Developing writers

Ann Craig

University of Northern Iowa

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Abstract
As our nation focuses on educational reforms in reading, math, and science, the place of expository writing within subject areas becomes evident. Students are required to write for different purposes within their classes, often expected to draft, explain, and interpret ideas offered by their educational experiences. Unfortunately, teachers find many of their students unable to understand their directions for writing. An approach that balances writing instruction with self-regulation as students write may help them internalize different aspects of writing expository papers as a means of communication in their classes. This paper, therefore, examines an instructional writing strategy, specifically self-regulated strategy development (SRSD), as a way to improve students' knowledge of the process of writing expository text.
Developing Writers

Ann Craig

University of Northern Iowa

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Reader of Paper – Thomas Berg

Reader of Paper – James Davis

Advisor – Thomas Berg

Department Head – Michael Waggoner

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Imagine a 6-day old baby. Small and pink, this child is at the mercy of the parents to whom she was born. Waiting in her few waking hours for a mother or father to change, feed, or rock it to sleep, this child has one form of communication through which to relay to her parents what she needs. Fortunately, this child will evolve quickly from her first form of communication, crying, to speaking, listening, reading and writing. In a world where communication is not only essential to everyday life, but also continuously developing, parents and educators find themselves in critical roles as teachers for these children developing from crying to writing.

As our nation focuses on educational reforms in reading, math, and science, the place of expository writing within subject areas becomes evident. Students are required to write for different purposes within their classes, often expected to draft, explain, and interpret ideas offered by their educational experiences. Unfortunately, teachers find many of their students unable to understand their directions for writing, to create a draft, to find purpose from which they can begin, to support a topic statement (that they have been unable to write) with reasons, to end with an effective conclusion, or to write using appropriate forms of English conventions and mechanics. An approach that balances writing instruction with self-regulation as students write may help them internalize different aspects of writing expository papers as a means of communication in their classes. This paper, therefore, examines an instructional writing strategy, specifically self-regulated strategy development (SRSD), developed by Karen Harris and Steve
Graham as a way to improve students’ knowledge of the process of writing expository text.

Statement of Problem

Although The National Assessment of Educational Progress shows that fourth and eighth grade students have made gains in writing since 1998, many educators at elementary, secondary, and collegiate levels would disagree, as would business men and women. Educators argue that students come into science, mathematics, social sciences, and language arts classrooms lacking the knowledge necessary to communicate effectively in written language using the content material. While there has been an increase in writing ability since 1998, only 22% of fourth grade students tested at a proficient level in 2002 “demonstrating competency over challenging subject matter, including subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter” (“The Nation’s Report Card,” 2002).

“The challenge is that writing is one of the most difficult skills children are expected to master in school” (Harris & Graham, 2002). There are so many different procedures and strategies to teach students how to write. In addition, writing performance, in itself, is hard for students to grasp without being taught skills to internalize what they are learning and trying to do.

Writing involves the ability to use a writing process including planning, monitoring, evaluating and revising. Students are expected to practice a writing process with correct grammar and content appropriate vocabulary. Students unable to get past
the first expectation of planning will be unable to either follow through with further steps of a writing process or use correct language conventions and/or content vocabulary.

This is true not only for students who have shown they understand writing process skills, but especially for those who are still developing as writers. Lack of knowledge of the writing process affects the attitudes of students being asked to write. Often students are asked to complete an expository paper in a certain class to show comprehension of the content, but are unable to develop their paper in a way that demonstrates the knowledge they have gained.

**Significance of Problem**

The inability of students to self-regulate while writing an expository piece (and other pieces of writing as well) is a significant issue in education today. Not only is writing a fundamental form of communication, but it is also one way educators and parents are able to see the content comprehension across subject areas. Writing is developed through the practice of reading, but it also aids in reading, as a student may better understand a text by knowing how it has been constructed.

In my own experience as a seventh grade language arts teacher, I see many students excel in an area such as science, but have a weakness in the ability to explain in writing what they know. Students with negative attitudes about writing due to the inability to writing independently, produce work that is “shorter, less cohesive, and poorer in overall quality” (Harris & Graham, 1999). However, when students can see that they are producing work that is “shorter, less cohesive, and poorer in overall quality,” their attitudes progressively erode. A cycle begins. It is up to the teacher to
make sure that students understand the process of writing so that they are able to write for real life purposes throughout each class.

In order to learn the process of writing, they must know about the process. Students must be taught strategies to put together a writing piece in order to explain what it is they are asked. "Expository writing allows students to demonstrate their unique perspectives on and understanding of social, political, and historical issues" (Gersten & Baker, 2001). When students do not have the ability to write expository pieces, they have one less way to express their "unique perspectives."

Definition of Terms

Many theories and approaches abound for teaching students the process of writing. *Explicit teaching* is one. In this approach, teachers take on a more structured and primary role, instructing students in the steps they can take in writing. "This teaching advocates for the use, at times, of focused and isolated instruction to the extent needed by individual children" (Harris, Graham, & Mason, 2003). Sometimes this explicit instruction serves the needs of individual children, while other times it works in group situations.

A *process writing approach* is one in which "teachers create an environment where students have time not only to write, but to think and reflect upon what they are writing" (Harris, et al., 2003). Much choice is involved in this strategy, and students have opportunities to write for real purposes and real audiences. They are given the chance to write for extended periods of time. Teaching strategies may include writing conferences, peer collaboration, mini-lessons, modeling, sharing, and classroom dialogue. There is an emphasis on using "teachable-moments," but not necessarily on
the writing process; the teacher gives lessons as the students show they need help in particular areas.

Using "teachable-moments" allows the teacher to first assess what attributes are lacking in the students and then create learning situations for the students to experience and practice within that particular piece. For example, a teacher may find, in her initial assessment of her class, that most students are having a hard time writing a clear topic sentence at the beginning of an essay. The teacher would use this "teachable-moment" to create an activity that draws attention to this piece that is missing as well as how to use it. Using these moments rather than focusing on the writing process as a whole allows the teacher and students the opportunity to focus on authentic problems for the class instead of lessons in which the students may not need to review.

Constructivism allows for a more student-directed learning environment where students have the opportunity to take writing into their own hands. Brainstorming activities and other such strategies help students to plan their writing without the teacher as the center of developing the writing process.

SRSD (self-regulated strategy development), created by Karen Harris and Steve Graham, takes an explicit teaching approach and constructivist approach at different times to help develop the students' own understanding of the entire process of writing from planning to editing. Three major areas of SRSD include: "assisting students in developing knowledge about writing, supporting students in the ongoing development of abilities needed to manage writing, and promoting positive student attitudes about writing and themselves as writers" (Harris, et al., 2003). Using a method in which both explicit teaching and constructivism are evident allows for students to strategically
develop their writing techniques while truly beginning to understand the process of writing and self-regulation. This method also aids the teacher in gathering data to support the students' writing needs.

**Organization of Research Paper**

Chapter 1 of this paper has introduced the reader to the problems our students face as writers today. It has set up the problem, explained the significance of the problem and defined terms associated with teaching writing in schools. The paper will delve into this issue of poorly developed writers. Chapter 2 will offer the historical background on writing reform and what students need to be good writers. Chapter 3 will explain the theory and strategies of self-regulated strategy development based on the research of Karen Harris, Steven Graham, Susan de La Pas, and others in this field. Chapter 4 will project implementation of SRSD in a seventh grade language arts classroom, exploring how this theory can help students begin to understand the writing process while developing the ability to self-regulate their own writing. Chapter 5 will summarize the SRSD exploration and suggest further studies.
Chapter 2

The following chapter considers the history of writing in education. It will begin with an overview of how writing instruction has moved back and forth between teaching with a focus on the skills and products of students’ writing verses teaching the writing process. This section will take the reader through the triumphs and the set backs in this content area. Next, this chapter looks at what good writers do and need. Various educators have pin-pointed attributes that good writers must acquire before honing their writing skills. Finally, this chapter will delve into the writing research of the past 30 years. It will discuss what teachers need in order to teach writing.

Historical Background

Before the learning environment of a writing classroom can be determined, a teacher must be aware of strategies and techniques that good writers employ. Unfortunately, educators have been unable to pinpoint how to teach these strategies and techniques. Over the last century, our country has swung on a pendulum of reform from traditional and direct instruction of writing process to theories of focus on skill. Karen Bromely stated it well in her article "Key Components of Sound Writing Instruction."

The teaching of writing shifted from a focus on skills and the written product to a focus on writing process, and most recently to a balance approach that embraces both product and process. But recent calls for “back to basics” in teaching to ensure higher achievement suggest that the writing pendulum is moving again in the direction of skills and product (1999).
What do students need to know to be effective writers? How can we aid our students? What key strategies are needed? How will we assess whether or not a student is an effective writer? Throughout the last century there have been many different ideas as to what is important in writing instruction. The following section will address the last century of educational reform in regards to writing. It will discuss how our country has changed in its conception of good writing instruction within our schools. The section will end with a look at what good writers do and how students can be taught these actions.

The Past Century of Writing Reform

In the last century, writing reform has seemed to swing back and forth between two central areas of writing instruction: rote memorization, including direct instruction of grammar, and a whole language reading and writing process. From as early as the late 1880's with Charles W. Elliot and William Torrey Harris to the educational progressives of the current National Council of Teachers of English, we have gone full circle beginning with a negative view of direct instruction of teaching writing and grammar to a positive view and then back, again, to the negative.

Charles W. Elliot may have been one of the first educational reformists to believe and preach that studies of grammar should be eliminated. The president of Harvard University, this man "urged educators to shorten the grammar school course by eliminating redundant work in arithmetic and grammar" (Ravitch, 2000). Part of Elliot's belief was that because students are different in many ways, education should also be different. Doing away with the learning of grammatical rules and memorization of them could help ensure that these different students could learn how to write in different
ways. Elliot was less interested in students knowing the content, per se, but wanted students to have the thinking skills to create their own learning.

William Torrey Harris was another progressive thinker of this time in education. Harris was the U.S Commissioner of Education during the late 1890’s. Unlike Elliot, Harris believed that grammar was fully needed in education. In fact, grammar was one of the “five windows of the soul” according to Harris.

Harris defined the essentials of curriculum as the five windows of the soul.

"Illiterate man is shut up in the dark towers of ignorance, and the school undertakes to illuminate and emancipate him by opening windows on all sides (for this tower a pentagon).’ It teaches arithmetic, geography, history, grammar and literature. He held that … Grammar fixes and defines speech (Ravitch, 2000).

Harris agreed with Elliot in that all students should have an education, not just those of prosperous parents.

It was during this era that a lack of writing ability became evident at the college level as well. In 1874, when over half of the men who took the writing entrance exam to get into Harvard failed, the nation began to blame teachers in high schools for being ineffective. The Committee of Ten began to draft ideas for uniformed college entrance requirements to ensure the students applying to their colleges would be not only highly educated, but also fully prepared for college-level learning. This, of course, weighed heavily (and resentfully) on secondary educators.

