

2017



Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla

Facultad de Lenguas

*L2 Authorial Writing in Informational Texts by Bilingual Fifth Graders
in Mexico: An Exploratory Teacher Research*

Presented by Maria Esther Mercado Soler

(Mat. 215460621)

Thesis supervisor: Mtra. María Teresa Fátima Encinas Prudencio



L2 AUTHORIAL WRITING IN INFORMATIONAL TEXTS BY BILINGUAL FIFTH GRADERS IN
MEXICO: AN EXPLORATORY TEACHER RESEARCH

This thesis has been read by the members of the Thesis Committee of

María Esther Mercado Soler

And is considered worthy of approval in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of

Maestría en la Enseñanza del Inglés

Thesis Director

Mtra. María Teresa Fátima Encinas Prudencio

Committee Member

Committee Member

Committee Member

Dr. Bárbara Pamela
Olmos López

Mtra. Gicela Cuatlapantzi
Pichón

Mtra. Shannon Hickey
de Álvarez

Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla

Puebla, Puebla

January 2018

Acknowledgements

The journey to complete this thesis has been arduous, though there have been many people who helped me reach this milestone. Too many people to mention here, yet, I would like to express my appreciation for those who played a key role in my professional development.

Firstly, the one person who inspired me to find my path: my daughter, Sianya. Sianya moved me to find my true vocation, and has loved and supported me for the past twenty-one years. Her understanding when I decided to study and work, I will never appreciate enough.

My dear friends Grace Smith, Charlie Bernal, and Rubén Vizcaíno provided me with generous support and inspiration as I entered the profession. To Deborah Iddon, and Ricardo Morales who provided me with the opportunity to grow professionally, thank you.

My darling sister of different parents, Edaly, has given me needed encouragement and moved me with her ever-inspiring teaching craft and amazing resourcefulness.

There are no words to thank all the faculty at the Facultad de Lenguas BUAP who prompt me to attain my bachelor degree and encouraged me to pursue a postgraduate degree. My dearest partners at the MEI, who made everyone raise their bar to the highest standard. Mostly, I hold my thesis advisor, Mtra. Fátima Encinas, in very high regard for bringing the best of me as an emergent researcher and providing me with a new view of my professional development.

I would like to thank all my readers for their valuable feedback, Dra. Pamela Olmos, Mtra. Gicela Cuatlapantzi, and Mtra. Shannon Hickey who introduced me to my thesis topic with utmost kindness and patience.

Lastly, I would like to express my deepest and eternal gratitude for all the love and support of my son, Sebastián, who stood by me for these past two years with endurance and wisdom beyond his young age. I could not have completed this endeavor without his unwavering love.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	i
Abstract	v
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Significance of the Study	4
1.2 Context of the Research	4
1.3 Background of the Researcher	5
1.4 Research Setting	6
1.5 Purpose of the Study	7
1.6 Research Questions	7
1.7 Assumptions	8
1.8 Summary	8
Chapter 2: Literature Review	9
2.1 Transdisciplinary Pedagogy and Second Language Learning Philosophy	9
2.1.1 The Role of Inquiry-based Learning in L2 Writing	10
2.2 Second Language Writing Pedagogy: A Balanced Literacy Approach	14
2.2.1 Writing Teaching Approaches: A Balance Between Authorial and Secretarial Writing Skills	18
2.2.2 Genre-based L2 Pedagogy	21
2.2.3 The Writing Workshop	22
2.2.4 Conferring with L2 Young Writers	24
2.2.5 The L2 Writer’s Notebook	26
2.2.6 Learner’s Choice	29

2.3 The Literacy Continuum	34
2.4 Literacy Principles	35
Chapter 3: Methodology	40
3.1 Research Context	40
3.2 Sampling	42
3.3 Participants	43
3.4 Data Collection Strategies	46
3.5 Data Analysis	51
3.6 Access and Ethical Issues	53
3.7 Conclusion	54
Chapter 4: Results	55
4.1 Four Young Writers	55
4.2 The Writing Process	56
4.3 Writing within a Genre	66
4.4 Writing Craft	69
4.5 View of Self as a Writer	75
4.6 Literacy Artifacts and Authorial Writing Skills	77
4.7 Beyond Authorial Skill Behaviors and Understandings	81
Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions	84
5.1 Discussion about Learning to Write	84
5.1.1 Talking Enables Writing	84
5.1.2 Reading Enables Writing	87
5.1.3 Talking and Writing Expand Comprehension	89

5.1.4 Reading, Talking, and Writing are Conducive to Learning	91
5.2 Discussion about Teaching to Write	92
5.2.1 Pedagogical Reflections: Balancing Literacy in Writing Pedagogy	93
5.2.2 The Teacher as a Reader, Writer, and Researcher	95
5.3 Other Considerations: Limitations and Delimitations	96
5.4 Further Research	96
5.5 Conclusions	98
References	99
Appendices	109
Appendix A: Participants’ Diagnostic Test Results	109
Appendix B: The Writing Continuum.....	110
Appendix C: Samples from Data Analysis	117

Abstract

This research aimed to provide an understanding of the writing processes of an informational text by four young writers in a private bilingual school in Central Mexico. This study focuses on these young learners' authorial writing. The methodology used was an exploratory teacher research. These four young writers were set to inquire about the effects of social pressure on physical and emotional health. One of the products of this inquiry was composing two feature articles. This research explored literacy practices in four students' literacy events (four ways to compose those feature articles) through the analysis of the elements of these events (artifacts) as described by Barton, Hamilton, and Ivanič (2000). The three kinds of artifacts used to explore the four literacy events were i) the young learners' work on their writer's notebook, ii) six conferences (semi-structured interviews), and iii) the publishing of one of their two feature articles. These artifacts were analyzed adapting the Fountas and Pinnell's (2017) writing continuum. This study describes how these young writers used their agency as writers to plan, draft, revise and publish two feature articles in the span of six weeks. They also showed their understanding of genre to shape their texts for their intended audience. Their writing craft showed their decisions on their writing regarding: organization, idea development, language use, word choice, and voice. Finally, they provided insight on their view of selves as writers as they talked of one of their published feature articles. The main findings show how all these writers develop their authorial writing in a second language through some principles and how pertinent, timely, and unobtrusive scaffolding plays a key role in their authorship.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Authorial writing skill development is an area of second language learning that is rarely addressed in Mexican primary schools. Apparently, this is also the case in other parts of the world such as Australia (Fang & Wang, 2011; Laman, 2014; Maletta, 2016). The focus of the study aims to describe understandings and behaviors of authorial writing skill development based on Fountas & Pinnell (2017) as evidence of second language literacy in four young learners. These were Mexican, Spanish speakers, fifth graders in the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP). Rather than dismissing the relevance of acquiring or assessing the acquisition of secretarial skills (handwriting, spelling, grammar, punctuation and other writing conventions), this research merely focused on describing how young learners develop authorial skills. Fountas and Pinnell describe these skills as including the conscious decisions on topic choice, organization, word choice, audience needs, all of which is expressed from a particular stance and with an own voice. They make this description considering both first and English language learners (ELLs).

This study is placed within the boundaries of school-based literacy (ILA, 2015). Learners in the setting of this study are being prepared to face challenges of, among others, academic writing in their mother tongue and in a second language (English). Research in the latter is a somewhat recent practice. Matsuda et al. (2006) explain it did not launch properly until the 1960s due to the view of second language acquisition as primarily through speech. From the late 70s, the focus in L2 writing was on coherence in written products as described by Connor and Johns (1990). The lines of inquiry in second language writing dwell, according to Cumming (2001), in three main areas: i) studies on the qualities of learners' texts, ii) learners' composing processes, and iii) the sociocultural contexts of their writing. The present study focuses on learners' composing

processes. Atkinson (2002) suggests four implications of looking at Second Language Acquisition (SLA) from a socio-cognitive perspective: i) teaching is valuable; ii) language and language acquisition are not disconnected from the rest of the world; iii) qualitative research approaches where learners are placed in their learning environment as well as where the teacher becomes the researcher are favored; and iv) learners are viewed as individuals acting as they normally would, not as “mere research subjects, or mere students, or mere sites for language acquisition” (p. 539). It is in this view that this study explores L2 young learner writing.

Until the late 90s research in L2 writing and writing pedagogy basically focused on higher education settings. Studies in young learners are fewer, like those by, Hudelson and Serna (in Matsuda & Silva, 2005) who studied the native language literacy development of Spanish speaking children in a transitional whole language bilingual context in the U.S. Hudelson and Serna found that children in their study used their linguistic resources in L1 to support their L2 writing. In Mexico, research in ESL writing composition is rather limited. Most studies in this context regard matters of bilingualism in Mexican communities with exchange and immersion in American communities (Bruna, et al., 2007; Petró & Greybeck, 2014; González, 2016). From those, some study writing in bilingual young learners (Escamilla, 2000; Escamilla & Coady, 2001; Dworin, 2003; Coady & Escamilla, 2005; Rubin & Carlan, 2005; Escamilla, 2006; Gort, 2006). Those studies on basic education tend to focus on curriculum implementation rather than on student outcomes or perceptions, particularly ever since the plan of implementation of an English program for basic education in Mexico (López Gopar, et al. 2009; Perales Escudero, et al., 2012; Ramírez-Romero, 2013; Ramírez-Romero, et al., 2015; Ramírez-Romero & Sayer, 2016). In Mexico, studies on learner perceptions at an elementary school level seem to be rather scarce as well.

Studies in the context of the study are even scarcer, where only a study by Mercau (2009) discusses learner outcomes in a PYP school in Mexico City –this is the same setting as the present study.

In the Latin American context, Ordoñez (2010) questions the creation of artificial environments which may result in subtractive bilingualism. Nevertheless, she also recognizes that when there is education for bilingualism, both languages work together to foster knowledge and skill acquisition. Other L2 young learner studies dwell on bilingualism in settings that are similar to the one of this study: a bilingual private school with an elite view on bilingualism (Baker & Jones, 1998; Baker, 2001; Butler & Hakuta, 2004; Guerrero, 2010). Naismith (2004) presented research on a comparison of L1 and L2 literacy practices in a bilingual school in Central Mexico within the context of elite bilingualism (Romaine 1999, cited in Naismith, 2004). The study took place in the same school of this study, towards the time that it became certified by the International Baccalaureate Organization, and before instating a balanced literacy approach to second language instruction. The focus of the research by Naismith was on drawing conclusions on the relationship between L1 and L2 literacies, whereas the current scholarship aims to describe writing processes of learners in the context of balanced literacy in the PYP.

Regarding methodology in studies like the present one, the research by Calderón López (2017) explores self-generated literacy practices in young Chilean learners (ages 7 to 10) and their conceptualization of literacy. Similarly, this study seeks to explore learners' literacy practices and their view of themselves as writers. However, Calderón López looks at both home-based and school-based literacies, where this study only looks at the latter, and writing in particular.

This research, therefore, explores how these learners perceive and develop their authorial writing skill acquisition in the process of composing a feature article. The participants in this study show four different facets of acquiring authorial writing skills within the context of a balanced

literacy (Gavelek, et al., 1999; Firzgerald, 1999; Au, et al., 2001; Au, 2000; Weissberg, 2006; Fountas & Pinnell, 2017), inquiry-based approach (Ferreiro, 2005; Barrow, 2006; Strober, 2006; Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008; Escalante Arauz, 2013; Lee, 2014; Swartz & McGuiness, 2014). My study describes the different, conspicuous, inconspicuous or absent authorial writing understandings and behaviors that these writers either report in teacher-student conferences or display in their writing. The results of this study may become relevant to different agents in the teaching practice, curriculum administration and those interested in further scholarship on the matter.

1.1 Significance of the Study

This study is relevant to the research of second language writing in that it aims to document how young learners develop their writing craft through the process of writing a non-fiction piece as well as how they articulate (or not) their authorial skill development. Although there has been considerable amount of research in second language writing development (Isaacson, 1989a, 1989b; Matsuda et al., 2006; Akhavan, 2007; Adelman Reyes & Vallone, 2008; Scharer & Pinnell, 2008; Hyland, 2009; Daffern & Mackenzie, 2015), young learner writing has been less explored. There is little research in the setting of this study, student writing processes and outcomes in elite bilingual primary schools in Mexico as mentioned in the study of Mercau (2009).

