

EXPLORING ELEMENTARY STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF WRITING FEEDBACK

By

SARAH MARRS *

SHARON ZUMBRUNN **

CAITLIN McBRIDE ***

JK STRINGER ****

* Doctoral Student, Department of Educational Research and Evaluation, Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia, USA.

** Associate Professor, Department of Educational Psychology, Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia, USA.

*** Teacher, Buzz Aldrin Elementary School, Virginia, USA.

**** Doctoral Student, Department of Educational Psychology, Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia, USA.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this descriptive qualitative investigation was to explore elementary students' (N = 867) perceptions of the feedback they receive on their writing. After responding to the closed-ended question, "Do you like to receive feedback about your writing?" students were branched to the appropriate follow-up open-ended question, "Why do/don't you like to receive feedback about your writing from your teacher?" The majority of students reported liking writing feedback and provided reasons related to mastery and positive affective responses to feedback. A sizeable number of students reported not liking feedback and provided reasons related to avoidance of receiving feedback and negative affective responses associated with feedback. Qualitative findings highlight the range of both positive and negative views about writing feedback, as well as the power of listening to student voices.

Keywords: Writing, Teacher Feedback, Feedback Perceptions, Elementary Students, Social Cognitive Theory.

INTRODUCTION

Writing is critical to student success in school (Graham & Harris, 2005) and is the primary means through which students demonstrate knowledge and communicate ideas (Coker, 2007; Graham & Harris, 2004). Improved writing skills can lead to improvements in reading comprehension and reading ability (Graham, 2006; Graham & Hebert, 2011; Hebert, Gillespie, & Graham, 2013). Despite being essential for language and academic tasks, as well as helpful for sorting through complex ideas (Koutsoftas & Gray, 2013), many students struggle to write. Even skilled writers can find the task of writing to be cognitively taxing. For novice or young writers, these difficulties are even more apparent (Olive, Favart, Beauvais, & Beauvais, 2009).

The process of writing requires a range of different skills, from spelling to the synthesis of ideas. It also requires a great deal of self-regulatory behaviors such as planning what and when to write, setting goals, and regulating emotions when writing becomes frustrating (Graham &

Harris, 2000). Each of the individual skills necessary for efficient writing must be employed at different stages of the writing process. One of the most widely accepted cognitive models of the writing process describes writing as three separate processes: planning, translating, and reviewing (Flower & Hayes, 1980). Whereas planning includes goal setting, idea generation, and organization, translating is the production of written text from the generated ideas. Reviewing occurs when the writer evaluates and revises the written text. The three processes are not carried out independently. Instead, they occur simultaneously and repeatedly through the process of writing.

In the elementary classroom, writing can be particularly challenging for children who are just beginning to hone their writing skills (Berninger, Cartwright, Yates, Swanson, & Abbott, 1994) and their ability to plan their writing (Best, Miller, & Naglieri, 2011; Huizinga, Dolan, & Van der Molen, 2006). Developmentally, younger children are often unable to attend to each piece of the writing process at

the same time due to immature working memory capacity (McCutchen, 1996).

As students learn the writing process, it can be helpful for them to participate in Writer's Workshops, through which they receive guidance and feedback from their teachers (Willis, 2001). In one mixed methods study, first grade students who participated in a writer's workshop became better writers – largely due to the feedback they received on their writing as part of the workshop (Jasmine & Weiner, 2007). Specifically, students participated in writer's workshops focused on editing and revising. Students were also required to share their writing with their classmates, who then provided feedback and suggestions for making improvements. As a result, the students' scores on writing samples improved throughout the school year.