As these educational politics pressed down, teachers sought to allow for more creative writing experiences. “These teachers focused on the creation of a classroom
that facilitated the development of individual intellect and the realization of social
responsibility. Composition teachers took up and designed a number of pedagogical
innovations- including collaborative projects, student contracts, and self-directed
learning” (Gallagher, 2002). For the first time educators looked to make the writing
process and writing assignments meaningful for the students and the community based
on their needs. Stemming from John Dewey’s “pedagogical principles,” 1920’s
educators truly began to place students at the center of writing, while facing the problem
of how to integrate his “child-centered principles.” This movement of child-centered
writing would be debated throughout much of the 1930’s and 1940’s, but would,
inevitably, sustain as the main writing instruction methodology.

After World War II, many people began to question Dewey and the other
progressives of the time. Dewey and the other progressive critics felt that education was
losing sight of its “central purpose while trying to meet their students’ diverse social and
personal needs” (Ravitch, 2000). In the area of writing, students should not necessarily
be writing for experience, but writing to learn. They should learn about writing
conventions that would allow them to write for purpose in college and beyond. In direct
relation to writing, the “reading wars” began. Rather than teaching basic skills in
reading like using phonics to sound out unfamiliar words, educators were using the
“look-say” approach to reading. For many, this “look-say” method involved memorization
of words rather than understanding how to decipher sounds to read. For some, whole
language was the answer to helping student motivation. “In a Whole Language
classroom, kids are helped to fall in love with the written word, They are encouraged to
write even before they can spell, coming to see themselves as authors at a precocious age" (Kohn, 1999).

In 1955 Rudolf Flesch wrote *Why Johnny Can’t Read* and began to question whether students were really being taught basic skills needed in their subject areas. In writing, this meant neglecting the teaching of the writing process as well as grammar and sentence writing basics. By this time, the ideas of Dewey began to fade out of education.

Progressive influences in the areas of writing were limited to writing about personal experiences or about experiential connections to literature. In the area of vocational education, the emphasis on experience and motivation translated to writing business letters and resumes. Classroom practice that emerged from progressive child-centered pedagogy often became chaotic, lacking discipline and focus (Cremin, 1961).

In the 1960’s the question began to arise as to how writing should be taught as well as what the role of the teacher should be in writing instruction. As the writing process began to emerge it became more important for students to have explicit knowledge of writing. What was still in question was how and when explicit knowledge develops within a student.

It was assumed that such knowledge would emerge naturally as students engaged in meaningful reading and writing. One the other hand, the teacher was responsible for determining when and how the requisite knowledge of language would become explicit and how to nurture mastery of language in a
developmentally sequenced curriculum (Strickland, Bodino, Buchan, Jones, 2001).

The 1970’s began to look more closely at these questions of the 1960’s with the emergence of the National Writing Project. At this time, the first real studies of teaching the writing process and the writing process itself were conducted. Researchers such as George Hillocks set out to prove that the teaching of writing should, once again, be placed in a child-centered curriculum. It seemed, according to these studies, that the teaching of grammar and other teacher-guided writing instruction would not only be a waste for students, but also detrimental to their learning to write. “Reformers of writing often rejected the rhetorical formulas and grammatical rules that were traditionally offered as descriptors of exemplary writing but that were disconnected from the production of such texts” (Graves, 1975).

These educational debates would continue through much of the century, going back and forth between progressive ideas such as Dewey and basic skill theories from Flesch. What should be taught and how it should be taught in writing instruction would be (and continues to be) a question in language arts classrooms. What should be taught in writing was addressed again in 1996 when the National Council of Teachers of English published a set of standards for English teachers to follow. “The document proposed that students should ‘develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects,’ meaning that English teachers should not judge the ways in which students speak or write English” (Ravitch, 2000).

The standards specified what students should do and high expectations for the performance of writing were finally addressed. Similarly, ways in which to assess
writing performance came to the forefront in curriculum development. Rubrics were created to assess student understanding of writing traits.

By 2002 what should be taught in writing had been specified even more as “forty-nine states had adopted state-wide standards and forty-eight had adopted state-wide standardized tests” (Gallagher, 2002). While creating statewide and national standards is something that is greatly debated in education for its lack of meeting the needs of the diverse learner, it does provide educators with a “blue-print” from which to teach. It allows the new teacher a plan of action. It answers the question, “what should I teach students about writing” while “what do good writers do and need” are questioned.

**What Good Writers Do and Need**

Two central questions emerge from the reforms of writing from the past. First, what skills are needed by students to become independent writers? The second question involves teacher involvement. How do teachers help students learn those skills needed in writing to become independent? This section will address the following two questions:

1. What do good writers “do” while writing?
2. What strategies can teachers employ to help students develop good writing characteristics while becoming self-regulated?

Ruth Culham, the author of *6+1 Traits of Writing: The Complete Guide*, identified 7 traits of writing to help students develop the skills of good writers including: ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions and presentation. Teachers in the Cedar Rapids Community School District (CRCSD) in Cedar Rapids, Iowa only have to look as far as the language arts facilitators within the district for a list
of key elements to instill within students. They are required to teach from the 6 Trait Writing model and all teachers follow the same set of standards. The CRCSD is looking for writers who have demonstrated ability in areas of fluency, content and development, organization, style and voice, revision as well as in the conventions of language (see appendix A). Students are evaluated using the 6 Traits Model and are scored in those areas.

The National Center for Educational Statistics working with the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) looks for a number of writing criteria in fourth, eighth, and twelfth grade students when determining writing gains nationally. The writing framework focuses on the ability to write for three different purposes (narrative, informative, and persuasive) and has six objectives. Students who are proficient in writing should be able to do the following:

write for a variety of purposes; write on a variety of tasks and for different audiences; write from a variety of stimulus materials, and within various time constraints; generate, draft, revise, and edit ideas and forms of expression in their writing; display effective choices in the organization of their writing; include detail to illustrate and elaborate their ideas; use conventions of written English; and value writing as a communicative activity" (The Nation's Report Card, 2002).

Another set of researchers headed by Emig in 1971 explored how writers write. "Emig identified five stages of the composing process: prewriting (generation of ideas, mental rehearsal for writing); drafting (writing in progress); revision (re-see ideas); editing (cosmetics/error detection); and publication (public sharing of product)" (Danielson, 2000). Emig's idea was that good writers are flexible, moving through and
within in these different stages as a piece of writing progresses. The ability of a student to move between and among the different stages as they work enables them to gain a framework in their writing and to self-regulate as they process. A self-regulating, good writer has the ability to plan, draft, revise, edit and publish their work.

In addition to identifying what good writers do, researchers have also looked at what students need to become good writers. Writing reform throughout the past century has debated how teachers should present concepts key to good writing. Practices such as "conducting writer's workshops, having students complete multiple drafts, holding frequent individual and small-group conferences with students, and encouraging peer review of written products" (Unger & Fleischman, 2004) are techniques teachers have used in process writing classrooms. In Strategies for Learning and Teaching, Karen Bromley identifies 5 key components of sound writing instruction aimed at teaching students the skills they need to become good writers. Not only do students need specific assessments to guide their writing throughout a variety of writing forms, but they also need direct instruction in composition and conventions. In addition, students need large blocks of time to write and share their works, and the choice to write for a variety of purposes.

A big dispute over the past few decades has concerned the value of direct instruction of writing verses a whole language approach. While some theorize that good writing must be taught in a direct approach, others believe writing is something students are able to develop naturally through experiences with writing on their own. Somewhere, a balance must be found so that students are able to have that freedom of choice in their writing, but are also given the specific tools they need to be able to write.
Sometimes it seems too much freedom produces writers who are unable to plan, draft, edit or revise, too much direct instruction yields students who are unable to write across a variety of forms and purposes. "Good teachers of writing have learned that writers need direct and systematic instruction in writing as well as time to write" (Routman, 1996). This achieves a balance between the two most important aspects of writing instruction: the writing product and the writing process.

**Teaching Students to Write**

As previously stated in this chapter, the debates over how teachers can help students get "what they need" to become writers have raged over the last century of reform. The different approaches to the writing process versus a more direct approach to instruction have been studied to find the most effective ways in which to provide students with information. How much instruction should stress information about writing versus the ability to write is a fundamental question. In 1986 George Hillocks documented writing research in his *Research on Written Composition*. Hillocks discussed the difference in three models of instruction: presentational mode, natural process mode, and environmental mode. While presentational mode and natural process mode show two opposite ends of the spectrum of instruction, the environmental mode was a mix of the two.

The presentational mode encompasses a more teacher-centered direct approach to instruction. It is characterized by five techniques which were described specifically in 1981 by Applebee. The following five criteria are the basis of the presentational mode of instruction:
1) relatively clear and specific objectives; 2) lecture and teacher-led discussion with concepts to be learned and applied; 3) the study of models and other materials which explain and illustrate the concept; 4) specific assignments that involve applying the rules or following the rules that have been discussed; 5) feedback following the writing, primarily from the teacher (Hillocks).

This mode of instruction dominates in classrooms, and in 1986 at the time of Hillocks publication, dominated classrooms by 70%. In this mode of instruction, students are directed to the meaning of writing and the steps used in the writing process. They acquire knowledge of writing first through direct instruction by the teacher and then in practicing what that instruction entailed. Students develop through highly structured models and examples from which to work.

Natural process mode, by contrast, is one in which students are much more the center of instruction. There are six criteria for this mode of instruction:

1) generalized objectives such as 'increase fluency;' 2) free writing about whatever interests the students, either in a journal or as a way of 'exploring a subject;' 3) writing for audiences of peers; 4) generally positive feedback from peers; 5) opportunities to revise and rework writing; 6) high levels of interaction amounts peers (Hillocks, 1986).

In this mode of instruction, the teacher serves more as a facilitator and does not explicitly instruct writing techniques or processes. Students are expected to become writers because they are "genetically predisposed" to do so and because writing is a natural process. By having the chance to write in this fashion students will develop their writing skills. Hillocks states, "This position suggests that the skills of good writers are
part of every child's genetic make-up and that successful instruction allows that potential to blossom and come to fruition" (Hillocks, 1986).

The third mode of instruction is the environmental mode. This mode encompasses a mini-lesson approach and takes both the natural mode and the presentational mode into consideration. It is characterized by three main traits:

1) clear and specific objectives such as 'to increase the use of specific detail and figurative language; 2) materials and problems selected to engage students with each other in specifiable processes important to some particular aspect of writing; 3) activities, such as small group problem centered discussions, conducive to high levels of peer interactions concerning specific tasks (Hillocks, 1986).

In this approach, teachers do some direct instruction as they introduce ideas and processes, and then lead students through large group or small group practices and discussions before students practice the task independently. It provides a concrete model for students to follow through the modeling and structured tasks.

According to Hillocks, the environmental mode is the most effective of the three. "It brings teacher, student, and materials more nearly into balance and, in effect, takes advantage of all resources in the classroom" (247). Hillocks also draws conclusions on the evolution of writing instruction from presentational to natural to environmental and suggests this represents the evolution of writing instruction across the century of reform. Hillocks implies writing instruction has gone from a teacher centered approach to a student centered approach.
Teachers go back and forth among different instructional approaches in writing. On the one side, teachers are able to center writing instruction solely on the shoulders of the students. The students write, they evaluate their writing, they meet with the teacher (who do mini-lessons as needs arise), and they write some more. On the other side of the pendulum the teacher gives the students step by step instruction as to what a specific writing should look like at the end of a performance. The teacher is the center of the instruction and the students perform. In both situations, the students learn, by the end of the unit, how to follow the teacher’s directions in order to create a writing piece.

