LEARNING TO WRITE WITH METAPHOR: THE EFFECTS OF A UNIT ON WRITING WITH METAPHOR ON THE LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT OF TWO FIFTH-GRADE CLASSES

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ABSTRACT
Learning to Write with Metaphor: The Effects of a Unit on Writing with Metaphor on the Levels of Engagement of Two Fifth-grade Classes
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The need for improved student achievement in writing is well-documented across all grades and scores continue to show slow gains. The evidence is clear that one way to improve student achievement is to increase engagement. Engaged students not only do better in school, but think of themselves as better students and are perceived by others, including their teachers, to be more successful.

This study looks at a writing program based on the use of metaphor, and measures changes in student engagement before and after the writing lesson. It also looks at the writing produced by the students to determine how well they learned to write with metaphor and whether their writing evidenced use of well-developed metaphor, such as container and orientation metaphors. Conducted with two fifth-grade classes, the study uses quantitative and qualitative methods. The results indicated that the students overall did not show significant increases in engagement after the lesson. However, between the two classes, some differences did emerge. The study further examines whether students learned to use metaphoric concepts in their writing, and if the ability to write metaphorically differed by gender or class achievement.

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CHAPTER 1
RATIONALE

Writing well is a difficult task and one that has not received the attention that will be needed to raise overall literacy development. Over the past decade, increased attention has been paid to student learning in reading and writing, including legislation at the federal level. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 has mandated ambitious goals for all students to be assessed as proficient in a number of core subjects, including reading and writing, by 2014. Sanctions on schools and districts are imposed on a graduated scale for failing to meet proficiency, yet the sanctions are imposed without providing accompanying teaching strategies that would help increase proficiency of the students being tested. Teaching writing as an explicit subject is one strategy to improve writing skills. Student engagement in the writing process is an important element in improving writing; indeed, researchers and teachers alike agree, student engagement is a critical element in the case with learning generally. Engagement may be an even more important predictor of successful student learning than the elements states and districts are striving to measure as part of their assessment and testing strategy (Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Skinner & Belmont, 1993).

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a rationale and build a case for the need for this research study. The first section below documents data-based evidence of the need to improve writing skills in the student population, particularly at the pre- and early adolescent level. The section considers some of the national and regional data that suggest need for improvement is imperative. Following the section on the need to

improve writing is an overview of some of the prior research on engagement and motivation in writing; this topic is expanded upon in the literature review in Chapter II of this study. Since the context for the research study is a literacy lesson that uses specific instruction around teaching students to use metaphor in their writing, this first chapter also includes a brief overview of an earlier pilot study of the metaphor writing lesson. The earlier study used the particular instructional approach that also forms the basis for this current study. The pilot study provided some of the impetus for a more comprehensive consideration of whether elements of the lesson provided a path to engaging students in writing. Following the section on the prior pilot study, I have included a theory of action using metaphoric writing to increase engagement. Chapter I concludes with reasons why this study is significant, followed by a statement of the research questions to be investigated.

Need to Improve Writing Skills in Pre-Adolescents

Low literacy skills continue to prevail in the majority of schools across America. The underdeveloped literacy skills include competence in reading and writing. In 2001 with the introduction of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, increased light was shed on the performance of students through a series of mandated assessments. States were required under NCLB to implement challenging standards for students who would have to be one hundred percent proficient in those standards by 2014.

The legislation states: “Each State plan shall demonstrate that the State has adopted challenging academic content standards and challenging student academic achievement standards that will be used by the State…The purpose of this title is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-

quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments.”
(http:www.nochildleftbehind/.com/nclb-law/Title-I downloaded 11.20.07). However, what constitutes a challenging standard was never defined.

While states were given some latitude in developing their assessment plans, all were required to include assessment in writing. Prior to the implementation of NCLB, slight gains from 1998 to 2002 were shown in grades 4 and 8, with no significant change in scores for high school students. In fact, the percentage of twelfth-graders at or above the basic level decreased between 1998 and 2002. In 2002, despite the intense focus on literacy instruction resulting from the mandates of NCLB, student scores at the advanced level increased by only two per cent over 1998 scores (U. S. Department of Education, 2003).

According to the most comprehensive data compiled for my research (U. S. Department of Education, 2003), 36 states were expanding the grades to be tested; only 15 states were in full compliance. Of course, because of the latitude granted to states in developing individual plans, there is a wide range of what is being tested. The assessment systems developed and implemented by the 50 individual states vary in what exactly is being assessed in reading, writing, and math. Some examples are presented here of what content was expected to be mastered across state assessments in writing by middle-grade students. As is the case with all subjects being assessed, there is great variability across the states in what writing skills are assessed. In most instances where writing is considered, it is not approached as a discrete subject, but rather often rolled into the language arts discipline. A number of the state assessments view writing as a mechanical

process and focus heavily on punctuation, sentence structure, and form (McCombs, Kirby, Barney, Darilek, & Magee, 2005). According to information included in the report from RAND Corporation (McCombs et al., 2005), a limited number of states, such as New Jersey, Minnesota, and North Dakota, include assessment of writing skills requiring the student test-taker to have prior knowledge and skill using various strategies, such as idioms, analogies, similes, and metaphor, in order to respond successfully to the questions. A limited number of states also require that students analyze poetry and interpret ideas.

For instance, New Jersey requires students in grade 8 to write in "clear, concise, and organized" fashion (http://www.state.nj.us/njded/ccs/s3_lal.htm#31). Among the elements tested to verify skill in interpreting text is recognizing the use of metaphor, responding to the text, and supporting interpretations of the text with textual evidence. Although writing is included as a subskill in the language arts literacy category along with reading, speaking, and listening, the assessment also includes discrete writing skills. In the assessment for the state of Oregon, writing has its own content strand (http://www.ode.state.or.us/teachlearn/subjects/elarts/standards/contentstandards.pdf). However, the students are not required to actually write. They do, however, need to respond to 50-60 multiple choice questions that require them to be able to recognize the connections between what they read and their own experiences. Although the number of instances is lower, several states assess writing separately from reading, such as Florida and Wyoming. In both of these states, students are required to write essays and other forms of written material, and respond to a variety of prompts. In Massachusetts, the writing assessment is part of the language arts component, but does include a

comprehensive writing task. Massachusetts' students are required to write a draft of their writing and then are given an opportunity to revise into a second draft, which is submitted for scoring (McCombs et al., 2005).

For writing, the irony is that a number of the elements being assessed use multiple-choice questions; this is in fact the oft selected method of assessment, which is understandable from the standpoint of ease of grading. However, a number of states (about a third) do include a prompt for the student test-taker to develop a narrative or descriptive response to a prompt, a tactic which at least includes some actual writing in the assessment of writing. The NCLB-mandated state assessments included testing at the state level which allowed for comparison between states. Although the standards and assessments were designated and implemented by the individual states, in several states fewer than half of the students achieved state proficiency standards. The state passing rates in writing tended to be in the lower range than those in reading, with Kentucky reporting a dismal nine percent pass rate in writing. According to the RAND report (McCombs et al., 2005), only 18 states even reported data on writing. A startling 31 states did not administer a separate writing assessment segment at the elementary level or did not have the data available for collection. Of those that reported the state writing assessment data, there were mixed correlations between the reported reading data and the reported writing data: sometimes the correlation was positive and other times it was negative. For example, South Dakota scored low on both assessments with some difference between reading and writing, reporting that slightly more than 30 percent passed on writing and less than 50 percent attained a passing grade on the reading assessment. Colorado and Texas are two states who reported state assessments in both

reading and writing and whose scores were comparatively high in both. However, students in Mississippi were reported to have passed in the 90 percent range in reading, yet less than 30 percent passed the state writing assessment. On a lower scale but a similar track, Maine reported 18 percent passing for writing and over 50 percent of its students attained a passing grade in reading. Overall, pass rates in writing were on average lower than pass rates in reading; schools reported that, based on the scores, students were better readers than writers. States who did relatively well in reading with poor showings in writing-- indicating that students could read once they were effectively taught but could not write to the same level of ability-- is a disturbing trend. Again, it is difficult to compare across categories when the field is not level; all states wrote their own assessment criteria and also tested on their own schedules. To make generalizations across states when the variability is so great is not scientifically sound. However, the scores do provide a starting point to create a snapshot of writing ability in relation to what is considered basic within each state, and to be able to look at how the writing scores compare to reading scores at least within states if not across the country. The following section looks at a national assessment strategy.

The US Department of Education National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (June, 2005) provides a look at how students are performing relative to national goals. The NAEP writing assessment tests students in three styles of writing: narrative, informative, and persuasive. The students actually write in order to be tested. NAEP used six themes in developing the writing assessment:

- Students should write for a variety of purposes: narrative, informative, and persuasive.

- Students should write on a variety of tasks and for many different audiences.
- Students should write from a variety of stimulus materials, and within various time constraints.
- Students should generate, draft, revise, and edit ideas and forms of expression in their writing.
- Students should display effective choices in the organization of their writing. They should include detail to illustrate and elaborate their ideas, and use appropriate conventions of written English.
- Students should value writing as a communicative activity (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003).

The NAEP writing assessment has national goals, goals that are the same across states so they tend to be a better indicator for creating a national snapshot than the state data reported to comply with NCLB requirements. However, what the NAEP assessments measure does not necessarily align well with what states individually measure and therefore determine what needs to be taught. State standards do not align across states so may not align with the NAEP standards. In the case of the NAEP standards, not one single state had even half of its students meet the NAEP national literacy standard of achievement (McCombs et al., 2005). NAEP reports that the reading performance of eighth-graders appreciated slightly between 1992 and 2003, while the reading performance of fourth-graders showed no significant improvement. For the 2002 fourth-grade writing assessment, 44 states participated; therefore, NAEP has a larger sample of data available than the self-reported state assessments. Proficiency scores were lower on the NAEP on average than on the state data. The lowest writing score came in from Washington, DC, with only 12 percent proficient. Connecticut topped the scale at 49 percent. In 12 states (DC, Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, Arizona, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Nevada, New Mexico, Arkansas, Michigan, and West Virginia) scores were recorded under 20 percent proficiency. The NAEP scores for the 8th-grade writing

assessment showed similar trends; while there was some shift in how states ranked, it was still true that DC and Mississippi had the lowest scores (under 10 percent proficient) and Massachusetts and Connecticut had the highest, but still even these two highest performers came in under 50 percent proficient, a long way for all students from the 100 percent NCLB-goal for all schools by the year 2014. The reported results get worse when the data are disaggregated for minority and low-income students. Minority students scored 20-29 points on average below White students. Connecticut, a state scoring among the highest in both 4th and 8th grade in both reading and writing, also claimed one of the widest achievement gaps, scoring 30 points lower for its minority and economically-disadvantaged students.

A new design is being developed for the scheduled 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in Writing (NAEP, 2007). While it is still unclear what the new revised design will entail, early indicators are that it will include a closer examination of writing skill levels of emerging writers. Even a brief examination of the results from 2003 are convincing evidence that much needs to be done to provide instruction to improve writing skills for all students. More rigorous testing serves to clarify the problem; it does not provide solutions.

As noted by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) in their report *Recommendations for Middle Level Reform* (2006): "Literacy skills—reading, writing, and comprehension—are the foundations of academic success for every student in every school. Literacy instruction…must be a vital component of a student's educational experience from kindergarten to graduation" (p. 8). While there are no easy solutions to guarantee solid literacy skills, there are recommendations both from research

and practice that have been shown to provide opportunities for improved writing skills. These recommendations include skill-building instruction in strategies that provide interest to more complex reading material and teachers who model and explicitly instruct students in strategies that successfully engage their interest in both the material and the medium of reading and writing. Literacy instruction that includes proficiency in writing must continue past the elementary grades (NASSP, 2006) and be structured in a way that provides access to students' own experiences and improves their overall literacy repertoire. Fourth-graders who are not performing well need educational supports to increase their learning prior to eighth grade standardized testing. Strong learning can not occur when reading and writing skills are underdeveloped. Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) noted a drop in reading motivation between the 4th and 5th grade, and writing for pleasure also declines over the school years (Langer, Applebee, Mullis, & Foertsch, 1990). Guthrie and Knowles (2001) likewise document a substantial drop in willingness to read from the fourth to the fifth grade, reporting that the younger grade students read about 22 minutes per day and dropped to 12 minutes per day the following grade year. The disinclination to read was clearly linked to a lack of engagement in the process. The fifth-grade classroom, the site for this current study, is the logical choice for instruction that has the potential to help improve literacy skills that can be transferred into the increasingly challenging middle school environment.

Prior Research on Engagement and Motivation in Writing

While much research has concentrated on improving reading, less is known explicitly about improving writing (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997). Writing is hard work, and a topic that is much neglected in the classroom (Lewin, 2003). In addition, good writing

instruction requires that students learn specific strategies (Van Keer & Verhaeghe, 2005) and be actively engaged in order to ensure that the value of writing is appreciated (Pasquarelli, 2006). One argument suggests that students who continue to improve in their writing are more likely to want to attempt to increase both the amount and the quality of their writing. This belief is based on an accepted motivation construct positing that positive competence leads to greater persistence to the task, choice of more challenging activities, and higher levels of engagement (Pajares & Johnson, 1994).

In fact, self-efficacy beliefs in students' own performance contribute to their motivation, and subsequent educational success and academic performance (Graham & Weiner, 1996). Many researchers have suggested that self-belief may play a mediational role in relation to cognitive engagement; encouraging development of cognitive strategies may also lead to better academic performance (Dewey, 1933; Maslow, 1943; Pajares & Urdan, 2006).

Bandura (1997) asserts that what one believes about personal skill and competency is at least as important as actual skill; both are necessary for optimum performance. Students who are confident in what they believe they can do are motivated to perform well and will perform better than those who may have the skills but not the sense of personal control that strong self-determination provides. Specifically for this study, gaining confidence in writing is self-motivating and leads to writing better. Bandura (1997) also makes an important distinction between self-efficacy and self-esteem. "Perceived self-efficacy is concerned with judgments of personal capability, whereas self-esteem is concerned with judgments of self-worth" (Bandura, 1997, p. 11).

It is important that the skill of writing be developed alongside the belief that one can write competently; the two enjoy a reciprocal relationship of skill and will.

In the past, writing has often been thought of as a secondary skill that would emerge as students wrote in class for various reasons. However, teaching writing explicitly entails the use of key components of solid writing instruction, including writing to construct meaning in a variety of forms and some direct instruction in conventions and process (Ames, 1992). Explicit writing instruction will be even more important in an age where assessment is an integral part of determining what a student knows and understands. The present educational environment is highly focused on assessment. Successful testing beyond a multiple choice format requires that the test-taker have knowledge of clear writing techniques and skills, so that ideas can be clearly and effectively communicated.

Engagement and motivation are known to be critical to improving achievement in reading and writing (Alvermann, 2003; Alvermann & Guthrie, 1993); lack of motivation is also one of the principal reasons causing students to leave school prematurely. While the construct of motivation encompasses a wide range of sociocultural and economic factors--including among others the quest for teacher/parent approval, higher grades, better career options, and the like--engagement is described by Guthrie, et al. (1996) as "the joint functioning of motivations and strategies." Guthrie, Anderson, Alao and Rinehart (1999) further define engagement as "the mutual support of motivation, strategies, and conceptual knowledge…" Ideally it would seem necessary to use specific strategy instruction and positive feedback to help emerging writers develop skills that would provide a framework of support as they gain confidence and expertise in writing

ability. These skills and concepts could be productively applied to improving present and future writing ability. Developing writers need to be taught ways to overcome their resistance to writing. They need to be given strategies that help them become more proficient and engaged writers, and make writing "a little less difficult and risky for the emerging and/or struggling writer" (Strickland, Ganske, & Monroe, 2002, p. 167).

Increasing engagement in structured writing tasks is one way to help developing writers improve. Engagement in writing can be fostered by providing instruction that helps students develop their writing skills. Successful learners need skills that allow them to construct or reconstruct what is to be learned, a constructivist rather than objectivist stance (Hillocks, 1999). Students who are instructed in a practice that encourages attaching personal meaning to their writing are more likely to be engaged in the writing process (Miller & Meece, 1999). The Report of the National Reading Panel (U. S. Department of Education, 2000) noted that reading can be improved by teaching students to use specific cognitive strategies or to reason strategically when they encounter barriers. Writers, too, need a variety of ways to negotiate the writing process. Successful writing emerges from a combination of instruction that includes both form and function (Pasquarelli, 2006; Wood & Harmon, 2001). Collins (1999) suggests an instructional design that relies heavily on teaching particular strategies: (a) identify a strategy worth teaching, (b) introduce the strategy by modeling it, (c) help students try out the strategy in a writer's workshop, and (d) help students move toward independence in the use of the strategy through repeated practice.