Feedback and Students' Perceptions of Feedback

Feedback plays a critical role in the process of understanding (Agius & Wilkinson, 2013; Orell, 2006; Rowe, 2011) and can lead to increases in student learning (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Feedback has been identified not only as a tool for guiding students towards learning targets, but also as a form of academic interaction and encouragement (Rowe, 2011). Specific to writing, the provision of feedback leads to increased writing success for students (Ferris, 1997; Lizzio & Wilson, 2008; Smith & Gorand, 2005; Vardi, 2009). Receiving feedback on writing can lead to increased student writing motivation (Cleary & Zimmerman, 2004; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Pajares, 2003; Schunk & Swartz, 1992), and writing self-regulation (Butler & Winne, 1995; Cleary & Zimmerman, 2004).

Unfortunately, the process of receiving feedback can be difficult and students do not always consider the feedback they receive as being helpful (Carless, 2006; Higgins, Hartley, & Skelton, 2001; Holmes & Papageorgiou, 2009). Additionally, feedback can elicit a variety of emotions from students, ranging from extremely negative to extremely positive (Rowe, Fitness, & Wood, 2013). Since students are invested in their writing, negative feedback can elicit negative emotional responses and actually decrease writing motivation (Robinson, Pope, & Holyoak, 2013). Given that feedback is so critical to learning,

knowing more about students' openness to feedback would allow researchers to have a better understanding of children's affective responses to the feedback process. More importantly, gaining this knowledge can inform teachers how to more effectively give feedback to their students.

Bandura's (1978) social cognitive theory argues that, behavior, cognition, and the environment are closely related within individuals. People are both impacted by and impact the environments in which they exist (Bandura, 2001). Bandura described the two-way relationships that exist between behavior, cognition, and environment as reciprocal determinism (Bandura, 2001). According to this theory, self-efficacy or one's beliefs in his or her ability to accomplish specific tasks is, one of the most critical components of an individual's interactions with their environment (Bandura, 1989). This perspective is helpful in understanding why students' perceptions of feedback could impact their writing self-regulation and motivation for writing. It also suggests that, students' confidence in their writing ability might translate into how they feel about the feedback they receive on their written work. For example, Ekholm, E., Zumbrunn, S. K., & Conklin, S. (2015) found that, students' perceptions of or openness to receiving feedback about their writing partially mediated the relationship between their writing self-efficacy and writing self-regulation aptitude.

Purpose

Till date, most of the research conducted on students' perceptions of feedback has sampled college students (e.g., Ekholm, E., Zumbrunn, S. K., & Conklin, 2015; Carless, 2006; Higgins et al., 2001; Holmes & Papageorgiou, 2009; King, Schrodt, & Weisel, 2009; Poulos & Mahony, 2008; Rowe, 2011). At the elementary level, the impact teacher feedback has on the quality of students' writing has been investigated (Clare, Valdés, & Patthey-Chavez, 2000; Matsumura, Patthey-Chavez, Valdes, & Garnier, 2002) as well as the nature of feedback teachers provide their students (Clare, Valdés, & Patthey-Chavez, 2000; Peterson & Kennedy, 2006). Little work has been done to explore the ways in which young writers perceive feedback on their writing. Given the greater difficulty writing poses to

elementary students, combined with the benefit providing feedback can have on writing success, it is important to understand how children perceive feedback on their writing. Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore the feedback perceptions of young writers.

Research Question

This study was guided by the following research question: How do students perceive feedback they are given on their writing from their teachers?

Method

Participants and Setting

Participants included 867 students in grades 3 – 5 across four elementary schools in a large Southeastern school district in the United States. The sample consisted of both males ($n = 429$) and females ($n = 438$) representing European American (41.1%), African American (27.5%), Hispanic (22.6%), Asian (3.9%), and Indian/Native American (.5%) children. Approximately 4.5% of students identified with two or more ethnicities. The children in the study are representative of the suburban area in which they reside. Roughly 13% of students received special education services and 7% received gifted education services.