Is it possible that there could be a set of instructional strategies to help students become effective writers while writing independently? Can teachers employ whole language and direct instruction to help students communicate through writing? Are there circumstances in which students internalize how to be "good" writers? Chapter 3 will take a more in-depth look at such an instructional approach to writing.
Chapter 3

Chapter 3 is the reader’s first look at self-regulated strategy development as an answer to the writing problems noted in previous chapters. The reader will begin with a look at self-regulated strategy development in its theory—an approach in which the teacher acts as the facilitator of learning rather than the center. From there, the reader will find the goals of SRSD which include assisting students in higher-level thinking about, managing, and developing positive attitudes toward writing. The reader will read SRSD outcomes such as producing writers who understand how to go about a writing task and feel motivated to do so while self-regulating their own work. Next, the steps of SRSD will be reviewed, which will show how students’ writing ability and attitudes progress as the teacher models, leads discussions, allows for student perceptions, and eventually scaffolds at the needs of the students. Finally, this chapter will relate the research that supports SRSD. The research supports uses of SRSD in elementary, middle school, special education and gifted education classrooms.

What is SRSD?

Self-regulated strategy development is a six-step approach to writing instruction that instills writing strategies within students. It provides students with support that is lacking in many other writing programs. It is leveled to meet the individual needs of the students in a writing class. The teacher gives students specific strategies that can be internalized as part of the writing process. Finally, it supports students by providing tools through which the students will eventually be able to regulate their own writing.

SRSD is a writing program that strives to teach students how to set goals, monitor and
record the use of different writing strategies, and develop an internal dialogue while writing.

Throughout this paper the significant problems of teacher and developing writers have been noted. There are many different parts to writing that must take place in order for students to be able to write. In addition, students encounter different approaches to teaching writing as they learn from different teachers. SRSD is an approach that works toward giving students the tools they need to become independent writers rather than dependent on their teachers. SRSD, created by Steve Graham and Karen Harris, is a cognitive strategy approach that allows students, through a balance of direct instruction and freedom, to develop their writing skills.

In *Making the Writing Process Work: Strategies for Composition and Self-Regulation*, Karen Harris and Steve Graham begin by looking at the learning environment of developing writers. Graham and Harris stress that the learning environment must be conducive to the task because the writing process is a higher order thinking process that is difficult to grasp. “While whole language and writing process approaches offer a wonderful context and environment for developing writers, skills and strategies are not often taught or developed as explicitly as many children need in order to master them” (Harris & Graham, 1996). The learning environment must meet the needs of the students in the room, whether they are developing, seasoned, or struggling writers. Not only is the learning environment critical, but the strategies presented are critical as well. Self-regulation and the knowledge of how to produce expository writing pieces on one's own are explicitly developed over time and with the help of teachers. Because the objectives of SRSD are based on meeting the needs of...
the students rather than the needs of the method of instruction, students have the opportunity to learn in whole group, small group or individual situations.

To which students is SRSD designed?

Graham and Harris developed this strategy with all students in mind. As stated in the previous chapter, there has been a pendulum swing between types of writing instruction: a focus on the writing product versus the writing process. When questioned on why their theory on writing strategy was necessary, they responded:

...whole language and the process approach often place such an emphasis on the students' natural development of writing abilities within authentic contexts that many students – including those who struggle with writing within these classrooms – do not get instruction in writing and self-regulating strategies that is as explicit as they need. While for some students a mini-lesson, student-teacher conference, or brief modeling may suffice to help them come to own methods of writing, this is not the case for many students, especially students with writing problems (Harris & Graham, 1996).

Therefore, the students who are focused on in SRSD are all students. Students with difficulties in any area of writing benefit from the explicit nature of the instruction and students in need of mini-lessons are able to benefit from this flexibility as well. The SRSD Research Review will show studies that support the use of SRSD in special education as well as gifted and talented classrooms.

Goals of SRSD

Self-regulated strategy development is a program in which the teacher and the students play a vital role within the classroom. While Graham and Harris do not
propose that this program is an entirely directed instructional approach, it does have some of those elements. Students learn different strategies and tools of the writing process through many different roles of the teacher. Teachers play an active role in the SRSD approach through the use of modeling, conferencing, prompting, and discoursing. Teachers begin this approach with very direct and supportive instruction as they take students through different steps and strategies of the writing process. Eventually, the support is lessened, at each student’s own level of need, and as they become familiar with the strategies they begin to work more independently.

There are three major goals to this approach, as stated by Graham and Harris in *Making the Writing Process Work: Strategies for Composition and Self-Regulation*:

1. To assist students in mastering the highest level cognitive processes involved in the planning, production, revising, and editing of written language;
2. To help students further develop the capability to monitor and manage their own writing;
3. To aid students in the development of positive attitudes about writing and themselves.

This metacognition of the writing process will ensure that students have the capacity to “understand how and when to apply a writing strategy; independently produce, evaluate, and modify writing; recognize improvement in skills, writing processes, and writing products; gain new insights about their own writing; improve their own expectations as writers; and maintain strategic writing performance.”
Outcomes of SRSD

Graham and Harris believe there are three key reasons developing self-regulation skills in students is advisable in the area of writing. The first reason is that "self-regulation skills allow students to become more independent during writing. Secondly, teaching students to use these skills can increase their level of motivation and encouragement with writing. Thirdly, self-regulation skills provide students with the tools they need to orchestrate the composing process" (Harris & Graham, 1996). Giving students self-regulating skills will prepare them for real life writing and allow them yet another way to communicate in the world, through the venue of written word. In addition, it is important to think about the role of teachers. Writing assessments and teacher accountability is at an all time high due to state mandates and government programs such as No Child Left Behind; it is imperative that students are given all of the tools needed in order to create writing pieces that show effective use of language skills.

Steps of SRSD

Throughout this self-regulated strategy development approach teachers and students collaborate on the students' levels of mastery for each tool introduced. Students are introduced to, acquire, manage and master different strategies through a six-step process within the different stages of the writing process. Teachers begin by helping students to "develop and activate background knowledge" for different types of writing. Students learn the basic parts of the essay they are to write including how to define, identify and generate each part. Students and teachers begin to develop an internal dialogue to pull from as they eventually work independently on the writing.
The second and third steps of this writing process have the teacher taking an active role in the direction. First, the teacher leads the students through a discussion stage in which the class collaborates on which set of writing strategies will best fit the needs of the writing task at hand. Having developed a writing framework while developing background knowledge, students will now be able to develop goals for the writing piece they will create. Should any mnemonic devices are involved with that particular strategy; the teacher introduces those to the students at this time.

In the third step the teacher continues with this active role as she models the piece of writing for the students in her classroom. In this step, the teacher naturally and enthusiastically models self-dialogue involved with the strategy as well as actual writing of the piece. There are no scripts from which the teacher would read. Prompts and visual aids and actual scripts may be used in order to help students remember the different steps that may be involved with that particular strategy. In addition, because SRSD is a program that may support the individual needs of students, a teacher may designate a student who has mastered the strategy already to model for the class. This allows for further development not only for the students who are learning the strategy, but also for the student who may have it mastered already.

The fourth step in this process scaffolds the teacher out of the leading role at the pace of the students in need. While some students will need less support with the different strategies introduced, others will need more teacher support. This fourth step occurs at different stages for different writers. In this stage, the students begin to memorize the steps in the composing strategy as well as the mnemonics used. This step reinforces self-regulation and self-dialogues so that students can write without the
need of teacher support when writing in other classes or for assessment purposes. However, students are encouraged to create their own models to understand the writing process as well. Graham and Harris discuss the independence that can be gained through authentic mnemonic devices and tools created by the students.

In the fifth step, teachers begin to scaffold the students' use of the particular strategy. In this stage, students use the strategies to compose the writing piece at hand. Throughout this stage, the teacher reinforces the strategies that have been taught, prompting students to use their own internal dialogue to take themselves through the steps needed to create their writing piece. “During this stage, students employ the strategy, self-instructions, and other self-regulation procedures as they actually compose” (Harris & Graham, 1996). The prompts and interactions of the teacher gradually decrease in this stage at a pace needed for individual students; however, the major goal of step five is mastery of the strategy.

Finally in the last step, step six, the students independently practice the writing strategies. Here, the students work to get their teacher out of their head, and to depend on their own voice instead. As this stage develops, new pieces can be written and collaborative maintenance of the strategies may be implemented. The teacher and students can then use goal setting and evaluation to see how writing has improved through the use of the strategies.

**Review of SRSD Research**

For the past 20 years Graham and Harris, both professors at the University of Maryland, have conducted research in the area of writing. Working with general education and special education students, the two developed an instructional practice
for writing in which students can begin to self-regulate as they write. A paper written by Harris, Graham and Linda Mason, a college professor at the University of Illinois, states:

Since 1985 more than 30 studies using the SRSD model of instruction in area of writing have been reported, involving students from the elementary grades through high school. SRSD research has resulted in improvements in four main aspects of student performance: quality of writing, knowledge of writing, approach to writing, and self efficacy. Furthermore, depending on the strategies taught, improvements have been documented in planning, revising, content, and mechanics. These improvements have been consistently maintained for the majority of students over time, with some students needing booster sessions for long term-maintenance, and students have shown generalizations across settings, persons, and writing media (Harris, Graham, & Mason, 2003).

The following section discusses different studies, not only by Graham and Harris but also by other college and university professors, which focus on self-regulation of writing in regards to these strategy-development practices. While some studies look at these practices with general education populations, others look at special education students as well as gifted and talent students.


In 1992 Graham and Harris with the support of another professor of education at the University of Maryland, Richard Sawyer, created a study to look at the effects on the composition skills and self-efficacy of students with learning disabilities of direct
teaching and strategy instruction in writing. They were replicating and extending a previous study that Graham and Harris had done in 1989 with fifth and sixth grade students. In that first study Graham and Harris looked at learning disabled student reactions to a strategy that gave them tools for planning, generating content, and producing stories with basic elements of writing (Sawyer, Graham, & Harris, 1992).

Graham, Harris and Sawyer took the thirty-three fifth and sixth graders, all of whom were receiving special educational services, and placed them in one of three instructional groups: direct teaching, SRSO without explicit self-regulation instruction, and full SRSO. In addition, thirteen general education students, all of whom “were capable writers according to their classroom teachers, and had a B to C average on their report card of the previous year” were selected as a normative comparison group in this study. The general education students were placed in each of the three instructional strategy classrooms as well. All students were both pre-tested and post-tested on a story grammar scale which looked at the structure of stories. A holistic rating scale, looked at the overall quality of each story, and a self-efficacy measure looked at each student’s perceived ability to write a story. Lastly, the students were assessed on their ability to use the writing strategies actually taught.

