines 152-153).</p> <p>Since adding the popular culture material, I have noticed a few changes in my children at the Writing</p>

			<p>Center...sheer amount of time the children are spending...they only came to do one writing sample...and now they are coming for longer periods of time...(Reflexive Journal, lines 213-217)</p> <p>Editing work based on peers' feedback that carries over into journaling (Reflexive Journal, lines 315-321)</p> <p>I finally got Greg to come to the Writing Center (Reflexive Journal, lines 322-323)</p> <p>I was excited to see that a few of my older children requested to go get certain cards from the Writing Center during our Journaling time. This is especially exciting since I have only modeled using the cards a few times during our Guided Writing lessons so far. (Reflexive Journal, lines 499-501)</p> <p>...Kyra seems to have her own solution for what to do when our boards are full. She decidedly did not want to wait for me to remove some of the older work (as I promised her I would do today) and found new places to tape her work) (Reflexive Journal, lines 387-389).</p> <p>I love that Kyra found an alternate way to locate Shay's name for her "mail". Even though I reference the word wall during the day, I think this is the first time a child has actually used it for writing (Reflexive Journal, lines 410-412).</p> <p>I found it interesting to note...Kyra informed me that she was dark-skinned, Jane was light-skinned, and I was even lighter-skinned. Jane and I both agreed. I asked if it mattered. Both girls said no and Jane said, " 'cause we all friends". With all the fuss being made over Caucasian teachers teaching African American children, I found this interesting. Here you have two African American preschoolers, taught by a Caucasian teacher, who noticed that our skin is different shades and it didn't matter to them. (Reflexive Journal, lines 190-197).</p>
Tensions and Frustrations	Speaking of conflicts	2	Tina came over and refused to leave until she finished her picture. She drew a picture with a black

			<p>crayon on her green paper. She brought her picture to me for dictation (Field notes 28 Feb 2018, lines 261-262).</p> <p>I probably did not do myself any favors by taking Tina’s dictation; however, I truly wanted to see what she would have to say about her work. On the one hand I want to keep the number of children at the center to a manageable 4 (that way they are not in each other’s way) but on the other hand, I want to encourage them to write and express themselves. I suppose that battling a three-year-old over writing was not something I really felt like doing today (Reflexive Journal, lines 49-54).</p> <p>I found it interesting that Kevin gave Kyra’s card to Auggie since he didn’t want it, he only wanted one that was “all red”. Last week Kyra tried to give me the picture he had given to her and he objected stating that if she didn’t want it, she should have given it back to him...however, he tried to give away her work without a second thought. He and I discussed this briefly. It did not do much good since he still felt that he could do whatever he wanted with something that was given to him (and that she should still take his “picture I made for her” home). Sigh, at least I tried to help him see the other side of this issue (Reflexive Journal, lines 581-589).</p> <p>I may have intervened too quickly on Michael and Kevin’s argument but as both have been known to hit when they don’t get what they want (and once hit, the other would not have been pacified until he returned the hit and their would have been more hitting), I tried to help them solve the problem peacefully (Field notes, 14 March 2018, lines 157-160).</p> <p>Michael and Star both have the tendency to hit when they are trying to get materials away from another child. Neither child will let anyone get by with hitting him/her...(Field Notes 24 April 2018, lines 184-185).</p>
	Teacher debate	2	Apparently, one of the children brought the stamp pad into the restroom yesterday (I did not find out

			<p>until today) and filled it with water. I am going to have to diplomatically address the concept of not taking the materials into the restroom with the children (we have discussed that we do not need to take toys and supplies into the restroom many times before) (Reflexive Journal, lines 227-232).</p> <p>I am debating if I should leave the writing, pictures, stamp, and sticker explorations in the books or remove them...(Reflexive Journal, lines 278-279)</p> <p>I allowed Kelly to bring her My Little Pony notepad into the Writing Center today. She exclusively used it and showed us work she and her siblings previously did in it. I wonder what would have happened if I had talked to her sooner about bringing it in to the center. Would it have sparked more conversations with the children about other things that they wanted me to introduce to the Writing Center? (Reflexive Journal, 695-699).</p> <p>...I find myself questioning some of my decisions (not that they were right or wrong at the time that I made them), such as, deciding which characters to add in the span of a week through discussions with the kids....I chose to do it as a one and done activity since I knew I would have to purchase and/or prepare the materials ahead of time. I also question my decision not to include anything more than the cards with the Power Rangers' names on them was a good one. I did not include them because...and 3) I could not find anything on them, not even a coloring book at my local stores...(Reflexive Journal, lines 526-536)</p>
	Materials	2	<p>Next week I plan on adding cards with Bubble Guppies pictures (copied from a coloring book) and envelopes into the Writing Center. Since the only preschool friendly Bubble Guppies merchandise I was able to locate at Party City, Target, Wal-Mart, and Dollar Tree were coloring books and a pail (which I will put the cards and envelopes in), I had to get a little creative in what I could add in (Reflexive Journal, lines 515-519).</p>