Data Collection and Analysis

The current study is one component of a larger project examining elementary and secondary students' perceptions of the writing process and themselves as writers. All data were collected during the spring semester in students' classrooms using an online survey platform. The online survey data collection format and the large sample limited the qualitative data for this study to one open-ended question. Students first responded to the closed-ended question, "Do you like to receive feedback about your writing?" Next, students were branched to the appropriate follow-up open-ended question, "Why do/don't you like to receive feedback about your writing from your teacher?"

To help ensure developmentally appropriate methodology, the prompt and all instructions were provided in written and audio formats within the online instrument. All students completed the prompt

independently; however, classroom teachers across all grade levels made accommodations based on students' individual needs. For example, some teachers reported that, they recorded dictated responses for students with writing or language difficulty. Participant responses were not limited by character, word count, or time. Student responses ranged from no response, to a few words, to two to three sentences or phrases.

Data analysis followed procedures for conventional content analysis for this exploratory descriptive qualitative investigation (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Sandelowski, 2000). First, student responses to the open-ended question were divided into two sets: 1) students who reported liking writing feedback (answered, "yes" to the closed-ended question, "Do you like to receive feedback about your writing?"), and 2) students who reported disliking writing feedback (answered, "no" to the closed-ended question, "Do you like to receive feedback about your writing?"). Using inductive category development (Mayring, 2000), whereby readers immerse themselves in the data, two researchers next read all data several times. While independently reviewing students' responses, readers noted recurring ideas. The readers then met to compare and discuss patterns in the data and develop initial codes. Constant comparative analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) was used to ensure that connections, contrasts, and comparisons between codes covered all data and were mutually exclusive. Final codes for perceptions of writing feedback were co-determined by both team members. Each reader independently coded half of all student responses then met to determine final coding of all data. Discrepancies between readers were discussed and reconciled to 100% agreement.

A quantitative analysis of students' qualitative responses also was conducted. Each code was converted into a numerical binary code and the whole of the data was analyzed statistically. That is, each student response received a binary score for each of the codes: '1' if the response aligned with the code, or '0' if the response did not align with the code. The process of numerical coding permitted a frequency analysis for each code assigned throughout the sum of the qualitative data. Averages of

binary scores equated the percentage of the proportion of participants whose response aligned with each code. It was possible for individual responses to align with multiple codes, as many students included several reasons for either liking or disliking to receive writing feedback. As a final step in the process, all codes were grouped into categories and subcategories for liking/disliking writing feedback (Patton, 2002).

Findings

Significantly more students ($n = 765$) answered “yes” to the question, “Do you like to receive feedback about your writing” than those who answered “no” ($n = 102$). The main qualitative categories and subcategories for both liking writing feedback and disliking writing feedback are described in the following sections. To understand students' perceptions of the feedback they receive on their writing, the main emphasis is on the qualitative analysis of the data. The number of responses in each category and subcategory are provided to illustrate magnitude.

What are the Reasons Students Give for Liking Writing Feedback?

The majority (88%) of students reported that they like

receiving feedback about their writing. The reasons for liking writing feedback were grouped into two main qualitative categories (“Mastery” and “Positive Affect”). Table 1 shows the categories, subcategories, frequencies of student responses, and exemplar quotes. Approximately 16% ($n = 119$) of the students who indicated that they like to receive feedback about their writing provided either an unrelated or non-response to the open-ended question. Sample uncoded positive qualitative responses include: “don't know”, “I like to write sometimes,” and “yes.”

Mastery: The Mastery main category represented students' appreciation for feedback as a means to improve their writing. This category included the subcategories of “Improvement,” “Mistakes”, “Positive Aspects,” and “Others' views.” Taken together, the Mastery subcategories represented 50% of positive student responses.