The results of this study support the effectiveness of instruction in writing strategies for students with learning disabilities. In the area of story grammar, the results from the pre-test showed there was a significant difference between LD students and general education students as LD students who are “required to write without strategy instruction did not result in performance comparable to that of normally achieving students” in the same situation. However, after the post-writing assignment
with strategy instruction, there was no longer a significant difference between LD students and their general educational counterparts.

As this study looked at the differences of LD students in comparison to general education students, it sought to examine the relationship between what types of instruction best suits LD students in the area of writing. In the groups where students did not receive instruction as to what their stories should include or how they should be structured, general education students performed significantly higher in both pretest and posttest writings. However, in groups where students received explicit SRSD instruction, there was no significant difference between LD and general education students after having written their post writings. General education students were not compared across the different groups.

Incorporating Strategy Instruction Within the Writing Process in the Regular Classroom

In a third study conducted by Graham, Harris, and Barbara Danoff in 1993, LD students were again assessed on the use of SRSD and improvements in writing. The major difference between this study and the two previous studies lay in the structure of the classroom setting. In the two previous studies, LD students were in pull-out resource classrooms, i.e. in small group settings. This third study had LD students integrated into general educational settings. "Strategy instruction should occur in the context of real academic tasks and processes. One advantage of such incorporation is that students are learning to use strategies in the context in which they are expected to apply them, increasing the likelihood that they will see the relevance of the strategies
and be more likely to maintain and generalize their use" (Danoff, Harris, & Graham, 1993).

Based on this premise, Graham, Harris, and Danoff's study worked with fourth and fifth-grade students teaching them strategies for planning and writing stories as well as how to regulate the use of those strategies. A special education teacher in the building presented the instruction to all students during a writer's workshop period of class time in a co-taught classroom. The special education teacher adapted SRSD instructional practices for this investigation. In addition to following the plans of the SRSD model, the teacher also "decided to incorporate self-instructions, proximal goal setting, self-monitoring, and self-reinforcement into the strategy instructional regime." The teacher took the students through a "criterion-based" schedule, having them work through the following stages:

1. "Initial whole-group conferences" in which the purpose of the instruction was discussed;
2. "Preskill development" as a large-group discussion of the parts of a story, including looking at literature for examples, whole-group generating of story ideas, and individual conferences with students regarding goal setting;
3. "Discussion of composition strategies" where the students were introduced to the five-step writing process while writing their stories;
4. "Modeling" by the teacher as she thought aloud while creating a story with all five steps of the strategy used;
5. "Memorization of the strategy" was asked of the students alone or with a partner;
6. "collaborative practice" in which the teacher placed the role of the writing into the hands of the students, utilizing small group conferences to look at student created stories and holes that may be missing in the five steps they were to use;

7. "independent performance" occurred as students wrote an independent story using the five-step strategy, scaffolding them away from her direct and immediate support and into a more self-regulating individual and small group practice (Danoff, Harris, & Graham, 1993).

Based on this instructional model, student pre and post writings were assessed in areas of story grammar, number of words written, strategy use, self-efficacy, and social validity. In all areas, a positive result was found, especially in the writings of the fifth-grade students. "The students consistently use the strategy when writing stories" (Danoff, Harris, & Graham), although the quality of the stories was not discussed. Not only did story grammar triple in average scores from the baseline to the post instructional writing, but gains were maintained over time and in subsequent writings. The numbers of word increased from baseline to post instructional writings, as was the overall story quality. However, unlike the story grammar, this aspect of writing was not maintained as efficiently over time. After instruction the students viewed themselves as more efficient writers.

**Using Strategy Instruction and Self-regulation to Improve Gifted Students' Creative Writing**

Another study looked at the use of SRSD in a gifted and talented classroom. This was the first study that did not compare special education and general education students for the improvement and use of self-regulation of writing strategies. The study
looked specifically at the use of the SRSD model in gifted students and whether or not it would affect planning, text production, rates of writing, reviewing, and writing quality.

This study, conducted by Luann R. Albertson and Felix F. Billingsley, looked at two seventh grade students who had been identified as gifted writers. The two participants were given a set of instructions to use with their writing, stated as follows:

You will plan to write a story that involves (randomly assigned topic). Your story needs to have a beginning, middle and end. Think about who and what you want to write about. Think about your audience and the type of story you will write (humorous, nonfiction, scary, science fiction, mystery etc.). Before you start writing your story, think about the items listed above. You may use this C-SPACE mnemonic to help you plan your story. Please use this sheet to help you outline and make notes using the computer. Make a letter for each part of the mnemonic and fill it in as you plan. If you want to write down ideas about some of the story elements listed here and add other story elements and ideas as you write, that is fine. Use the C-SPACE Planning handout to help you write a great story (Albertson & Billingsley, 2001).

After the two students had used the directions to create their story, they were given a checklist to help prompt them in revising and editing. Finally, the students were given a Goal and Performance Sheet to help them record planning time, total number of words, and number of story elements used to create goals for their story.

Both writing pieces were studied for the amount of time the students spent writing, the number of words per story, and the fluency or rate of writing. In addition, the overall writing quality was judged. To rate the quality of each story, readers looked for
character development, setting, plot, action, and conclusion. In this study, Albertson
and Billingsley found that strategy instruction with the use of self-regulation
interventions enhanced the performance outcomes for both students in areas of words
written per piece, writing fluency, and story elements.

In the area of planning, the students had to spend less time planning due to the
use of their C-SPACE Planning handout. The mnemonic helped them plan more
effectively and in less time than they had done on previous writings. The male student
also suggested that his planning time decreased as he was trying to work more quickly,
producing more words per minute as he had set goals for himself in this area. The
researchers found, however, that this decrease in planning did not affect his writing
quality. They attributed this to an improved fluency in planning. Based on the positive
correlations between writing goals and performance, the researchers found their study
to support their proposed theory that "gifted learners may be particularly effective in
using self-regulation strategies when they are taught those strategies" (Albertson &
Billingsley, 2001, pg. 97).

The Effectiveness of a Highly Explicit, Teacher-Directed Strategy Instruction
Routine

In 2002 Graham joined Gary Troia, an assistant professor of special education at
the University of Washington, to examine "the effectiveness of a highly explicit, teacher-
directed instructional routine used to teach planning strategies for writing to fourth and
fifth graders with learning disabilities" (Troia & Graham, 2002). The researchers worked
with twenty students who had IEPs with writing goals and had difficulties composing
written texts, as identified by their teachers.
The students were assigned to one of two groups. The first group received advanced planning strategy instruction and second group received "a modified version of process writing instruction." In both groups, students were taken through lessons that helped them to identify and generate key elements of writing stories. After this introduction, the students looked at the elements in sample essays. The students worked as a whole group and independently on this task. Once pre-instruction was completed, the two groups began to work with writing strategies using different instructional practices.

Students in the SRSD instructional groups started with the STOP & LIST writing strategy which takes students through the steps of the following writing prompts: Stop, Think Of Purposes & List Ideas, Sequence Them. The instructor used texts to show the students where this strategy could be applied and then modeled it. In the second part of this process, the teacher asked the students to "recall and rehearse" the STOP & LIST strategy and again, modeled it with a specific writing task. In session three, the students looked at the pre-writing they had done before the sessions began and rated their stories for how STOP & LIST could have improved their writing. Once again, the students "recalled and rehearsed" the strategy. In the fourth session the strategy was again reviewed, and the students and instructor collaborated to generate a story using it. When finished, the class rated this story just as they had their pre-writings. At the end of this session, the students were assigned a homework piece in which they would practice applying the strategy to their own writing. The fifth of the seven sessions began with a review of the homework and a recall session with the STEP & LIST strategy. Again, the instructor and students wrote a story together. Another homework
strategy was assigned. In the sixth session the students used the STOP & LIST strategy to write a story independently. Assistance from the instructor was provided on a needed basis only. In the final session the students wrote completely independent of the instructor's assistance while using the strategy.

The process writing instruction group also had seven sessions during in which they worked on writing pieces. In the first session the teacher reviewed four steps in writing based on a process writing approach with explicit instructions. The instructor modeled the steps and described each step as they moved along. In the second session, the students "recalled and rehearsed" the steps of the writing process. The remainder of the session was spent discussing different times in writing that these steps are used. The third session had the students rehearsing the steps again until they could be repeated with 100% accuracy. The students worked for the remainder of the period using the steps to create a writing piece. Students who finished worked with a partner to receive feedback for revision purposes. During sessions four through seven the students wrote independently while using the steps, partners, and instructor for help if needed. In the last session the students put their writing pieces in a portfolio.

The students in both groups were assessed on three writings. The first was a pre-writing that took place before instruction. The second was a post-instructional writing piece that students wrote immediately following the instruction. The third was a maintenance-writing piece written four weeks after the post-instructional writing piece.

The following results were found for both groups. Although there was not a significant difference between the groups at the time of the posttest in terms of story length, there was a significant difference between the groups for story quality. Students
in the SRSD group made small and positive gains, while the writing process group decreased in their performance. When the students wrote the maintenance piece, scores showed a significant difference favoring the SRSD group again. This time, the improvements for the SRSD group were not only in story quality, but also in story length. At maintenance, the stories were 50% increased in length for the SRSD group, and 60% decreased in length for the writing process group.

There was also a significant difference between the groups in the measure of advanced planning time, again, favoring the SRSD group. Students in the SRSD group spent more time planning their stories in advance after having been given the STOP & LIST strategy. "Half of the students in the strategy instruction group developed written plans for their post instructional stories, which included, on average, about 5 propositions, whereas none of the children in the process writing group did so for theirs" (Troia & Graham, 2002). There was, however, no significant difference at the post maintenance time of writing.

Explicitly Teaching Strategies, Skills, and Knowledge: Writing Instruction in Middle School Classrooms

In 2002 Graham teamed up with Susan De La Paz, a professor in education at Santa Clara University in California. They examined the difference between the use of explicit and non explicit instructions at the middle school level. This study:

- examined the effectiveness of an instructional program designed to improve the writing performance of middle school students. The program primarily focused on teaching students strategies for planning, drafting, and revising text. Also emphasized was knowledge about the characteristics of good writing, criteria for
evaluating writing, and the structure of expository texts. Writing skills emphasized were constructing a thesis statement, using mature vocabulary, and different types of sentences (pg. 687).

A total of 58 seventh and eighth graders participated in this study with 30 of the students taking part in the experimental group and 28 taking part in the control group. Prior to instruction, all students in both groups took part in a pre-instructional session in which expository writing attributes were presented. During this session, the teachers explained the different purposes of writing expository pieces and students were told they would be expected to write a 5-paragraph essay about one of three prompts. After the pre-instruction took place, all students were given 35 minutes for a pretest writing experience. The students were then split into the experimental and control groups for a six-week period of instruction. Immediately following this instructional the students wrote a posttest essay in the same format as the pretest. One month later, after having no other writing assignments, all students took a third maintenance test.

The writing pieces were assessed for the following: planning time, length, vocabulary, and quality of writing. The researchers found that no students in either group did advanced planning in the pretest writings, however in both the posttest and maintenance writings, students from both groups did. In the experimental group, 90% of the students received scores of fours and fives on their created plans at posttest and maintenance writings; whereas, 30% of one control group and 60% of the other obtained those scores (Whitaker, Berninger, Johnston, and Swanson in 1994 created the range system: no advanced planning equaled a one; accurate and fully developed planning equaled a five (pg. 694)). The length of the papers from the two groups also
significantly differed, favoring the experimental treatment groups whose papers, one month later, were also significantly longer.