Students need to be instructed in skills to help them construct meaning from text, increase their analytical ability and become more engaged in the process of learning as

making meaning becomes more under their control (Block, 1993; Wood & Harmon, 2001). Many teachers tend to model forms rather than provide strategies to encourage students to access their own experience and develop their own versions of forms (Hillocks, 2002).

Research demonstrates that a strategy used by expert readers and writers can be taught effectively (Pressley & Hilden, 2002). In considering what students need to learn in order to improve their literacy skills, Monahan (1993) notes: "No matter the label, the general notion is that thorough comprehension requires readers' active engagement in constructing meaning. Getting students to engage with texts and develop interpretations requires helping them to monitor their cognitive processes, to gauge the extent to which they comprehend incoming information, and perceive areas of difficulty" (p. 91).

Student engagement in schooling is generally accepted to be an important factor in their academic achievement, including in specific areas of study such as writing. An engaged student is less likely to drop out and is more inclined to learn the subject matter and achieve well in school. Students who are disaffected continue to experience falling grades regardless of grade level, with a noticeable decrease in scores in the middle grades (Fredricks & Eccles, 2002). Recent work has suggested that engagement should be looked at as a multifaceted construct that encompasses several aspects of learning, rather than trying to disentangle individual aspects. "Defining and examining the components of engagement individually separates students' behavior, emotion, and cognition. In reality, these factors are dynamically interrelated within the individual; they are not isolated processes" (Fredericks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004, p. 61). Fredericks et al. and other researchers (Guthrie, et al., 1999; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000) argue for a construct of

engagement that includes behavioral, emotional, and cognitive aspects. For the purposes of this study on writing metaphor, a student who is engaged as defined by this multifaceted definition of engagement would be one who is aware of the scope of the assignment and has paid attention to what is expected of him/her (behavioral); approaches the assignment willingly and with enthusiasm and anticipates a successful outcome (emotional); and produces writing that is thoughtful and skillfully constructed around the concept of metaphor (cognitive). Since engagement is defined as multifaceted then it follows logically that strategies to increase engagement need to be examined for multiple components.

Components of the Writing Lesson

The metaphoric writing lesson that is the basis for this research study is multifaceted and incorporates a number of aspects that research indicates contribute to engagement in writing. The instruction moves students along a continuum of knowledge and experiences that includes pre-writing activities and lessons which occur simultaneously throughout the spring semester and provide necessary background. The lesson includes a combination of lower order mechanical skills and higher order composing skills. In the fall of the fifth grade year, a rudimentary understanding of symbolism is established through the analysis of Native American mythology. Students are guided through an analysis of folklore, which introduces them to a sense of symbolism in language. For instance, the notion that peace can be relayed through the use of a tree and a turtle is explored. Recognizing and avoiding cultural and racial stereotyping is another critical piece of the inferential thinking students are expected to assimilate at this point in their fifth grade year. Students learn that animals mean

different things to different cultures, and are encouraged throughout to avoid generalizing. But such notions as "wise as an owl" or "sly as a fox" are modern interpretations of behaviors students can assign more universally to humans. They also learn to invent such similes and metaphors by analyzing animals' behavior, and transferring that to their own experiences. By the winter of their fifth grade year, students are exposed to Eastern philosophy through an interdisciplinary unit on the history and culture of China. The teachings of Confucius are analyzed, and those concise "pearls of wisdom," proverbs, are explored. Questions such as, "What could 'don't cry over spilled milk' mean if you're not talking about crying or milk?" encourage the students to think beneath the surface, to move from the literal to the abstract. Repeatedly eliciting responses to simple questions about numerous Chinese proverbs lays the groundwork for the child's independent questioning, and the realization that often things are not as they seem at first glance. As a result of this instruction, children should become more alert to metaphorical prescriptions in all they read, and to the concept that the deeper meaning assigned to commonplace occurrences and objects, adds much to the richness of the literature experience. By the end of the unit, students craft folktales illustrating a proverb of their choice, and which contain literal interpretations of the figurative language.

By the spring of their fifth grade year most children have turned eleven, a milestone in cognitive development, with the child supposedly moving beyond the concrete in solving problems and becoming able to think abstractly. Again, this phenomenon does not occur overnight, but can be encouraged to emerge through carefully selected activities and series of questions. A more formal introduction to grammar, specifically parts of speech such as abstract nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and

verbs, enables the students to begin to choose their words more carefully, especially as they compose poetry. Their spring interdisciplinary unit takes them to the rainforests of the world, biomes rich with mystical, magical images to feed young imaginations. Color imagery, as well as metaphor, simile, personification, and hyperbole are highlighted as students learn the factual information about the ecosystems described, and gain a "feel" for these unique environments and their inhabitants. Conflict in literature, and in the daily life of a fifth grader, is also examined at this time (Hunsinger-Hoff, 2004).

Aside from lessons on the environment, grammar, and the elements of literature, students are encouraged to become much more metacognitive about their learning, and more reflective about their emotional development. As they discover their unique intelligences and learning styles, and begin to examine the incredible array of emotions they experience during these pre-adolescent days, their vocabulary increases as well as their appreciation for the depth of the characters' emotions being encountered in the literature. By studying such terms as "frustrated," "anguished," "tranquil," "persecuted," or "indestructible," and by recalling instances when they might have felt this way, and by pursuing all of the other curricular topics simultaneously, set the stage for the metaphoric poetry writing assignment.

Prior Study on Use of Metaphor to Teach Writing to Fifth-Grade Students

In the spring of 2002, I conducted a preliminary study of the writing samples produced as a result of the metaphoric writing lesson as described above.

Participants

The students whose writing was reviewed were members of two fifth-grade classes in suburban Pennsylvania. The school is one of the oldest non-sectarian day

schools in the United States, and was an all-boys facility until 1961, when it also went co-educational for the first time. The school has three divisions: lower school (pre-K to 5th grade); middle school (6th to 8th grade); and upper school (9th to12th grade). The school typically has about 1100 students; in any given year, there are approximately 16 percent of the student body who receive scholarships. The curriculum and philosophy of the lower school encourages writing as both an academic skill and a process for self-reflection. The writing process (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, proof-reading, and publishing) is used at all levels to guide students as they develop their writing pieces. The lower school language arts program strives to develop and sustain the students' enthusiasm for reading and writing.

The two fifth-grade classes were taught by female teachers, each with over 25 years teaching experience. Both teachers hold masters degrees and are long-term members of the faculty.

The Lesson

The fifth-grade classes that participated in the study are the recipients of a process approach to the teaching of writing, in which students work through certain clearly defined steps in the development of the pieces. The steps include:

- An analysis of figurative language, specifically personification, metaphor, simile, and exaggeration.
- Reviewing adjectives, adverbs, and powerfully descriptive verbs.
- Reading, and related discussion of *The Lilith Summer* (Irwin, 1979) up to page 85 where Lilith says, "All of us are many people: the people we once were, the people who have loved us, even the people who have hurt us. We're pack

rats. We store away bits and pieces and somehow they turn into selves that become an I."

- Listing the similes, metaphors, and other figures of speech in *The Lilith Summer*. At the point in the novel where "All of us are many people..." appears, more formalized pre-writing preparation and actual writing of the poem occurs. The following activities are listed as they should be introduced:
- Brainstorming a list of human emotions
- Listing at least 10 emotions the students have experienced in their lives, which have made them "who they are today." The students are reminded that we are indeed a compilation of all that they've experienced.
- Reading the poem, "Wilderness" by Carl Sandburg (1918) and discussing the metaphors. See Appendix D for poem.
- Students add to their "emotions lists" a metaphor for each emotional experience...an animal or natural object which will stand for the emotion; e.g., for sorrow, a weeping willow in the rain; for anger, the ocean on a stormy, gray day; or, for fear, a lost baby egret.
- The form of the final poem is modeled after Sandburg's "The Wilderness" (1918). The students discuss the Sandburg poem prior to beginning their own writing experience.

As noted in an informal interview with one of the teachers who helped develop this instruction: "We have found that even reluctant writers can be encouraged, with the right steps, to enjoy writing and write better. The mind of a fifth-grader provides fertile ground for the introduction of metaphor. The acquisition of a sense of metaphor does

not, however, magically appear at this age, nor is it evident in the philosophy behind much of standard curriculum. But for our students who progress through the fifth grade, it has become an integral part of their cognitive development, and has been carefully woven into the fiber of their curriculum." (Hunsinger-Hoff, 2004)

In preparation for writing their metaphor poem, the students are provided a template in the spring of the fifth grade and the template is used to develop their poetry. There is no limit imposed on the amount or the content as long as the students begin with the form of the template. However, to complete this assignment, students must produce one full response to the template, shown below:

There's a ___(noun)_____ inside of me.... a , ___(adjective)___ , ___(adjective)__ __(noun)____....it __(verb)___ and ....__(adverb) (verb) ... when I'm __(adjective)_____when __(adjectives, nouns, verbs) (explanation of what causes the emotion)….I keep (it) because_____. (optional...combination of adjectives, nouns, verbs, adverbs)

Procedure

During the preliminary study the writing produced over a two-year period was analyzed, from two fifth-grade classes, the students of which were members of the lower school. Only writing available on the website was reviewed for the preliminary study. The students wrote using the class computers and they could have their work posted on the school website. I visited the classrooms on two occasions, once at the beginning of the writing unit and again about halfway through. On both visits, I observed that the students were focused on the task. Several students were working independently, while

others were eager to share their work with others in their class. Several asked questions of the teachers; all seemed to be highly involved with writing the poems. I downloaded completed assignments from the school web site, where they are posted for public access. The sample consisted of the writing produced by 45 students; there were 24 males and 21 females. This gender breakdown is consistent with all fifth-grade classes within the school, which tends to be weighted towards males. The writing was developed during the spring semester, and was the final assignment for the students to complete as part of the overall writing lesson.

Results

The 45 students whose work was sampled produced 112 pages for the assignment. One pass through the template was required for satisfactory completion of the assignment. The writing elicited 442 metaphors. I applied the broad literary definition of metaphor and did not attempt to categorize the metaphors into subgroups by type. Females produced more metaphors than males; the mean for the females was 12.6 and for the males 7.4. Overall, animal images outpaced other categories of metaphor. However, within the animal images, boys tended to choose aggressive animals, such as a lion or snake, and girls tended towards smaller, less aggressive images, with playful overtones, such as monkeys or squirrels. Girls also chose images from nature, such as clouds or willow trees; boys rarely chose such passive naturalistic images.

Discussion

The construct of engagement and/or motivation was not considered or measured for this sample. The students seemed eager to write in the format they were studying, and their teachers confirmed that they appeared to be engaged in the process. While this small

study was not scientifically rigorous, it did provide the impetus for considering a more comprehensive look at other aspects of the writing lesson, such as this current research focusing on level of engagement and categories of metaphor produced by the students sampled.

The results (Table 1) provided useful information as a basis for considering a study focusing on engagement in the writing process. As noted, the preliminary study did not focus on engagement as a variable to be measured. However, the study did look at some of the qualitative aspects of the students' writing samples, such as number of metaphors in the poems they produced, and gender as a variable. Again, informal discussion with the two teachers elicited the information that this assignment is one of very few that always produces a one hundred percent completion rate for the students. According to the teachers, even reluctant writers overcome their anxiety and produce a completed piece of work. The fact that all students completed the assignment, in its entirety and on-time, was, according to a post-assignment discussion with the two teachers, indicative in itself of the engaging nature of the work.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Number of Metaphors per Student in Sample (N = 45)

	No. of metaphors	M
Males (n = 24)	177	7.4
Females (n = 21)	265	12.6
Total	442	9.8

Theory of Action Using Metaphoric Writing to Increase Engagement

A theory of action provides a bridge between ideas and evidence. Since the process of writing is more transactive than reading (Kucer, 2005), metaphor—as a transactive process that links the experiences of the writer to the text—is a strategy that can help students be less resistant to the task of writing, helping them become more engaged in the writing process. This research analyzes engagement from the perspective of the writers' metaphoric responses to the writing task.

Metaphor is a unique combination of linguistic and psychological functions of speech and thought. Research in the disciplines of both linguistics and psychology supports the concept that metaphor plays a central role in human linguistic and non-linguistic behavior, and can be seen as a way to bridge the gap between disciplines. Central to the use of language, and not merely a linguistic device, metaphor plays a central part in verbalizing what may otherwise be difficult to verbalize or express (Lakoff, 1993; Low, 1988; Schmitt, 2000).

The writing instructional unit that forms the basis for the data collected for this research is based on instruction in the use of writing with metaphor. Why teach writing with metaphor as a strategy? As noted previously, metaphor combines linguistic and psychological functions of speech and thought. The students are taught to recognize metaphor, but more importantly, to write metaphorically about their own experiences. The instructional writing unit teaches metaphor as a basic writing improvement strategy. Research relating instruction to metaphor development is still limited, but evidence of children's capacity for metaphor supports the potential value of early opportunities to interact with metaphorical language (Little, 2003).

This study tests a three-part theory of action to improve engagement and subsequent writing ability: (a) teaching metaphor as part of a continuum of literacy-based activities, which also includes lessons on proverbs and symbolism, leads to (b) increased engagement in writing activity, and subsequently (c) increased confidence in writing ability and willingness to write.

In this study the metaphoric writing lesson is being tested. The model suggests that the lesson causes an effect on the dependent variable, or level of engagement. The students who are being taught using the metaphor writing lesson choose metaphors to include in their writing. This study also looks at the metaphors that are chosen by the students and what the relationship of those choices is to the level of engagement. Does the choice of metaphor mediate the relationship between the writer and the level of engagement?

Students who use deep strategies are thought to be more cognitively engaged in their tasks than students who use surface-level effort to complete their work (Fredricks et al., 2004).Teaching metaphor use introduces students to a strategy that encourages deep, thoughtful application of language that has the potential to link language, thought, and experience. By its nature, metaphor use encourages cross-domain thinking, forming a bridge between language and learning. As Holme (2204) concludes, "Metaphor can thus stand as a link between the nature of language and the nature of the learning process" (p. 123). Holme, in fact, use the term "cognitive hooks" when referring to the relationship between metaphor and the linkages between learning and language that are embedded in our nature. By providing the potential for deeper cognitive thought, learning metaphor can also facilitate increased cognitive engagement.

The use of metaphor in learning how to write is a strategic, critical tool that, when taught and developed in students, has the potential to link the writer to the text, and engage students in forming a "transactional" relationship with the words they create (Rosenblatt, 1994). Metaphor can be a strategy to increase engagement in writing, and lead to increased confidence in writing ability (Figure 1).

As noted by Alvermann and Guthrie (1993), engaged students are motivated, knowledgeable, and socially interactive. As reported in the work of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), students' writing fails to improve in part because they spend little time in schools engaged in specific writing activities (National Commission on Writing, 2003; NCES, 2003). Students are engaged when they voluntarily pursue an activity that interests them. The heart of engagement is the desire to gain new knowledge, to follow the excitement of a new narrative, to expand one's own experience in print.

Successful students use cognitive strategies to regulate comprehension and expression (Baker, Dreher, & Guthrie, 2000). Engaged writers use active strategies to discover meanings, and knowledge of appropriate strategies to use for better understanding of text is vital (Pressley et al., 2002).