1.2 Context of the Research

Second language writing scholarship has been systematically documented for almost half a century now (Hyland, 2009). The interest in this area of inquiry has not diminished over the years, on the contrary, it has now expanded to study it from different disciplinary perspectives (e.g.

applied linguistics, psychology, pedagogy, and linguistics). Second language writing in bilingual contexts, whether elite or folk (Romaine 1999), have brought light to the concept of transfer from the mother tongue(s) to another language (Cummins, 2008). Particularly, foreign language writing instruction has become of great interest in recent years (Cimasko & Reichelt, 2011). This study hopes to collaborate in understanding how these young writers' processes occur within a specific learning context. Specifically, the present study seeks to describe the second language (L2) authorial writing skills involved in the writing process of a feature article. It is with this perspective that the present study will hopefully contribute to the current scholarship.

1.3 Background of the Researcher

I am a twenty-year experienced English language teacher and teacher trainer with experience in teaching English as a foreign language to young learners and adults. I have been teaching English in a myriad of contexts for the last twenty years. When teaching young learners, I have taught in settings of bilingual immersion schools, as well as in settings where English is taught as a foreign language unlinked from other disciplines. Recently, in early 2016, I was invited to teach at a primary school where English is taught in a transdisciplinary setting with an emphasis on balanced literacy. Having been foreign to teaching in this context, my practice was challenged, particularly when teaching writing skills. Just a few months within observing and assisting teachers in this context, I knew there was something worth documenting about this approach to teaching English in Mexico. I witnessed how learners were developing as young authors not only through their products but also through their processes. These young learners were able to articulate their craft, process and understanding of the different genres they wrote in, in a way I had never seen before in my practice. Herein resides the inception of the present research.

1.4 Research Setting

The research took place in an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School –part of the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). The IBO has consultative status with UNESCO. As partners, they have shared visions on matters of assuring world peace through, among other actions, promoting literacy. There are currently 4574 IB World Schools around the world, 105 IB World Schools in Mexico, 6 in the geographical state of the study, only two where the additional language of instruction is English –there are three languages of instruction in the IB programmes: English, Spanish and French (IBO, 2009b). The IBO offers four programs. The setting of the current study is in the first of those: the Primary Years Programme (PYP). This program requires to “offer a language, in addition to the language of instruction, to students from the age of 7” (IBO, 2009, p. 5). The IB PYP believes that “exposing students to languages other than their mother tongue provides an insight into and an appreciation of other cultures, and an awareness of other perspectives” (p. 5). As for their view of language in the IB Programmes, they believe language is a tool for inquiry, yet they believe that “in order to conduct purposeful inquiry and in order to be well prepared for lifelong learning, students need to master a whole range of skills beyond those normally referred to as basic” (p. 21) which they refer to as transdisciplinary skills –thinking skills, social skills, communication skills, self-management skills, research skills. Tenets within this curriculum that directly relate to the present area of inquiry will be further explained and analyzed in the following chapter.

1.5 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study, as mentioned before, is to explore authorial writing skill development of English as a language additional to the mother tongue through the analysis of the texts produced by young learners in the PYP and with the use of semi-structured interviews in the form of teacher-student conferences. I seek to understand L2 authorial writing skill development in young learners through observable or implicit understandings and behaviors that are either articulated by the participants themselves or evidenced in their writing.

With this research, I seek to provide a description on how purposefully chosen young learners acquiring L2 writing skills as authors of an expository piece (a feature article) they composed in the term of six weeks. I intend to describe their second language learning outcomes in terms of how they are able to convey their point of view through the process of their writing, as well as how their texts and their insights about them might provide evidence of development of their authorial writing skill development in a foreign language.

1.6 Research Questions

The research questions for this study are the following:

RQ1 How do high- and low-performing Mexican second language elementary fifth graders in an inquiry-based balanced literacy approach develop their authorial writing skills during the process of composing a feature article?

RQ2 How do these learners perceive themselves as writers within an informational expository genre?

1.7 Assumptions

The current study assumes that participants provided honest reflections to the best of their abilities. When asked questions about their work and or their reflections, it was assumed that participants answered candidly given the structure of the written and oral prompts used to collect data. It can also be assumed that participants, due to their age, needed assistance in providing the necessary insight to analyze, and that is why written and oral prompts were used to provide the necessary artifacts for analysis.

1.8 Summary

Overall, the present study aims to provide a description of how young learners in a second language inquiry-based balanced literacy setting, use their second (foreign) language to produce written texts while demonstrating different authorial writing understandings and behaviors. As their teacher, I will describe the journey of the four participants of this study into writing a feature article while eliciting and analyzing the decisions they make to develop their product and their craft. As a result, this depiction will provide a second language teacher-researcher's view and interpretation of the development of these four writers as emerging authors that could inform other practitioners and researchers on a gap in scholarship in the area.

In the following chapters, I will describe relevant theoretical concepts that provide a framework to this research, the methodology used to collect and analyze data, an analysis of results and conclusions. Chapter Two will define concepts regarding topics of current research in L2 writing, second language writing from a socio-cognitive stance, developing L2 writing skills in young learners, inquiry-based learning, and balanced literacy instruction.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter will start by explaining transdisciplinary pedagogy and one of its key constructs: inquiry-based learning. After that, I present the second language writing pedagogy used during this research, a balanced literacy approach, as well as key elements of this approach. Then, I present the literacy continuum, the tool I used to analyze the artifacts in the literacy events this study explores. Finally, I describe literacy principles underlying the design of both the aforementioned continuum and how data was analyzed. All these provide a frame where to place the purpose and methodology of the present research. Because of the unique research context, the descriptions below may seem extensive; however, this is aimed to provide the reader with a clear picture of where and how this study occurs.

2.1 Transdisciplinary Pedagogy and Second Language Learning Philosophy

This inquiry is held in a bilingual transdisciplinary context where Mexican and international learners study in two languages: Spanish and English. In English, they learn literacy through a balanced literacy approach. In all subjects taught, including English classes, they explore transdisciplinary themes. These themes are explored in a 6-8-week span. During this lapse, all teachers are viewed as language teachers and the view of language learning is aligned with that of Halliday's (2004). While the PYP (IBO, 2009) encompasses a transdisciplinary curriculum that dwells well beyond what Halliday (2004) describes as the relationship between language and education: i) learning language, ii) learning about language, and iii) learning through language. According to Halliday, language is learned since birth and by engaging in communication with others. Learning about language is learning about the "nature and functions of language itself" (p.

322). Learning through language regards the construction of reality, “how we use language to build up a picture of the world in which we live [...] the part played by language in shaping and transmitting the world view of each and every human culture” (p. 317). Through transdisciplinary themes, learners explore the world and they build their own reality. All teachers are seen, therefore as language teachers. The job of the language teacher, thus, is teaching the language and through the language, yet English and Spanish teachers teach them about each language.

Most of the children’s first language in the setting of this study is Spanish. Therefore, when learning English as their second language, they are mostly learning how to mean in that second language what they already know in the first. Nevertheless, there are concepts they learn in English that they might have not learned in Spanish –i.e. concepts related to literacy. Some concepts, as Cook (2015) states, can be transferred from an L1, but the role of L1 in learning an L2, Cook suggests, still needs more research. Whether there is transfer of the L1 in learning an L2 or the role of L1 in learning L2 do not concern the present research. Nonetheless, what does concern this research are the literacy principles by which they learn the second language.

2.1.1 The Role of Inquiry-based Learning in L2 Writing

Inquiry-based learning is a pedagogical approach that relies upon the notion that learners are able to construct knowledge using different resources, from previous knowledge, peer and expert guidance, and other tools, tasks and artifacts (Hmelo-Silver, et al., 2007). One of its first advocates was the American educator and philosopher John Dewey as he promoted ‘learning by doing’ (Dewey, 1933). Despite Dewey’s revolutionary view on learning, as noted by Friesen and Jardine (2009), the industrial world demanded workers that needed to memorize facts and

procedures, rather than question them. However, times have changed and due to seemingly ever-evolving working and overall living conditions, the view of education has also evolved.

A shift in the view of learners have also contributed to exploring new approaches to education. Haynes (2014) describes how the philosopher Lipman (1988), in response to the Piagetian view that preadolescent children would not be able of formal operations as still believed in the 1980s, actively advocated intellectual empowerment of children. This support to young learners to develop higher order cognitive skills aligns with the also concurring trend to center learning around the learner. Therefore, there has been a surge of scholarship on inquiry-based, learner-centered and collaborative education as means to live up to the demands foreseen in the 21st century (Ferreiro, 2005; Barrow, 2006; Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008).

This trend has not been foreign to the realm of second language learning (Lee, 2014). As noted by Lee “[a]lthough this instructional model has primarily been applied to the teaching in science and math, its concept and question-answer mechanism are equally well-suited to L2 classroom” (p. 1237). It is under this assertion, formed by decades of research in the field, that several educational settings, like that of this study, uses inquiry to teach a myriad of concepts, sometimes in a second or foreign language. Authors as Escalante Arauz (2013) provide empirical data on the success in the use of inquiry-based learning to learn a foreign language in that it empowers learners to control their own learning. Active learning has been researched in terms on how it engages learners, therefore, providing solid grounds to keeping them motivated. Inquiry-learning dwells within the construct of active learning as an approach where learners are actively engaged in constructing knowledge and developing learner’s thinking. In the setting of this study, this learning is promoted through its essential elements: knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes, and action (IBO, 2009). Furthermore, the research setting (the IB PYP) addresses the following

thinking constructs: thinking processes, thinking dispositions, metacognitive thinking, and beliefs about knowledge, as well as a strong “emphasis on communities of inquiry, on collaborative work between students and teachers” (Swartz & McGuiness, 2014, p. 21). It is in this context that learners develop research skills.

Learners in an inquiry-based learning develop habits of the mind (Strober, 2006). Parting from a question, as Neumann (1992) suggests, the aims of research-based learning may be defined as forming “academics who are curious to know why something is the way it is and who are, therefore, actively pursuing an answer to a question” (p. 162). Young learners may develop habits, thus, enabling them to avoid becoming mere consumers of information as it happens in traditional educational settings, where the teacher instructs learners and they are expected to recall the information that has been imparted rather than discover it or even question it. Conversely, having young learners ask questions and having teachers not answering those rather than providing support and guidance for learners to seek for their own answers or discoveries on how some questions remain unanswered, develops in learners their innate curiosity, preparing them to become active and independent seekers of their answers. This training allows children to become critical thinkers. Learners observe, ask questions, inquire through provocations and are encouraged to develop understanding and come up with their own conclusions based upon evidence. Therefore, learners, from a very young age, are trained to reflect upon not only what they learn but also why and how they learn it (IBO, 2009). Furthermore, there are two tenets that make inquiry-based possible in way that allows for the right support and informed decision-making: scaffolding and formative assessment.

Scaffolding is vital in inquiry-based learning. Some authors consider that constructivist pedagogical approaches such as inquiry-based are characterized by minimal guidance (Kirschner,

Sweller, & Clark, 2006); however, inquiry-based learning requires expert guidance and some direct instruction during what Vygotsky (1978) acknowledges as a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). While in this zone, the learner requires assistance from others, usually experts, who provide scaffolding (Bruner, 1987). This means providing enough support to construct knowledge through not only the interaction with their environment, but with others, generating processes of assimilation and accommodation (Piaget, 1958). This interaction with others was overviewed in Piaget's conception of 'schemas', who instead considered interaction with artifacts to develop cognitively. Vygotsky and Bruner were able, conversely, to provide a more solid theory to understanding children's cognitive development in that they recognize the role of social interaction in it. Quintana et al. (2004, cited in Hmelo-Silver, Duncan & Chinn, 2007) conceive scaffolding as key to cognitive apprenticeship, where learners develop their problem-solving skills through guidance and scaffolding of experts (e.g. the teacher or a higher-performing peer) who work as coaches. In second language education, "[s]caffolding refers to providing contextual supports for meaning through the use of simplified language, teacher modeling, visuals and graphics, cooperative learning and hands-on learning" (Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003, p. 345). The writing workshop in the balanced literacy classroom, as described further in this chapter, provides this language scaffolding for young learner composition.