Improvement: Just over a quarter ($n = 204$) of students' responses related to improvement. The majority of student responses classified in this subcategory communicated that feedback is critical to becoming a better writer. Students commented, “It makes me a beter [sic] writer,”

Category	Sub-Category	Frequency (Percent) of Student Responses [N = 765]	Exemplar Quotes
Mastery	Students want to improve their writing skills. (Improvement)	204 (26.7)	“It helps me learn more” “It helps me improve it” “It helps me do better writing”
	Students want to see their writing mistakes. (Mistakes)	93 (12.2)	“She lets me know what I did wrong, what my mistake was” “It shows what I need to fix” “Then I know what I need to work on”
	Students want to see what was done well in their writing. (Positive Aspects)	54 (7.1)	“I like to know if my writing is good” “It is nice to know [know] I did good” “It will tell me how good I can write”
	Students value others' views of their writing. (Others' Views)	35 (4.6)	“She gives me good ideas” “To know what my teacher thinks of my writing” “I like to know people's opinion”
Positive Affect	Feedback evokes positive emotions for students. (Positive Emotion)	178 (23.3)	“It makes me feel good inside” “I like when she [the teacher] comments on my writing. It makes me feel good!” “It makes me happy like I did a good job”
	Students recall positive experiences with writing feedback. (Positive Experiences)	102 (13.3)	“I like when people like my writing” “I like when I hear that my writing is a fantastic job!” “It is mostly good”

Table 1. Qualitative Categories for Liking Writing Feedback

and "It makes me better!" Many student responses highlighted that feedback leads to improved products: "It helps me find ways to make [my writing] better than it already is," "It helps me change my writing to be better," and "It improves my writing." Some students also commented that feedback helped them "learn" or "think."

Mistakes: Many students ($n = 93$) seemed to appreciate feedback for its potential to help them recognize areas of concern within their writing. For example, a fifth grader responded, "I like feedback because it gives me an idea what I hav [sic] to try harder on." Whereas many children were more general in their responses (e.g., "I like to see what I did wrong."), others were more specific (e.g., "Because I might have spelt [sic] something wrong and I want to learn from my mistakes.").

A few students recognized the ways in which feedback can inform their future writing. For example, one student wrote that feedback helps her "know what to fix when I start another story." Another child commented, "I like to receive feedback because I can see what I need to not do next time." The primary sentiment of many student responses in this sub-category was to avoid repeating the same mistakes in their writing (e.g., "So I can know what I did wrong and not do it next time", "So I will do better nexted [sic] time").

Positive Aspects: Many students ($n = 54$) described liking writing feedback when it highlights the positive aspects of their work. "I [like] my teachers telling me what she likes about my writing," responded one child. Another student wrote, "I like it because I can know. when my writing is just right." Several children noted the importance of knowing whether or not their writing is "good."

Others' Views: Responses ($n = 35$) in this subcategory highlighted students' appreciation of others' opinions. "Even though I know I'm a good writer, means more to me when adults like my writing," remarked a fifth grader. Similarly, another child wanted to "know what [the teacher] thinks" about her writing. Many students seemed to recognize that others could offer good ideas for their writing. For example, one child thought her teacher "might give me a couple of ideas to make my writing

better." Another student believed his teachers "sometimes give me good ideas".

Positive Affect: The Positive affect main category represented students' positive experiences and emotions related to receiving feedback about their writing. This category included the subcategories of "Positive Emotion" and "Positive Experiences". Taken together, the Positive Affect subcategories represented approximately 23% of student responses.

Positive Emotion: Nearly a quarter ($n = 178$) of the students' responses related to positive emotion. The majority of student responses classified in this subcategory communicated that, feedback engenders feelings of happiness. Several children responded that, they liked receiving feedback from their teachers because it made them "feel good." "When [the teacher] says really nice things to me about my writing it makes me feel good", commented one student. Another replied, "I feel good when my teacher likes it". Many student responses characterized feelings of warmth. For example, a fourth grader wrote, "It makes me feel warm and fuzzy". "It makes my heart happy", and "It makes me feel really happy inside," recalled other students. Feedback also seemed to make several children feel recognized. "It makes me feel good to know that they are paying attention", noted one student. Feedback made a fifth grader "feel so special". Similarly, another child commented that feedback, "means that the teacher really likes my writing and it really makes me feel special."