At posttest and maintenance, the vocabulary use in the papers differed significantly as well. "Immediately following instruction, students in the experimental treatment conditions wrote papers with a greater number of different words that were seven letters or longer when compared with students in the control condition. Furthermore, these gains were maintained one month after instruction ended" (De La Paz & Graham, 2002).

The quality of the papers was assessed on a traditional holistic rating scale of one to eight that represented the reader's general impression of the overall quality. It was found that at posttest and maintenance, students in the experimental groups wrote papers judged at a higher quality than those in the control treatment groups.

**Chapter 3 Summary**

In summary, self-regulated strategy development is an approach that may be used to help writers who have the ability to monitor their progress, write for longer periods of time, stay on task more easily, and set goals to improve in writing. SRSD may help all students, including those who struggle or are in their beginning stages of writing and students in talented and gifted programs or in middle levels of education. When teachers use this approach to facilitate and coach their students, they help them internalize the processes involved with writing and they are more motivated. SRSD allows for instruction that is right in the middle of the pendulum. Teachers are no longer at the center of instruction; they work alongside the students.
Chapter 4

The following is a self-regulated strategy development unit of instruction for teaching strategies to use when writing a persuasive paper. The unit has been designed for a seventh grade language arts class, based on curriculum requirements stated by the Cedar Rapids Community School District. Chapter 4 will take the reader through the rationale behind this instructional unit first, describing the specific school district curriculum as well as the setting and participants. It will then proceed to discuss a persuasive writing unit using self-regulated strategy development. At this point, the reader will see the SRSD strategy referred to as TREE. Finally, Chapter 4 will end with a structured overview of the unit describing specifically how the SRSD steps were utilized. Appendix B includes the entire set of lesson plans as well as the handouts that accompany this instructional unit.

Rationale and Discussion of Environment

School District Curriculum

In the Cedar Rapids Community School District, seventh grade students are expected to work on many different elements of communication. There are based on the standards in the Cedar Rapids Community Schools Elementary and High School Standards and Expectations which were developed from: national standards of NCTE/IRA; national standards compendia on the Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning website; and state standards from such states as Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Florida, and Connecticut. There are standards in six areas including: reading, writing, speaking and listening, conventions, literary study, and research. Standard B: Writing states, "students will use the elements
of the writing process to communicate effectively with different audiences for a variety of purposes.” Standard 7.B.1.a-d states, “apply the steps of the writing process.”

Standard 7.b.2 a-e states, “identify and use various types of writing for numerous purposes and audiences in both formal and informal writing (Standard B: Appendix C).”

This writing unit will allow students to use the SRSD model to aid in writing a paper to persuade an administrator of their choice to change something about their school. This unit will fulfill curricular requirements of the Cedar Rapids Community School District for these seventh graders in the area of writing (Standard B).

Setting and Participants

The following unit has been designed for a seventh grade classroom at Roosevelt Middle School in the Cedar Rapids Community School District. The students face many inhibitors. Currently, 56% of the students are on free or reduced lunch, 73% have some type of individualized plan for learning, behaviors, or social needs and 27% of those students have an IEP for learning and or behavioral disabilities. There are Level 1, 2, and 3 programs in the school for both learning disabled students and behavioral disabled students. An English Language Learners program is housed at Roosevelt as it is the only middle school in the district to work with students from other countries. A Reading Center and a Math Center work with students who are not in special education because the numbers are too high, but who have learning problems in those areas. An attendance facilitator works with those students who have 5 or more tardies and or absences from school, and a drop-out prevention class helps students identified as being at-risk. Finally, 32% of the student population, not in the level 2 or 3
behavioral programs, has been to the office by referral. RMS teachers employ teaching strategies that may best reach the needs of a diverse population.

As evidenced by previous chapters, neither a writing process approach nor a direct writing instructional approach, alone, can serve the diverse needs of the learners at Roosevelt Middle School. Instead, instructional approaches like self-regulated strategy development can be used to help students first learn an approach to writing, and then regulate these strategies on their own to create different forms of writing.

As a teacher at RMS, I chose this particular approach to teaching writing because it fulfilled for my students and me some very fundamental aspects of teaching/learning how to write. First, the reader must understand that most of the students I teach do not take much initiative when it comes to writing. Either they aren't motivated to do so, or they don't have the knowledge to begin and continue their writing. Of course, some would argue that the first reason results from the latter. Finally, I chose this approach because it easily fit into our new educational era of data collection. I found it easy to collect pre and post writing data to help me make instructional decisions. The following section will take the reader through the unit.

Applying the Self-Regulated Strategy TREE to a Persuasive Writing Unit

In seventh grade language arts classrooms in the CRCSD, students are expected to do some type of persuasive paper. Never before has the SRSD approach been used in writing this paper. Incorporating the SRSD approach will serve as a way to teach students, in their experience with writing a persuasive paper, strategies they can use in subsequent papers throughout their educational careers. The following will take the reader through the writing unit designed for seventh grade students at
Roosevelt Middle School. The "TREE" strategy adopted from the SRSD methodology will be used throughout the unit to clarify the processes involved in planning for and writing a persuasive essay.

"TREE" is a four-part mnemonic device designed to help students organize their ideas in a paragraph or a paper. For the purpose of this unit, TREE helped students organize an entire persuasive paper. Each part of TREE stands for an important aspect of a paper. The "T" represents the topic sentence of a paper. It is the first sentence of a single paragraph or, for the purpose of our persuasive writing unit, the introductory paragraph of a paper in which the topic sentence was introduced. The "R" stands for reasons. A topic sentence cannot stand alone; writers must include reasons to back up their opinions. In this paper, each paragraph under the introductory "T" provided a different reason to support the topic sentence. The first "E" of TREE stands for examine the reasons. In the described unit, examine was changed to explain. Each reason needed to be examined or explained with details in order to be "evaluated in terms of its believability" (Harris & Graham, 1996). The final "E" represents the ending. At this point in a paper, the writers created a final paragraph in which they concluded their argument in an attempt to persuade the reader. TREE served as a tool that not only helped the students to organize their papers, but also helped them to evaluate their papers for all the parts they needed to develop their topics.

Applying the SRSD Steps in the Persuasive Unit

SRSD uses six stages to help students begin to attain self-regulation when writing. Appendix B shows the set of lesson plans and a unit handout and
demonstrates how the stages flow in this model persuasive unit. The following is an explanation of the unit highlighting the steps of SRSD.

**Stage 1- Build Background Knowledge**

The first stage of self-regulation strategy development requires the teacher and students to work together to develop the necessary background knowledge needed to internalize and complete the writing task. This step works at the knowledge level of the individual students and begins the scaffolding that will accompany each student’s writing experience. In this step we began to do two things:

1. build background knowledge of the process of writing a persuasive paper;
   2. gather data in inform decisions directing each lesson.

At the beginning of this unit I asked my students to write an essay in which they discussed their opinions on the color of skin. They were to persuade me, either way, whether all people should have the same skin color. We had just concluded *The Giver* by Lois Lowery and this was a theme we had discussed throughout the novel. I was looking, in this first essay, for each student to use each part of TREE. By simply labeling these parts and marking tallies, I found that, with a few exceptions, most students were able to write a topic sentence. In addition, most students also added one reason which they may or may not have explained with one example. Most students thought their essays were complete; however, 85% of them were composed of one to three sentences. Of 100 papers, 4 students had a concluding statement. This data showed the instruction our class needed in order to write persuasive papers.

From here, we started a discussion of what good "persuaders" do. The students began to create a list of things that would be included in TREE. They told me good
"persuaders" would need to explain by giving reasons. They said that it would help to use facts instead of opinions. The students told me that presenting it in a light that made it seem beneficial would also help them to get their way. We also talked about how staying calm, rather than "throwing a fit" almost always seemed to help too.

I then said to my students, "Let's say we were going to write a paper to persuade your parents to give you $500... how would you organize it?" We delved into the TREE strategy. An elementary concept, the seventh graders took to it immediately. TREE quickly became a foundation they understood for organizing a paper. We discussed TREE, reviewing the vocabulary and I showed them an example with the topic we had just been discussing. With our background knowledge in the beginning stages, I decided to show them my data.

Stage 2- Discuss It

"During this stage, the teacher and students(s) may collaboratively determine what strategy will be targeted for development. The teacher and students conference to discuss the significance and benefits of the strategy" (Harris & Graham, 1996). In this stage my students began to understand the need for the strategy and we initiated goal setting and motivation. Here they evaluated what they had done in the past and created goals for how to improve their writing. They started to internalize what they could do to write better papers.

We started each day during this stage with a review of TREE. Sometimes the students would act out TREE and I even had a few students who created a rap to help everyone learn the mnemonic device. On the first day of this stage, I showed the students how I looked for each part of TREE in their original papers and what the data
looked like. They were shocked. We flipped back to those original essays and the
students evaluated for themselves which part of TREE they had included as well as
which parts were missing. Then, the students created individual goals for how they
would improve their next writing piece. We continued this stage with whole class, peer,
and individual conferences.

**Stage 3- Model It**

In the “model it” stage the teacher or a peer shows the self-regulation part of
writing a particular paper. It was extremely important for my students to learn how to
self-regulate the organization of this paper. I wanted them to learn how to ask
themselves, “what is missing?” and “what else can I add to make this persuasive paper
more persuasive?” Graham and Harris discuss the use of student language in this
section and the importance of the students putting the self-directions down in their own
words to further the self-regulation process.

In addition, self-instructions have important motivational aspects. Self
instructions can enhance positive task orientation, elicit an achievement set,
reinforce and help maintain task-relevant behaviors (helping the student spend
more time constructively engaged in the task), and provide ways of coping with
failure and self-reinforcing success (Harris & Graham, 1996, pg. 134).

During this section, we spent multiple classes modeling the TREE process.
I wrote papers while modeling the language that could be used while writing. Peers
contributed parts of papers with the language modeling as well. Each class started with
a look at some section of TREE and we wrote from there. During this stage, the
students began to develop their own sets of directions to use when they wrote.
Stage 4- Memorize It

At this point in the SRSD process, students should spend time memorizing the strategy. This can be done in one of two ways. Students can either memorize the strategy through the use of their own self-directions, or they can simply use the mnemonic device that has been presented to them. The use of self-directions can be particularly helpful for students who have learning difficulties. At this point, those students who feel comfortable using the mnemonic device on its own are free to move on to the next stage of the process. Students who need more support work in small groups or as individuals to look more closely at those self-directions to help them through the process.

Stage 5- Support It

The “support it” stage marks the beginning of scaffolding. “During this stage, students employ the strategy, self-instructions, and other self-regulation procedures as they compose. The teacher provides as much support and assistance as needed… Challenging initial goals are determined cooperatively; criterion levels should be gradually increased until final goals are met” (Harris & Graham, 1996, pg. 32).