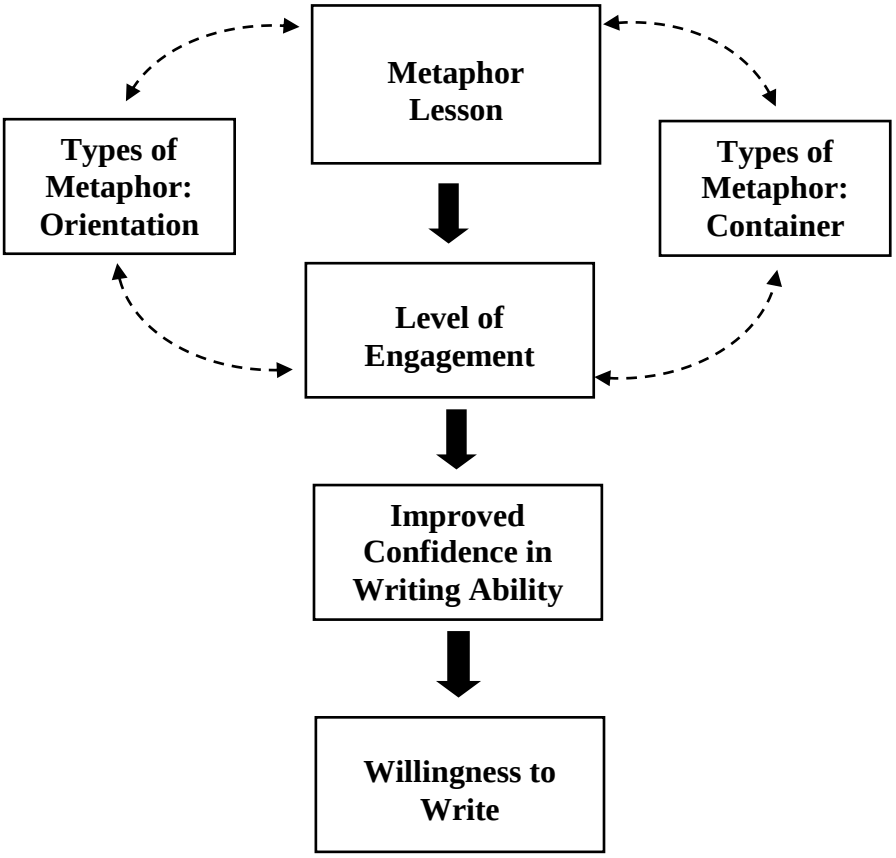


Figure 1. Proposed Theory of Action

Significance of the Present Study

The study is significant for several reasons. First, the research study focuses on a population (fifth-graders) that is poised to begin facing an increasingly more challenging curriculum, in an NCLB-driven high risk assessment environment, where skillful writing is integrated across the curriculum. “Students in the middle years face increasingly complex literacy challenges as they move from a curriculum where acquiring initial literacy knowledge and competencies permeates their school day, to a time when their

literacy skills and interests are prerequisites for success across the curriculum" (Hosking & Teberg, 1998, p. 332). In addition, there is a documented, significant drop-off in interest in literacy skills between the fourth and fifth grades (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997; Verhoeven & Snow, 2001), and intervention strategies that have the potential to increase engagement and subsequent willingness to write are worth investigating.

Second, the study capitalizes on the emerging higher order thinking skills and need for self-expression that are part of early adolescent development. Practices that link students to their own experiences have a higher likelihood of engaging their interests (Miller & Meece, 1999). As part of the metaphor writing lesson, students are encouraged to link their own past experiences to the text by writing poems using metaphors that are meaningful to them. This encourages activity on an analytical level, seeing patterns and recognizing connections, a crucial psychological progression to the level of "analysis" on Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, 1984).

Third, writing is a lifetime skill that will join reading, science and math as a subject that will receive increasing national focus. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) writing assessment was administered throughout the nation to students at grades 8 and 12 from January to March 2007. Students were asked to write from a variety of perspectives and often in response to a poem, prompt or picture. Knowledge of the effective use of a strategy such as metaphor would be useful in responding to the text of a poem or the images in a picture.

Fourth, there is a large portfolio of research on engagement and reading and considerably less on engagement and writing. Likewise, there are thousands of articles on various aspects of metaphor, but little research on whether teaching the critical skill of

metaphor can be used as a tool for increasing student engagement in the writing process. This study brings together various aspects of engagement, writing and metaphor, in a middle school context that have not been previously explored in one study.

Fifth, the fifth-grade population is increasingly at-risk of school disaffection, a decline that can begin as early as first grade and exhibit in later grades (Alexander, Entwisle, & Horsey, 1997). Even engagement that remains stable prior to middle school is increasingly at-risk as students enter the middle grades (Skinner, Zimmer-Gembeck, & Connell, 1998).

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to investigate two research questions related to the instructional results of teaching one group comprised of two classes of fifth-grade students to write with metaphor. The questions are:

1. Is there a significant effect on student engagement following participation in a metaphoric writing lesson?

2. What was the effect of the writing lesson on the poems the students produced?

CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Overview: Setting the Context for the Study

This literature review is developed to respond to several objectives of the research study, objectives which are congruent with a solid and reliable protocol for a literature review in education research. That is, this review will attempt to set the broad context of the study, clearly demarcate what is and what is not within the scope of the investigation, and justify those decisions. It also will situate the existing literature in a broader scholarly and historical context (Boote & Beile, 2005). The purpose of this review is to consider a perspective on what helps students become more engaged in schoolwork through a writing lesson, a topic that may contribute to increased knowledge of student engagement in the writing process.

The purpose of this study is to consider whether students exposed to a metaphoric writing lesson increase their engagement and confidence in writing. As noted, "No matter the label, the general notion is that thorough comprehension requires…active engagement in constructing meaning. Getting students to engage with texts and develop interpretations requires helping them to monitor their cognitive processes, to gauge the extent to which they comprehend incoming information, and perceive areas of difficulty" (Monahan, 1993, p. 91). Engaged writers use active strategies to discover meanings and knowledge of appropriate strategies to use to better understand text is vital (Pressley et

al., 2002). In fact, writing problems that develop in school often continue to cause anxiety and poor self-image issues throughout the students' life, perhaps even into adulthood. Numbers of adults report that poor writing skills concerned them sufficiently as adults to cause fear that such a deficit would be revealed and cause peers to look down on them (Skaalvik, 2004). Students often perform poorly, not only because they lack skills but because they judge as low their own personal capacity to do well (Bandura, 1997). Writing is a much more public literacy activity than reading, and quite self-revealing. Where what happens in reading is something of a black box, writing is a more permanent artifact of one's thoughts at one point in time.

For this study, I have researched how teaching the strategy of metaphor to fifth-grade students as part of a continuum of literacy-based activities can lead to changes in level of engagement in writing, and subsequently to increased student confidence in writing ability and willingness to write more.

Since the purpose of this study includes topics each of which enjoy wide-ranging and extensive background research literature (i.e., engagement, writing process, and metaphor), the purpose of this literature review is to focus on exploring why examining these topics as a whole and as they connect with each other will contribute to the knowledge base on what helps students become successful writers, and perhaps add a new perspective to these three disparate topics when approached as parts of a comprehensive learning strategy.

This review will consist of four categories: (a) enduring theoretical literature and research on the theory of engaging with the text; (b) review of the theoretical framework

of metaphor as it connects to language and thought; (c) an examination of categories of metaphor; and (d) writing strategies and linkage to student engagement.

Literature on Engaging with the Text

It is important to this research to understand what happens when a writer faces a blank page; what is the transaction that occurs to move the writer's thoughts to create a series of coherent symbols of text? Few theorists have had the resiliency and endurance of the work of Louise Rosenblatt. Her texts, including *Literature as Exploration*, first published in 1938, and republished as recently as 1995, and *The Reader, the Text, the Poem* (1978), continue to make a major contribution to the importance of the relationship between the reader/writer and the words on the page. This relationship with the text is central to how students interact with the words on the page. For almost 70 years, since the introduction of *Literature as Exploration* in 1938, Rosenblatt's work has provided a basis for thinking about and implementing processes for extending the imagination and personal thinking of students and validating their personal experiential responses to literacy tasks (Farrell, 1990).

Rosenblatt (1995) notes that, through a process of reflection and rejection, a student can understand literature. "When literary experiences are made the material for reflective thinking, they may be one means of providing this sorely needed linkage between feeling, thought, and behavior" (p. 227). He can then thoughtfully go on to modify, reject, or accept it. One of the best ways of helping students gain this appreciation of literary form and artistry is to "encourage them to engage in imaginative writing" (p. 48). Her work is an important theoretical framework for a study on writing

engagement and metaphor because of its focus on how the reader relates to what is read, encouraging self-reflection and discussion "off the page."

Rosenblatt (1995) uses the term transactional method to consider the relationship between the reader and what is being read. She considers the essentiality of both reader and text, in contrast to other theories that make one or the other determinate. Interaction, the term generally used, suggests two distinct entities acting on each other, like "two billiard balls…Transaction lacks such mechanistic overtones and permits emphasis on the to-and-fro, spiraling, nonlinear, continuously reciprocal influence of reader and text in the making of meaning. The meaning 'happens' during the transaction between the reader and the signs on the page" (p. 26). This transaction and its relationship to signs on the page makes the work of Rosenblatt critical to a study of metaphor and writer response.

Rosenblatt uses the terms "efferent reading," which she defines as "what we carry away" and "aesthetic reading," in which the student brings experience, mood, personality, and so on, to the text. Allowing the work to come to life for the reader is a precarious balance between looking for signs and imposing meaning, and permitting the natural flow and reflection of meaning. Rosenblatt (1994) describes the initial zone of meaning as "an awareness—more or less explicit—of repetitions, echoes, resonances, repercussions, linkages, cumulative effects, contrasts, or surprises is the mnemonic matrix for the structuring of emotion, idea, situation, character, plot—in short, for the evocation of a work of art. The transaction with any text stirs up both referential and affective aspects of consciousness" (p. 33). In recent work relying heavily on the theoretical constructs of Rosenblatt's work on affective response and reading poetry, Eva-Wood (2004) employed an experimental design with a small but randomly assigned

sample to explore how college freshmen approach interpreting poetry. She concluded in part that they can develop a "thoughtful sensitivity" to language that will increase their engagement in the emotional experience of a poem, an engagement that the students seemed unable to cultivate on their own without explicit instruction in recognizing specific genres and appropriate comprehension strategies. In fact, she notes that "stylistic devices such as metaphors may 'engage the reader's feelings and evoke less prototypic, more personal meanings' " (Miall & Kuiken, 1994, p. 183). It is interesting to note how closely Rosenblatt's work parallels current thought on metaphor as "a device of the poetic imagination…the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor" (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 3).

The reader does indeed have to be prepared to bring life to a particular work, but it is a life which, in order to be fulfilling and not demanding, must be encouraged not imposed. Meaning emerges through a reader's joint activity with mediating tools and signs, among them the signs of a text (Smagorinsky, 2001).

With a second perspective on the relationship between the reader and the text, Langer (1995) considers how the world makes sense to an individual at any point in time by proposing the term *building envisionments*. Langer's theory regards *envisionments* as "…text-worlds in the mind, and they differ from individual to individual. They are a function of one's personal and cultural experiences, one's relationship to the current experience, what one knows, how one feels, and what one is after" (p. 9). In the process of envisioning experience, the kinds of thinking, reading or writing a person does and how it can be influenced or even transformed and developed is systematically nurtured. Thinking about differing vantage points can inspire sensitivity to the plights of others and

greater awareness of the limits and limitlessness of our own perspectives. Langer considers envisioning experience from the "objective experience," which she defines as involving a discursive way of reasoning that occurs when people treat meaning as if it were an object to be viewed and held apart, scrutinized with a keen and distant eye. She maintains that "subjective experience" occurs when we look within ourselves for meaning and understanding, when we bring new ideas and experiences closer to ourselves in ways that let us see them from the inside.

Children are not unlike adults in situations where they make sense out of the world using the tools at their disposal, making central the role of the individual learner in constructing reality. Students who are properly introduced to a literacy experience can become thoughtful learners across the curriculum (Langer, 2001). They draw out of an experience, such as viewing a picture or reading a story, the experiences they bring to the situation. As experience expands and develops outside of their immediate world, the ways of interpreting what is seen or read needs to also expand exponentially. It is the ability to link text and experience that encourages engagement. Applebee (1992) remarks: "There is a shift in emphasis from content knowledge to processes of understanding that are themselves shaped by and help students to become part of the cultural communities in which they participate" (p. 3). The process of writing should form a bridge between the words on the page and the experience or potential for experience. This bridge can be reinforced by supplying students with the critical tools they will find useful as they nurture the connectedness of writing and life experience. The strategy of metaphor can encourage use of the students' developing "linguistic capital" and create an awareness of the transactional nature of writing, thus activating the writer's capacity for symbolic

linkages. The central point of any writing strategy that aspires to increase engagement is that "the individual linguistic reservoir must be activated" (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 17).

Metaphor has the potential to straddle the divide between the linguistic and the cognitive. Generating meaning involves practice in using a variety of strategies and mental processes (Kucer, 2005). Using metaphor can be a way to apply a linguistic vehicle and make meaning that is expressed through writing. Writing is more transactive than reading as a literacy task, and as such has the potential to increase cognitive engagement.

The notion of *stance* is part of a schema in helping students develop a literary sensibility (Langer, 1990). Stances are presented as a kind of scaffolding allowing the writer to view what is written from a greater variety of vantage points.

In a study on the different types of reading, Langer (1990) concluded that narrative thought is part of the well-developed intellect, and that it has repercussions in contexts other than literature. The reader reflects on, analyzes, and judges past experience and present circumstances and relates them to other works and experiences (Langer, 1995). Langer's work suggests ways that reading and narrative thought are part of intellect and part of the meaning-making process.

Faust (2000) presents an intriguing update on a reconceptualization of the theories of Rosenblatt and Langer, and incorporates Dewey's premise that people can learn to anticipate and then compose experiences that are aesthetic. Faust relates his experiences as a teacher confronted with the dualistic options of teaching the text separately from a reading subject. The basis of his discussion seems to be that one must recognize that literature is not static, but expands and reforms in its relationship to the reader. Faust's re-

reading allows him to posit that students would learn how to use speaking and writing to textualize their reactions as readers of text.

Faust's contention that this process is interactive supports the premise of this research that metaphor can be a vehicle of transaction between the writer and the text. "Teachers of literature today possess a unique opportunity to help young people use their experiences with reading to disrupt habitual and stereotypical ways of understanding differences and to construct responses wherein their developing cultural identities are voiced, rehearsed, and revised." (p. 30)

Work on effective literacy strategies by Pressley (Pressley et al., 1992) borrows from Rosenblatt's transaction theory. The work is largely descriptive and qualitative, while acknowledging the need for quasi-experiments and longitudinal studies to be conducted. Nevertheless, it does strongly suggest that students who are provided with specific strategies in using background knowledge and prior experience are more likely to both comprehend what they read and be increasingly engaged in the literacy tasks. They suggest that strategy use results in greater learning and encourages a continuum of greater engagement, more opportunity for strategy use and practice and increasing the knowledge base of literacy activity (Pressley, El-Dinary, Gaskins, Schuder, Bergman, Almasi, & Brown, 1992).

Literature on Links between Thought and Metaphor

The primary purpose of this research is to examine engagement before and after a writing lesson. Metaphor serves as a mediating variable since the writer uses metaphor to form a response to the writing lesson. It is therefore important to have a solid overview of current thinking on what metaphor is and how it works during discourse events. While

the students in the proposed study initially are taught the linguistic function of metaphor in the traditional sense, once they begin to actually write on their own, they move into a usage of metaphor which is more in line with current research on metaphor as a concept that embeds culture and language, thereby influencing and constraining people's discourse (Cameron & Deignan, 2006). Therefore, a review of the theoretical framework of metaphor as it connects language and thought is appropriate and necessary to this work.

One of the critical tools that can enlarge the literacy experience and engage students is the acquired critical skill of metaphor. Empirical results in current research on metaphor have resulted in the word "metaphor" meaning "a cross-domain mapping in the conceptual system" (Lakoff, 1993). The metacognitive knowledge of how to manipulate ideas explicitly in metaphor in order to transform either one's own knowledge or another's knowledge into new knowledge makes metaphor a major tool for extending our capacities for analytic thought (Sticht, 1993). Originating with Aristotle, metaphor is rooted in the Greek word to use one object or idea to suggest a link between a likeness or analogical messenger elsewhere. There is a continuity between what is experienced or remembered or re-experienced or overlain on present memory to continuously invigorate current experience. Metaphor can be used as a vehicle to encourage such re-experience and maintain cognitive relationships that will enlarge the writer's world and help sustain interest in writing. The task of the metaphor interpreter is to find or create a set of relations linking the topic and vehicle (Ortony, 1993). There is much research available on the processes involved in such mapping, or acquiring reading and language skills, and

the various cognitive theories on language acquisition. Metaphor is a unique combination of linguistic and psychological functions of speech and thought.

For example, in the poem "Fog" by Carl Sandburg (1916), he writes: "The fog comes on little cat feet." The reader understands intuitively that the mist that the poet describes is not literally approaching on the back of a feline, a congruity that sets up the brain to recognize the incongruity and begin to think of other reasons why the writer would suggest a link between the image of the cat and the fog. Most readers envision that a cat approaches silently, gracefully, and as a species, are generally unobtrusive. Cats are also light on their feet and move with a rolling grace. Such feline aspects can also be attributed to fog—stealth, grace, quiet, etc. In the readers' mind, such associations between one's experience with cats and one's experience with fog provide a satisfying cognitive explanation for the author's choice of words. Though some readers would be more literal than others, most readers "get it." These thought processes and linkages happen quickly.