Feedback engendered feelings of pride for some children. "It makes me feel exellent [sic] and proud". remarked one student. For many other students, feedback seemed to help them feel more confident in their writing ability. For example, "It just makes me feel like I am a real auther [sic] of a book", recalled a fourth grader. Another child commented that feedback gave him "more confodents [sic] about writing". Similarly, a fourth grader wrote, "I like it because it makes me feel smarter at wriiting [sic]".

Many responses suggested that, receiving feedback from their teacher made students feel motivated to write. For instance, one student recalled, "It makes me feel better

when I get feedback because it makes me want to write better". Similarly, another child wrote that, feedback helped him "feel beatter [sic] even if I did bad". Other students noted that, feedback from their teachers helped them "stay positive". Feedback from teachers seemed to encourage several students in their writing. One child reported, "It incourges [sic] me to correct my ansers [sic] and to do better in writting [sic]". Similarly, a fifth grader commented, "It encourages me". Many student responses related to motivation to write more or better: "It gives me motivation to write more", "It makes me want to write more", and "It makes me want to write better". Other students seemed motivated to be more persistent in their writing as a result of receiving feedback. One child responded that feedback from her teacher helps her "kip goin [sic]". Many students noted that, feedback helps them devote more effort to their writing: "So I can work harder than I am doing now", and "It makes me work harder to write".

Positive Experiences: Several students (n = 102) recalled positive experiences with receiving feedback about their writing from their teachers. Many noted that, feedback is typically positive. For example, a fifth grader wrote, "My teacher usually says good things". Another student commented that, feedback from his teacher is "always nice". Humorously, a fifth grader commented, "You know she's going to say something nice". Not surprisingly, several students appreciated hearing positive things about their writing. "It feels good to get compliments [sic]", wrote one child. Overall, the responses of many children suggested the importance of receiving positive feedback. For example, students commented, "When I write something, it makes me feel happy when someone

says something nice to me", "I like it when people like my writing", and "I like to know that my teacher thinks I do a good job."

What are the Reasons Students Give for Disliking Writing Feedback?

Twelve percent of students reported that, they do not like to receive feedback about their writing. The reasons for disliking writing feedback were grouped into two main qualitative categories ("Avoidance" and "Negative Affect"). Table 2 shows the categories, subcategories, frequencies of student responses, and exemplar quotes. Approximately 28% (n = 29) of the students who indicated that, they did not like to receive feedback about their writing provided either an unrelated or non-response to the open-ended question. Sample uncoded negative qualitative responses include: "because", "I don't know," and "no."

Avoidance: The Avoidance category represented students' disinterest or indifference to feedback-particularly negative feedback. This category included the subcategories of "Negative Feedback" and "Uninterested". Taken together, the Avoidance subcategories represented approximately 30% of student responses.

Negative Feedback: Some students (n = 25) seemed to expect negative feedback about their writing. For example a third grader recalled that, her teacher "always tells me what's wrong with it, neaver [sic] what's good". Another child wrote, "They might say stuff I don't like". A few students seemed to anticipate particularly harsh feedback about their writing. "My teacher can be herful [sic]", wrote a fourth grader. Others expected to be

Category	Sub-Category	Frequency (Percent) of Student Responses [N = 102]	Exemplar Quotes
Avoidance	Students do not want negative feedback about their writing. (Negative Feedback)	25 (24.5)	"It's not nice" "I think that they will give bad comments about it" "They're mean"
	Students are uninterested in writing and /or writing feedback. (Uninterested)	7 (6.9)	"I don't like writing" "Because it may bug me"
Negative Affect	Feedback evokes negative emotions and/or memories for students.	31 (30.4)	"It makes me feel bad" "I get nevous [nervous]" "It makes me feel sade [sad]"

Table 2. Qualitative Categories for Disliking Writing Feedback

embarrassed by their teachers' feedback: "I don't want them macking [sic] fun of it," "They might laugh at it," and "They embaris [sic] me." Some students expected their teachers to be "mean". For example, one child commented, "Feedback from my teacher always says mean stuff." A few students anticipated that their teachers would be "disappointed" or "get mad" after reading their writing.