Where scaffolding provides the appropriate support and guidance for learners to find knowledge or develop a skill, formative assessment provides information for both learners and teachers to make decisions about their learning. Scriven (1967) first defined formative assessment. Lewy, (1990, in Ketabi & Ketabi, 2014) defines formative assessment as that which occurs during learning and aims to assist learning by means of appropriate feedback. This feedback is how learners form their knowledge, by analyzing and internalizing it, as Brown & Abeywickrama

(2010) assert. The role of formative assessment in the inquiry-based learning classroom is to help determine what learners are learning, where opportunities for growth are, and courses of action to undertake towards learning or improvement.

Although there are scholars that have found arguments against the use of formative assessment in education (Dunn & Mulvenon, 2009) claiming lack of evidence of its impact, it is still resorted by practitioners to inform their practice and empower learners. Bell and Cowie (2001) identify two kinds of formative assessment: formal or planned and informal or interactive. Due to the nature of inquiry, the latter occurs almost naturally: both learners and teachers identify learning process and learning needs through dialogue. This is one of the purposes of the conference within the writing workshop described further below.

2.2 Second Language Writing Pedagogy: A Balanced Literacy Approach

Second language writing is a relatively recent and evolving area of scholarship. Hyland (2009), acknowledges that even though there have been different methodologies and theories informing L2 writing, they do not contradict or replace each other, rather than represent “potentially compatible means of understanding the complex reality of writing” (p. 2). Hyland also identifies different foci in L2 writing: language structures, text functions, themes or topics, creative expression, composing processes, content, and genre and contexts of writing.

Regarding L2 writing pedagogy, Ivanič (2004) describes different approaches that range from approaches that focus on accuracy (learning sound-symbol relationships and syntactic patterns), to those that focus on interesting content and style, appropriacy, effectiveness for purpose and even social responsibility. These orientations have been adopted eclectically by practitioners to accommodate their teaching situations. Hyland (2009) asserts that even though not

one single approach to teaching L2 writing is usually adopted by a given practitioner, there is usually one that is preferred.

The focus of writing instruction in the context of the present study seems to align the most with that of: i) creative expression, ii) composing processes and iii) genre and contexts of writing as described by Hyland (2009); however, there is also regard to structure, function, themes or topics and content. Creative expression occurs when learners are encouraged to bring about their “personal experiences and opinions, and writing is considered a creative act of self-discovery” (p. 8). This occurs in the school in the study as even when learners are exposed to exemplars of different literary types and writing functions, they are always encouraged to write about what concerns them the most and then to reflect upon what they wrote and why they wrote that. A composing process focus “emphasizes the writer as an independent producer of texts, but it goes further to address the issue of what teachers should do to help learners perform a writing task” (p. 10). When focusing on composing processes, there is a clear objective towards “recognizing basic cognitive processes as central to writing activity and in stressing the need to develop students’ abilities to plan, define a rhetorical problem, and propose and evaluate solutions” (p. 10). A balanced literacy approach seeks to acknowledge the interplay of different language skills and literacy domains in the development of literacy whether in the first or a second language.

In describing the emergence of the balanced literacy approach, Gavelek, et al. (1999) state that there should be coordinated instruction, “some combination of the major language processes as tools to achieve a learning goal (p. 5).” It is due to this realization, as well as shortcomings observed in phonics and whole-language (Rigg, 1991) approaches to literacy, and those of other approaches to second language writing instruction development that a balanced literacy approach was proposed. Balanced literacy was devised as a philosophical perspective (Fitzgerald, 1999).

Fitzgerald identifies three key characteristics in a balanced literacy approach to instruction: i) focus on giving an equal weight to key aspects of the curriculum or instruction, ii) focus on how the classroom is to be conducted –e.g. through readers’ and writers’ workshops, including structures, teacher-directed activities, student-directed activities, and assessment (Au, et al., 2001), iii) focus on the kinds of reading (and writing) knowledge students should gain from the approach to balanced instructions. Au (2002) states how “emphasis on strategy and skill instruction suggests that students should gain cognitive processes central to effective reading” (p. 71), and thus, to effective writing.

Au (2002) also describes five dimensions of balance: authenticity, response to literature, teachers’ roles, skill contextualization, and curricular control. In terms of authenticity, Au (2002) states that “[t]o make literacy instruction authentic, teachers should focus reading, writing, and talking about text on authentic tasks” (p. 72). However, she notices that this notion should not be taken in such a way that the teacher neglects teaching learners “skills as phonics, grammar, and punctuation” (p. 72). The response to literature should seek balance between “(1) helping students to make connections to the past, which requires a knowledge of the conventional wisdom, and (2) preparing them to meet the future, which requires an emphasis on invention or students’ creative and interpretive abilities.” (p. 75). Regarding teachers’ roles, the balance is achieved by having teachers move from explicit instruction, to modeling, scaffolding, facilitating and finally participating, where learners’ activity increases through these stages and teachers’ control, conversely, decreases. In the dimension of skill contextualization, teachers ought to find a balance between those skills and strategies prescribed by the program they teach and those who arise in impromptu ‘teachable moments’. Finally, regarding curricular control, the balance ought to be sought between local and distant control, where local control refers to that the teachers has over

curriculum and instruction because of their knowledge of their learners and “their needs as readers and writers” (p. 82), while distant control is that exerted by policy makers and other similar agents who mandate choices of programs, textbooks, learning goals and expected outcomes. Essentially, Au (2002) suggests that the aim of a balanced literacy approach is to “make evident the connections between literacy and students’ own lives, so that the importance of literacy learning becomes crystal clear to students”; moreover, she asserts that to achieve a balance between school and life outside school, “affective knowledge, or students’ ownership of literacy, should receive the attention necessary to motivate students to acquire local knowledge (including phonics) and global knowledge (including comprehension processes)” (p. 85).

There are several factors that contribute to the development of writing in a second (foreign) language. Some of these occur beyond the language classroom. Weissberg (2006) lists the following factors as contributing to L2 writing development: i) family and home literacy experiences, ii) L1 reading knowledge, iii) L1 writing instruction, iv) L1 oral knowledge, v) L2 reading knowledge, vi) personality factors and learning styles, vii) L2 writing instruction, and viii) L2 oral proficiency. Weissberg analyzed the development of writing skills in relation to their L2 speech. He found how some learners rely heavily on their knowledge of L2 speech and some others seem to develop it independently from it and yet are other learners who seem to develop writing and speaking symmetrically. This may be due to learner differences. This realization may be of great help in accepting that choosing a one-size-fits-all approach to L2 written instruction may not be the most efficient way. It may seem overwhelming to seek to differentiate learning, particularly when teaching and assessing writing in large groups, but neglecting the fact that learners approach L2 writing in different ways, regarding the instructional approach, may be even more time and energy consuming.

By adopting a balanced literacy approach to L2 writing, therefore, learners are provided with tools to acquire literacy skills that they can transfer (Cumming, 2001) to a second language, through acknowledging their authorship and agency in their own learning processes. The following are aspects of a balanced literacy approach that either conform to or facilitate it. Among these are teaching writing approaches (balance between authorial and secretarial writing skills), genre-based pedagogy, the writing workshop, the writing conference, the writer's notebook, and learner choice, all of which are explained below.

2.2.1 Teaching Writing Approaches: A Balance Between Secretarial and Authorial Writing Skills

Isaacson (1989b) states that “[w]riting, by its very nature, is a communicative function and should be taught as such” (p. 209). What might be inferred from this quote is that practitioners may sometimes focus on aspects of writing disregarding its ultimate purpose: to communicate. Writing pedagogy influences the way we, teachers, support writers and, eventually, the way that writers view themselves as writers. Daffern and Mackenzie (2015) state that writing instruction is critical since it “supports and extends learning across all disciplines, as well as promotes social, emotional and cognitive development” (p. 23). Because of this significant role, writing instruction practices should be well balanced. When assessing learners' writing, it is very common practice in first and second language teaching to focus on secretarial features: handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar; i.e. writing conventions, and thus, neglecting authorial writing skills. Authorial writing skills are those that relate to “the organization of ideas and information to communicate to a particular audience” (Daffern & Mackenzie, 2015, p. 24), and thus, on the author's voice, their communication of ideas, feelings or information. Secretarial writing, on the

other hand, deals with surface features of writing and it is meant to recognize that a text must be understood by others who, in turn, share knowledge of writing conventions such as a certain language structure, spelling and punctuation. Conversely, authorial writing skills are those that allow writers to convey the intended meaning as they wish readers would understand it. As early as the 1980s, researchers, like Isaacson (1989a), addressed the issue of addressing both authorial and secretarial writing skills in second language writing instruction. Both kinds of writing skills develop well-formed writers who can convey their ideas successfully for others to read and understand.

Scharer and Pinnell (2008) describe how learners should be exposed to both craft and conventions; that is, authorial and secretarial writing skills. Craft of writing involves elements such as how the text is organized, how ideas in the text are developed, how the writer uses language, word choice and the writer's voice or unique style and perspective. Conventions, according to Scharer and Pinnell, are meant to "make meaning clear, including aspects of writing such as text layout, grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and handwriting or word processing" and they state how the "skilled use of conventions is necessary for proficient writing" (p.63). Therefore, there should be a balance between both kinds of writing skills: those which deal with the writers' ideas and intentions (authorial) and those dealing with the writing conventions needed for readers to understand the author's ideas and intentions (secretarial), to produce written texts that fulfill the purpose for which they were composed successfully.

Ivanič (2004) describes a range of different approaches to writing pedagogy (Figure 1). She analyses six different "configurations of beliefs and practices in relation to the teaching of writing" (p. 220). Each of these approaches analyzed propose a different view on language. Some of these approaches rely more on the written text, others in the mental processes of writing, some others in

the writing event, and one of them in the sociocultural and political context of writing. Instruction in the context of this study dwells between the range of the written text, the mental processes of writing and the writing event. This encompasses a myriad of beliefs about learning to write.

<i>Discourses</i>	<i>Layer in the comprehensive view of language</i>	<i>Beliefs about writing</i>	<i>Beliefs about learning to write</i>	<i>Approaches to the teaching of writing</i>	<i>Assessment criteria</i>
1. A SKILLS DISCOURSE	THE WRITTEN TEXT ↑	Writing consists of applying knowledge of sound-symbol relationships and syntactic patterns to construct a text.	Learning to write involves learning sound-symbol relationships and syntactic patterns.	SKILLS APPROACHES <i>Explicit teaching</i> 'phonics'	accuracy
2. A CREATIVITY DISCOURSE		Writing is the product of the author's creativity.	You learn to write by writing on topics which interest you.	CREATIVE SELF-EXPRESSION <i>Implicit teaching</i> 'whole language' 'language experience'	interesting content and style
3. A PROCESS DISCOURSE	THE MENTAL PROCESSES OF WRITING ↓	Writing consists of composing processes in the writer's mind, and their practical realization.	Learning to write includes learning both the mental processes and the practical processes involved in composing a text.	THE PROCESS APPROACH <i>Explicit teaching</i>	?
4. A GENRE DISCOURSE	THE WRITING EVENT ↓	Writing is a set of text-types, shaped by social context.	Learning to write involves learning the characteristics of different types of writing which serve specific purposes in specific contexts.	THE GENRE APPROACH <i>Explicit teaching</i>	appropriacy
5. A SOCIAL PRACTICES DISCOURSE		Writing is purpose-driven communication in a social context.	You learn to write by writing in real-life contexts, with real purposes for writing.	FUNCTIONAL APPROACHES <i>Explicit teaching</i> PURPOSEFUL COMMUNICATION <i>Implicit teaching</i> 'communicative language teaching' LEARNERS AS ETHNOGRAPHERS <i>Learning from research</i>	effectiveness for purpose
6. A SOCIOPOLITICAL DISCOURSE	THE SOCIOCULTURAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT OF WRITING	Writing is a sociopolitically constructed practice, has consequences for identity, and is open to contestation and change.	Learning to write includes understanding why different types of writing are the way they are, and taking a position among alternatives.	CRITICAL LITERACY <i>Explicit teaching</i> 'Critical Language Awareness'	social responsibility?