Metaphor in one form or another is "absolutely fundamental to the way language systems develop"…as well as to the way human beings consolidate and extend their ideas about themselves, their relationships and their knowledge of the world (Cameron & Low, 1999, p. xii). The study of metaphor is wide-ranging, increasingly expanding into the arena of cognitive research over the past twenty years. Literally thousands of articles have been written on the various aspects of metaphor, yet the nature and strength of links between metaphor and thought are still only partly understood.

The theories of Rosenblatt (1995), Langer and Applebee (1987), Langer (1995), and others posit how relationships between the reader and the text can be formed; how

these thoughts and experiences are mapped into personal schema are part of the current research focus of the study of metaphor. The current literature on metaphor as a process for communication and understanding extends well beyond the domain of language; it has extended to include a range of issues from the arena of sociology and psychology. How metaphor and thought are related in the contemporary definition of metaphor is important to the proposed study because of these cross-mappings, and how critical literacy strategies encourage increased student engagement.

Since the concept of metaphor relies heavily on cues and retrieval, and experience is only available through long-term memory, personal schemata or what makes up how we think as individuals must be stretched to accommodate metaphoric interpretation (Driscoll, 2000). Accessing meaning through personal schemata is the basis for interesting work on how meaning is constructed through a reading transaction method. Smagorinsky (2001) investigates the various responses of high-school students to multiliteracy projects, encouraging them to plot their reactions to the drama *Hamlet* on a body biography, which is a life-sized human outline that the students fill with images and words that represent their understanding of a particular character. Smagorinsky's work resonates with Rosenblatt's theory of evocation as a codified, intertextual event. In much the same way that students can respond to writing for metaphor, Smagorinsky's students respond to the body biography with evocative, enculturated texts that are meaningful to them. The students' responses to the interpretations of *Hamlet* are their associations with the text, rather than the text itself. Smagorinsky reiterates Rosenblatt's evocation theory:

> The tendency is to speak of interpretation as the construing of the meaning of the text. This conceals the nature of the reader's activity in relation to the text: he responds to the verbal signs and construes or organizes his

> responses, which is for him "the work." All of interpretation involves primarily an effort to describe in some way the nature of the lived-through evocation of the work (Smagorinsky, pp. 149-150).

Smagorinsky's work has significance to this current research because it reflects on how experiential and textual engagement contribute to individual response.

Interesting research on signifying as a tool for improving literary interpretive skills was conducted by Lee (1995). This study was grounded in a sociocognitive perspective of literacy and considered how, among other issues, awareness of a variety of strategies improved reading comprehension skills, thus the potential implications for this proposed study on teaching metaphor as a strategy that can be used to improve reading skills.

Signifying is a form of discourse in the African American community that is rich in nuance and oblique literal reference (Lee, 1995). Similar to metaphor it requires a recognition that there is meaning implied apart from the literal word, and the signifier must be skilled in reading "off the page" into the more subtle meanings implied by the signifier. Such sensibilities to the nuance of detail and figuration are critical tools for literary analysis. In fact, the act of signifying may be directly ironic and/or metaphoric, and expertise in translating signifying literary allusions has much in common with the predispositions and talents required to use metaphor skillfully. Lee notes, "The signifiers knowledge parallels the knowledge that the expert reader of a text of fiction brings to bear in literary interpretation (p. 360)."

The results of the Lee study showed that the experimental group, after receiving specific instruction recognizing signs and significance in literature, among other skills, scored significantly better on the post-test than the control group, who did not receive

specific instruction. Interestingly, the greatest challenge to the instructors was convincing the students "what they already know." This resonates because, like metaphor, recognizing the hidden meaning in signifying does not call for absorbing new facts, but rather learning strategies to retrieve previously experienced linkages. Reading in this manner required new skills from these students, and Lee notes the importance of schema theory in their learning:

> Schema theory on reading research proposes that people often learn new knowledge by noting analogies between existing schema and the demands of the problem at hand for which their existing schemas do not account, or by fine-tuning variables within an existing schema (p. 371).

Further, the researchers note the metalinguistic perspective exhibited by the study, referring to the aesthetic stance toward transforming literature. This theoretical construct has much in common with the theories of both Rosenblatt and Langer discussed earlier in this review. Although it was aimed at the efficacy of culturally significant teaching, many of the findings resonate with the proposed research on identity and metaphor.

Introducing students to the concept of metaphor provides a formal setting that allows them a wide range of personal experience to interpret how they see the world. These experiences position the students to interpret verbal signs in relation to each other and their own personal experience. A framework is provided that encourages looking beyond obvious clues to more abstract concepts. Learning occurs intentionally in formal instructional settings and incidentally through experience (Driscoll, 2000). Reddy (1993), in his discussion of the conduit metaphor, suggests that the central locus of metaphor is thought, not language. Reddy investigates the use of "dead" or unused metaphors as conduit metaphors, expediting effective human communication. What one

thinks is largely comprised of personal experience; metaphorical thought is inextricably tied to personal experience and thinking.

Lakoff (1993) in a response to Reddy, proposes that Reddy's work dispels the myth that metaphor is purely linguistic. Rather, it reflects our everyday experience. The metaphors one chooses to represent oneself are part of a personal schema.

Lakoff notes further that:

> The metaphor is not just a matter of language, but of thought and reason. The language is secondary. The mapping is primary, in that it sanctions the use of source domain language and inference patterns for target domain concepts. The mapping is conventional, that is, it is a fixed part of our conceptual system, one of our conventional ways of conceptualizing…relationships" (p. 208).

Lakoff has worked extensively in metaphor theory, and in 1980 developed the first book outlining the contemporary theory on metaphor. Lakoff has developed several theoretical constructs on the topic of metaphor and thought which are relevant to a study on how using metaphor could increase engagement in a writing task by immersing the student writer in a level of thought deeper than surface linguistics:

1. Mappings are not arbitrary, but grounded in the body and in everyday experience and knowledge.
2. The system of conventional conceptual metaphor is mostly unconscious, automatic, and used with no noticeable effort.
3. The heart of metaphor is inference. The locus of metaphor is in concepts, not in words.
4. Metaphor plays a central role in developing abstract thought (Lakoff, 2003).

Lakoff's findings are important to this study because they suggest that using metaphor can provide a link to deeper levels of cognitive engagement by a writer who has learned to access what is mapped onto his/her domains of thought.

A study by Chularut and DeBacker (2003) considered concept-mapping and its influence on the learning achievement in students of English as a second language (ESLs). The results of the study in response to the question of whether using concept mapping as a strategy to improve engagement and comprehension in literacy activities in ESL students, showed that the concept mapping group posted higher achievement scores than the non-concept mapping group. Concept mapping is a strategy that allows students to study relationships between and among ideas, supporting a more complex understanding of the text. It also involves linking prior knowledge to new ideas, a theory with strong ties to metaphor as a strategy. The students in the study who learned and applied this strategy felt more engaged and self-efficacious about their reading and writing and showed significant increases in their measured literacy achievement.

A recent published study on the use of metacognitive strategies to improve reading and writing behaviors in poor comprehenders suggests the effectiveness of using the web as a tool in literacy applications. Johnson-Glenberg (2005) trained poor comprehenders in a Web-based strategy called 3D-Readers. This work is important for the proposed study because it encourages the building of a mental model and activating prior knowledge within the student, two concepts central to metaphor use and that also resonate strongly with transaction theory. The 3D-Readers process involves training and use of multiple strategies to increase engagement, comprehension, and interaction with the text, albeit in a web-based image concept. However, the students in this study were trained to "look beyond the text" and to move beyond literal meaning in constructing their own response. The results "supported the hypothesis that participants did

significantly better on the texts that encourages and allowed them to work on metacognitive strategies" (p. 770).

Literature on Categories of Metaphor

A secondary question to be considered in this study is what categories of metaphor the artifacts collected from the students' writing reveal. A good deal of research energy and effort over the last several decades has been devoted to categorizing metaphoric mappings and several are considered by the research reviewed in this sub-section.

Metaphor as a strategy leads one to consider what might otherwise not have been noticed. All metaphors are untrue, but lead us often to the truth in what one believes or understands (Martinich, 2001). In an attempt to better understand this elusive concept and to make it more accessible for study, a number of researchers have attempted to organize metaphors into categories. In order to delimit this particular study of metaphor, concentration will be on two particular categories: orientation and container metaphors. Orientation metaphors are those that involve spatial orientation: up-down, in-out, front-back, on-off, deep-shallow, central-peripheral (Lakoff, 2003). In western culture, happy is up and sad is down. For instance, *sitting on top of the world* is the emotional opposite of being *down in the dumps*. Likewise, *taking the high road* is the opposite experience of *taking the low road*. Lakoff's work posits a number of generalizations about the category of orientation metaphor that should prove useful in organizing the metaphoric responses of the students in this proposed study:

1. Most of our fundamental concepts are organized in terms of one or more spatialization metaphors.

2. There is an internal systematicity to each spatialization metaphor that indicates a coherent system.
3. Spatialization metaphors are rooted in physical and cultural experience; they are not randomly assigned.
4. There are many physical and social bases for metaphor.

A recent study on orientation metaphor by Langston (2002) suggests a reader must be cognitively well organized and ready to implement a critical tool, such as metaphor, in order to benefit from it. "As readers try to construct a mental model of the situation in the text, information consistent with the model is more easily integrated, and so is rated as more appropriate to the text." (p. 283) Langston's work on orientation metaphors is important because it establishes the possibility that clearly mapped metaphors (in this case, orientation) are more easily accessed than obscure metaphors. "When the metaphors themselves have a relatively restricted set of entailments and the situation requires just those mappings, the metaphors will be available for comprehension." (p. 304) In this study, the authors reported significant findings in support of their hypothesis.

The second category of metaphor that will be considered is container metaphor. Container metaphors are actually a subset of ontological metaphors; that is, a way of categorizing entities, experiences, or substances that helps us quantify them, and hence deal with them more easily. Metaphors based on containment involve boundaries; hence, the relationship of the individual to his place in the world. For example, feeling "boxed in" or "trapped in a job" are common metaphors for feeling confined when no actual

container is involved. Man is by nature territorial, from the initial boundary of his own skin and extending out to the imposed and natural boundaries all humans, capable of movement, encounter. Each of us is a container, with a bounding surface and an in-out orientation (Lakoff, 2003). “Thinking outside of the box” is a common business metaphor that refers to not allowing creativity to be limited; one is encouraged to extend thinking to come up with new solutions; in other words, do not allow your thinking to be “bound” in ways that suffocate creativity. There is, of course, no actual box or container involved, except one that is constructed by accessing the domains of our own reality and experience to create an image we can readily understand.

Both orientation metaphors and container metaphors are subsets of the universe of metaphor that afford a method of delimiting and categorizing the responses that will form the basis for this study.

Literature on Various Theories of Engagement

The research literature on engagement theory as it applies to writing and the positive potential effects of strategy use by the writer are also important aspects of this research. The term engagement is widely used in the research literature. It often encompasses a number of other constructs which can be used separately besides being used as part of the broader meaning of engagement. Prior to 1999, terms such as interest, involvement, and motivation were often used, sometimes interchangeably, in discussions about the broader aspects of engagement. For instance, a number of earlier researchers, such as Alvermann and Guthrie (1993) viewed an engaged reader as one that had acquired competencies, including motivation. Likewise, interest was viewed as part of engagement and considered simply curiosity, and also, like motivation, not a cognitive

process (Krapp, Hidi, & Renninger, 1992). Guthrie and Wigfield (1997) continued to consider engagement to be activity-related rather than cognitively-related. The body of work that emerged from the federally funded National Reading Research Center (NRRC) was developed around engagement as "the joint functioning of motivation, conceptual knowledge, strategies, and social interactions" (Baker, 2000, p. 2). Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) combined three multiple dimensions—motivational, cognitive, and social—to propose that "engaged readers in the classroom or elsewhere coordinate their strategies and knowledge (cognition) within a community of literacy (social) in order to fulfill their personal goals, desires, and intentions (motivations)" (p. 404).

The work of Fredericks, Blumenfeld, & Paris (2004) provides a comprehensive overview of the school engagement literature and state of the evidence. They note that the corpus of engagement work recognizes three types of engagement: *behavioral*, which includes aspects such as attendance and participation; *emotional*, which encompasses mental aspects, including items such as the reactions of teachers and students; and *cognitive*, which draws on how mentally invested an engaged individual might be. But Frederick et al. concede that the construct of engagement is a "messy" one, and clear lines can not be drawn between the various manifestations of engagement. Furthermore, they do not see such multidimensionality as a negative, but suggest that engagement can be usefully applied as a "meta" construct, as scholars such as Guthrie and Anderson (1999) and Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) prefer to approach the term.

The research literature likewise contains a wide range of aspects that contribute to improved engagement. These include, but are not limited to, the perceptions of the teacher, different forms of motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic (Baker & Wigfield,

1999; Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000), and involvement (Schallert & Reed, 1997). Increased engagement has also been linked successfully to a number of particular instructional theories, such as Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI), an instructional framework for enhancing reading engagement (Guthrie et al., 1999) and student response theory, where the focus is on content, connections and coherence. The goal of the student response process is to support students in what they already have stored in experience (Beck, 2004). What the majority of engagement theorists posit regarding successful engagement for increased literacy is the use of strategies and practice to become successful and competent text producers (Low, 1999).

Recent work supports the use of specific cognitive strategy instruction to increase and improve student comprehension in literacy activities. This work is reflective of Rosenblatt's transaction theory which places the burden on the reader/writer to personally interface with text rather than passively rely on the instructor's authority as to the meaning of what is read or written. Working with fifth-graders and employing a pre-test, post-test and retention group design, Van Keer and Verhaeghe (2005) evaluated the effectiveness of a range of explicit reading comprehension strategies and noted effect sizes "large enough to merit attention to the particular intervention" (p. 318). Of particular relevance to the proposed study on engagement using a metaphor-based literacy activity, is the conclusion from the Van Keer and Verhaeghe study that students who are instructed in explicit strategy use become more actively engaged in the process of extracting deeper meaning from texts. The authors also suggest the importance of having students understand and apply cognitive strategies that increase understanding beyond superficial rote processes. Students are more engaged in the text when they apply

critical learning tools that assist them in extracting more analytic meaning from the work. The authors conclude that "…expert readers distinguish themselves from novice or poor readers by their disposition of metacognitive skills to monitor and regulate comprehension and by the use of a flexible repertoire of cognitive "fix-up" strategies to repair understanding when it breaks down" (p. 325).

In a recent qualitative study, the findings of Bogner, Raphael and Pressley (2002) support the importance of teacher behaviors in motivating and engaging first-grade students in high-level literacy activity. They conclude that highly engaged students are taught by teachers who employ and teach numerous specific literacy skills, including writing and literacy experiences that are consistently challenging and interesting for their students.

Failure to use strategies effectively is a common problem with struggling readers and writers. The National Reading Panel (2000) noted that constructing meaning from text is an important strategy to be used as learners form a relationship with the words on the page and become drawn in to "the pull of the text" (Schallert & Reed, 1997). Writers are not unlike readers in their need to be exposed to strategies that will help them in their struggle to become competent text producers (Cameron, 1999).

In order to be effective, writing strategies must be personalized and appeal to the writer's own situation. Situational interest (Reinking & Watkins, 2000) can evolve into personal interest. Indeed, the concept of "flow," (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) can be applied to reading and is described as the ability to be so involved in the task that the student performs beyond what is required for the assignment. Flow is an important aspect of total engagement for all literacy activities, including writing. In addition, meaningful, engaged

learning has specific indicators that include: techniques for building upon prior knowledge, encouraging constructing and building knowledge in meaningful way, allowing the student time to reflect upon their discoveries. Students should be encouraged as "cognitive apprentices," an apprenticeship that occurs when students apply the strategies and processes they have learned (NWREL, 2007).

Summary

The central premise of this research is that students who are instructed in specific strategies, such as using metaphor, will increase their engagement in writing and improve their writing ability, particularly with metaphor. The instruction that is being used as the basis for this study has the potential to increase student engagement. Simply stated, students who are engaged will write more, and writing more will help overcome resistance to writing and improve their writing skills.

The critical strategy that the students in this study learn to use effectively is metaphor. Current research around metaphor has been researched not only by linguists but psychologists and cognitive theorists as well. Metaphor is no longer considered simply the "without-like-or-as" twin of simile but rather a method for mapping across cognitive domains of thought and experience. Providing students the time and opportunity to write metaphorically can encourage a deeper level of analytic thought than would be anticipated had they merely learned metaphor as a defined, discrete construct of language study.