Uninterested: The responses (n = 6) in this subcategory described students' disinterest in writing and/or writing feedback. "I hate whriting [sic]", wrote a fourth grader. Another child commented, "I don't like to here [sic] what I did". A few children stated that feedback "doesn't matter."

Negative Affect: The Negative Affect category represented students' negative emotions and experiences related to receiving feedback about their writing. Approximately 30% of student responses represented Negative Affect. The majority of student responses classified in this category communicated that feedback engenders feelings of sadness. For example, a fifth grader recalled, "I think my grades are bad and I start to cry." Many children responded that, feedback from their teachers made them feel "bad". One child wrote that feedback "gets [her] anger [sic]". A few students expressed timidity, "[I] am too shay [sic] to receive feedback." Several children seemed to lack confidence in their writing abilities. For example, a fifth grader commented, "I do not like receiving feedback all of the time because it makes me feel like I am a bad writher [sic]". "Because I'm not that good of a writer", wrote another student. Unfortunately, some responses expressed fear in receiving writing feedback from their teacher. "I feel scard [sic]," recalled a fourth grader. Other students expressed anxiety in their responses. For example, one child replied that, she feels "nerfise [sic]". Similarly, another child wrote, "I am really nervous about what my teacher is going [to] say."

Discussion and Recommendations

To return to the original purpose, the study gave voice to elementary students regarding their perceptions of feedback they receive about their writing. Building on the

work of Ekholm, E., Zumbrunn, S. K., & Conklin, S., (2015), which suggests a relationship between students' feedback perceptions and their writing self-efficacy and writing self-regulation, the authors focused specifically on students' feedback perceptions at the elementary level, what reasons do students provide for why they like or do not like receiving feedback about their writing?

The majority of the students in the sample indicated that, they like to receive feedback about their writing. Though students provided a multitude of reasons for liking writing feedback, responses primarily fell into one of the two categories: Mastery and Positive Affect. The students' responses in the Mastery category related to several different facets of mastery that all help students polish their writing skills.

A large number of students were interested in generally improving their writing skills. Many children indicated that, they liked writing feedback because it helped them to become better writers. In some cases, students referenced feedback as being useful for making future writing products better. Although students did not typically point out specific ways feedback can help them improve their writing, they seemed to recognize the usefulness of feedback in helping them improve their overall ability to write. Not only is it important to know that a large number of students like feedback, because it can help them become better writers, it is encouraging to know that many students are motivated to improve their writing skills. As discussed earlier, writing is a difficult task, but these children, to some degree, were invested in improving despite the challenges. Research has shown that, when students find writing tasks important and relevant, they are more likely to perceive writing tasks favorably and to be more motivated to write and make improvements (Troia, Harbaugh, Shankland, Wolbers, & Lawrence, 2013). Perhaps children interested in making improvements view writing as an important skill to master and feedback as helpful for working toward that goal.

In many instances, students liked the fact that feedback can help them see what mistakes they are making in their writing. These students seem to understand that making mistakes is a part of learning and becoming a better

writer. They want to know what they are doing wrong so they can avoid making the same mistakes on subsequent writing assignments. Again, it is encouraging that, students want to make use of their mistakes to produce better writing in the future (Nelson & Schunn, 2009). Research has shown that, feedback specific to students' errors is more likely to lead to fewer errors in the future (Dorow & Boyle, 1998). However, the authors know that, feedback is only useful when students are willing to accept it and grow from it (Price, Handley, Millar, & O'Donovan, 2010). Thus, feedback may be most beneficial when it illustrates how mistakes can be fixed, as well as, includes suggestions for improvements (Weaver, 2006).