Fig. 1 Discourses of Writing and Learning to Write (Ivanič, 2004)

The scope of the present study ranges from creative self-expression, the process approach, the genre approach, functional approaches and purposeful communication (see Figure 1). This means that in words of Ivanič, this study explores how i) writing is the result of the author's creativity, ii) writing consists of composing processes, iii) writing is shaped in socially shaped texts, and iv) writing is communication that generates socially and accomplishes a purpose. Regarding these last two, instruction in the study context regard genre as a way to provide context to learners' writing processes.

2.2.2 Genre-based L2 Pedagogy

Genre-based pedagogy emerges from the attempt to contextualize the writing process and fill in gaps observed in the process approach. Horowitz (1986 cited in Johns, 1995), on the one hand, describes how genre-based pedagogy became predominant in the US as a response to process writing and how it did not prepare learners in academic writing appropriately. On the other hand, Paltridge (2014) identifies that the term genre in second language writing was first used in the 1980s by Swales. Ever since, genre-based pedagogy has increasingly been used in different countries to better prepare learners for the demands of academia.

Hyland (2007) states that “genre-based writing instruction offers students an explicit understanding of how target texts are structured and why they are written in the ways they are” (p. 151). According to Hyland, genre writing instruction relies on several principles, namely: writing is a social activity, learning to write is needs-oriented, learning to write requires explicit outcomes and expectations, learning to write is a social activity, and learning to write involves learning to use language. Hyland also sustains that learning to write through an understanding of the social purposes of different genres is possible since early elementary education. The purpose of genre-based pedagogy is to provide learners with “options for writing so their texts seem well-formed and appropriate to readers” (p. 153). Hyland also concludes that “[w]hile it may be the case that genre pedagogies are more complex and demanding for teachers than earlier approaches to writing instruction, they also offer them more possibilities for informed intervention through greater direction and situational focus” (p. 154).

In sum, genre-based writing instruction provides a framework for both teachers to assess and assist learners. Learners in a genre-based pedagogy acquire techniques and strategies to

produce texts that serve relevant functions, therefore, promoting their communication skill development.

2.2.3 The Writing Workshop

Writing is a highly complex task that requires constant practice. The writing workshop aims to provide young learners instruction and practice to develop writing skills and acquire writing traits. It is within this setting that writing instruction is delivered in the context of this study. According to Akhavan (2007), “children need focus, explicit guidance, and help, and they need plenty of time to simply write” (p. 66). The writing workshop provides opportunity for all these to occur. The objective of the writing workshop, as Pinnell and Fountas (2008 in Scharer & Pinnell, 2008) state, is to create a ‘writing community’ where people talk about their writing; “[i]n every way possible, student will be learning more than how to write in specific ways –they will be learning how to be writers” (p. 61).

One key principle to the writing workshop is to provide ‘transparent teaching’. This entails what Akhavan (2007) asserts as clear and focused teaching. This means that “children can clearly see what they are learning –and why” (p. 104). Therefore, when they learn a new strategy, Akhavan explains, they are exposed to i) how to practice the strategy, ii) what the strategy looks like in practice (by observing the teacher performing it as they verbalize their thinking), iii) how to master the strategy, iv) why the strategy matters. This is the objective of transparent teaching in the workshop. Akhavan states that transparent teaching “focuses on children constructing knowledge.” (p. 109)

The methodology of the writing workshop provides a framework where to present a writing strategy through transparent teaching. Akhavan (2007) outlines effective practices of transparent teaching into these different steps: i) setting the scene, ii) making connections, iii) telling the what,

iv) telling the how, v) assessing, vi) reteaching –when the learners show little understanding in the assessment. This research does not seek to understand the role of the transparent teaching section of the writing workshop, but rather the latter stages, where the teacher assesses and, if needed, reteaches. This assessment ought to be a way to collect data “in ways that will inform your instruction” (Akhavan, 2007), as well as “checking for understanding” (p. 107). The latter could be done through: i) asking learners to signal their answer to a question (e.g. thumbs up for understanding or readiness), ii) having learners write their answer and then showing it to you, iii) listening to student discussion during think/pair/share activities, and iv) conferring with individuals as they work. The last stage is when the teacher has noticed what individual learners have not learned and decides to reteach. However, this reteaching should be done without overcoaching (Cruz, 2008).

Akhavan (2007) states that “(a)n effective workshop session teaches, gives children time to practice, and then reinforces learning” (p. 108). During the workshop children construct knowledge, develop understanding through teacher’s modeling and scaffolding in preparation for learners to work collaboratively with their peers, with the teachers and then independently. The structure of workshop instruction is: i) mini-lesson, ii) work time, and iii) share time. During the mini-lesson, the teacher resorts to direct instruction to demonstrate a skill or strategy, during work time, learners work independently to apply the skills or strategies just learned during the mini-lesson, while the teacher works with individual learners (conferring) or with a pre-selected small group (small group instruction). Finally, during share time learners present how they used the skills or strategies seen.

Scharer and Pinnell (2008) describe four areas of writing competency that are addressed in the writing workshop: genre, process, craft and convention. Regarding genre and process, during

the mini-lesson section of the workshop, learners are exposed to examples that show the characteristics of narrative, informational, poetic, or functional writing using mentor texts to have learners become competent in genre; whereas, when developing learners' understanding to the writing process, they are exposed to its components, how their favorite or known authors engage in such process, as well as assisting to see themselves as writers. The ultimate goal is to foster lifelong readers and writers (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001).

According to some researchers, time devoted to writing every day is an essential differentiator in developing proficiency in writing. Cunningham and Allington (2007) identify essential principles to become good writers (and readers), one of which is the amount of classroom time spent in writing. Cunningham and Allington recommend allotting at least half an hour of writing daily for learners to become good writers. A writing workshop is designed to last from 35 to 80 minutes, out of which 20 to 45 minutes are allotted to independent writing time, where the teacher may confer with individual learners or with small groups (small group instruction). Within these two approaches to collaborative work, it is during conferring that the teacher enables a conversation where learners are praised in their developed writing skills and prompted to notice how to improve their composition and try strategies during their writing process.

2.2.4 Conferring with L2 Young Writers

Conferring consists on having a conversation with a few individual learners while having the group work independently on their writing. This discussion has different purposes. Conferring can be organized around the writing process (Anderson, 2009). These conferences can help the learner in pre-writing so they find and develop topics, in drafting conferences the focus is on identifying an audience, planning drafts, and crafting writing in different genres, while during the

revising and editing process the focus is on revision and editing strategies and writing conventions (i.e. grammar and writing mechanics). Anderson states that “[w]hen you confer with a student, it isn’t your job to fix or edit the student’s writing. Rather, it’s to teach the student one writing strategy or technique he can use in a current piece of writing and continue to use in future writing” (p. 3). The role of the teacher, thus, is that of a mentor that aims to develop the writer, not a piece of writing. This means that when conferring, the goal of the teacher is to provide with tools for the writer to try in the writing task at hand but for them to keep in their writer’s toolkit for further writing. Anderson also outlines every conference has two main parts: i) identifying the student’s needs, and ii) teaching the writing strategy or craft technique. During the first part of the conference, the teacher assesses the stage of the writing process the writer (learner) is in and how well the learner is doing. For it, Anderson suggests three steps: i) ask an open-ended question, to invite learners to tell you about what they are doing as writers (e.g. “What are you doing as a writer today?” or “How can I help you today?”); ii) ask follow-up questions, where the teacher finds out more about the writing stage, and the strategies and techniques used by the writer; iii) look at the student’s writing. From then, the teacher may make the decision to teach or reteach a skill or strategy to assist writers to fulfill their writing goal.

Calkins, Hartman, and White (2005) discuss the relevance of establishing good classroom management so that teachers can perform these actions during conferences. Additionally, Wood Ray and Laminack (2001) identify different kinds of conferences a teacher may choose to perform, depending on the individual needs of learners and where they are at in the writing process, such as: expectation conference (to reinforce procedures and guidelines); content conference (to choose and maintain writing topics); design conference (structure and organization), process conference

(to think about how and why learners write), and evaluation conference (to critique and revise). The present research uses these five types of conferences (see Chapter 3, Fig. 2).

Another argument toward carrying out conferences is offered by Pinnell and Fountas on the relevance of speaking to develop writing skills. Pinnell and Fountas (2008 in Scharer & Pinnell, 2008) state that language is “an integrated set of three systems –phonological, syntactic, and semantic” (p. 49). They also assert that “(w)ritten language represents oral language, so it reflects the same systems” (p. 52). Therefore, by using the oral language to support writing is expected to help learners become better writers and as Fountas and Pinnell (2017) suggest, develop fully literate learners.

One of the key challenges of conferring is that it is aimed to ‘teach the writer’ (Graves & Jacobbe, 2004 cited in Scharer & Pinnell, 2008). That is, the purpose of conferring is to teach the writer strategies he or she can use every time he or she writes through guidance, showing active listenership and respect to their authorial voice (Scharer & Pinnell, 2008). “When we confer with children, we want to follow their lead and intentions as much as possible [...]. We nudge our student to explore the path a writer takes by reaching in to their own thinking and experience to help readers think and experience in richer ways” (p. 219). Teachers are encouraged to encourage learners to write about actual experiences, which interest readers. Ray (1999 cited in Scharer & Pinnell, 2008) invites teachers to consider the learners’ authorial skills by having them make their writing say, “[t]his is who I am, this is what I wish for, and this is what I care about” (p. 219).

2.2.5 The L2 Writer’s Notebook

Just like genre-pedagogy emerged as a solution to the shortcomings of process writing approaches up to that moment, the writer’s notebook function has seemingly fulfilled a similar role

for particularly the young writer. The writer's notebook emerged because writing pedagogy by the early 1990s was so focused on the writing process that, as Calkins (1993, cited in Dempsey, 2015) states, writers were getting lost in it, they were no longer focusing on 'catching the moment'. Calkins works with academic writing in higher education, but other researchers, mainly teacher researchers, have documented the use of the writer's notebook to develop writing skills in young learners. This tool is regarded by them as a haven for learner's thoughts.

Author Ralph Fletcher (2001) has documented the use of this writer's notebook by young learners extensively. In an article in 2001 he shared the poem written by a fifth grader about this young writer's view of his own writer's notebook (Fig. 2).

It's a Place
Why am I keeping this notebook?
Because it's a place where I can
keep track of my life.
It's a place where I can observe closely
And where I can store little pieces of strength.
It's a place where I can keep the elements of Life
(lightning, fire, ice, time and space)
and Writing
(poetry, words, eyes).
It's a place where tales weave.
All in all
It's a place for ME.

Fig. 2 Poem by John Mihaltses, a fifth grader from Long Island, NY (Fletcher, 2001)

Fletcher (2001) explains how an ancient tool: the writer's notebook, becomes a means to provide young learners access to a life as a writer. Fletcher identifies three uses: i) a place to live the writing life; ii) a place to react; and iii) a place to experiment. Fletcher describes that children experience the writing life by "noticing, paying attention, listening, collecting, musing, wondering, playing with the language, taking pleasure in her own words" (p. 1). Other authors like Allan et al. (2009) acknowledge the writer's notebook as both a resource and a place for learners to experiment, particularly with their voice. Kuby et al. (2015) notice that learners use their writer's notebook to

collect ideas as an extension of their rehearsing their pieces. Kuby et al. recognize that writers rehearse their pieces through different modes, including what they describe as intra-actions (e.g. learners were found role-playing their writing ideas during recess). Fountas and Pinnell (2017) describe the importance of the notebook as a tool for young writers, for them to “collect ideas, experiment, sketch, diagram, and freewrite” (p. 236). Moreover, Fletcher (2003) uses an analogy for the role of the writer’s notebook as a place to collect ideas: a ‘ditch’ writers ‘dig’ to ‘catch’ all sorts of ‘creatures’. These ‘creatures’ are meant to become seeds or triggers for inspiration.