During this stage, it is critical to allow for time in order to allow students to progress at their own comfort levels. We started this stage with a partner writing experience. Students were given a second prompt to write about from The Giver and were asked to use the self-directions and/or TREE strategy to write a persuasive paper. On the second drafts most students not only had a topic sentence, but also a concluding statement. Most pairs used at least two reasons and some had three.
However, a common error among these papers was the lack of explanation to support the reasons. At this point, students reevaluated their goals and began to write more.

**Stage 6- Independent Performance**

Finally, the students practiced what they had learned on an individual basis. It is important for the students to continue with their self-directions while working to achieve their goal in this final stage. When the students reached stage six they worked independently to write a persuasive paper to the administrator of their choice in the building. They were to persuade the administrator to change something about the school for the better. Throughout this stage the students used TREE and continuously evaluated their papers for all of the parts.

With this final independent performance, I was able to gather my last bit of data. Whereas at the beginning of the unit my students only a topic sentence and a reason in their persuasive papers, their final products were written with much more depth. At the end of the unit every student had a topic sentence and 75 percent of the students had 3 or more reasons to support it. Over half of the class backed up at least two of their reasons with details and all students used some sort of a concluding statement or paragraph to summarize their ideas. In addition to this data, I found that my students were more motivated to write at the end of the unit than I had seen them in any other instructional unit in the year.
Chapter 5

Self-regulated strategy development is an effective means of teaching students what it takes to be good writers. Research on SRSD has shown that focusing on student needs and teaching them how to write effectively gives students the tools and motivation to create prose for personal and educational purposes, including enjoyment. Students are also able to internalize the writing process, and self-evaluate and monitor writing for more on-task writing time. It has also been suggested that SRSD can help struggling and gifted writers alike. This final chapter will explain why this author feels SRSD is beneficial to writers and where SRSD could go from here.

Why Does SRSD Help Students in the Area of Writing?

Self-regulated strategy development is an approach to writing that "requires teachers to play an active, facilitative role in the development of writing abilities, through activities such as conferencing, modeling, prompting, and dialoguing" (Harris & Graham, 1996, pg.24). I believe that it works because the teacher and students can work as a team. SRSD doesn't have the teacher at the front of the classroom teaching to the students; it has the teacher working alongside them scaffolding along the way. In this, the students have the chance to work with the teacher—easing their access to support as needed along the way.

SRSD is middle ground for the swinging pendulum of the past century in the area of writing. SRSD balances different approaches to writing because it gives a direct approach in its instruction, while staying focused on the needs of the individual writers. After modeling and the use of mnemonics, teachers can effectively evaluate which
students need more support and which ones are ready to move on with their writing. It works to support students as they increase their writing ability.

SRSD offers different strategies to help students monitor and evaluate their own writing. Students are able to internalize the process of writing because teachers are coaching them to create self-directions and self-talk in order to take themselves through each strategy. Then, when students feel confident that they can take themselves through each strategy without the aid of the teacher, they feel more successful and therefore more motivated to write longer pieces.

SRSD allows students to create goals for their writing. Creating personal goals also helps to motivate students to create more pieces of work for personal and educational purposes and for enjoyment. Once students understand the processes that they can use to create different types of prose, they feel more self-confident and therefore are more likely to create stories or essays. Through the use of SRSD, students can set goals to help them maintain their levels of writing and increase their abilities where needed.

Finally, self-regulated strategy development also helps educators make meaningful decisions. Education has begun to move into an era of data driven decision making and SRSD can provide answers to that challenge too. SRSD allows teachers to evaluate their students while building background knowledge and discussing “good writer” strategies. From there, teachers can make decisions as to what practices need to be addressed. Based on the students’ needs, teachers can effectively plan student-centered lessons while creating data from which to plan further instruction.
Ideas and Conclusions

Self-regulated strategy development is a tool that helped me teach my students how to organize a paper. Choosing TREE as an instructional strategy allowed me to give my students a way to internalize how to write. For most of the year, I took the students through the different parts of writing a paper in a teacher centered manner: “...now write an introduction... this is where your reasons go... now add 2 details to explain that part... now you have to write a conclusion... this is how you write your conclusion...”. It seemed as if they weren’t actually learning the steps of writing a paper; they just followed my instructions as they came up. I feel that if I pre and post-tested my students on writing a persuasive paper without using TREE or my instructions, the two drafts would look and sound very similar. However, with the use of TREE and the students’ ability to internalize where and how everything fits together in a paper, their drafts improved by leaps and bounds at the unit’s end.

Using SRSD has seemingly helped my students not only to organize their writings, but also to feel more motivated to write longer and more informational pieces. At the beginning of the unit I met the usual moans and groans about “having to do another writing piece... again?!?!?!”. However, midway through the unit and after teaching them the TREE strategy, the students were ecstatic when they heard they would be writing a persuasive letter to improve the school. The students couldn’t wait to brainstorm ideas, begin their drafts, and come up with details. My moaning, groaning students wanted to be writers. Their final products were not only longer than their prewriting at the beginning of the unit, they were also much more informational.
Where can SRSD go from here?

In Graham and Harris's *Making the Writing Process Work: Strategies for Composition and Self-Regulation*, SRSD was discussed mostly in an elementary setting. The authors mainly focused on creative writing purposes. Education, for the most part, is moving away from creative writing purposes toward real life writing experiences like persuasive essays and research papers. After planning and teaching my unit, I found that SRSD can also address current trends in writing.

While an understanding of what good, *creative* writers do helps students write creative stories better and understand the purpose of stories, it is also essential that students understand what good, *informative* writers do as well. TREE is an example of a strategy that can be used in informative writing situations. This practice can help students with real life writing experiences outside of the classroom. Persuasive writing is used daily in editorials, the news, and magazines. People use it to earn scholarships and awards, internships, or an interview. Persuasive writing is even used to make complaints. Helping students learn strategies to effectively write for this purpose addresses something they will have the potential to use long after they have graduated from high school.

It would be interesting to see sets of instructional practices geared more toward informational writing experiences. These strategies and mnemonic devices would help not only to increase writing abilities of middle level and high school students, they would also serve as motivational strategies to help them enjoy their writing assignments as well. In my experience as a middle school teacher, I have found my students lacking in the ability to write as well as in motivation to do so. In this single persuasive writing unit,
I found that giving them the strategy with which to develop self-directions motivated them more than I was able to do without it in any other writing unit. Not only were they motivated, they were also knowledgeable about what steps to take to create a persuasive piece. In today’s middle schools, students need more strategies to write better papers. SRSD could be one approach to help teach writing.

Finally, I would like to see SRSD consciously inform data-driven decision making. I saw how SRSD can effectively help teachers to make data driven decisions. However, this worked for me because I am familiar with the need for data and how to create it for myself. While Graham and Harris do offer ways both teachers and students can assess student writing, more can be done. Graham and Harris focus student evaluation on the number of words written rather than on different parts of the writing. That assessment is left to the teacher. I would be interested in seeing students assess this as well.

In my unit, I looked at the organization of the paper, something I found lacking in my writers. I think SRSD could be used with 6 Traits writing instruction to aid in many areas. Teachers can begin with a pre-assessment piece in the area to be taught (persuasive, informative, creative, narrative) and then assess the papers for a particular trait (organization, voice, conventions, word choice, sentence fluency, ideas or presentation). After finding what is lacking in the papers and charting the data, the teacher can then employ one of the strategies to further develop that trait in the students’ writings. Midway through the unit (or even year) the teacher can reassess the students in that particular area and reevaluate what action should be taken next. The students can have a hand in this data-driven decision making also. By simply creating
charts and plotting improvement, the students can easily see what areas they need to work on. Then, the students can set their own personal goals to improve upon.

Focusing instruction on the tools to create different pieces of writing for personal and educational purposes can help to motivate students to write more often. SRSD gives students a way to internalize the writing process, and self-evaluate and monitor writing for more on-task writing time. It can help struggling and gifted writers alike. Self-regulated strategy development is an effective means of teaching students what it takes to be good writers.
Cedar Rapids Community School District 6 Traits Writing Rubric

The following is the 5 point scale that is used in the Cedar Rapids Community School District to evaluate student writing in the six areas of ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency and conventions. Students receive a 1-5 rating in each area. CRCSD middle level students are officially evaluated at both the beginning and end of the school year and teachers are encouraged to use this rubric with other writing assignments throughout the year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDEAS</th>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>VOICE</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This paper is clear and focused. It holds the reader's attention. Relevant anecdotes and details enrich the central theme.</td>
<td>The organization enhances and showcases the central idea or theme. The order, structure, and presentation of the information are compelling and move the reader through the text.</td>
<td>The writer speaks directly to the reader in an individual, compelling, and engaging way. The writer drafts the writing with an awareness and respect for audience and purpose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ The topic is narrow and manageable.</td>
<td>□ An inviting introduction draws the reader in; a satisfying conclusion provides a sense of closure.</td>
<td>□ The tone of the writing adds interest to the message and is appropriate for the purpose and audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Relevant, telling, quality details give the reader important information that goes beyond the obvious.</td>
<td>□ Thoughtful transitions throughout clearly show how ideas connect.</td>
<td>□ The reader feels a strong interaction with the writer, sensing the person behind the words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Accurate details support the main idea.</td>
<td>□ Sequencing is logical and effective.</td>
<td>□ The writer takes a risk by revealing who he or she is consistently throughout the piece.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The writer seems to be writing from knowledge or experience; the ideas are fresh and original.</td>
<td>□ Pacing is well-controlled; the writer knows when to slow down and elaborate, and when to move on. All details seem relevant and in effective order.</td>
<td>□ Expository or persuasive writing reflects a strong commitment to the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ The reader's questions are anticipated and answered.</td>
<td>□ The title, if desired, is original and captures the central theme of the piece.</td>
<td>□ Narrative writing is honest, personal, and engaging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Insight—an understanding of life and a knack for picking out what is</td>
<td>□ Organization flows so smoothly the reader hardly thinks about it; the</td>
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</table>