This study examines the level of engagement exhibited by students. Through pre- and post-questionnaires, the students are surveyed to see if the metaphor writing lesson has succeeded in producing an increased level of engagement in writing.

This review has examined several disparate strands of literature and thought in order to provide a comprehensive picture across several topics. Enduring theory on the relationship between the writer and the text contributes to the knowledge base on transaction with text. It is important to understand what happens when a writer faces a blank page. The research literature on engagement theory as it applies to writing is also critical to the study, as is the literature on specific strategies and their implications for the emerging writer. Finally, understanding current thought on metaphor as a linguistic and a cognitive construct is necessary to analyze this research.

Operational Definitions

Two terms that are used throughout this research are defined here: engagement and metaphor.

Engagement

Engagement is a term that has been widely used over the years in combination with or as a part of several other terms. Narrowing it down can be problematic. For the purposes of this research, I used a definition proposed by Guthrie and Wigfield in the *Handbook of Reading Research*, Volume III (Kamil, Mosenthal, Pearson, & Barr, 2000) which balances several elements: "…engaged (writers) in the classroom or elsewhere coordinate their strategies and knowledge (cognition) within a community of literacy (social) in order to fulfill their personal goals, desires, and intentions (motivations)" (p. 404). To paraphrase this definition for my research, the students in the sample will be recognized as engaged at varying levels based on their use of "strategies and knowledge" (metaphor lesson) within a "community of literacy" (the classroom) in order to fulfill their "goals" (write a poem using metaphor).

The "community of literacy" designation is appropriate for this study. During several classroom visits, I observed a number of aspects of the classroom as a community of learners. The teachers ask for and carefully listen to student input and responses to questions that were posed. Students are encouraged to pursue new concepts and enlarge their repertoire of literary strategies (Verhoven & Snow, 2001). The teachers support the learning of the students, thus increasing the likelihood that they will be motivated, engaged learners (Sweet & Snow, 2003). There is a clear sense of respect that is engendered by the teachers who take the time to listen to what the students have to say and allow enough time for everyone in the class to have an opportunity to speak. There is a sense of shared learning, where the teachers teach the students but the students also provide opportunities for the teacher to be the learner and the student to be the teacher (McCaleb, 1994). Students are greeted by name as they enter the classroom, and the teachers clearly know their students. Teachers take advantage of learning moments, and as exemplified during my visits, solicited responses from students who were less-inclined to voluntarily speak up.

The questions on the survey instrument were divided into three sub-constructs of engagement in order to thoroughly mine the engagement construct: self-efficacy, willingness to write, and choice of subject matter. Using this definition makes sense, since both the instrument being used to measure engagement and the definition of engagement were both developed by Guthrie and Wigfield (Kamil et al., 2000).

Metaphor

Traditionally, metaphor is defined as a linguistic device that is used to make comparisons between topics that are seen to have commonalities. In many instances, the

term is thought of as a simile without the "like" or "as." However, several decades of research have provided empirical evidence that using metaphor is a cognitive process, and the locus of metaphor is in thought not words (Lakoff, 1980; 2003). In the context of this research, students are initially introduced to metaphor as a linguistic device. It is through the application of the metaphor to their writing that they become engaged in thought processes that are more analytic and a function of the mind, where they begin to understand one thing in terms of another. Two categories of metaphor as defined by earlier research (Lakoff, 1980; 2003) will be collected from the student artifacts:

1. Orientation metaphors: having to do with spatialization, such as up-down, in-out, on-off. In this context, some common orientation metaphors include *happy is up, sad is down*; *more is up, less is down*, for instance.
2. Container metaphors: having to do with the boundaries of thinking, life, etc. For instance, *I feel boxed in*, or *she reached a glass ceiling* are typical.

These two types of metaphor were chosen for several reasons. The students in this study are finishing what Piaget defines as the concrete operational stage which occurs around ages 7-11 (Bybee, 1990; Phillips, 1975; Piaget, 1954). According to Piaget's theory, at this stage the students are becoming more concrete in their thinking and becoming less egocentric. Most students are able to understand different points of view and begin to understand empathy, compassion, sharing, and the like. More importantly, they are poised to move into the fourth operational stage which Piaget refers to as concrete operational. This is a critical stage where one learns or does not learn to be a critical and creative thinker. Not everyone masters this stage and many individuals, children and adults alike, remain rigid, confined thinkers. Thinking metaphorically is a

process that allows one to be more creative and to apply experience, beliefs, and alternative images to one's thinking. It encourages thinking beyond what may be observed or even logical (Ortony, 1993). Encouraging the use of metaphor encourages thinking beyond the ordinary and to look at life more broadly. Metaphor is operationalized by combining thought and experience (Lakoff, 1993). The students, as part of the curriculum leading up to this point, simultaneously learn more about other cultures and points of view. Their emerging cognitive development shares a number of parallels with maturing metaphoric thought.

Container metaphors are about the boundaries of life, and how it can be confined or limited. Orientation metaphors are directional, thinking about possibilities beyond boundaries. These two types of metaphor are fairly common and would seem to be in alignment with students who are moving into Piaget's fourth operational stage of their cognitive development and being encouraged to move away from egocentric thought and think more abstractly and globally.

Statement of the Research Problem

Students need to write well to advance their education successfully. As with the range of literacy tasks, writing well can translate into improved performance across many subjects (Verhoeven & Snow, 2001). To learn to write well, students need to be engaged in learning the skills of good writing practices, and to be exposed to skills that will both engage them in the writing process and serve as tools for connecting their world experiences to the lesson. This connection provides what Strickland (2002) refers to as "situational interest," a process that manages to engage students in a task (in this case writing) by setting up a situation that appeals to them. This research will measure student

engagement before and after a lesson on writing metaphorically. It will also examine the student writing resulting from the lesson on writing metaphorically built into a literacy-based curriculum to learn whether teaching metaphor as part of a continuum of literacy-based activities can lead to changes in level of engagement in writing. The study also examines the collected metaphors in the writing that was produced by the students in the sample to see what patterns of interest emerge from the data collected.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to investigate two research questions related to the instructional results of teaching two comparable groups of fifth-grade students to write with metaphor.

1. Is there a significant effect on student engagement following participation in a metaphoric writing lesson?

2. What was the effect of the writing lesson on the poems the students produced?

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

Presented in this chapter of the study are the research design and the methods that were used to investigate the effects on student engagement of a learning unit on writing with metaphor. A mixed methods process is described, combining elements of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Information is included on the research design, instrumentation and measurement, sampling issues, conditions of the study, and plan for data analysis.

Research Design

In this model, the hypothesis is that the level of student engagement is a function of the metaphor lesson and other variables entered as controls, such as gender, class placement, and race. Holding constant for student abilities, I expected students to exhibit an improved attitude toward writing and to be more willing to write at the conclusion of the writing module of concern in this discussion (Bandura, 1977; Pajares & Urdan, 2006). In addition, I expected that the metaphor lesson will affect the quality of the poems the students write, and subsequently, the quality of the metaphors they chose.

The research design for this study is a mixed methods, one group pre-test post-test design, O1—X—O2. The pre-test measure (O1) was a questionnaire administered prior to the writing lesson, then followed by the intervention of the metaphor lesson (X). The post-test measure (O2) was the repeated questionnaire, administered after the metaphor

lesson. This design, while chosen because of the nature of the sample and the study, has a number of limitations (Campbell, 1957).

History can affect the outcome, even in the relatively short three-week time span of this study. The students are in the same classes and taught by the same teachers; however, they experience a variety of events outside of the classroom, and inside as well, that could affect their answers. The test itself can make the test-taker self-conscious and thus produce answers that are reactive to the testing situation. In other words, the students would be aware that they are being asked how well they are doing in writing, and may want to give the "right" answer, since that is a response mode that is ingrained in them and a function of being a student. In addition, what is referred to as "voluntary self-description" can also affect the outcome of a survey (Campbell, 1957).

The students' poems and writing artifacts were collected and used as a data source. Data on the number of words in each sample were collected. The word counts were used as a way to determine time on task as another indicator of engagement. Although quantity is not a strong indicator of time on task, it does provide some basis to determine whether the students were interested enough in the lesson to develop a longer poem than was required for their assignment. Therefore, the word counts would provide some baseline for looking at the range of assignments. Also collected were samples of metaphors produced by the students in their writing. The metaphor lesson is the independent or manipulated variable of interest. The variables observed for changes are "levels of engagement" as measured by the pre-, post-questionnaire, and "analytic abilities" of the students in the sample as measured by the number and kinds of metaphor used in the students' writing, and the overall quality of the student writing.

Instrumentation and Measurement

Data were collected from several different sources and are discussed here: school information, the Writing Motivation Questionnaire (WMQ), the Writing Quality and Tonal Score Rubric, and the metaphor identification process.

School Information. I requested and received data from the school regarding attendance and grade placement. These school data were collected and entered into Excel and transported to SPSS for analysis. The data collected included grade-level placement, attendance, and Gates-MacGinitie test scores, a nationally-normed, paper and pencil format test that measures reading vocabulary and comprehension. Data were also collected and included on the teachers for attendance, length of time teaching at the school, and general demographic information.

The grade-level placements were determined by the teachers, using an internal rating system that ranks the students for the purposes of differentiating instruction. The teachers use this system for their own information. I requested that the teachers provide this information to me for my study so that I would have a way to rank the students by order of ability. The students are placed on a scale that includes Not Satisfactory (N-S), Satisfactory (S), Good (G), and Excellent (E). The teachers submitted the rankings for the students in this sample, and identified three students whom they represented as between (G) and (S); no other intermediate placement scores were submitted. The teacher rankings were assigned scores of 0 to 3. The G-S score was between "Good" and "Satisfactory" so was given a 1.5 numerical designation for analysis. Four students were ranked as Excellent (11.4%), 10 students (31.4%) were placed at the Good level, 3 were

Good-Satisfactory (8.6%), 8 were Satisfactory (22.9%) and 9 (25.7%) were Not Satisfactory.

Regarding attendance, of the 34 students in the sample, a total of three days of absenteeism was recorded. None of the three students were absent for more than one day. All three absences were made up through use of a computer-based program designed to help students make up missed lessons. Tardiness was not a factor since the metaphor lesson is an afternoon activity and any reported tardiness occurred in the morning. Neither teacher was absent for any of the days during the writing lesson. Therefore, absenteeism and tardiness were eliminated as factors in the analysis of engagement.

Standardized test scores would have been an appropriate measure of student performance. However, the school does not administer them since it is not required to do so. I was provided with scores from the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test (GMRT) which is administered to the fifth-grade classes (MacGinitie, MacGinitie, Maria, Dreyer, & Hughes, 2006). Therefore, the GMRT was used in this study as a measure of student ability. The GMRT is a group-administered reading survey test. It is a nationally-normed, paper-and-pencil format test that measures both reading vocabulary and comprehension. A recent study designed as a randomized control trial on reading comprehension reported GMRT reading difficulty reliability coefficients ranged from .93 to .96 (Resendez, Sridiharan, & Azin, 2006). The vocabulary portion is a multiple choice format that tests word knowledge. The comprehension portion consists of prose passages, both fiction and non-fiction, in a variety of styles that vary by grade level. The prose portion of the test is particularly appropriate for this study since it requires responses based on information

that is implicit rather than explicit, from the paragraphs selected for the testing. Grade equivalent means and stanines were also collected from the students in the sample.

The Writing Motivation Questionnaire

The principal quantitative data-collection instrument used in this study was the writing motivation questionnaire (WMQ). The WMQ was used to capture changes in the students' attitudes toward writing and level of engagement. The original version of the questionnaire is John Guthrie's Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ), who granted permission to modify it for use in this study. The MRQ was introduced in 1993 to measure children's motivations for reading. Several iterations of the instrument were developed, and given to different groups of children. The last group consisted of 600 children. Different statistical analyses showed that dimensions of motivation could be supported empirically. The summative results of the studies concluded that the test could reliably measure motivation (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997). The instrument has been used as the basis for measuring engagement of hundreds of students. The pre-test, post-test design is subject to instrument reactivity and Hawthorne effects. However, the survey is not meant to test for gains in achievement in such a short time frame. The questions are designed to assess aspects of the engagement construct, such as attitudinal and affect changes in the student's writing, which it is hypothesized can occur as a result of a lesson focusing intently on a particular aspect of writing, in this case the use of metaphor.

The revised WMQ is comprised of 32 questions. The questions included in the survey and an explanation of the scoring are included in Appendix A. The instrument includes an explanation directed at the student respondent followed by a brief explanation of how the items are presented at the outset. The teacher reads the explanation:

> We are interested in your writing. The sentences tell how some students feel about writing. Listen to each sentence and decide whether it talks about a person who is like you or different from you. There are no right or wrong answers. We only want to know how you feel about writing.

Following there are two sample questions which the teacher reads so the students can practice and feel comfortable with the scale. After the practice questions, the students are reassured that there are no right or wrong answers, and to circle only one response for each question. The teacher then begins to read the questions and the students answer. The responses are scaled with a Likert-like scale from 1 to 4, with 1 as "very different from me" and 4 as "a lot like me" (see Appendix A).

There are three subscales to this instrument; the questions within the subscales focus on several factors which are part of the overall construct of engagement (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). The breakdown of the questions and the factors within the construct of engagement to which they refer are included in the table below:

Table 2. Questionnaire Entries by Three Sub-Constructs of Engagement

Engagement Construct	Item on Questionnaire
Self-efficacy	I am a good writer.
	I talk to my friends about what I am writing.
	I like when we meet in groups to discuss our writing.
	I know that I will do well in writing next year.
	I am not a good writer.
	Writing helps me think about how I feel.
	I am confident I can learn to write higher-achieving by practicing.
	I can think of the best word to use when I write.
Willingness to Write	I often write when I am not in school.
	When I'm writing I do not want to stop.
	I enjoy the challenge of writing.
	I write more than I have to in school.
	I write for pleasure.
	Writing down my thoughts makes me think.
	I do not write very often.
	I write a lot.

Table 2. (continued)

Engagement Construct	Item on Questionnaire
	I really get into my writing once I get started.
	I think writing is fun.
	My friends and I like to read what each other wrote.
Subject Matter as a Factor in Writing	I do not write about things I have already seen or experienced.
	I like to tell my family about what I am writing.
	I write about topics that interest me.
	I like to write about new things.
	I like to write about animals or things I have observed in science.
	I have favorite authors or series of books.
	I often write about something interesting I have seen.
	I have favorite subjects that I like to write about.
	I do not enjoy choosing a topic to write about.
	I often write about things I observe in science.
	I make pictures in my mind when I write.
	I enjoy writing about important concepts.
	I write about places I visit.

The questionnaire format was chosen because of the advantage of face-to-face collection of the data and economy of the design. The interval between pre- and post was 3 weeks, from the beginning of the metaphor writing lesson until the conclusion.

The pre-, post- survey questionnaire was administered to the same subjects once before and once after the metaphor lesson. Comparisons of the two sets of responses were made to determine any changes in the subjects' responses and subsequent engagement level. This design procedure, while not scientifically rigorous, can determine effectiveness of a particular program, particularly when controlled experimental comparison groups are unavailable (Cresswell, 1994; McMillan & Schumacher, 2001; Spector, 1981).

Writing Quality and Tonal Score Rubric

A goal of this study was to understand what factors affect the quality of a poem the students were asked to write. Since as a matter of course the writing is not graded in the classroom, it is therefore important to be able to rate the quality of the students' final writing assignment.

A rubric was developed for determining tonal score and writing quality of the student writing samples, ranging from very positive to very negative. Two teachers, a writing instructor, and I developed the rubric to measure the tonal variations of the student writing, and the quality of the writing. We incorporated a holistic approach (Cooper & Odell, 1977) for scoring the poetry, focusing on a tonal message and insightful or original language rather than more mechanistic functions of writing. After examining several rubrics for scoring writing, the final rubric was developed from a combination of elements from several versions available online at

http://www.teachervison.fen.com/tv/printables, then customized for my own use. Several student writing samples from previous years, developed as a result of the same writing intervention and chosen at random, provided a baseline for determining the range of tonal and writing quality elements most likely to be of interest in assessing the current students' work. They were used as an example for the raters to develop a sense of what various ratings, from low to high, might look like for the poems they would be asked to rate. After several alterations the team agreed on a three-part rubric with ratings of 1 to 4 in three categories: a) organization and overall impact, b) elements of the poem, and c) mechanics. The final rubric also included a place for comments. The rubric scores provided an anchor rating scale to evaluate the writing samples.