The writer’s notebook is not the best solution for all writers. There are some authors like Cynthia Rylant (Fletcher, 2003) who do not rehearse their writing on paper but rather in their minds. However, not all writers may prefer this approach. Young writers may find the cognitive burden to be too heavy to organize their writing only in their minds, i.e. different writing processes may compete over working memory (Kellogg, 2001). Furthermore, Fletcher (2003) discusses how writers, unlike other people, besides noticing their surroundings or having different experiences, record their observations and their reactions. Fletcher regards the writer’s notebook as a place where ideas may be fostered and may or may not evolve into final (private or public) pieces of writing. Fletcher describes different ways to record writing but states that “maybe the most important lesson you can learn as a writer is to *write small*”, which means taking quick notes of what calls the attention of young writers or words or phrases that mean something to them.

Laman (2014) characterizes the writer’s notebook as tantamount to approach the writing process as a recursive process. In her study, Laman portrays how a class used the writer’s notebook as a tool to explore how writers would approach the same task at hand. Laman describes how multilingual young learners were exposed to alternatives to their entries, having them re-view them, comparing them to what expert writers when facing similar challenges. By using visual

organizers and other ways to structure thinking, young writers have seeds that they can later expand into their texts. Young writers in Laman's study were also given the chance to experiment with their writing (i.e. writing different beginnings). Laman argues about using the writer's notebook as a tool that "using tools for authentic purposes is integral to learning" (p. 6). Furthermore, she describes how in her study "the purpose of the writer's notebooks was reshaped; it became a tool that both engaged children in writing as a recursive process and was dependent on children's lived experiences rather than on isolated prompts" (p. 6) making the tool and the task more authentic.

All in all, the writer's notebook, as described above, would rarely be the neat and organized record keeping place that many language teachers usually aim learners to maintain as proof of their learning. By owning writing as means to express and expand their thinking, young writers stop considering their notebook as a burden and start acknowledging its value in becoming an extension of themselves.

2.2.6 Learner's Choice

Finally, a relevant tenet for consideration in this research, which plays a significant role in balanced literacy, is the relevance of learner's choice in writing. In a balanced literacy approach, first, there is direct instruction. That is, the teacher first states the teaching point and proceeds to model a specific strategy, showing what it is and how it looks like. Teachers think aloud, showing learners their decision-making process using rhetoric metalanguage to then invite learners to try performing the strategy on their own, with the guidance of the teacher and, sometimes, the assistance of a peer. Control is then given to the learners, thus, they include the strategy in their repertoire of literacy understandings and behaviors. As they are ready to move on to independent work, their own decision-making process enacts. They make several choices, from genre and form,

to topics and even word choice to express their voice. This active choice has been documented as having positive outcomes, mostly when associated to learner autonomy (Bandura, 1989; Benson, 1997, 2007; Ryan & Deci, 2001). Choice in writing, specifically, has also been documented (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Hunt, 1995; Cremin & Baker, 2010; Laman, 2014; Maletta, 2016).

Flower and Hayes (1981) explored choice in writing, specifically what guided writers' choices in the writing process. They explored four key points: i) writing process is best understood as distinctive thinking processes writers organize while composing; ii) these processes have a hierarchical, highly embedded organization in which any given process can be embedded within any other; iii) composing is a goal-directed thinking process, guided by the writer's own growing network of goals; iv) writers create their own goals in two key ways: by generating both high-level goals and supporting sub-goals which embody the writer's developing sense of purpose, and then, at times, by changing major goals or even establishing entirely new ones based on what has been learned in the act of writing (p. 366). The writing process approach to composition sometimes misunderstood the difference between the stages by which a text grows and evolves with writer's choices, and how writing processes occur in the minds of writers. Flowers and Hayes describe how writers are constantly planning and revising as they write. They also state that choice and decision-making dwell between the tensions of three major elements of writing: i) the task environment (i.e. the rhetorical problem or assignment and the text itself); ii) the writer's long-term memory (i.e. knowledge about the topic, audience and writing plans); and iii) the writing processes (i.e. basic processes of planning, translating, and reviewing). Flowers and Hayes notice that, as addressed by Bereiter and Scardamalia (1982), young writers find difficulty or lack of fluency as "their lack of an 'executive routine' which would promote switching between processes or encourage the sustained generation of ideas" (p. 374), for instance, young writers "possess the skills necessary to

generate ideas, but lack the kind of monitor which tells them to ‘keep using’ that skill and generate a little more” (p. 375).

Hunt (1995) discusses topic and discourse form choice between genders in high school learners. With all the constraints of this study (98 learners in a private Puerto Rican high school), Hunt recognizes the inadequacy of generalizations and, as a research teacher, focuses on how her own practice may be modified to empower her learners. However, one potentially interesting finding was her observation of the need of instruction and guidance to guide learners’ choices further from their seemingly comfort zone.

Cremin and Baker (2010) describe how teachers themselves are challenged in their perception of authenticity when deciding to write ‘for the system’ or ‘for themselves’. By having teachers (writer-teachers, teacher-writers) experience this tension, Cremin and Baker found that there were pedagogical consequences. Teachers were more aware of the importance of choice in fostering authorial agency, and thus, they sought to provide with enough options and opportunity for their learners to develop as writers.

Laman (2014) studied the literacy practices learned and enacted by multilingual children in a writing workshop structure. Laman states that,

“[...] workshop formats provide opportunities for teachers to scaffold multilingual student learning by providing explicit language and composition instruction, supporting students through conferring, and offering extended amounts of composing time during which students can talk and draw upon social, cultural, and linguistic resources to convey meaning through writing.” (p. 2).

Laman suggests that in multicultural contexts, from a critical sociocultural perspective, power is in interplay with differences in race, language, class, gender, among others. If English is

set as the language of instruction, the dominant language, learners from other linguistic backgrounds would be set in disadvantage. She cites Lewis, Encino, and Moje (2007) to assert that identity, agency, and power are pivotal in learning literacy. Laman states that in the writing workshop multilingual learners are empowered, among other ways, by giving them choice on topics and authorial decisions in literacy practices. Laman states in her study that by providing learners with choice of genre, discourse styles, showing them alternatives to the different moves in their writing (e.g. different ways to introduce their text), multilingual learners increase their command of the language of instruction. Laman also discusses what happens when learners are given the chance to express themselves in their dominant language. This, with the purpose of providing learners with a new perspective to the messages they want to convey and providing them with a scaffold to write in the language of instruction. Laman states that “[i]t is imperative for identity and agency that people see themselves as able to read and write an array of texts” (p. 8). Laman (2014) observed an implicit constructing of self in the young writers in her study. This identity, as well as the agency she mentions, were constructed through the options they were given. In sum, for learners to make these choices, the teacher should be ready to anticipate needs and be open to cater for the needs of their learners.

Maletta (2016) analyzes choice from different angles. She describes choice as fuel to motivate learners to be engaged in literacy practices. Maletta describes how choice leads to ownership, and thus, she states how Au (1998 in Maletta, 2016) “believes that ownership is the overarching goal of literacy” (p. 8). Maletta describes how Au believes that learners drawing on their own interests and experiences leads to learners’ enhanced comprehension. Maletta, furthermore, describes how learners who are given the choice to engage in literacy activities and choose to engage in such activities seem to be more prompt to succeed academically over those

who did not make that choice (Haag, 2015, in Maletta, 2016). Maletta also explores choice in genre across culturally diverse young learners. She cites a study by Mohr (2003) where it was found that first graders, when given the choice, instead of choosing narratives, as expected, they chose non-fictional texts. This study suggests that when young learners are given the choice, they choose to learn. When exploring choice of partnerships in the classroom, Maletta cites another study by Stout (2009) on how young learners choose peers who may help them in the task at hand. In topic choice, Maletta cites the work of Behizadeh (2014), who recommends not to limit topic choice too strictly, since it may limit how invested and open learners may express themselves in return. Remarkably, Maletta asserts how “student control and student choice allow students to perform at higher levels than they normally would” (p. 11).

The work of Maletta highlights how very young learners can make choices leading to developing their literacy. However, young learners may or may not be equipped to make certain literacy choices depending on their age and literacy development. The teacher, therefore, may mediate learner choice, making these choices more concrete or authentic to young learners and thus maintain a high level of motivation and sense of self-efficacy. In all the literature I have explored that discusses learners’ choice, the teacher plays an essential role in facilitating choice as well as providing with the right tools and task settings for learners to be prepared to make choices that develop them as writers.

Considering all aspects of balanced literacy, I found a tool, the literacy continuum, that is used for assessment and planning that could help in the analysis of data collected in this study.

2.3 The Literacy Continuum

Fountas & Pinnell (2017) provided a framework used in this research to describe the data through content analysis. The literacy continuum describes what users of a language can do at different levels of literacy development, there are different levels of control of literary techniques and literacy skills at different levels of second language proficiency. Fountas and Pinnell devised the Literacy Continuum to serve different purposes but mainly as a reference for teaching; “it serves as a curriculum guide to use in observation, planning, teaching, and reflecting, always asking, ‘What are my students showing that they know and can do?’” (p. 1). This is the reason why this continuum was considered to execute data analysis. Fountas and Pinnell, however, advise to not regard the descriptions in the continuum as “an even, step-by-step process” (p. 1), and warn teachers to expect learners to probably advance significantly in one area and seemingly not progress in another.

Fountas and Pinnell (2017) examined curriculum state standards (from across the U.S.) and found six guiding principles: i) learning is ever-evolving; ii) basic concepts are acquired first and then expanded over time; iii) some of the literacy understandings and behaviors take years to develop; iv) learners apply their understandings and behaviors to increasingly complex texts; v) most learners need expert teaching to develop both reading and writing expertise; and vi) different kinds of learning occur across different kinds of language and literacy activities, each enhancing and reinforcing others.

The continuum, therefore, is designed to provide teachers with information about learners’ understandings and behaviors in different literacy activities (instructional contexts). The literacy continuum is divided, therefore, in eight continua: i) interactive read-aloud and literature discussion; ii) shared and performance reading; iii) writing about reading; iv) writing; v) oral and

visual communication; vi) technological communication; vii) phonics, spelling, and word study; viii) guided reading. The specific continuum used in this research, is the one used for writing as an instructional context.

Fountas and Pinnell (2017) describe the writing instruction as “a way of experimenting with and deepening understanding of genres students have read” (p. 5). Writing instruction is expected to be held in writing workshops where the teacher assist learners to “expand their learning of the craft, conventions and process of writing to communicate meaning to an audience” (p. 5). The writing continuum describes understandings and behaviors for each grade level in the categories of craft, conventions, and process, and “suggests purposes and genres for students to consider and choose as they write at each grade level” (p. 5). Fountas and Pinnell acknowledge the complexity of dimensions of writing and so they designed a framework to describe it (see Appendix B). The writing continuum, adapted in this research, describes understandings and behaviors that are ideally achieved by the end of every school year in four major areas of writing: purpose and genre, craft, conventions and process. This study focuses on authorial writing; therefore, it will not use the descriptors of conventions, since those belong to secretarial writing. Out of the three areas, the most extensively described is process. It is because of its extent and due to my research questions that its last section, ‘view of self as a writer’ is analyzed separately. Thus, in this research, the understandings and behaviors analyzed belong to: process, (purpose and) genre, craft, and view of self as a writer.