- The traits of ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions are evaluated on a 5-point scale.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The writer is beginning to define the topic, even though development is still basic or general.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The topic is fairly broad; however, you can see where the writer is headed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support is attempted, but doesn't go far enough yet in fleshing out the key issues or story line.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideas are reasonably clear, though they may not be detailed, personalized, accurate, or expanded enough to show in-depth understanding or a strong sense of purpose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The writer seems to be drawing on knowledge or experience, but has difficulty going from general observations to specifics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The reader is left with questions. More information is needed to &quot;fill in the blanks.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The writer generally stays on the topic but does not develop a clear theme.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The organizational structure is strong enough to move the reader through the text without too much confusion.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The paper has a recognizable introduction and conclusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitions often work well; at other times, connections between ideas are fuzzy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequencing shows some logic, but is not under control enough that it consistently supports the ideas. Sometimes it is so predictable and rehearsed that the structure takes attention away from content. Some details may be out of order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacing is fairly well-controlled, though the writer sometimes lunges ahead too quickly or spends too much time on details that do not matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A title (if desired) is present, although it may be uninspired or an obvious restatement of the topic.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The organization sometimes supports the main point or story line, but lacks sufficient transitions, paragraphing, or ordering of details.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The writer seems sincere but not fully engaged or involved—not compelling.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The writer seems aware of an audience but discards personal insights in favor of obvious generalities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The writing communicates in an earnest, pleasing, yet safe manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only one or two moments here or there intrigue, delight, or move the reader. These places may emerge strongly for a line or two, but quickly fade away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expository or persuasive writing lacks consistent engagement with the topic to build credibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative writing is reasonably sincere, but doesn't reflect unique or individual perspective on the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As yet, the paper has no clear sense of purpose or central theme</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] The writer is still in search of a topic or has not yet decided what the main idea of the piece will be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Information is limited or unclear or the length is not adequate for development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] The idea is a simple restatement of the topic, or an answer to the question without detail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] The writer has not begun to define the topic in a meaningful, personal way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Everything seems as important as everything else; the reader has a hard time sifting out what is important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] The text may be repetitious, or may read like a collection of disconnected, random thoughts.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideas, details or events seem strung together in a loose, random fashion; no identifiable structure.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ ] There is no real lead to set up what follows, no real conclusion to wrap things up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Connections between ideas are confusing or not even present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Sequencing needs lots and lots of work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Pacing feels awkward; the writer slows to a crawl when the reader wants to get on with it, and vice versa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] No title is present (if requested) or, if present, does not match well with the content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Problems with organization make it hard for the reader to get a grip on the main point or story line. Writer makes little or no attempt at paragraphing.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>The writer seems indifferent, uninvolved, or distanced from the topic and/or the audience.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ ] The writer is not concerned with the audience. The writer's style is a complete mismatch for the intended reader or purpose of the writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>[ ] The writer speaks in a kind of monotone that flattens all potential highs or lows of the message.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] The writing is humdrum and &quot;risk-free.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] The writing is lifeless or mechanical; depending on the topic, it may be overly technical or filled with jargon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] The development of the topic is so limited that no point of view is present.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD CHOICE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Words convey the intended message in a precise, interesting, and natural way. The words are powerful and engaging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Words are specific and accurate. It</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SENTENCE FLUENCY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The writing has an easy flow, rhythm, and cadence. Sentences are well built, with strong and varied structure; invites oral reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Sentences are constructed in a way</td>
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<tr>
<th>CONVENTIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The writer demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions and uses conventions effectively to enhance readability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Spelling is generally correct, even</td>
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**The language is functional, even if it lacks much energy. It is easy to figure out the writer's meaning on a general level.**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Words are adequate and correct in a general sense, and they support the meaning of the text.</td>
<td>Although sentences may not seem artfully crafted or musical, they get the job done in a routine fashion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Familiar words and phrases communicate but rarely capture the reader's imagination.</td>
<td>Sentences are usually constructed correctly; they hang together; they are sound.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attempts at colorful language show a willingness to stretch and grow but sometimes reach beyond the audience (thesaurus overload!).</td>
<td>Sentence beginnings are not ALL alike; the writer attempts SOME variety.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The text hums along with a steady beat, but tends to be more pleasant or businesslike than musical, more mechanical than fluid.</td>
<td>The writer shows reasonable control over a limited range of standard writing conventions. Errors may distract the reader somewhat, but do not impair readability in general.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Punctuation is accurate, even creative, and guides the reader through the text.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A thorough understanding and consistent application of capitalization skills are present.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grammar and usage are correct and contribute to clarity and style.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minimal editing would be required to polish this text for publication.</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minimal editing would be required to polish this text for publication.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spelling is usually correct or reasonably phonetic on common words, not on more difficult words.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>End punctuation is usually correct; internal punctuation is sometimes missing/wrong.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Most words are capitalized correctly. Control of more sophisticated capitalization skills may be spotty.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Despite a few successes, the writing is marked by passive verbs, everyday nouns, mundane modifiers.

The words and phrases are functional with only one or two fine moments.

For the most part the language looks more like the first things that popped into the writer's mind.

The writing shows a limited vocabulary or no effort to find the "right" word.

Words are so nonspecific and distracting that only a very limited meaning comes through.

Problems with language leave the reader wondering. Many of the words just don't work in this piece.

Audience has not been considered. Language is used incorrectly, making the message secondary to the misfires with the words.

Limited vocabulary and/or misused parts of speech seriously impair understanding.

Unimaginative words and phrases distract from meaning.

Jargon or clichés distract or mislead. Redundancy may distract the reader.

The reader sometimes has to hunt for clues that show how sentences interrelate.

Parts of the text invite expressive oral reading; others may be stiff, awkward, choppy, or gangly.

The reader has to practice quite a bit in order to give this paper a fair interpretive reading.

Sentences are choppy, incomplete, rambling or awkward; they need work; phrasing not natural.

There is little to no "sentence sense" present. The sentences do not hang together.

Many sentences begin the same way and may follow the same patterns (e.g., subject-verb-object) in a monotonous pattern.

Endless connectives or a complete lack of connectives creates a massive jumble of language.

The text does not invite expressive oral reading.

Grammar and usage may not be correct all the time but are not serious enough to distort meaning.

Moderate editing would be required to polish this text for publication.

Number and level of errors distract the reader and impair readability in significant ways.

Spelling errors are frequent, even on common words.

Punctuation is often missing or incorrect.

Capitalization is random; writer shows awareness of only the most basic rules.

Errors in grammar or usage are very noticeable and frequent, affecting reader's understanding of text.

Extensive editing would be required to polish text for publication.
Appendix B

The following unit write-up outlines the exact SRSD steps taken throughout the unit as outlined in *Making the Writing Process Work: Strategies for Composition and Self-Regulation* by Graham and Harris. Appendix D will take the reader through the instructional packet that accompanied the unit. Note: items in bold show the exact steps listed in the SRSD model.

**Language Arts Topics:**

persuasive writing, planning and organizing ideas

**Resources and Materials:**


Research and Writing Unit packet and handouts, created by Ann Craig (see Appendix D)

Opportunity to make use of library resources and the Internet as well as time in a computer lab for research and drafting first through final copies of the persuasive paper

**Objectives:** The student will:

1. Prewrite a persuasive piece to gather baseline for students’ abilities in this area of study.
2. use the TREE SRSD strategy to plan for, organize, and write a persuasive paper.
3. identify an issue in school that can be improved to aid students in their time at Roosevelt.
4. conduct research surrounding the topic chosen in order to help explain the viewpoint chosen.
5. view a demonstration of TREE modeled as an introduction
6. create multiple drafts of the persuasive letter focusing on the organization of the paragraphs written.
7. study the difference between fact and opinion statements.

**Unit Outline**

**Day 1 (Stage 1 - Build Background Knowledge)**

1. Introduce Persuasive Writing Unit.
2. Assign prewriting assignment: All people should/should not have the same color of skin. (It is felt that the students will have strong opinions on this issue as the class will have just concluded The Giver by Lois Lowry.)

Day 2
1. Begin with a discussion on what the students know/don’t know about writing persuasive essays.
2. Discuss the elements that can be found in these essays including: an introduction, reasons with supporting evidence, and a conclusion.
3. Introduce TREE, teaching the students the mnemonic device as well as its importance.
4. If time, model TREE with a persuasive topic.

Day 3
1. Continue with the TREE strategy, modeling for the students how to use it.
2. Students will follow along and write as it is modeled to them.

Day 4 (Stage 2- Discuss It)
1. Review TREE.
2. Students will evaluate their original paragraph that they had written with the TREE strategy that they have been using over the last few classes.
3. We will discuss the parts that are commonly missed in their original drafts.
4. Students will write goals for what they would like to accomplish in their next persuasive essay.

Day 5 (Stage 3- Model It)
1. Review TREE.
2. I will model the use of TREE in other class persuasive essay while students follow along volunteering ideas.
3. Students will evaluate essay, looking for all parts of TREE.
Students who have mastered the idea of TREE will begin with Stage 4- Memorize It and Stage 5- Support It with partners. Those students who need more practice will work with me on other model.

Day 6-8 (Stage 4- Memorize It and Stage 5- Support It)
1. With a partner the students will be expected to write a persuasive paper with the used of the TREE organizer, and then a second without their partner or the organizer (to show that they have memorized the mnemonic devise).
2. The first topic will be as follows: Release is a tool that should be used today.
3. The second topic will be as follows: Medicine should be used to help all people be in control.
4. Students will evaluate their papers with the TREE organizer to look for missing parts in both topics.
5. Students will take a quiz over TREE parts for final evaluation of knowledge on how to write a persuasive essay.
Those students who have proven their knowledge in Stages 4 and 5 will then move unto Stage 6- Independent Performance). Others will have more support as needed.

**Day 9 (Stage 6- Independent Practice)**

1. Begin with a discussion on the things we enjoy about our school and the things that need to be improved.
2. Generate a list of things that could be improved in our school.
3. Explain to the students their independent paper.
4. Discuss with the students the activity of gathering “data” for this unit. Students will create and conduct a questionnaire survey to gather opinions of their schoolmates on the topic that they have chosen. Students will be required to gather data by the end of the week.

**Days 10-12**

1. Students will use TREE to generate a persuasive letter to an administrator to improve something at school.
2. Students will observe a business letter format modeled for correct use.
3. Students will complete a business letter homework assignment for understanding of the correct format and use.
4. Students will use the data they have gathered as well as other activities to help them chose their topic and audience.

**Days 13-14**

1. Students will begin with a self-evaluation of their persuasive papers looking back at their TREE organizers to see which parts may be missing.
2. Students will revise parts as needed.
3. Students will have a peer evaluate for missing parts while doing the same for others.
4. Students will rerevise as needed.
5. Students will look for possible editing changes on their own and with the help of peers/teacher.

**Day 15-16**

1. Students will work to write final drafts of their persuasive letters. Additional help with correct business letter form will be given as needed.
2. Students will finish by creating graphics that show data that was collected to be included in their letters.