All 34 poems were evaluated by four experienced raters. Two of the raters were the classroom teachers; the third rater was a linguistics professor and the fourth an editor and published poet, both of whom are trusted colleagues of mine. The teachers recognized the authors of the poems since they had taught at least half of the students whose writing comprised the sample. We developed the rubric as a team, with me leading and soliciting feedback and comment from the raters. All four raters had ample opportunity to provide feedback on the development of the rubric and to ask questions about its application. All four raters received the same instructions concerning the application of the rubric; the basics of the metaphor writing lesson were also explained to them, including the recent lessons the students had been taught on the use of verbs, adverbs, and other forms of speech. The raters also knew the students had recently studied the rain forest and its creatures, and were initially working off of a template. Hence, the raters were aware that some congruity would be normal. A sample poem was

used by the raters for practice before they began the actual rating process. The ratings were conducted in separate physical spaces. The raters returned the poems to me after they completed the ratings and I entered the scores.

The raters used a holistic approach to scoring the writing (Cooper & Odell, 1977). That is, they scored the overall poem based on certain agreed-upon features and assigned it a numeric grade. The rubric contained three categories, each with a possible score of 1 to 4. The 1 to 4 scoring was chosen to avoid the tendency to choose a 3 as a central score, thus encouraging the rater to make an informed decision rather than a random choice. After scoring each category, the rater assigned an overall score to the poem. The mean score of each poem's ratings from each of the four raters was used in the analysis, thus dampening the effect of any extreme scores. See Figure 2 for scoring rubric.

Metaphor Identification Process

The metaphors subjects produced in their writing were also counted and identified. Two types of metaphors were collected: container (coded CN) and orientation (coded OR) (see discussion under Operational Definitions, p. 58) to observe for patterns across the various demographics. I identified and coded the metaphors according to the following criteria:

1. Metaphors should be well-developed, beyond simply "fill-in-the-blanks" from the template;
2. Metaphors should not be overused, common or "dead" (Searle, 1998);

Scoring Rubric: Poetry/Things Inside of Me
Student: _____

	4	**3**	**2**	**1**
Organization and Overall Impact	The poem enables the reader to see, hear, feel, or think about the writer's feelings or thinking in a new way or in a more potent way than ever before.	The poem enables the reader to see, hear, feel, or think about the writer's feelings or thinking.	The poem enables the reader to see, hear, feel, or think about the writer's feelings or thinking, but this is accomplished through clichés, worn-out images, or other predictable choices.	The poem does not enable the reader to see, hear, feel, or think about the writer's feelings or thinking.
Elements of the Poem	Sensory details and figurative language create vivid images that contribute significantly to the meaning of the poem. Choices of images are original and not predictable.	Sensory details and figurative language contribute to the meaning of the poem.	Sensory details and figurative language may be overused, underused, or inappropriate to the subject. Word choices may be vague, repetitive, or imprecise.	There is no use—or consistently confusing or inappropriate use—of sensory details and figurative language. Words may be misused or unclear.
Mechanics of the Poem	The writer not only met the standards for the assignment, but elaborated on several themes beyond the minimum required and provided extra details, such as a title, that were not a required part of the assignment.	The writer met the minimum standards for the assignment and elaborated on the theme by writing more than was required.	The writer met the minimum standards for the assignment.	The writer did not meet the minimum standards for the assignment.

Comments:

Figure 2. Scoring Rubric

3. Metaphors should fit within the operational definitions of container or orientation (Lakoff, 2003).

After the initial coding, I reviewed the poems a second time and again coded the metaphors. I included in the final count metaphors that were selected for inclusion on both of my reviews of the poems.

Sampling Issues

School Conditions

The study was conducted with a purposive sample, using two fifth-grade classes in a private suburban school in Pennsylvania. The sample was chosen because the fifth-grade language arts curriculum includes a unit on learning to write using metaphor. The school is one of the oldest non-sectarian day schools in the United States, and went co-ed from an all boys school in 1961. The school has three divisions: lower school (pre-K to 5^{th} grade); middle school (6^{th} to 8^{th} grade); and upper school (9^{th} to12^{th} grade). This study was conducted in the lower school. The school typically has about 1,100 students; in any given year, there are approximately 16% of the student body who receive scholarships. For the sample in this study, the scholarship students were in fact teachers' children. Since the children of teachers do not pay tuition, they are counted as scholarship students. Two other students in the sample were scholarship students and not children of teachers. However, all of the scholarship students, both children of teachers and two who were not, were from middle-class or upper middle-class families. Therefore, economic status was not a contributing variable for this sample. The two fifth-grade classes in the study were taught by female teachers, each with over 25 years teaching experience. Both teachers hold masters degrees and are long-term members of the faculty.

Students from two classes were included; thus comparison groups within and across the two classes were also used to determine effects across classes.

Classroom Conditions

Students were assigned subject identifiers. The school and teachers provided demographic information including: race, age (in months because of the short timeframe for the study), and gender. There was so little difference in the age across the sample that it was not included in this study.

There were 35 students in the two classes, with 18 in class 0 and 17 in class 1, a 51.4% to 48.6 % breakdown of the total number in the sample. All but one student participated in the study for a sample size of $N = 34$. The gender breakdown was 18 females to 16 males, divided between classes, 51.4% to 48.6%. Ethnicity for the sample was 74.3% ($n = 26$) White, 14.3% ($n = 5$) African-American, and 11.4% ($n = 4$) Asian-American.

Teacher Characteristics

The classroom teachers are both White and female. They have been each teaching for over 30 years. Teacher A has been teaching in the school for 15 years; Teacher B has been teaching in the school for 25 years. Both have advanced degrees. They have both been teaching the writing metaphor module as part of the standard curriculum for several years. I visited both classrooms on several occasions and their teaching characteristics incorporate solid pedagogical skills. As one teacher noted, "We definitely operate as 'guides on the side' as opposed to the 'sage on the stage'." With a strong emphasis on differentiating instruction to accommodate various learning styles and multiple intelligences, the lessons are hands-on, discovery-driven, and process-rather-than-product

oriented. The classrooms are set-up to be interactive, and in my site visits I noted a strong constructivist approach, where the students are actively involved, there is high energy and activities are interactive and student-centered. Both teachers provide a democratic environment where each student is allowed time to respond and question, students work together on projects but also have time alone where appropriate. The process of learning at the school is one in which student responsibility and good citizenship are encouraged and acknowledged.

Conditions of the Study

Access and Consent

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval through Temple University was granted in December 2006 and renewed in December 2007. See Appendix B for copies. The study began in March 2007, when the study was explained to the students in the two classes by their teachers. The teachers distributed consent forms and letters of explanation to the students, who were asked to have their parents or guardians sign consent forms agreeing to have the students participate in the study. See copy in Appendix C. Signed forms were returned to the school from all but one student ($N = 34$).

I also requested and received a signed letter from the head of the Lower School (the principal equivalent in public school), granting me access to the school for the purpose of the study. A copy of the letter is included in Appendix D.

Implementing the Study

I scheduled several meetings with the two teachers, both on-site at the school and off-site, where we discussed what would be the optimum point in the curriculum to administer the pre-survey questionnaire. We decided that the pre-survey questionnaire

should be administered prior to the start of the actual writing process and at the point in the teaching module where the students are being introduced to the writing of the poem and also to the construct of metaphor to be included in their assigned writing. The post-survey questionnaire was administered after the students completed the writing assignment.

Administering Pre-survey Questionnaire. The two teachers administered the pre-survey to their own classes in advance of the metaphor lesson, having decided that the teacher administering the survey would be less distracting and intrusive for the students than having an outsider administer it. The teachers explained that this exercise was not a test and that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. They also reconfirmed that the students understood that we wanted to learn how they feel about their writing and they should answer as honestly as they could. Both teachers went through the warm-up exercise using the two examples from the front of the questionnaire. They asked the students if they had any questions and then proceeded. The teachers read each question and then waited for the students to write down their answers. The entire process took approximately 45-minutes, with Class A taking slightly longer. The teachers then collected the surveys and returned them to me. I coded them as per class 0 or 1, marked them as the pre-survey questionnaires, and entered the responses into Excel.

The Metaphoric Writing Lesson. Through several discussions with the teachers and examination of the curriculum, I determined that the study should be initiated at the point in the literacy lesson when the students are preparing to learn about metaphor, simile, and other figurative language. The students at this point are introduced to definitions of figurative language, specifically personification, metaphor, simile, and

exaggeration. They have completed reviewing adjectives, adverbs, and powerfully descriptive verbs. Earlier in the semester, they were reading and discussing *The Lilith Summer* (Irwin, 1979), with particular discussion around the quote on page 85 where Lilith says, "All of us are many people: the people we once were, the people who have loved us, even the people who have hurt us. We're pack rats. We store away bits and pieces and somehow they turn into selves that become an I."

The book discussion prepares the students for the metaphor writing lesson and occurred just prior to the administration of the survey. This teaching module of interest in the study is constructed to last three weeks and covers five topics. The schedule is as follows:

- Listing the similes, metaphors, and other figures of speech in *The Lilith Summer*.
- Brainstorming a list of human emotions.
- Listing at least 10 emotions the students have experienced in their lives, which have made them "who they are today." The students are reminded that we are indeed a compilation of all that we have experienced.
- Reading the poem, "Wilderness" by Carl Sandburg and discussing the metaphors. This poem serves as a model for the final writing assignment. (See Appendix E for a copy of the poem.)
- Students add to their "emotions lists" and practice writing a metaphor for each emotional experience...an animal or natural object which will stand for the emotion; e.g., for sorrow, a weeping willow in the rain; for anger, the ocean on a stormy, gray day.

Template for Poems. As a component of the writing lesson, the students are provided with a template (shown below) as a prompt or guide to get them started on the process of developing a poem. As confidence increases, the teachers report that in past classes, most of the students begin writing on their own without the template.

> There's a (noun) inside of me.... a (adjective) , (adjective) (noun) ....it (verb) and .... (adverb) (verb) ... when I'm (adjective) when (adjectives, nouns, verbs) (explanation of what causes the emotion)….I keep (it) because_____. (optional...combination of adjectives, nouns, verbs, adverbs)

Administering Post-survey Questionnaire. The same teachers who administered the pre-survey questionnaire to their class also administered the post-survey questionnaire, and followed the same protocol and under the same conditions as were followed in the administration of the pre-questionnaire. The teachers went through the warm-up exercise using the two examples from the front of the survey. The teachers explained once again that this exercise was not a test and that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. They also reconfirmed that the students understood that we wanted to learn how they feel about their writing and they should answer as honestly as possible. They asked the students if they had any questions and then proceeded. The teachers read each question and then waited for the students to write down their answers. The entire process took approximately 45 minutes, again with Class A taking slightly longer. All 34

students in the sample were available for both the pre- and the post-questionnaire. The teachers then collected the surveys and returned them to me. I coded them as per class 0 or 1, marked them as the post-survey questionnaires, and entered the responses into Excel.

Data Analysis

I entered all collected data into Excel for transporting to the SPSS program for analysis. I initiated a combination of analytic techniques to measure differences in outcomes. Among the techniques I used to analyze the effect of the teaching intervention were: independent samples *t* tests, and paired samples *t* tests. A-parametric Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was run to test for significant differences in scores between the pre- and post-tests. Second, a two-way, repeated measures ANOVA was conducted with pre-post as one factor, and class as the other. The difference between the first and second questionnaires for each individual was computed to assess changes in engagement levels (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2000; Johnson & Bhattacharyya, 2006). I also ran a number of cross-tabulations between variables.

CHAPTER 4
ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The purpose of this study is to look at the effects on student engagement of a lesson on writing with metaphor. The analysis and results for this study are presented here in three parts. The first part presents preliminary analyses and contains a series of initial analyses that were conducted as a basis for the remaining analyses reported in this chapter. The second part contains the analyses relevant to the major research questions. The final part presents several additional analyses that are included to elaborate and extend the results.

Preliminary Analyses

Data checks for reliability

Two instruments were used in this study: the Writing Motivation Questionnaire and the Writing Quality and Tonal Scoring Rubric. Information on reliability checks is presented here.

The Writing Motivation Questionnaire was used to measure engagement in the writing lesson. This instrument was modified from the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ), first used as an assessment tool by Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) to explore different aspects of children's reading motivation. Factor analyses were done by Wigfield and Guthrie for the various items in each sub-construct for their original study. Items with values less than .40 were eliminated; remaining items reported values ranging

from .41 to .83 and were considered as reliable measures of motivation (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997).

Factor analyses were done for this study on the elements of the Writing Motivation Questionnaire to assess the instrument overall and for each of the sub-constructs of engagement separately. To ascertain the internal consistencies for the subscales and total score of the engagement survey, Cronbach alpha coefficients were computed for both the pre-test and post-test. These results are contained in Table 3.

Table 3. Cronbach Alpha Coefficients for Writing Motivation Questionnaire

	Pre-test	*Post-test*
Self-efficacy	.16	.30
Willingness to write	.60	.80
Choice of subject matter	.41	.44
Total	.72	.77

The alpha components for the individual sub-constructs of the instrument are small, but the overall score is acceptable.

The second instrument used in this study is the Writing Quality and Tonal Scoring Rubric. Four raters evaluated the writing artifacts from the study. The Cronbach alpha coefficient to measure inter-rater reliability was in the acceptable range at .72.

Differences between the classes

Since there were two classes used for the research an analysis was conducted to ascertain if the classes were similar. Independent samples *t*-tests were conducted on all of the relevant variables. These results are contained in Table 4.

Table 4. Independent Samples *t*-Test Results by Class

	Class	*N*	*Mean*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Grade level placement	A	17	1.88	.85	1.53	.136
	B	17	1.38	1.03		
Gates grade equivalency	A	17	7.00	1.50	-1.82	.078
	B	17	7.88	1.31		
Container metaphors used	A	16	.65	.786	-.2.58	.014
	B	17	1.59	1.278		
Orientation metaphors used	A	17	.88	1.11	-.617	.541
	B	17	1.12	1.11		
Number of words in poems	A	17	287.88	51.52	-1.025	.313
	B	17	317.06	105.43		

Table 4 indicates that the two classes are different in a number of ways that might affect the results. For instance, students in class B tested almost one full grade higher on the Gates-McGinitie test than did the students in Class A. Other differences, though not statistically significant, were consistent across the two classes. As a consequence, this will be taken into account for all of the analyses where class might be a factor.

An independent samples *t* test was conducted to compare the two classes on other variables. The test revealed no significant differences on the pre-test for class A (M = 85.25, SD = 10.46) and class B (M = 90.17, SD = 7.57) or on the post-test for class A (M = 86.35, SD = 10.9) and class B (M = 90.82, SD = 9.98). The independent samples *t* test likewise showed measures of student competency were not significant.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: Is there a significant effect on student engagement following participation in a metaphoric writing lesson?

A paired-samples *t* test was conducted on the three sub-scales of the engagement questionnaire as well as on the total score to evaluate the impact of the intervention on students' scores on the engagement questionnaire, pre- and post- the metaphor writing lesson. There was no statistically significant increase in scores from the first questionnaire to the second for any of the components or for the total score. Two additional analyses were conducted to analyze these data from a somewhat different perspective. First, a non-parametric Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was run and confirmed that there were no significant differences in scores between the pre- and post-tests. Second, a two-way, repeated measures ANOVA was conducted with pre-post as one

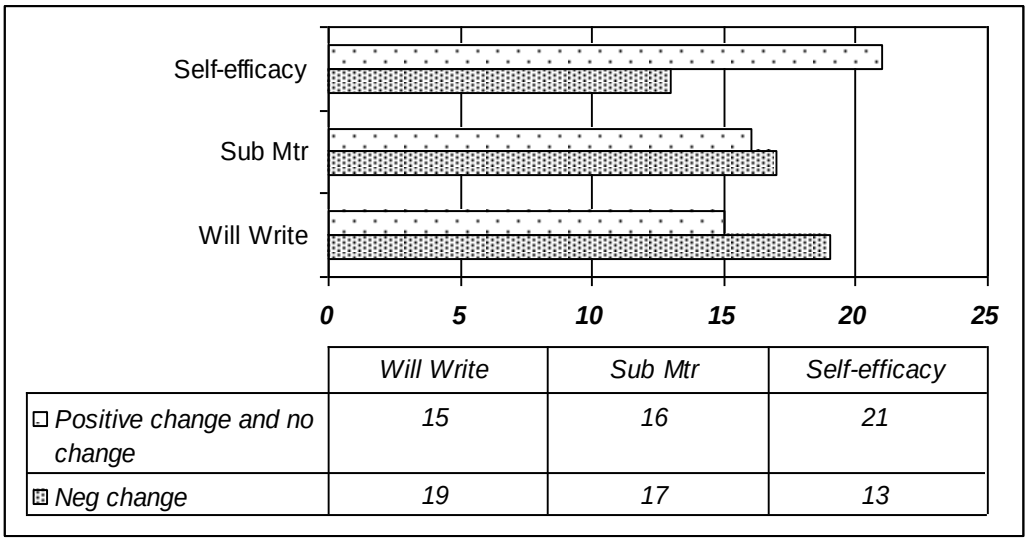
factor, and class as the other. None of the factors from this ANOVA were significant. Table 5 lists the results of the paired samples *t* test by sub-construct.