Other children were more interested not in knowing what they did wrong, but in knowing what they did right. They seemed to appreciate when their teachers highlight positive aspects of their writing. Identifying students' strengths may lead to increased self-efficacy for writing, which has the potential for impacting students' writing self-regulation and their motivation for writing (Zumbrunn, S. K., & Bruning R, 2013). Furthermore, if students are aware of the areas of writing where they are most proficient, they can invest more energy in working through more difficult challenges. Although it is important for teachers to recognize specific positive aspects of students' writing, it is also important to help students recognize their own good writing (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Using rubrics, checklists, or student exemplars can be a good way to help young writers contextualize good writing and to be able to recognize aspects of their writing that are meeting appropriate goals (Andrade, Du, & Wang, 2008).

Apart from improvement, other reasons students provided for liking writing feedback referenced past positive experiences with receiving feedback or noted positive emotions elicited as a result of receiving feedback. For these children, it is clear that, at some point, they have received very complimentary feedback and it produced positive emotional reactions for some. The findings related to emotional responses echo those of Rowe and colleagues (2013), who found that some students associated a host of positive emotions with receiving feedback. Similar to the sample of this study students

interviewed reported feelings of happiness, joy, excitement, and love related to feedback (Rowe et al., 2013). Additionally, some of the participants indicated that, the feedback they receive motivates them to write better in the future, encourages them to keep trying to improve, and makes them feel proud.

For some children, it was evident that, receiving feedback is typically a positive experience, which is likely a reason they liked receiving feedback. These students seemed to expect feedback to be positive or complimentary of their writing. It is possible that, such positive expectations for feedback stemmed from high self-efficacy beliefs related to writing ability (Ekholm, E., Zumbrunn, S. K., & Conklin, S., 2015). In other words, these students may be more confident in their writing skills, making them more open to receiving feedback than their less efficacious peers.

Providing students with positive feedback not only can aid them in making positive revisions to their written work, but can also support the development of self-regulation (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Although this does not mean that critical feedback should not be given, it is important that, feedback be framed in a way that students, particularly developing writers, can understand and implement. Finding a balance between giving positive and negative feedback can be difficult, but positive feedback may be critical to boosting students' self-efficacy for writing as well as their motivation for future writing (Tolli & Schmidt, 2008). Many opportunities for low stakes writing tasks with feedback focused on improvement should be provided to maximize the benefit for improving student writing self-efficacy (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).

Though the majority of students in this study liked receiving feedback about their writing, a sizeable number of students did not. When students reported not liking to receive feedback on their writing, they often indicated that they expected to receive negative feedback. Some children even noted feeling as if the feedback they have received made fun of or insulted them or their writing. Others mentioned that their teachers primarily focus on the weaknesses rather than on the strengths of their writing.

Many college students exhibit similar feelings toward feedback they get from professors on their writing, stating that the feedback tends to be more negative than positive (Higgins et al., 2001). It makes sense that, students may want to avoid getting feedback altogether if they believe it will be negative or critical. Thus, helping students who have had negative experiences with feedback in the past to realize the value of the feedback process should be an important goal.

A subset of the sample expressed being uninterested in receiving feedback. In many cases, children simply did not want to know or did not care what their teachers have to say about their writing. It is possible that, students who view receiving feedback this way might also be apathetic with other school subjects. However, knowing that there are students who simply "do not care" to get any sort of feedback is discouraging. It would be helpful to know why these students have developed their perceptions of feedback to understand how to keep students from reaching the point of not caring. Existing research suggests that, some students focus exclusively on the grades they receive (Higgins et al., 2001) or the process of completing the assignment (Rust, 2002). For instance, a student who receives a high grade on a writing assignment may not care to read the feedback because they are already performing at a high level. Other students may not fully understand the purpose or process of feedback (Crisp, 2007).

