

Towson University Teacher-Researcher Action Study Summary - 2008

Six students from the Action-Research Graduate Class at Towson University used Write More products as the basis for their year-long research project. Each student is a full-time teacher in the Baltimore City Schools and their research was conducted with students in their classrooms. Four different studies were conducted.

The studies utilized pre-writing surveys, conferences, interviews, observations and student samples. Research also included information gathered from parent surveys and teacher-made rubrics.

Study 1 asked the question, "How does the Write More Program increase students' writing abilities in math and science?" The teacher focused her research on six fifth grade students over the course of six weeks. After six weeks of integrating the Write More writing prompts, organizer and strategies into math and science time, the teacher concluded that her students were more efficient writers. They were able to create their own rubrics and organize their ideas. Students also reflected their thoughts and ideas about writing through journaling.

At the end of the project, students' attitudes towards writing greatly increased. Their writing scores improved from below average to above average.

Study 2 asked the question, "How will the use of the Write More graphic organizer impact the content and organization of student brief constructed responses (BCR)?" This study took place for six weeks in a fourth grade classroom daily during a 30-minute writing block.

Students in this district are expected to answer brief constructed responses on year-end achievement tests, so the teacher wanted to improve their ability to write these. After six weeks, the students learned to incorporate three details into their BCRs and they learned to answer all three parts of the BSR. The data showed that the Write More organizer positively impacted student BCRs. Student responses became more detailed. Student scores improved from an average 1.3 to 2.1. The BCRs had a clear beginning, middle and end.

Study 3 asked the question, "What impact do graphic organizers have on the content, organization and attitude of primary writers?" This research was conducted to enhance the writing performance of students who already demonstrate high level reading and math scores. The students in this research came from a low-socioeconomic status yet attend a blue ribbon school. Eighteen kindergarten and first grade students were chosen for this study.

The results of the research were astonishing. By using the Write More Program, students were motivated to independently create writing pieces with more depth and content as compared to writing samples created prior to the use of the program. Positive attitudes towards writing changed immediately for some and gradually for others. The Everyday Organizer gave students a sense of confidence and structure to the writing process.

Study 4 asked the question, "How does journaling help kindergarten children become emergent writers?" This action research took place in a kindergarten after-school program classroom for two months. The children would write in their journals twice a week for 20-30 minutes at a time. Six African-American children were chosen for this study.

At the end of the study, the teacher concluded that students were more interested in journaling, they were more excited about writing time and they wanted to share their writing with others.

Topics from the *Writing Works* book were used in the study to motivate children to write. At the end of the study, many of the children showed more characteristics of an emergent writer and increased their confidence level after using the Write More products.

The 2008 Towson Action Research Studies prove that the Write More products work to enhance student abilities and attitudes towards writing. Each study focused on different ages of children and different aspects of writing. Write More products are designed to work over many grade levels and they enable teachers to better teach the writing process in a more efficient and effective manner.