2.4 Literacy Principles

Fountas and Pinnell (2017) assert the following as literacy principles at play in a balanced literacy approach: i) “Students learn by talking”; ii) “Students need to process a large amount of

written language”; iii) “The ability to read and comprehend texts is expanded through talking and writing”; and iv) “Learning deepens when students engage in reading, talking and writing about texts across many different instructional contexts” (p. 2). This means that since talking represent their thinking, by engaging learners in different kinds of texts, they expand their comprehension of those, their ideas and how they share their thinking. This talk, for English Language Learners (ELLs) may even be in their first language, as proposed by Verplaetse (2008). When processing written language, it is important that learners have daily exposure to a myriad of texts where they can choose. This has been explored by researchers like Purcell-Gates (2001) who acknowledge the importance of exposing young learners to written language and Grant, Golden and Wilson (2014) who state that that learners need to be exposed to copious amounts of text and approach those in different ways, mediated by specific instructional strategies. Choice, as explained further on, is key in keeping learners engaged in their literacy development. Learners should also be given the opportunity to talk and write about texts in different ways to both, expand their comprehension and find new ways to express that comprehension. Wallace, et al. (2007), for instance, claim that writing can improve reading comprehension in elementary school learners. By balancing the different modes of communication (reading, talking and writing about texts) we provide learners with new ways to express their thinking, learn from texts and from each other. This is supported by research like that of Wallace, et al. (2007) on writing to learn in elementary school learners to improve not only literacy but metacognition; Graham and Herbert (2010) who assert that writing might not only improve reading comprehension but is conducive to writing; and Woolley (2014) who describes how literacy is developed when engaging in different practices. They assert that literacy skills can become tools for ongoing learning.

School-based literacy, such as that explored in this study, relies heavily on reading and writing. Fountas and Pinnell (2017) emphasize on the role of talking as well. The current research also relies on the notion of literacy as social practice as described by Barton, Hamilton and Ivanič (2000) and Barton (2007). Barton (2007) urges literacy researchers to observe literacy events in their context, as they emerge. For that, he encourages the use of literacy events as means to collect observable data about literacy practices, which, as stated by Barton, Hamilton and Ivanič (2000), may remain non-visible in the most part unless explored through the literacy events that constitute them. In the case of this study, learners are inquiring about how social pressures influence physical and emotional health. During the course of their inquiry, they were expected to write two feature articles on issues they wanted to explore. In teams, they chose their topics. As they were exploring their topics, my job as a teacher was to scaffold their composing through direct instruction and one-on-one guidance. Their inquiry implied interacting not only with their teachers but with their peers to construct knowledge. One of the outcomes of this inquiry was their feature article writing. This is the literacy practice explored in this research.

Literacy practices, as described by Barton, Hamilton and Ivanič (2000), help conceptualize “the link between the activities of reading and writing and the social structures in which they are embedded and which they help shape” (p. 7). Barton, Hamilton and Ivanič identify literacy practices as the basic unit in understanding literacy as a social theory. They assert “[l]iteracy practices are the general cultural ways of utilising written language which people draw upon in their lives” (p. 7). It is in this understanding that the unit of study of the present research aligns with the concept of literacy practice. They also assert that literacy practices are not observable units of behavior in themselves because they entail a myriad of aspects including “values, attitudes, feelings, and social relationships” as well as “people’s awareness of literacy, constructions of

literacy and discourses of literacy, how people talk about and make sense of literacy” (p. 7). Barton (2005) states that these are internal individual processes as well as social processes “which connect people with one another, and they include shared cognition represented in ideologies and social identities” (p. 22). Barton and Hamilton (2012) describe that these practices reside between individual and social worlds and how they are better understood when studied in people’s relations, groups and communities, rather than residing in individuals. Barton and Hamilton state that these literacy practices “cannot wholly be contained in observable activities and tasks” (p. 8). Literacy events, conversely,

...are activities where literacy has a role. Usually there is a written text, or texts, central to the activity and there may be talk around the text. Events are observable episodes which arise from practices and are shaped by them. The notion of events stresses the situated nature of literacy, that is always exists in a social context (p. 8).

In the case of this research, the literacy practice is that of learners inquiring about the effects of social pressure in the situated context of their school and close communities (e.g. family and friends). The events used as units of analysis are of three kinds: their work recorded in their writer’s notebook, learner-teacher writing conferences, and the publishing of one of their feature articles. These events align with the observable qualities of literacy events in that the participants, setting, artifacts, and activities are evident. They align as elements of literacy practices in that through them one might imply the non-visible elements of the literacy practice of inquiring about social phenomena (Figure 3).

Elements visible within literacy events	Non-visible constituents of literacy practices
Participants: the people who can be seen to be interacting with the written texts	The hidden participants –other people, or groups of people involved in the social relationships of producing, interpreting, circulating and otherwise regulating written texts.
Settings: the immediate physical circumstances in which the interaction takes place	The domain of practice within which the event takes place and takes its sense and social purpose
Artifacts: the material tools and accessories that are involved in the interaction (including the texts)	All the other resources brought to the literacy practice including non-material values, understandings, ways of thinking, feeling, skills and knowledge
Activities: the actions performed by participants in the literacy event	Structured routines and pathways that facilitate or regulate actions; rules of appropriacy and eligibility – who does/doesn't, can/can't engage in particular activities

Fig. 3 Basic elements of literacy events and practices (adapted from Barton, Hamilton, Ivanič, 2000)

Barton, Hamilton, and Ivanič also state that "the notion of events stresses the situated nature of literacy" in that "it always exists in a social context" (p. 8), which is consistent with the three kinds of events analyzed in my study. I do not analyze the texts in isolation but within its social context. This social context is the interaction in the classroom between these learners and me, their teacher.

In their writer's notebook, there is record of the interactions held during our writing workshops and then our exchanges during writing conferences. Our writing conferences were transcribed to analyze these interactions, viewed as social events, "rather than the formal linguistic properties of texts in isolation" as described by Lemke (1995) in Barton, Hamilton, and Ivanič (2000). The last two conferences were supported by their published feature article, chosen by each of the four writers as exemplar of their authorial writing. The analysis of this composition was also done from the perspective of the discussions that led to writing these feature articles. Barton, Hamilton, and Ivanič assert that "the study of literacy is partly a study of texts and how they are produced and used" as they are "a crucial part of literacy events" (p. 9). The study of Calderón López (2017) on self-generated literacy practices is an example of a study that regards this analysis.

In the following chapter, I will outline the methodology used in this research, framed by the concepts above.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This research was an exploratory teacher research (Nickoson., 2012) The inquiry sought to document the progress and insight of young learners' text production and reflection through six moments at different stages in their writing process (prewriting, drafting, and revising) as well as an analysis of their final product: one of two feature articles. Practitioner-researchers try “to access a profound understanding of the situation [...] using their normal pedagogic practices as investigative tools” (Hanks, 2017 p. 27), just as I attempt in this study. Also, because this inquiry seeks to understand composition from young writers in my classroom, and as described by Nickoson (2012, in Nickoson & Sheridan, 2012), my research is encompassed in what she describes as teacher research. This is because she describes teacher-research as that which aims to have “a deeper understanding of our students as writers” (p. 111). Having evolved from action research and other methodological traditions, teacher research encompasses all inquiry where the teacher is regarded as an expert of all actions and elements of the classroom, and thus having a privileged stance that leads to either better understanding or informed change in their practice. Although I do not aim to implement any change in my research, I do seek better comprehension of my learners as writers.

3.1 Research Context

The present thesis was carried out in a school in Central Mexico that is part of the International Baccalaureate Organization Primary Years Program (PYP). In the PYP they work on six units of inquiry during the school year, the research occurred during the fifth one. Each unit took around six weeks to complete. Each unit works with a transdisciplinary theme. In the PYP,

transdisciplinary themes help design a unit of inquiry. The themes are selected based their relevance to essential human effort to make sense of the world and they are called transdisciplinary because the issues they focus on, transcend subject areas. The transdisciplinary theme of the unit of inquiry to analyze was ‘who we are’, where learners explore the nature of self; their beliefs and values; personal, physical, mental, social and spiritual health; and their families. These themes had already been designed but learners, with the guide of their teachers, devise the queries they wish to explore. The central idea of the unit of inquiry was aimed to explore social pressure and its effects in someone’s mental and physical health. It is within this theme that learners wrote their feature articles and chose the topics they wanted to write about. In the unit, they were set to write two feature articles based on topics they had chosen after agreeing with their team mates. At the end of the unit, they chose one of their articles to be included in one of six class newspapers (one per team).

This qualitative research aimed to describe the writing process and learners’ insights considering that I, the researcher, was also the teacher in the class. Learners in this setting learn literacy in general, writing in particular, through a balanced literacy approach where minilessons and conferences, among other strategies, were used to teach and monitor learning. To keep record of the teachings and their attempts to writing, learners keep a writer’s notebook. During conferences, the teacher mediated learning and learners used feedback given during these to make changes or try new strategies in their writer’s notebook they could later demonstrate in their published articles. This research used these (writer’s notebook, conference transcripts, and a published article) as artifacts to facilitate data collection and further analysis.

3.2 Sampling

As Ritchie and Lewis (2003) state, sampling is necessary in exploratory studies like the present one because the researcher would not be able to observe all individuals in the group. First, to examine the writing processes of high- and low-performing learners, a criterion based sampling (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003) was used to yield high- and low-performing learners, that represented the population that aligned with the purpose of the study: Mexican, Spanish L1 speakers. All participants had been in the program during their elementary education. Two female and two male participants were chosen, placed on opposite sides of the spectrum of English language level performance; one high-performing girl, one high-performing boy, one low-performing girl, and one low-performing boy. Criterion based or purposive sampling is commonly used in qualitative research as stated by Ritchie and Lewis (2003) “because they have particular features or characteristics which will enable detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and puzzles which the researcher wishes to study” (p. 78). To choose participants that strongly represented the phenomena to be studied, i.e. how both male and female low- and high- performing fifth graders undergo their writing process, an intensity sampling approach (Patton, 2002 in Ritchie & Lewis, 2003) was used. This sampling approach was used to provide with in depth insight of the development of authorial writing skills from rich cases, rather than deviant or extreme ones. I made this decision given that the phenomenon has not been explored enough to describe cases out of the norm.

The criteria used to select the participants was first, their language level performance as assessed in an adaptive diagnostic test at the beginning of the school year (Appendix A). From there, one high-performing girl and one high-performing boy were chosen, as well as one low-performing girl and one low-performing boy (Figure 1). These four participants were chosen

considering their other school activities since, if part of a school team or a special role, they may be asked to step out of class or be absent during the time of the study. To select the moments to have conferences with the participants and analyze their writing, I followed a maximum variation approach (Patton, 2002 in Ritchie & Lewis, 2003), to include different phenomena that may yield central themes in learners' authorial writing skill process and products and performance across the different participants. That is, by having high and low performing writers in both genders, the description may become richer provided the four different stances.

3.3 Participants

The participants were four learners discussing their written process, product, view of selves as writers, as well as providing evidence of their writing. They were attending the fifth grade in the 2016-2017 school year at an IB PYP school in Central Mexico. The learners belonged to a group of 24 learners. The four participants were 10 at the time of the study. Because of their age and how access was granted to this research, their anonymity was requested and thus procured. The writers, henceforth, will be referred to as: Alba, Adrián, Martha, and Mateo. Samples of their writing showed in this study, therefore, omit any evidence of their actual names and the school they attend. Any other name mentioned by these learners during conferences was also changed, including the name of the school, which may only be referred as [School]. The following is the profile of these learners at the beginning of the school year, when they were selected.

This research describes how these four young writers developed their authorial writing skills in the term of six weeks. They had been developing their writing skills within a balanced literacy approach for at least three years prior this study. They had been developing literacy behaviors and understandings in a second language as expected in an English as a first language

setting in accordance to the expectations of the school they attend. It is worth mentioning that each of these young learners approached their writing in different ways and therefore the four perspectives were set to provide a particular stance on what may occur in learners when teaching writing in a second language. Below, there is a general outline of the characteristics of these four learners at the time of this study (Fig. 4).