For some students, writing feedback elicited very strong negative emotions; a few children mentioned that, feedback has made them cry. Others reported fear or anxiety related to receiving feedback. Often, children with responses in this category professed that, they were not good writers or otherwise indicated that, they were not confident in themselves as writers. Again, self-efficacy may be playing a role in why these children do not like receiving writing feedback. Rowe and colleagues (2013) also found that, some college students associate strong negative emotions with experiences of receiving feedback, such as embarrassment, fear, anger, sadness, shame and guilt. Taken together, the responses, and those from Rowe et al. (2013) and Ekholm, E., Zumbunn, S.

K., & Conklin, S. (2015) suggest that, feedback perceptions and self-efficacy may go hand-in-hand.

To be most beneficial, feedback needs to be meaningful and useable for students (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). By helping students understand the benefits of using feedback and how the process functions, they may be more likely to use and appreciate feedback in the future. Feedback should also support student motivation and self-esteem (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Teachers can build supports for positive feedback experiences by creating a classroom environment that is supportive of students and their writing (Wigglesworth & Storch, 2012). One way to encourage a supportive writing environment is to familiarize students with the feedback process through explicit conversations about the use and purpose of feedback (Rust, 2002).

Implications for Future Research

Research seeking to answer the question of how students perceive feedback has thus far primarily asked college students about the feedback they receive and how they use it (e.g., Higgins et al., 2001; Holmes & Papageorgiou, 2009; Rae & Cochrane, 2008; Weaver, 2006). Little work has been done to identify the perceptions younger students have of writing feedback. By giving elementary students a voice, this study is a critical first step toward better understanding the feedback perceptions of young writers. More work is needed so that we may fully understand not only students' perceptions of writing feedback, but also the origins of these perceptions and how they relate to other writing variables.

Although the methodology used in this study allowed for the analysis of hundreds of responses from students, a key limitation of the present research is that many of the responses were not detailed. For example, several students did not specify what aspects of feedback helped or did not help them improve their writing. It may have been difficult for some students at this age to articulate their beliefs or experiences regarding feedback, especially in response to a prompt. Future research using interviews or focus groups may be beneficial for capturing a deeper level of students' perceptions. Further, the context and style of the

feedback students receive can vary across teachers, students, and assignments (Peterson & Kennedy, 2006). Future research examining students' perceptions of the different kinds of feedback they receive is an important next step of this work.

Conclusion

This study, in conjunction with others (i.e., Ekholm, E., Zumbrunn, S. K., & Conklin, S. 2015; Carless, 2006; Higgins et al., 2001; Holmes, & Papageorgiou, 2009; Poulos & Mahony, 2008) has uncovered a better understanding of students' perceptions of writing feedback. Future research should build upon this preliminary work by continuing the exploration of why such perceptions exist. For instance, does writing self-efficacy predict writing feedback perceptions for younger students as it does with older students? (Ekholm, E., Zumbrunn, S. K., & Conklin, S., 2015). Why is it that some students come to recognize the usefulness or value of feedback while others avoid it or show no interest? Answers to these questions will begin to explain why students hold certain perceptions of writing feedback and, in turn, will afford practitioners an opportunity to foster the development of positive perceptions of writing and writing feedback in their students.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Sarah Marrs is a doctoral student in Educational Research and Evaluation at Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia, USA. Her research interests center around Student Writing Beliefs and Attitudes, particularly with regard to Writing Feedback.



Sharon Zumbrunn is an Associate Professor of Educational Psychology in the School of Education at Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia, USA. As a former elementary school teacher, her broad research interests include Understanding Student Learning and Motivation, and the Contexts that foster Student Success.



Caitlin McBride is a first grade teacher at Buzz Aldrin Elementary School in Reston, Virginia, USA. Her research interests include Understanding Student Learning and Engagement.



JK Stringer is a doctoral student in Educational Psychology at Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia, USA. His research interests include Student Motivation and Well-being, as well as Academic Self-concept.