**Day 15**

Share ideas, complete plus delta on unit, and celebrate
**Persuasive Writing Unit**

Think about your school. Are there things that you like more than others, and things that you dislike? Are you 100% satisfied with the way things are run at your school or do you think there are things that could be improved to make your 3 years here at RMS the best? Now is your chance to really look at the issues surrounding our school, and possible do something about it! In this unit, you will choose a way in which you could improve RMS, you will research this situation and you will then write a letter to the teacher/administrator of your choice who you think could best help you make a change for the better in our school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Block Day</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All People Should/Should Not have the Same Color of Skin.</td>
<td>TREE</td>
<td>A teacher's TREE</td>
<td>Evaluate Day 1 essay and set personal goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 5: TREE and evaluate new class essay</td>
<td>Day 6: Begin partner and self essays using TREE models</td>
<td>Day 7: evaluate essay 1 using TREE model</td>
<td>Day 8: evaluate essay 2 with partner using TREE model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HW: essay 1 due Wed.</td>
<td>HW: essay 1 due Wed.</td>
<td>HW: essay 2 due Friday</td>
<td>TREE Quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 9: School improvement and gathering Data</td>
<td>Day 10: Writing a business letter: the model</td>
<td>Day 11: Gathering ideas for letter and drafting</td>
<td>Day 12: continue with first draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HW: Data due Block day</td>
<td>HW: Fill out letter format due Block Day</td>
<td>HW: rough due Monday</td>
<td>HW: rough due Monday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 13: Evaluate letter with TREE on your own and with partners</td>
<td>Day 14: evaluations continue Revise and edit as needed</td>
<td>Day 15: Complete final drafts and create graphics</td>
<td>Day 16: Complete final drafts and create graphics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HW: revisions and edits due Block Day</td>
<td>HW: revisions and edits due Block Day</td>
<td>HW: finals due Monday</td>
<td>HW: finals due Monday</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
- TREE: Thematic Research Exercise
- HW: Homework
- Monday, Tuesday, Block Day, Friday:
  - Day 1: Introduction to the unit
  - Day 2: Understanding the parts of a persuasive paper
  - Day 3: Continuation of TREE exercise
  - Day 4: Continue TREE exercise
  - Day 5: Final TREE and evaluation of new class essay
  - Day 6: Begin partner and self essay on TREE models
  - Day 7: Evaluate essay 1 using TREE model
  - Day 8: Evaluate essay 2 with partner using TREE model
  - Day 9: School improvement and gathering data
  - Day 10: Writing a business letter using the TREE model
  - Day 11: Gathering ideas for letter and drafting
  - Day 12: Continue working on first draft
  - Day 13: Evaluate letter with TREE on your own and with peers
  - Revise and edit as needed
  - HW: Revisions and edits due Block Day
  - Day 14: Evaluations continue
  - Day 15: Complete final drafts and create graphics
  - Day 16: Complete final drafts and create graphics
  - Day 17: Share letters, complete Plus/Delta, celebrate!
The Color of Skin

Directions: In the space below, write a persuasive essay where you discuss the following topic:

All people should/should not have the same skin color.

You WILL NOT share these with anyone aside from Mrs. Craig. You can use ideas that we discussed in The Giver if you choose to. There is no length requirement, just DO YOUR BEST!! Remember, you are trying to persuade me to think the same as you.
The "Know" on The Parts of a Persuasive Paper

What things do persuasive papers do?

In order to accomplish this, what types of things do persuasive papers need to have?

The following graph is an organizer to help you remember persuasive paper parts:

**TREE**

- **T**= Topic Sentence
  - Tell what you believe

- **R**= Reasons... 3 or more
  - Why do you believe this? How will you make your readers believe it too?

- **E**= Explain reasons
  - Say more about each reason; give details.

- **E**= Ending
  - Wrap it up right!
Evaluate Your Original and Set Goals

Directions: Look at the essay you wrote at the beginning of this unit and fill in the graph with the parts that you included in your essay that would go with TREE.

Did you have a TOPIC SENTENCE? ____________________
IF SO, what was it?

____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________

Did you have 3 REASONS to tell why you believe it? _____
IF SO, what were they?
1. __________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________

Did you EXPLAIN YOUR REASONS? ________________
IF SO, what are some of the details you used?

____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________

Did you “wrap it up right” in the END? ____________
IF SO, how did you do so?

____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________

Knowing what you need to do when writing a persuasive essay, set a goal for what you will do in your NEXT persuasive essay.
Practice Essay 1

Directions: In the space below, write a persuasive essay where you discuss the following topic:

Release is/is not a tool that should be used today.

You WILL NOT share these with anyone aside from Mrs. Craig and your partner. You can use ideas that we discussed in The Giver if you choose to. There is no length requirement, just DO YOUR BEST!! Remember, you are trying to persuade me to think the same as you. Use the TREE model!

T= Topic Sentence
R= 3 reasons to tell why
E= Explain your reasons...
give details
E= End by “wrapping it up right”
Evaluate Your Essay

Directions: Look at the essay you wrote with your partner and fill in the graph with the parts that you included in your essay that would go with TREE.

Did you have a TOPIC SENTENCE? ____________
IF SO, what was it?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Did you have 3 REASONS to tell why you believe it? ______
IF SO, what were they?
1. _____________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2. _____________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

3. _____________________________________________________________________

Did you EXPLAIN YOUR REASONS? ________________
IF SO, what are some of the details you used?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Did you “wrap it up right” in the END? ________________
IF SO, how did you do so?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Practice Essay 2

Directions: In the space below, write a persuasive essay where you discuss the following topic:

Medicine should/should not be used to help people be in control.

You WILL NOT share these with anyone aside from Mrs. Craig and your partner. You can use ideas that we discussed in The Giver if you choose to. There is no length requirement, just DO YOUR BEST!! Remember, you are trying to persuade me to think the same as you.
Evaluate Your Essay

Directions: Look at the essay you wrote with your partner and together, fill in the graph with the parts that you included in your essay that would go with TREE. Then, do the same with your partner's paper.

Did you have a TOPIC SENTENCE? __________________________
IF SO, what was it?

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

Did you have 3 REASONS to tell why you believe it? ______
IF SO, what were they?
1. ___________________________________________________
2. ___________________________________________________
3. ___________________________________________________

Did you EXPLAIN YOUR REASONS? _________________________
IF SO, what are some of the details you used?

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

Did you "wrap it up right" in the END? ______________________
IF SO, how did you do so?

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________
School Improvement and Gathering Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Great Things about RMS</th>
<th>Things That Can Be Improved</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

Choose one of the things that you would like to improve at RMS and answer the following questions.

1. What would you like to improve at RMS?

2. Why does this need to be improved?

3. How would you go about making it better?
Gathering Data

What needs to be improved?

What would make it better?
Writing a Business Letter

Directions: Explain what goes in each of the sections of a business letter.
Gathering Ideas and Rough Draft

I. ____________________________

a. ____________________________

b. ____________________________

II. ____________________________

a. ____________________________

b. ____________________________

III. ____________________________

a. ____________________________

b. ____________________________
Directions: In the space below, write a rough draft of the business letter that you will write for your persuasion. Make sure to use the TREE format as well as the BUSINESS LETTER format.
Evaluate Your Essay

Directions: Look at the rough draft you wrote, fill in the graph with the parts that you included in your rough draft that would go with TREE. Then, ask your partner to do the same.

Did you have a TOPIC SENTENCE? ____________________
IF SO, what was it?

Did you have 3 REASONS to tell why you believe it? _______
IF SO, what were they?
1. ______________________________________
2. ______________________________________
3. ______________________________________

Did you EXPLAIN YOUR REASONS? ____________________
IF SO, what are some of the details you used?

Did you “wrap it up right” in the END? ___________________
IF SO, how did you do so?

Have your partner fill out THIS sheet AFTER you have!!!!!
Final Check before your Final Draft!!

Did you check to make sure your paper...
1. has ALL WORDS spelled correctly?
2. uses the correct punctuation marks throughout the paper?
3. begins each sentence with a capital letter?
4. has correct forms of the following words:
   a. there/their/they're
   b. it's/its
   c. chose/choose
   d. where/wear/were
5. has the correct form for a business letter?

If you have checked AND fixed all of these items... If you have made sure your paper follows the TREE format...

USE THE RUBRIC BELOW TO DOUBLE CHECK YOUR PAPER!!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items needed:</th>
<th>Points Possible:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>o You included a <strong>topic</strong> sentence in your paper.</td>
<td>________/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o You included 3 <strong>reasons</strong> to explain your belief.</td>
<td>________/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o You have used at least one detail to <strong>explain</strong> each reason.</td>
<td>________/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o You have <strong>ended</strong> your letter with a conclusion.</td>
<td>________/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o You used correct business letter format:</td>
<td>________/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>~you have your name and address</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>~you have the name, address, and title of the person you are writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>~you have a greeting line with colon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>~you have used box paragraphs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>~you ended with the correct salutation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>~you ended with a typed and written sign</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o You have no editing mistakes (see above)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total:</strong> ________/75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now, you may type your final draft!!
Homework Pieces!!!!!! Make sure they are done before turning in this packet and your paper!!!!!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Color of Skin</td>
<td>____/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate your originals and set goals</td>
<td>____/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Essay 1</td>
<td>____/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate your essay</td>
<td>____/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Essay 2</td>
<td>____/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate your essay</td>
<td>____/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School improvement and gathering data</td>
<td>____/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing a business letter</td>
<td>____/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gathering Ideas and rough Draft</td>
<td>____/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate your essay</td>
<td>____/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have included a graphic with your paper</td>
<td>____/10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: ____/60

How to get points...

5 points= You have a stamp on your paper signifying it was completed on time.
4 points= You have your paper completed, but you didn't have it done on time.
3 points= ¾'s of your paper is completed.
2 points= ½ of your paper is completed.
1 point= less than ½ of your paper is completed.
0 points= none of your paper is completed, or it is missing.
Appendix C

CRCSD Standard B: Writing Seventh Grade Language Arts

Students will use the elements of the writing process to communicate effectively with different audiences for a variety of purposes. (Continue to address earlier expectations as needed and as they apply to more complex writing tasks.)

LA 7.B.1 Apply the steps of the writing process.

LA 7.B.1.a Select a topic: Brainstorm ideas through methods such as discussion, reading, mapping, freewriting, or outlining.

LA 7.B.1.b Establish audience and purpose. Assess knowledge of the subject to determine if more information is required.

LA 7.B.1.c Draft for content and form.

LA 7.B.1.d Use the scoring criteria in self-assessment, peer conferences, or student-teacher conferences. Set goals for improvement and revise the writing for ideas and content, organization, voice, style, and tone as appropriate to the assignment.

LA 7.B.1.e As the piece is finalized, reread it and make the necessary corrections to grammar, usage, and mechanics.

LA 7.B.2 Identify and use various types of writing for numerous purposes and audiences in both formal and informal writing.

LA 7.B.2.a Expository: Write and defend personal interpretations of literary, informational, or expository reading in writing that includes a topic statement, supporting quotations and other details from the literature, and a conclusion. Write research reports that include quotations, parenthetical citation, and a works cited page.

LA 7.B.2.b Persuasive: Write a persuasive essay. This persuasive piece should include an opinion statement that is supported by factually-supported, fully-developed reasons and evidence selected with the audience and purpose in mind, and should end with a call to action.

LA 7.B.2.c Expressive/Imaginative: Write poems that employ such devices of poetry as simile, metaphor, alliteration, or onomatopoeia, and that show an awareness of a poem as different from prose in line length, spacing, and use of mechanics.

LA 7.B.2.d Narrative/Descriptive: Write narratives (personal or fictionalized) or scripts with developed characters, setting, dialogue, conflict/resolution, and use of detail.

LA 7.B.2.e Writing on demand: Practice on-demand writing that allows no time for extensive revision.

LA 7.B.3 Present and celebrate pieces of writing.

LA 7.B.4 Develop ideas thoroughly and effectively.
LA 7.B.4.a  Focus topic.
LA 7.B.4.b  Use a clear topic sentence when writing in single paragraph format and a clear thesis sentence when writing in multiple-paragraph format.
LA 7.B.4.c  Select and develop supporting details in well-organized paragraphs. Practice using transitions between thoughts and paragraphs.
LA 7.B.4.d  Write multiple-paragraph compositions that have clear topic development, logical organization, effective use of detail, and variety in sentence structure.
References