Both Alba and Adrián were placed at an early reader literacy development level from the diagnostic test they had taken at the beginning of the school year (Appendix A); Martha and Mateo, on the other hand, were placed at a transitional reader literacy development level, meeting the standard of the grade level and being two of the highest performing learners in the diagnostic assessment. All participants, however, consistently matched the description of the intermediate fluency SLA stage. The group of these participants, in general terms, scored low in the diagnostic test used to assess level of literacy. Only four learners were at level and the rest below. At the end of the study, there was a final diagnostic test where only one learner, Mateo, exceeded the expected performance level, followed closely by Martha. Alba reached the expected level of grade level performance, although Adrián did not reach that level in some literacy domains.

Learner	Literacy Development Level¹	Stage of SLA²	Observations	Family Background	Nationality
Alba	Early reader	Stage IV: Intermediate Fluency Stage	A risk taker. Even when her control of the language is limited, she compensates with her being resourceful.	Third child of four. Divorced parents. Her mother is a librarian and encourages her reading, mostly in Spanish.	Mexican; Mexican- origin parents
Adrián	Early reader	Stage IV: Intermediate Fluency Stage	Playful. Gregarious. He is more interested in talking to his friends than his academics.	Youngest of two boys. Both parents are involved, but mom is more involved in his and his older brother's academic performance.	Mexican; Mexican- origin parents
Martha	Transitional reader	Stage IV: Intermediate Fluency Stage	High achiever. She keeps very neat notes and is very organized. Sometimes too cautious to take risks.	Oldest of two girls. Highly involved parents. Mom does homework with her and her little sister.	Mexican; Mexican- origin parents
Mateo	Transitional reader	Stage IV: Intermediate Fluency Stage	Perfectionist. He takes his time to write. He is a devoted learner and reads regularly.	Oldest of three boys. Parents and extended family (grandmother) highly involved in his academics. His mom could not be as involved this year due to the arrival of his baby brother.	Mexican; Mexican- origin parents

Fig. 4 Participant writers' characteristics

The results from the adaptive online reading diagnostic test were used for evaluation towards instructional design decisions as an institutional assessment tool. It is from the results of this assessment that decisions on differentiated instruction are made. Some of these decisions may

¹ This literacy level was assessed based on observations and other assessment instruments throughout the school year. For more detailed information about the level of the different literacy domains, see Appendix A.

² Chen and Mora-Flores (2006), based on the work of Cummins (1984, 1992), outline these stages.

be to inform the conferences and small group instruction held with learners during instances like the writing workshop, among other ones. The diagnostic test assesses different domains: phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, reading comprehension of literature, and reading comprehension of informational texts. These results may predict performance in the second language oral and written expression (Abbott & Berninger, 1993; Geva & Yaghoub Zadeh, 2006; Harrison, Ogle, & Keilty, 2013).

Furthermore, the participants had some characteristics in common to keep this scholarship relevant to the contexts of most practitioners and researchers at the location of this study, although some differences may be salient. They were all Mexican, from Mexican parents, whose first language is Spanish. All come from highly involved families, which may not be that common in other contexts. They had been in the PYP program for four years and were in the fifth grade at the time of the study. This means they had been learning literacy in English with an English as a Second Language (ESL) approach to the language, as the school curriculum dictates. This particular learning context and contact with the language is not common, however, the view of second language acquisition may be shared in other contexts (Halliday, 2004).

3.4 Data Collection Strategies

The participants were selected to describe authorial writing from four different stances, in hopes to provide insight on how young learners develop and perceive authorial writing skills throughout the process of writing an informational piece during a six-week span. The data obtained for analysis came from two main sources: learners' writing samples (optically scanned documents) and semi-structured interviews (audio recorded conferences) with learners. The latter were

enriched with field notes from the observations I made during this study in my roles of teacher, tutor, and researcher.

At six instances during their process, there were 5-10 minute conferences held with each of the four participants, where their writing, their decision making as well as assistance to improve their writing were discussed. The conference questions form part of the curriculum; however, depending on writers' responses my response would either become a compliment or a reteach. Consequently, the conferences became semi-structured interviews. After each conference, observations and field notes were made to complement them in providing evidence of authorial writing skill development, as well as awareness of their writing process. The writing samples and conferences belong to the work from a single unit of inquiry, where learners explored a transdisciplinary theme (who we are: an inquiry into the nature of the self; beliefs and values; personal, physical, mental, social and spiritual health; human relationships including families, friends, communities, and cultures; rights and responsibilities; what it means to be human.) with a central idea: social pressures influence physical and emotional health. Within this inquiry-based, transdisciplinary program, there is room for disciplinary work, such as ESL literacy. For this particular unit, teaching points for writing are aimed to understand and produce feature articles. In reading they continue to explore non-fiction after having done so for another prior unit. Each lesson in a writing workshop is led by a teaching point. This informs the aim of the lesson: to develop understanding or behavior of good writers. The conference questions derive from these teaching points as well, working as an assessment of what learners understand and can do as writers. Although there are other kinds of conferences (e.g. exploratory to identify needs), for this research, they are pre-planned, to collect the insights from learners upon each of the teaching points. The conference questions leading the semi-structured interviews are outlined in Figure 5.

Conference Content	Conference Questions
1. Pre-writing. Expectation conference: Writers of feature articles write about common ideas in new and interesting ways.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What have we learned about feature articles? 2. How could you present these topics in a new and interesting way?
2. Researching. Design conference: Writers research by gathering information from a variety of sources.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What do you want to find out about your topic? 2. What kinds of resources can you use for your feature article? 3. Did you find resources that will help you learn more about your topic? What are they? Why do you think they might be helpful?
3. Drafting. Content conference: Feature article writers need to select an angle or focus that fits their audience and purpose.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is your selected angle? 2. Who is your audience? 3. What is the purpose of your article? 4. Where might a reader find your article?
4. Revising. Evaluation conference: Writers revise by looking for all the key elements in their writing.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What have you included in your article? Can you show me? 2. What do you still need to revise? 3. How will you do that?
5. Publishing. Evaluation conference: Feature article writers sometimes rely on visual communication to add to the impact of their pieces.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What sorts of visuals have you found in the mentor articles? Show me the two types you've chosen for your article. 2. What kind of visual do you think will work there?
6. View of Self as a Writer. Process conference: Feature Article Writer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What was the most important thing you learned about writing a feature article? Why? 2. How often did you consult a mentor text to get inspiration? What was the best part of having a mentor text? 3. What part of the writing process was the most challenging for you? Why? 4. Were you surprised by the path your article took? Did you have unexpected research that changed what you wanted to say? 5. Describe your feelings about feature article writing now that we've been through it. Compare this to what you were feeling when we started the work.

Figure 5. Conference questions used per lesson

I also used optically scanned documents to examine texts: learners' writer's notebooks and their chosen published feature articles. For each text produced throughout the school year, these learners followed a writing process they recorded in their writing notebook. During independent writing, the teacher engages in short conferences where learners shared their writing and were guided to identify salient features of their writing processes. They were then prompted to notice areas of opportunity and encouraged to make decisions based on these conversations. These

interactions (conferences) were recorded and transcribed for further analysis (Creswell, 2012). Towards the end of data collection, participants selected one of the two feature articles they were scheduled to publish as representative of their best authorial skills. This article represented, from the stance of each participant, the best sample of their authorship, and thus, arguably provide insight on how learners perceive themselves as writers. All these units of analysis are artifacts that conform literacy events as described by Barton, Hamilton and Ivanič (2000), i.e. “activities where literacy has a central role” (Laman, 2014). In sum, this research uses three kinds of artifacts: the work in their writer’s notebook, writing conferences, and the publishing of the writing product (a feature article). The timetable of data collection from these artifacts is illustrated in Figure 6.

Week 1	Writer’s Notebook	Pre-writing conference. Expectation conference (predesigned questions and additional questions based on their responses and observations from their notebook)	
Week 2	Writer’s Notebook	Researching. Design conference (predesigned questions and additional questions based on their responses and observations from their notebook)	
Week 3	Writer’s Notebook	Drafting. Content conference (predesigned questions and additional questions based on their responses and observations from their notebook)	
Week 4	Writer’s Notebook		
Week 5	Writer’s Notebook	Revising. Evaluation conference (predesigned questions and additional questions based on their responses and observations from their notebook)	Some writers started publishing their feature articles.
Week 6	Writer’s Notebook	Publishing. Evaluation conference (predesigned questions and additional questions based on their responses and observations from their notebook)	View of Self as a Writer. Process conference (predesigned questions and additional questions based on their responses and observations from their notebook) Published text (One of two feature articles)

Figure 6. Timetable of artifacts used to analyze and understand the literacy events

Because this research aimed to describe authorial writing skill development and not how it was taught, the emphasis was on identifying behaviors and understandings of learners rather than the actions taken by me, the teacher. During this research, my role was that of a participant observer. In describing the role of a participant observer, DeWalt and DeWalt (2002) identify that it helps answer inquiry from descriptive research as the present inquiry aims to do. Kawulich (2005) identifies that the stance of the observer affects the quality and amount of data collected. That is, the more involved the observer is in the culture (e.g. a complete participant whose role is not revealed to the group but after all data is collected), the less objective they become; however, the less involved in the culture, although potentially able to provide a more objective view of a given activity, the depth of understanding of such activity may be compromised by the lack of interaction with the members of the given culture. Kawulich also justifies the role of a participant observer in that by participating in the observed action the researcher views it from a vantage point, a deep understanding of such action nourished by the insight of the community they are immersed in. In the present research, my role as a participant observer allowed me to participate in six conversations with each one of the four young writers at different stages of their writing process.

There were measures in the data collection design to procure the best quality and amount of information within the constraints of the research setting. For instance, the conversations, held as conferences in the manner of semi-structured interviews, were correlated with the texts produced by learners during the writing process –their writer’s notebook– and their final product –one of the two feature articles they wrote– to triangulate data and avoid, as much as possible issues with bias. As DeWalt and DeWalt (2002) state, there are indeed limitations to use observations as the main data collection tool, mainly because the observer is biased and flawed in their nature since, after all, they are only human. To maintain the necessary rigor, nonetheless,

observations can be just one way to collect data but not the sole source of them. That is why this study uses field notes as observations just to enhance data collection and interpretation as also suggested by DeWalt and DeWalt (2002).

3.5 Data Analysis

Although the data analysis was done during the term of six weeks during the fifth of six units in a school year, as the teacher of this group, I had collected anecdotal, statistical, and performance data throughout the school year (2016-2017). The focus of the study was to describe how four emergent L2 writers, whether high- or low-performing, perceive their writing process and authorial writing skill acquisition at different stages of writing an expository text, as well as how their writing reflects their authorial writing skills.

The analysis of data was done through a directed approach to content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) using a literacy continuum framework (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017). This means I use the codes provided by the continuum to analyze data, to describe understandings and behaviors of the four young writers. The understandings and behaviors to analyze authorial writing used in this research are described in Appendix B. The continuum is a tool that was designed to assess, plan, and teach literacy. I used it to assess whether understandings and/or behaviors related to authorial writing skills were present in the conferences and writing samples of these four participants. I also discriminated those understandings and behaviors that did not belong to the specific genre the participants engaged in writing. Also, since the purpose of this study was not to describe authorship as a social activity (i.e. assisted by peers) but rather mediated by the teacher and other artifacts, those understandings and behaviors that regarded peer feedback or sharing work with others outside a conference, were not regarded to describe authorial writing skills.

Writing Areas	Specific Aspects	Understandings and Behaviors
Writing Process	Planning and Rehearsing	46
	Drafting and Revising	60
	Publishing	8
	Drawing	13
Genre	Understanding the Genre	9
	Writing in the Genre	11
Craft	Organization	21
	Idea Development	9
	Language Use	17
	Word Choice	14
	Voice	9
View of Self as a Writer		21

Fig. 7 Summary of the adapted writing continuum by Fountas and Pinnell (2017)

I decided to use four categories to analyze these understandings and behaviors, mostly in alignment with the categories devised by Fountas and Pinnell (2017): the writing process, writing within a genre and the writing craft. In the actual literacy continuum by Fountas and Pinnell the view of self as a writer is included within the writing process but for the purposes of the present inquiry, I decided to analyze it as a separate category. The purpose of having these four different categories (Figure 7) was to provide a better view of how the different understandings and behaviors might vary from participant to participant.