			<p>These (Bubble Guppies) cards have also been popular among the children there as we only have a few remaining of the 25 initially included in the center (as of 3 pm today). This surprises me. As always, if the children specifically ask for more of them, I will gladly put more in to finish out the year (Reflexive Journal, lines 663-666).</p> <p>I discovered part of the problem was that I did not correctly hear him (or he did not correctly pronounce the names, either way, it was an issue) on any character other than Pikachu. It would probably help if I knew something about this game...(Reflexive Journal, lines 60-63).</p> <p>...the characters that were on my list were not actually in the programs (probably because I did not understand some of the names the children said)...I also found out that some of the character names were not spelled the way I thought they should be spelled. I did better after a break and searching for shows instead of the characters (Reflexive Journal, lines 106-114).</p>
	Gender	2	<p>Joe: It disgusting! Winters: What's disgusting about Supergirl? Joe: I don't like girls, I like boy! Cory: I like girl Kyra: Girl stickers you mean? Cory: Yeah Joe and Sam: Uggh Cory: Why you all keep saying "Ugh!"? Kyra: Cause you keep sayin' you like girl stickers. Cory: The stickers are for everybody. Sam: He say, he said, "He likes girls" Winters: Well, aren't all of you friends? The group agreed...(Field notes 17 April 2018, lines 60-72).</p> <p>Kyra: I'm gonna put a Pokémon sticker on it. Joe: Hey, that not girls (referring to the sticker). Kyra (in a very matter of fact manner): It's for Kevin. (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 171-173)</p> <p>...they all want to participate but do not want all</p>

			<p>“Girl stuff” or “Boy stuff” (Reflexive journal, lines 178-179)</p> <p>Kyra: Look! That’s me. I’m dressed up in a Ninja Turtle, a girl one, NOT a boy (Field notes 6 March 2018, line 113)</p> <p>Joe: I want all the BOYS! Winters: Why Joe? Joe: ‘Cause there’s too many girls. Winters: Where? Joe: In here (pointing to the bucket) I helped him find the male characters from Bubble Guppies (Field notes 1 May 2018, lines 61-66)</p> <p>I have noticed that gender and writing (as well as toys) is an issue for Joe. He has distinct ideas about what he and the girls should or should not be allowed to do in the Writing Center (and in other areas of the room)...Point of information, there are NO boys toys or girls toys in our room, there are simply toys. It has been this way since day 1 in our program. Somehow this message as not fully gotten through to him yet (Reflexive Journal, lines 611-616).</p> <p>...even though I stress that the materials in our room are for everyone on a daily basis, some of the children, boys and girls alike, still have the bias that certain materials are for “boys” or for “girls”. (Reflexive Journal, lines 744-746).</p>
<p>Issues for group discussion</p>		<p>2</p>	<p>Stamp pad issue (see Reflexive Journal, lines 227-232)</p> <p>Sharing one of the mailboxes with Dramatic Play (Reflexive Journal, lines 235-242).</p> <p>After the shock and confusion about the girls in Dramatic Play not getting the mail the boys in the Writing Center put in the Dramatic Play mailbox for them, we had an immediate discussion before lunch. I started out by...slight problem with our friends’ not knowing they had mail. I requested that they let the person they wrote a letter to know that they had</p>

			<p>mail (Reflexive Journal, lines 285-290)</p> <p>I am so glad my plan worked. I reviewed the procedures for centers when I am with a group and had the kids tell me what they are supposed to do if they have a problem or need something during center time when I am with other children (see entry for 17 April 2018 for details on the procedure). Today's session was much smoother because of it. (Reflexive Journal, lines 442-445).</p>
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Appendix J: Pre-test and Post-test Measures

Desired Results Developmental Profile Language and Literacy Developmental 10:

Emergent Writing

According to DRDP (2015) domain for Language and Literacy development measure 10: Emergent Writing there are six developmental levels for preschool children's writing. They are Exploring Middle, Exploring Later, Building Earlier, Building Middle, Building Later and Integrating Earlier. On the chart provided by DRDP (2015) the developmental levels are defined as follows.