Table 5. Paired Samples *t*-Test Results for Sub-constructs of Engagement

	Pre-test, *N* = 34		Post-test, *N* = 34		*t*	*p*
Sub-construct	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*		
Self-efficacy	21.17	2.69	21.61	3.04	-1.00	.32
Willingness to write	30.23	4.29	30.00	5.66	.37	.70
Choice of subject matter	36.45	4.27	36.90	4.66	-.66	.50
Total	87.78	9.28	88.42	10.65	.43	.66

Figure 3, below, plots the different sub-constructs of engagement measured in this study and how the 34 students in the sample responded on the pre- and post-survey questions. No results are significant.

An independent samples *t* test was conducted to compare pre-test and post-test scores for the two classes in the study on the sub-constructs of engagement. The results of the independent sample *t* test, by class, for the three subconstructs are reported in Table 6.



	Will Write	*Sub Mtr*	*Self-efficacy*
Positive change and no change	*15*	*16*	*21*
Neg change	*19*	*17*	*13*

Figure 3. Change in Sub-constructs of Engagement, Pre- and Post-survey

Table 6. Independent Samples *t*-Test Results for Sub-constructs of Engagement by Class

	Class	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Pre-, Self-efficacy	A	17	20.76	2.90	-.889	.380
	B	17	21.58	2.47		
Pre-, Willingness to Write	A	17	28.58	4.24	-2.39	.023
	B	17	31.88	3.77		

Table 6. (continued)

	Class	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Pre-, Choice of Subject Matter	A	16	36.18	4.70	-.343	.734
	B	17	36.70	3.96		
Post-, Self-efficacy	A	17	20.88	2.95	1.430	.162
	B	17	22.35	3.04		
Post-, Willingness to Write	A	17	27.94	5.23	-2.24	.032
	B	17	32.05	5.45		
Post-, Choice of Subject Matter	A	17	37.52	4.73	.702	.488
	B	17	36.41	4.55		
Total, pre-test	A	17	85.25	10.46	-1.541	.135
	B	17	90.17	7.57		
Total, post-test	A		86.35	10.90	-1.247	.221
	B		90.82	9.98		

No significant effect was reported for the subconstructs of self-efficacy and choice of subject matter. There was a significant effect for the subconstruct of willingness

to write in pre-test scores for class A (M = 28.58, SD = 4.24) and class B (M = 31.88, SD = 3.77); $t(32) = -2.39$, $p = .02$). There was also a significant effect in post-test scores for class A (M = 27.94, SD = 5.23) and class B (M = 32.05, SD = 5.45); $t(31) = -1.43$, $p = .03$). The data indicate that class A decreased in willingness to write after the metaphor lesson was completed. Class B increased in willingness to write after the metaphor lesson.

Research Question 2: What was the effect of the writing lesson on the poems the students produced?

The poetry created by the students for the writing lesson provided a rich source of qualitative data for this study. Table 7 provides descriptive data for the poems the students produced.

Table 7. Descriptive Data for Student Poems (N = 34)

	M	*SD*
Number of words	302.47	83.04
Number of container metaphors	1.15	1.14
Number of orientation metaphors	1.03	1.10
Quality rating	2.91	.53

The word count for the poems ranged from a low of 166 words to a high of 554 words (M = 302.47, SD = 83.04). The standard deviations are high indicating

considerable variation across students in the length of the poems. The students were required to complete one full pass at the template provided for the lesson. The word count for the poems indicated that a large number of the students wrote more than the lesson required.

The relationship between the quality rating of the poems (as measured by the four raters using the tonal quality rating scale) and measures of student poetry (i.e., number of words, number of container metaphors, and number of orientation metaphors), was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedacity. There was a high positive correlation between the quality ratings and the number of words in the poem [$r = .65$, $n = 34$, $p<.01$], with longer poems rated higher. There was a high correlation between the quality ratings and the number of container metaphors in the poems [$r = .50$, $n = 34$, $p<.01$], with poems using container metaphors rated higher. There was a moderate correlation between the quality ratings and the number of orientation metaphors in the poems [$r = .40$, $n = 34$, $p<.05$], with poems using orientation metaphors rated higher. Type of metaphor was not a consideration in rating the poems and raters were not oriented to observe for particular types of metaphor.

All metaphors begin with images. The images the students chose varied, but fell into several basic categories: animal (large and small, including insects), birds (enough of these were chosen to warrant a separate category); nature images, and other. There were some interesting percentages by gender. The category of image chosen most often by the males was large animal, with 33% ($n = 36$) of the images. For females, the category of image chosen most often was small animal, at 36.8% ($n = 35$). Males chose more images

from nature (17.4%, *n* = 19) than females (12.6%, *n* = 12). Table 8 shows the breakdown for each category.

Table 8. Images Chosen for Metaphors by Gender

	Animal					
	Small	*Large*	Bird	Nature	Other	Total
Male	33 (33.02%)	36 (30.27%)	17 (15.59%)	19 (17.43%)	4 (3.66%)	109
Female	35 (26.31%)	25 (26.31%)	22 (23.15%)	12 (12.63%)	1 (.01%)	95

The students moved from the images they chose and began to develop metaphors. As noted in the operational definitions for this study, metaphor development is a process that involves thinking beyond the ordinary and combining thought and experience. Included below is an example from a poem where the image was not successfully developed.

> Example:
> There's a macaw inside of me…a chattering bubble of artistry
> Its sweet voice reigns over all the forest…then it flies away, feeling joyous
> I keep this macaw for artistic and musical ability…and for joy beyond
> what any **horse** could bring.

The writer intuits that owning a horse would bring joy, but the link to the macaw as the vehicle of joy is weak and not sustainable.

Other images are developed into successful metaphors, as in the example below of an orientation metaphor.

Example:
There's a macaw in me…a beautiful, graceful macaw…soaring above the clouds, away from all troubles

The writer recognizes that life has boundaries and has used the recent classroom discussion on creatures of the rainforest to access the image of the macaw. In this poem, the vehicle of the macaw is successful and effective. The flight image has been extended to "soaring above" as a venue for escape from perceived limitations, i.e., "all troubles."

Consistently, the student writers access recent information and recently acquired images; their experiences are more immediate than more mature writers. Their experiences are often what happened during Friday's soccer practice or last night at dinner.

Table 9 below categorizes container and orientation metaphors developed by the students in their poetry.

The writing suggests that the students in the study are capable of introducing the container and orientation metaphors into their writing. To complete the metaphor they need to situate it into an experience. Most students have not developed a world stance that would allow a broader perspective of the world (Langer, 1990) and make this transition with very recent experiences, such as "I am sad because I fight with my brother" or "I am sad because I forgot the lines in the play" rather than extending the emotion to the broader universe.

Table 9. Selected Student Metaphors

Container	Orientation
Crab pacing up and down the dreary monotony	That boy was going down
Leap for joy out of my mind	Fighting through layers and layers, up
Trapped in an echoless room	Storm blows me out
Hiding inside its shell	Through the clouds and out
The world on my back	Flying too far
Fenced in	Flying towards the sun
Want to get out of the bag	Flying high, leaving the lie
Closed in a bag	Soaring above the clouds away from trouble
My awesome camouflage makes me invisible	Flying, leaving a path of color
Come out from its shell	Carried through the sky on wings
I'm in a falling wall of evil	Bring my spirit down
Their prison of evil and darkness	My mind soars high
This silent cocoon	When people cut me down my spirit weeps strives to be let out (2)
The anger pours out	Go explore and be set free
A raging river dam	Fly into the sky above the clouds
The turtle of my life	Up and down up and down I rise
The balloon inside of me	Wishes can run and fly
A heaven of air love and kindness weighs me	A sun in me rises
Caught in a steel cage destroy the cage	The butterfly in me glides out

Table 9. (continued)

Container	Orientation
Bottled up water	My leaf flows out when I'm bored
My turtle (in my mind) wishes to go back to its shell	The bird lets me fly
My anger bottled up	My courage strides forth
The slow mind hides in a shell	My sloth crawls out when I am tired
I am a trapped and beautiful swan	The wolf in me slinks out slowly
I need to break free	The ant in me climbs ever higher
Everyone needs to fly away	The excited monkey in me leaps ahead
My mind peaks [sic] out	A delicate love flutters away from me
The bird stretches me when I am cooped up inside	
Fly fast from me	
My cloud cradles me	
The wild wind bursts free	
The front door abruptly opening in my heart	
Everyone needs a shell	

Additional Analyses: Gender Differences

An independent samples *t* test was conducted to compare the pre-test, post-test scores for males and females. The test revealed no significant differences on the pre-test

for males (M = 88.64, SD = 9.64) and females (M = 86.86, SD = 9.12) or on the post-test for males (M = 89.38, SD = 11.18) and females (M = 87.68, SD = 10.04).)

Additional independent samples t tests were conducted to compare the use of container and orientation metaphors for males and females. There was no significant difference in use of container metaphors for males (M = 1.17, SD = 1.15) and females (M = 1.06, SD = 1.18). There was no significant difference in use of orientation metaphors for males (M = 1.11, SD = 1.13) and females (M = .88, SD = 1.08).

Additional independent t tests were conducted to compare other variables, including competency measures and the three sub-constructs of engagement. There were no statistically significant results for these tests.

Summary

The writing lesson on metaphor had no significant effect on student engagement. The lack of significance was consistent across gender, competency, and sub-constructs of engagement. The study suggests there was a relationship between competency and length of the poems that were written, and between choice of type of metaphor and quality of the poems. A number of differences in the make-up of the two classes emerged, but these were not significant.

The students appeared to produce poems that suggest an understanding of metaphor as a linguistic device. A number of higher-level metaphors, categorized as container or orientation metaphor, were successfully developed as a result of the writing lesson.

CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to report on the effect of a metaphor writing lesson on student engagement. In this chapter of the dissertation I will summarize and discuss the findings, consider some general implications of the findings, review limitations of the study, and consider the implications for future research.

Summary and Discussion

The level of engagement measured after the writing with metaphor lesson failed to increase significantly. This finding was consistent across measures of competency and gender. This may, in part, be a function of the relatively small sample size. It could also be a function of the overall high scholastic aptitude of the students in the two classes studied. Most of the students scored well-above grade level as measured by the Gates-McGinitie reading test. In addition, the data show that the work they produced was highly rated, and all students completed the assignment. According to the two classroom teachers, this assignment is one of very few that enjoys one hundred percent completion.

The scores on the pre-test survey were high prior to the writing lesson, with a mean of 88 out of a possible 128 points. The students in the study scored well on the sub-constructs of engagement before the lesson was implemented. My observations of the classroom activity also support that the teachers both practice many aspects indicative of a nurturing community of learners. They greet the students by name as they enter the classroom, they give each student ample time to respond to questions and call on students

who are not engaged in the discussion. Both teachers appear to know their students as individuals and provide a variety of activities for diverse learning styles. They work with individuals, small-group, and whole-class instruction. By focusing on the learning needs of the individual, the students are provided a greater than usual support for their particular learning needs (Wang, 1992). All of this would argue that the students who participated in this study were highly engaged prior to the study.

The poems the students produced are a valuable source of information for this study. They contain the metaphors being considered, the words and phrases being parsed, and serve as one measure of engagement by the students. In order to provide some qualitative measure of engagement from the poems, they have been deconstructed, measured, and rated. However, poetry as a genre is complicated and often multifaceted in meaning and interpretation; poems are dense and reflect personal experience and individual interpretation. Poetic meaning is highly individualistic, as indeed it should be. Teaching students to write poetry is a difficult task. The teachers in this study used a scaffolded process that extends student vocabulary and creates in the student an awareness of the wide range of nouns, pronouns, verbs, and adjectives at their disposal. They teach the students to think about their emotions, and write them down. They expose them to exemplary poetry that is within the grasp of a fifth-grade mind, and provide a template to get them started. In many ways, they are priming the "linguistic reservoir" that Rosenblatt asserts is essential for a successful writing strategy (Rosenblatt, 1995). Langer (1995) would refer to this as part of the "meaning-making" process of writing.

One of the limitations of such a step-by-step process is that many of the poems were formulaic. It is important to keep perspective though, since for a number of the

students in the fifth-grade classes, this attempt at writing poetry could be a first attempt. Poetry is not a genre to which many adults are widely exposed, let alone children. However, regardless of the product produced, the artist or the writer are not excluded from leaving the canvas or the page as their art improves and the writer gains confidence and a sense of individual expression. Using the template without deviation did not necessarily lead the student to create a substandard assignment, since the process begins with a template. However, at times the formula did make students overly dependent on adjectives and adverbs, and make for awkward associations, as in this excerpt:

> There's a macaw inside of me…a chattering bubble of artistry
> Its sweet voice reigns over all the forest…then it flies away, feeling joyous
> I keep this macaw for artistic and musical ability…and for joy beyond what any horse could bring.

In this excerpt, the student has successfully expanded his vocabulary and seems enthusiastic in the attempt to incorporate as many new words as possible into the writing assignment, while also incorporating good sensory details. He seems aware of the different forms of speech and has filled in the template with the proper category of word choice. There is energy in the writing in the choice of vocabulary. However, the choices are not apt and come across as somewhat nonsensical rather than creative; there is no alignment of ideas or appropriate metaphoric development.

Metaphor is a concept that embeds culture and language and influences subsequent discourse (Cameron & Deignan, 2006). Several students reflected personal insights about their environment, both in and out of school, and supported those insights with appropriate metaphors as in these lines:

> There is a mourning dove inside of me
> A sad, depressed, mourning dove.

This author has selected an image in nature that reflects sadness and defeat; he goes on to discuss a situation in his life that is concerning him and uses images to support a sense of entrapment. The teachers report that in several instances the writing is self-revelatory and can lead to useful discussions with the students concerning what they wrote about in the assignment.

Several interpretations included more appropriate alignment of verb and noun that were both apt and original, as in these lines:

> There's an ant inside of me, scared and lonely, it ambles out cautiously…
>
> There's a penguin inside of me, clumsy and offbeat, it waddles out when I am feeling different…

Other verb choices included nice images, such as cantering, strutting, and gliding. Though these verb choices were better aligned to the noun, they did not yet evolve into metaphor, but they are headed in the right direction.

A number of the students replicated the format of the Carl Sandburg poem rather too closely, sometimes choosing tropes or figures beyond their own understanding. Thus they ended up with irrelevant or antithetical justifications (Page, 2007). For example, one student's use of a balloon image is clearly antithetical rather than metaphoric: "There's a balloon inside of me, a bulky packed balloon." The writer may be attempting to convey a sense of feeling weighted down, using the image of the packed balloon to indicate a paralysis of some kind. But it is difficult to connect the image to a life experience, in this case a "bulky, packed balloon," so the metaphor does not successfully make the transition to linking words and experience and comes off as awkward rather than creative.

The exercise does seem in many instances, however, to be effective at producing metaphor, and a clear understanding for many of the writers of how to develop an image into a metaphor. While initially following the template as a guide, several student writers produced mature, finely-written metaphoric images, as this young writer exemplifies:

> There's a macaw inside of me…it soars free, out of human reach….my spirit soars with it, flying, leaving a path of color…a part of my soul flies with the macaw…it carries a life of freedom…my personality is drawn in its feathers.

The sense of movement in this segment provides an example of the two metaphors being categorized for this study: container and orientation. The writer uses the bird imagery to soar and the feathers and color to create a metaphoric path away from whatever earth-bound concerns may be tethering the writer. The writer has used the interplay of words and imagery to connect to his own experience.

Metaphor is a process of recognizing what one already knows and applying it in new situations. Lee's research (1995) pointed this out and suggests that there is a link between knowledge retrieval and schema theory; the experiences pre-wired in our brains can be applied to new situations or in the case of metaphor, one can take an image and use it to reflect an existing experience. Many of the writers in this study were quite competent in applying cognitive experiences to physical images; some showed a developing and mature talent for such writing, and used emotions such as "jealousy runs rampant" and there is "a huge anger in me" to describe their feelings.