In the Exploring Middle stage the child, "makes marks on paper." (DRDP, 2015, p. 22). In the Exploring later stage the child, "makes scribble marks" (DRDP, 2015, p. 6). In the Building Earlier stage the child, "makes scribble marks or simple drawings that represent people, things, or events" (DRPR, 2015, p. 6). The Building Middle stage is represented when the child, "makes marks to represent own name or words" (DRDP, 2015, p. 6). In the Building Later stage the child, "uses letters or clearly recognizable approximations of letters to write own name" (DRDP, 2015, p. 6). The final developmental stage, Integrating Earlier, is demonstrated when the child, "writes several words or a few simple phrases, or clearly recognizable approximations" (DRPD, 2015, p. 6).

Missouri Early Learning Goals for Literacy section E: Writing

According to the Missouri Early Learning Goals (2013), the developmental goal for writing is to, "...use writing as a means of expression/communication" (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2013, p. 8). In preschool teachers are instructed to use the following indicators:

- a. Experiments with writing tools and materials
- b. Uses scribbles, shapes, pictures, letter-like forms and letters to write
- c. Tells others about marks and intended meaning of drawing or writing
- d. Uses of variety of resources to facilitate writing
- e. Converts speech to writing (Missouri Department of Elementary and

Secondary Education, 2013, p. 8).

Appendix K: Table 4.4 Teacher Interviews

Table 4.4 Teacher Interviews

Interview Question	I1	I2	I3	I4	I5
Do your students frequently go to the writing center?	“...they really don’t go it at all unless I encourage them...” (Interview 1, 3 Feb. 2018)	“They do not...seldom do they go to that center, they always go for the others” (Interview 2, 15 Feb 2018)	“Every day, all the time” (Interview 3, 16 Feb 2018)	Yes...I only allow 4 in at a time but lately, it’s been basically 2, the same 2 basically. It’s like one of my P4s goes mostly all the time and then a P3 is like following her” (Interview 4, 16 Feb 2018)	“...last choice activity when they run out of choices” (Interview 5, 26 Feb 2018)
Why do you think that they enjoy or do not enjoy going to the writing center?	“...issues with fine motor skills...a lot of times when they pick up a pencil or marker or crayon if they don’t press hard enough they can’t see the work” (Interview 1, 3 Feb 2018)	“When they go to writing it’s more like work...I think they look at it more as work instead of play. It’s not as fun as the other centers” (Interview 2, 15 Feb 2018)	“Cause there’s a lot of things they can do there” (Interview 3, 16 Feb 2018)	“...the one who enjoys going, she can write. She can write letters and she likes to write” (Interview 4, 16 Feb. 2018) After the project ended, Interviewee 4 told me informally that since	“...there are other things that are more enjoyable that are more, uhm, active and challenging...” (Interview 5, 26 Feb. 2018) “Yeah, it’s more of a quiet time and they do so much of that throughout the day that when it’s free choice they want something

				<p>her P4 writer moved very few children visited her writing center.</p> <p>“So it’s not, what I am hearing and correct me if I’m wrong, but it seems to be more work for other than play because they don’t have the...fine motor skills to do it yet” (Interview 4, 16 Feb. 2018)</p>	<p>more active and moving and free” (Interview 5, 26 Feb 2018).</p> <p>Many of the children with lower fine motor skills do not choose to go to the writing center. We feel this may be due to the idea that writing is more work than play for those with low fine motor skills (Interview 5, 26 Feb. 2018).</p>
<p>How could you change the use of your writing center?</p>	<p>Adding more materials that take less effort to make marks like paint (Interview 1, 3 Feb 2018)</p>	<p>Add things that they can make versus writing independently (Interview 2, 15 Feb 2018)</p> <p>“Make it more exciting” (Interview 2, 15 Feb 2018).</p>	<p>“Add some more writing utensils...changing the materials, like giving them something new...making it more interesting for them” (Interview 4, 16 Feb. 2018).</p>	<p>“...add a bigger table so more kids could come. Um, maybe like tape recorders, we sometimes put iPads there. I want a bigger writing center”</p>	<p>“...more space. I have space for two in there and uhm it is pretty crowded” (Interview 5, 26 Feb. 2018).</p>

				(Interview 3, 16 Feb 2018)	
If your students had access to their favorite popular culture icons at the writing center, what might happen?	“I think they would drift over there to the center and utilize that center more” (Interview 1, 3 Feb. 2018)	“I think they would, I think they would probably like them a lot” (Interview 2, 15 Feb. 2018)	“Oh my gosh, they would love it! Yeah, they would love it. I would like to do all of that but it’s just like funding for it” (Interview 3, 16 Feb. 2018)	“...if I had superheroes more of the boys would probably go and if I had like um Paw Patrol, that kind of stuff, I think they would be more interested in going...” (Interview 4, 16 Feb 2018)	“Well, I would definitely learn more about my students and what they liked, that’s one thing. It would give me a window into them...they would probably go back there a little bit more...whether they’d be writing about it I’m not sure” (Interview 5, 26 Feb. 2018).