Mature images of clay, mud, and dust were used to convey recognition of the cycle of life and how it is paralleled in man and in nature. The same writer used water images to describe optimism and a rebirth of sorts. A number of the poems were well-

developed by writers who responded to the metaphor writing lesson in a sophisticated way.

In several unstructured interviews with the teachers in the study the point was made that the students really enjoy the assigned writing. Reluctant writers are often converts by the end of the lesson. “There are always kids who do not want to write and are nearly panicked by the idea of writing,” one teacher stated. “But in the years we have been doing this, not one student failed to complete the assignment. That in itself is a remarkable accomplishment.” Prior to the lesson, three students gave themselves the lowest score on the question “I know that I will do well in school next year;” after the lesson, no student scored the lowest number; all thought they would do well in the coming year.

In the development of the poems, a wide range of orientation and container metaphors were chosen. The identification of these metaphors and their categories was done by me without input from others. Deignan (1999) refers to this as “informed intuition,” and argues that it is a legitimate mode of identification in the case of metaphor. Two main advantages to this unilateral approach are that it can be done quickly and by the individual who has the most immediate knowledge of the many aspects of the study. The danger is that it is a very subjective practice; however, poetry and the identification of what is metaphoric is subjective in itself, and by its very nature interpretive.

At the heart of the discussion on metaphor is the truth that all metaphors are technically lies, or as patently absurd in and of themselves (Beardsley, 1967). In other words, your love is not a red, red rose and your brain on drugs does not resemble a fried

egg. The truth in metaphor exists in what it represents and the experience it reflects for the individual and for the reader; these two truths themselves are rarely the same. A metaphoric statement can, however, generate new knowledge and insight (Black, 1993). A number of the students' writings indicated that they had successfully negotiated the transition from metaphor as a linguistic device to metaphor as a function of more mature cognitive ability. The images the students chose to initiate the metaphor-making process fell within socially predictable patterns for males and females. The fact that the differences were not significant is encouraging in a world where difference should matter less than competency.

Limitations of the Study

The study sample was purposive, and while it included all but one student from two classes, it was small ($N = 34$). Though some significance was shown in certain categories, overall it was difficult to derive sufficient power for statistical significance. A larger sample would have provided more opportunity for statistical power. A larger study would also entail other considerations, however, such as the need to provide technical assistance to additional teachers to be able to use the metaphor writing program in their schools. Since this particular writing program is part of an overall literacy-based curriculum, finding additional sample size where the school would be amenable to an entirely new curriculum that could be implemented in a timely fashion and with integrity would be difficult. In addition, if new teachers were sufficiently trained and brought into the study, the variable of novice teachers and expert teachers would have to be considered. This could, however, be incorporated into a new study.

Alternatively, this research could be extended longitudinally over perhaps two or more years, thus increasing the sample size and allowing for comparisons between more than two classes and effectively doubling the sample size.

The sample was also relatively homogeneous across student ability. Most of the students in the sample scored at or above grade level on the Gates-McGinitie Reading test. While there were a few who did not, the majority of the students were reading above grade level. The school does not routinely administer other state assessments, such as the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), since it is not a public school. Therefore, I had to rely on the Gates-McGinitie test scores and the rankings by the teachers as an index for student achievement. The sample was predominantly White, with little ethnic diversity. This lack of diversity eliminated any potentially interesting questions dealing with choice of metaphor between race and ethnicity. There was, however, an acceptable balance between male and female students.

The survey instrument that was used in this study was adapted for writing, with permission, from the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire developed by Wigfield and Guthrie at Vanderbilt University (1997). While it is a reliable and valid instrument for reading, it has not been previously used in the adapted-for-writing format. While reliability scores for the instrument as a whole were acceptable, some of the alpha scores on the sub-constructs for engagement were low, and I would consider removing or rewording some of the questions to increase the reliability of the instrument.

Contribution to the Field/Future Study Possibilities

This study provides an opportunity to look at the strategy of writing with metaphor and see how it impacts on student engagement. The importance of engagement

as an aspect of student success is well-documented; likewise, there is no doubt that engaged students learn more and retain what they have learned. Studies focusing specifically on engagement and writing are not as well-documented.

Engagement is a difficult and multi-faceted construct. In this study, I attempted to separate out three sub-constructs of engagement and look at them independently as they were affected by the writing with metaphor lesson. The three sub-constructs of engagement that were identified for this study—self-efficacy, willingness to write, and choice of subject matter—all contribute to overall engagement. By separating the strands and measuring them independently, the study provided information on priorities within engagement and provided a hierarchy suggesting which aspects of engagement were more or less effective.

Writing is hard work and an important lifetime skill. Even the most accomplished writer has experienced "writer's block" when faced with a blank page. Throughout one's life how one writes is nearly as important a marker as how one speaks. In an information age driven by computers and other technology, the ability to communicate via print is expanding rather than contracting. It is increasingly more important for writing to be approached as a discrete skill and taught with attention not only to style and grammar but to how we think and process what we write. This study contributes to the knowledge base of what we know about how young writers think at a point in time when they are poised to move into an increasingly complicated and assessment-driven school environment.

Students need to be instructed in skills to help them construct meaning from text, increase their analytical ability and become more engaged in the process of learning as making meaning becomes more under their control (Block, 1993; Wood & Harmon,

2001). Many teachers tend to model forms rather than provide strategies to encourage students to access their own experience and develop their own versions of forms (Hillocks, 2002). This study focused on a particular strategy and gave students the flexibility to be creative in applying the metaphor lesson to their own experiences. The study provided an opportunity to collect what the students had written in response to the lesson and observe and document the interplay between writing and various contextual aspects, such as class rank and gender, and consider the importance and significance of such intersections.

Teaching students to write with metaphor might also help students develop cognitive skills. As Sticht (1993) notes: "The metacognitive knowledge of how to manipulate ideas explicitly in metaphor so as to transform either one's own or another's knowledge into new knowledge makes metaphor a major tool for extending our capacities for analytical thought, at the same time changing us as tool users" (p. 631). As a tool for communication and thought, metaphor also has the potential to teach students to think creatively and access information across domains. It is important for them, both linguistically and realistically, to understand that things are often not what they seem to be at first glance. Eleven-year-olds are poised to be less egocentric and to begin to place themselves on the world stage and to see where they best fit in. Thinking creatively and broadly is a critical intellectual survival skill and has the potential to provide access to ideas that, in order to develop, require creativity. Petrie and Oshlag (1993) refer to this aspect of metaphor as *cognitive anomaly*; that is, a metaphor can be identified as such when, on the face of it, it does not seem to make sense. Therefore, it calls into play thinking beyond the concrete to other concepts and ideas it may represent. Students are

encouraged to begin a mental search of their experience and knowledge to begin to think interactively and across domains. Knowledge of metaphor encourages use of cues to expand the possibilities of thinking and to create linkage between concepts and ideas.

Suggestions for Future Research

The concepts of engagement and metaphor both merit further research. A number of the student poems produced revealing personal insights. Such linkage between the nature, experiences, and personality of the writer are anticipated aspects of metaphor. Rosenblatt (1995) referred to this as "transacting with the page." There is a need for future research to analyze student writing, particularly in the pre-adolescent and adolescent, to learn more about how the writer is speaking through the metaphors he/she chooses to self-represent. Metaphors are by definition self-revelatory; many of the students in the current study often transmitted subconscious messages about problems they were having, with such issues as bullying, anger, family concerns at home, and other psychological insights. An analysis of self-revelatory metaphor from a psychological aspect would contribute not only to the fields of education and language, but behavioral sciences as well. It will be important to further investigate the interplay of context and engagement. That includes the relationship between engagement and a wide sample of race, ethnicity, achievement gaps, and the like, and how these confluences affect educational success. Studies focusing on deconstructing the writing artifacts produced by a wide-range of students would be one way to analyze the interplay of context and culture in language.

How students construct meaning, not only from text, but from other mediums as well, is an emerging area of research (Mills, 2001). One understands text in a variety of

ways, and young people today especially approach discourse from a multi-media aspect (Gee, 2003). The experiences they apply to contexts such as gaming seems to be an area of metaphor and understanding that could be a fertile field for the cognitive processes that young people engage as they make sense of their world (Keller, 2002). In the world of gaming, students choose a number of identities and persona; these are actually metaphors, though not linguistically, and would be a rich area for study into the choices children make and what they might represent. Educational research could also be applied to gaming to learn more about the pull of the game and why students are willing to invest so much time and effort into these video-based tests of skill and knowledge.

For younger populations, popular allegories such as nursery rhymes and traditional stories such as *Hansel and Gretel, Goldilocks and the Three Bears,* and others would provide an interesting basis for introducing metaphoric thought. Often interpreting literature is something that is introduced much later, in junior high school or even as late as high school, but opportunities exist with younger children who could apply their own experiences to interpreting traditional allegorical tales, thus becoming familiar early on with the potential for interpretive reading and use of metaphor to enlarge the reading and writing experience.

Finally, in a world where assessment and testing success are the measures of education, encouraging understanding of one's place in the universe of thought is a worthwhile goal. Particularly at the early middle-school level where lifetime habits are encouraged and nurtured, alternative ways to learn about oneself and the world we live in should be part of the educational process. Writing well and understanding what it means

to link one's individual experience with the broader but surprisingly common experiences of history and literature is a way to feel secure that there is a common thread that links us all, one to another.

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APPENDIX A
WRITING MOTIVATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Writing Motivation Questionnaire

The Writing Motivation Questionnaire used in this study was developed from the Reading Motivation Questionnaire, first used by Guthrie and Wigfield:

Guthrie, J. T., & Wigfield, A. (1997). Reading engagement. Motivating readers through integrated instruction. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.

The survey was altered, with permission of the authors. Original questions focused on reading. Therefore, changes were made and wording altered to reflect writing. The questions were not altered in other ways. Several questions were not included since they did not relate to writing, and were very reader-specific. The questions used in the survey are included below the answer scale.

The answer scale:

1 = Very different from me

2 = A little different from me

3 = A little like me

4 = A lot like me

The Questions:

1. I often write when I am not in school.
2. When I am writing, I do not want to stop.
3. I do not write about things I have already seen or experienced.
4. I enjoy the challenge of writing.
5. I am a good writer.
6. I like to tell my family about what I am writing.
7. I write about topics that interest me.
8. I talk to my friends about what I am writing.
9. I write more than I have to in school.
10. I write for pleasure.
11. I like to write about new things.
12. Writing down my thoughts makes me think.
13. I like to write about animals or things I have observed in science.
14. I like when we meet in groups to discuss our writing.
15. I have favorite authors or series of books.
16. I do not write very often.
17. I write a lot.
18. I often write about something interesting I have seen.
19. I really get into my writing once I start.
20. I have favorite subjects that I like to write about.
21. I think writing is fun.
22. I know that I will do well in writing next year.
23. I do not enjoy choosing a topic to write about.
24. I often write about things I observe in nature.
25. I am not a good writer.
26. I make pictures in my mind when I write.
27. Writing helps me think about how I feel.
28. I enjoy writing about important concepts.
29. I write about places I visit.

30. I am confident I can learn to write better by practicing.
31. I can think of the best word to use when I write.
32. My friends and I like to read what each other wrote

APPENDIX B
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

Office for Human Subjects Protections
Institutional Review Board
Medical Intervention Committees A1 & A2
Social and Behavioral Committees B

3400 North Broad Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19140
Phone:215.707.3390 Fax:215.707.8287
e-mail: richard.throm@temple.edu

Research Review Committee B

Recertification of Approval for a Project Involving Human Subjects

Protocol Number:	**10785**
PI:	**SULLIVAN, FRANCIS**
Expires On:	19-Dec-2008
Committee:	**B BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**
Department:	CUR,INSTR. & TECH (1902)
Project Title:	MEASURING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT BEFORE AND AFTER A METAPHOR-BASED WRITING LESSON

Based on a review of your status report, the Institutional Review Board hereby re-approves protocol number **10785** , originally approved on 21-Dec-2006, for the period ending 19-Dec-2008

* Original Review Date: 21-Dec-2006
* Re-Review Date: 03-Dec-2007

It is understood that it is the investigator's responsibility to notify the Committee immediately of any untoward results of this study to permit review of the matter. In such case, the investigator should call Richard Throm at 707-8767.

ZEBULON KENDRICK, Ph.D.
CHAIRMAN, IRB

APPENDIX C
CONSENT FORM

College of Education
TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

Center for Research in Human Development and Education
[illegible]
[illegible]
Philadelphia, PA 19122

phone [illegible]
fax [illegible]
web [illegible]

TITLE: Measuring Student Engagement Before and After a Metaphor-based Reading Lesson

Dissertation Student:
Marilyn Murphy
CITE
1-3372

Advisor and Principal Investigator:
Francis J. Sullivan, Ph.D.
CITE
1-6157

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We are currently engaged in a study of student engagement, particularly as it applies to writing tasks. To help us gain further insight into this area, we wish to observe your child's fifth-grade class as it is involved in a writing and literacy lesson. The lesson will be taught in the Spring of this year and is a part of the child's normal curriculum.

As part of our study, we are requesting your permission to ask your child to fill out a short survey prior to the lesson, and at the end of the unit. The purpose of the survey is to gauge the level of engagement the students exhibited. Responses will be coded with first initials and/or numbers; proper names will not be used in order to protect confidentiality and maintain anonymity.

We welcome questions about the project at any time. Your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to participate at any time without consequence or prejudice.

Questions about rights as a research subject may be directed to Mr. Richard Throm, Office of the Vice President for Research, Institutional Review Board, Temple University, 3400 N. Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA, 19140, (215) 707-8757.
Signing your name below indicates that you have read and understand the contents of this Consent Form and that you agree to have your child participate in this study.

Child's Name

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

Investigator's Signature Date

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY
IRB (COMMITTEE 6) APPROVAL

DEC 2 1 2006

VALID FOR NO MORE THAN ONE YEAR

APPENDIX D
SANDBURG POEM

Carl Sandburg (1878–1967). Cornhuskers. 1918.

22. Wilderness

THERE is a wolf in me … fangs pointed for tearing gashes … a red tongue for raw meat … and the hot lapping of blood—I keep this wolf because the wilderness gave it to me and the wilderness will not let it go.

There is a fox in me … a silver-gray fox … I sniff and guess … I pick things out of the wind and air … I nose in the dark night and take sleepers and eat them and hide the feathers … I circle and loop and double-cross.

There is a hog in me … a snout and a belly … a machinery for eating and grunting … a machinery for sleeping satisfied in the sun—I got this too from the wilderness and the wilderness will not let it go.

There is a fish in me … I know I came from saltblue water-gates … I scurried with shoals of herring … I blew waterspouts with porpoises … before land was … before the water went down … before Noah … before the first chapter of Genesis.

There is a baboon in me … clambering-clawed … dog-faced … yawping a galoot's hunger … hairy under the armpits … here are the hawk-eyed hankering men … here are the blond and blue-eyed women … here they hide curled asleep waiting … ready to snarl and kill … ready to sing and give milk … waiting—I keep the baboon because the wilderness says so. 5

There is an eagle in me and a mockingbird … and the eagle flies among the Rocky Mountains of my dreams and fights among the Sierra crags of what I want … and the mockingbird warbles in the early forenoon before the dew is gone, warbles in the underbrush of my Chattanoogas of hope, gushes over the blue Ozark foothills of my wishes—And I got the eagle and the mockingbird from the wilderness.

O, I got a zoo, I got a menagerie, inside my ribs, under my bony head, under my red-valve heart—and I got something else: it is a man-child heart, a woman-child heart: it is a father and mother and lover: it came from God-Knows-Where: it is going to God-Knows-Where—For I am the keeper of the zoo: I say yes and no: I sing and kill and work: I am a pal of the world: I came from the wilderness.

APPENDIX E
SCHOOL LETTER

GERMANTOWN ACADEMY
P.O. BOX 287
FORT WASHINGTON, PA 19034
FOUNDED 1759

Telephone (215) 646-3500
Fax (215) 646-1216

April 2, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

I grant permission for access to Germantown Academy to Marilyn Murphy, doctoral student at Temple University. Access is granted to observe two fifth-grade classes and to administer a survey in partial fulfillment of her doctorate on "Measuring Student Engagement Before and After a Metaphor Based Reading Lesson".

It is my understanding that permission slips will be sent home to all parents of children in these two classes, one will be returned, signed, prior to the administration of the survey.

Sincerely,
Marie B. Kouls

Marie B. Kouls, Ed.D.
Head of Lower School
Germantown Academy
340 Morris Road
Ft. Washington PA 19034