The conferences analyzed were chosen to exemplify different stages of the writing process: pre-writing (conferences 1 and 2), drafting (conference 3), revising (conference 4) and publishing step (conference 5) with an additional conference for participants to assess their view of selves as writers (conference 6). I describe how I observed skills and understandings evidenced (or not) in their work and conferences. The understandings and behaviors pertaining to writing within a genre and the writing craft are expected to be found underlying the contents of the conferences and the writing evidence from the participants —writer’s notebooks and published articles.

To analyze conferences and writing samples, I relied on describing the personal creativity of the individual writer, cognitive processes of writing and writer's immediate context, and thus I will rely on Flowers and Hayes (1986), Kellogg (1996), Kellogg et al. (2013) among other scholars to form an accordingly socio-cognitive description.

3.6 Access and Ethical Issues

For this study, as a teacher-researcher using ethnographic data collection strategies – participant observations, children interviews, and analyzing documents–, I obtained permission from a gatekeeper to obtain emic data (Creswell, 2012) – I gained access to the learner community. I understand the risks in data interpretation and the tensions between etic and emic research perspectives. For instance, Yin (2010) states that,

"researchers cannot in the final analysis avoid their own research lens in rendering reality. Thus, the goal is to acknowledge that multiple interpretations may exist and to be sure that as much as possible is done to prevent a researcher from inadvertently imposing her or his own (etic) interpretation onto a participant's (emic) interpretation" (p.12).

At the time of the study, I was the English teacher of one fifth grade group of 24 learners. I discussed the research project with the academic coordinator of the program and I was granted permission to use learners' texts for analysis. I discussed the project briefly with the parents, as advised by my academic coordinator at school, assuring them the utmost commitment to the protection of their children identities. Parents were presented with their children's final written products and their written reflections a few weeks after the data collection ended.

3.7 Conclusion

The goal of the current research methodology was to analyze data and to be able to identify emerging themes to describe literacy and writer identity development. Particularly, I aimed to describe the process of these emerging writers, developing authorial writing skills to provide a picture of what these young learners are able to perform and how they perceive themselves as writers through the evidence of literacy understandings and behaviors. By doing so, I hope to create awareness of the salience of these authorial skills in developing biliteracy. The analysis of data is presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter displays the results of this study. First, there is a brief depiction of the four young writers to provide some background to their work during this unit of inquiry followed by findings in four strands of writing observed in this study: writing process, writing in the genre, writing craft, and view of self as a writer (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017). Finally, there is a recount of the role of the artifacts used by these young writers to mediate their learning, as well as a reflection of the pedagogical implications observed during this study.

4.1 Four Young Writers

In this chapter, I explore four young writers' authorial writing skills (Alba, Adrián, Martha, and Mateo) in the span of six weeks. During their lower primary years, these four young writers developed writing skills that allowed them to produce texts that were increasingly longer and more complex schoolyear after schoolyear. They had also developed the enough stamina to sustain their reading and writing work both collaboratively and autonomously. They had been used to a structure where they would be exposed, in direct instruction, with habits of good reading and composition. Little by little, these learners explored different genres and forms, learning from mentor texts and the authors behind them. They learned about the writing process and how to construct meaning for a specific audience, within the conventions of a given genre and form, developing their craft as writers. All of this, in constant reflection of the decisions they made and how their moves, their use of language, their chosen structure, constituted informed decisions they could later transfer to the writing of different pieces in different genres. Despite having different levels of control of the language and composition skills, all learners in this study demonstrated

high commitment to their pieces by devoting independent time, time without the guidance or close supervision of a teacher, to writing their feature articles. Each at a different pace, but all resolved to deliver a piece they would be proud of.

The following sections aim to answer my two research questions:

RQ1 How do high- and low-performing Mexican EFL elementary fifth graders in an inquiry-based balanced literacy approach develop their authorial writing skills during the process of composing a feature article?

RQ2 How do these learners perceive themselves as writers within an informational expository genre?

Sections 4.2 to 4.4 answer RQ1, section 4.6 answers RQ2, and sections 4.7 and 4.8 provide additional findings and reflections from the data obtained and the way it was collected and analyzed. Appendix C shows samples of the data analysis that yielded the following results.

4.2 The Writing Process

The writing process was analyzed in four main stages outlined in Fountas and Pinnell's literacy continuum (2017): Planning and Rehearsing, Drafting and Revising, Publishing, and Drawing. The first two stages are divided into different aspects represented in Figure 8.

Process	Aspects of the Process
Planning and Rehearsing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose • Audience • Oral language • Gathering seeds/ Resources/ Experimenting with writing • Content, Topic, Theme • Inquiry/ Research/ Exploration • Genre/ Forms
Drafting and Revising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the process • Producing a draft • Rereading • Adding information • Deleting information • Changing a text • Reorganizing information • Using tools and techniques
Publishing	
Drawing	

Fig. 8 Writing processes and aspects of processes

Indisputably, the most complex aspect of the writing continuum is the writing process. From the 159 understandings and behaviors that a fifth-grade teacher at the research setting would be expected to observe (or not) from the continuum in their young writers, 117 of these understandings and behaviors were chosen to help describe the purpose of this research (Appendix B). That is, only those behaviors that would describe how young writers develop their authorial skills were to be considered. While discriminating understandings and behaviors to use in coding data, some of them had to be discarded as well due to the nature of the literacy events studied in this research. That is, those understandings and behaviors that dealt with learner interaction with other learners were not considered. Finally, some other understandings and behaviors regarding genres and forms that were not consistent with writing a feature article (e.g. fiction or narratives) were also left out from the analysis since they would be deemed as irrelevant to the research questions at hand. Writing in a genre, writing craft and view of self as a writer described in the following sections had a significantly lower number of understandings and behaviors that were analyzed (see Sections 4.3 to 4.5).

Unsurprisingly, the writing process drew the biggest number of understandings and behaviors in the study, both, across the four writers and in each individual writer. After analyzing evident or implied understandings and behaviors in the writing process, the following were the most salient ones across the different artifacts (work on their writer’s notebook, conferences, and publishing of one of their feature articles) in the four writers in the study (Figure 9). Most of these understandings and behaviors belong to the planning and rehearsing process, and there was one understanding that belonged to the drafting and revising process.

Process	Aspects of the Process	Understanding/behaviors
Planning and Rehearsing	Purpose	Write for a specific purpose: e.g., to inform, entertain, persuade, reflect, instruct, retell, maintain relationships, plan
	Audience	Understand audience as all readers rather than just the teacher
	Content/Topic/Theme	Choose topics that one knows about, cares about, or wants to learn about
	Content/Topic/Theme	Choose topics that are interesting to the writer
Drafting and Revising	Understanding the Process	Understand the role of the writer, teacher, or peer writer in conference

Fig. 9 Most salient understandings and behaviors in the writing process consistent in the four writers

This may speak about how much time learners devoted to planning and rehearsing of their writing, as well as how much evident they verbalized (during conferences) or demonstrated with their writing (writer’s notebook and feature article) these understandings and behaviors. The questions in conferences may have prompted these behaviors more frequently, however, sometimes, the understandings and behaviors were evident without having been prompted.

All four writers not only wrote for the specific purpose to inform their audience about their topic, but also stated in different artifacts that a feature article has the purpose to inform readers

about a topic. This latter was evident in their writer’s notebook and in some of the conferences where it was prompted, like the pre-writing conference where I asked them what they had learned about feature articles. The only artifact where this was not evident but implied was in publishing their articles. That is, because of how they composed their articles, we can infer they write to inform their audience (Fig. 10). These transcripts are corrected for writing conventions so that they become clearer; corrected text is between brackets. Word choice was not corrected since it is part of their authorial writing skills (craft).

Young Writer	Excerpt	Interpretation
Alba	After researching[,] I have learn[e]d that [f]riendship is serious [m]atter. You will [be] happy and you will be so serious [...]. [B]ut is your friend a real friend [who] help[s] you to progress and [does] no[t] manipulate and replace [you]?	Alba is informing what a friend is.
Adrián	Alcohol affect[s] the brain. If you want to know more about alcohol[,] read this article!	Adrián is informing about the effects of alcohol.
Martha	What is alcohol? Alcohol is a depre[s]sant drug that can be found in some beverages. Alcohol makes a person’s brain and body slow down. Why may people drink alcohol? People may drink alcohol to feel older or feel relaxed. If someone younger drinks alcohol it may damage [their] brain forever.	Martha is informing what alcohol is and what it does to the body when drunk.
Mateo	Bad Day? Do you think you have bad bad days? But nothing compares to [A]lexander[']s days. All day[s] something bad happen[s] to him[,] he fall[s], he hit[s] h[im]self! He want[s] to move to [A]ustralia!	Mateo is informing the readers about the general plot of the book he is reviewing.

Fig. 10 Excerpts from the four writers’ published feature articles where their purpose to inform is implied

Other salient understandings and behaviors evident and/or implied in different writers in the study are shown in Figure 11. All these understandings and behaviors belong to the ‘Planning and Rehearsing’ writing process. These were consistently present in the artifacts of different writers, just not as evidently in all writers. In figure 11, one can see these understandings and behaviors and for which writer they became manifestly present, whether evident or implied.

Aspects of the Process	Understanding/behaviors	Understanding/behaviors			
		Alba	Adrian	Martha	Mateo
Purpose	Tell whether a piece of writing is functional, narrative, informational, or poetic			✓	
	Have clear goals and understand how the goals will affect the writing			✓	
Audience	Write with specific readers or audience in mind		✓	✓	✓
	Understand that writing is shaped by the writer's purpose and understanding of the audience		✓	✓	
	Plan and organize information for the intended readers				✓
Oral language	Generate and expand ideas through talk with peers and teacher			✓	
	Look for ideas and topics in personal experiences, shared through talk				✓
	Explore relevant questions in talking about a topic			✓	
	When rehearsing language for an informational piece, use vocabulary specific to the topic			✓	
Gathering Seeds/ Resources/ Experimenting with Writing	Use a writer's notebook or booklet as a tool for collecting ideas, experimenting, planning, sketching, or drafting	✓			
	Think through a topic, focus, organization, and audience			✓	✓
	Use notebooks to plan, gather, and rehearse for future published writing	✓			
Content, Topic, Theme	Observe carefully events, people, settings, and other aspects of the world to gather information on a topic	✓		✓	✓
	Select information that will support the topic		✓		✓
	Tell about topic in an interesting way			✓	
	Communicate the significance of the topic to an audience			✓	
	Show the audience (by stating or providing important information) what is important about the topic			✓	✓
	Develop a clear, main idea around which a piece of writing will be planned			✓	
Inquiry/ Research/ Exploration	Use notes to record and organize information	✓			✓
	Conduct research to gather information in planning a writing project: e.g., live interviews, Internet, artifacts, articles, books			✓	✓
	Determine when research is necessary to cover a nonfiction topic adequately		✓		
	Search for appropriate information from multiple sources: e.g., books and other print materials, websites, interview				✓

Fig. 11 Other salient understandings and behaviors observed in individual writers

At least 90% of the total understandings and behaviors were evident in each of the writers. However, there were some understandings and behaviors that were either not evident in their work (i.e. they were expected to be observed at a given artifact) or they would be identified as ‘not

applicable’ (i.e. the artifact itself would not be able to redeem such understanding and behavior). The understandings and behaviors in Figure 12 show those that were not evident in neither of the literacy events in this study. Some of them might have been absent because these young writers did not find relevant to use footnotes, numbers, and sketching (Fig. 12) for this particular endeavor. Their lack of demonstration of the concepts of sketching and drawing might have been due to the elusive role of sketching and drawing these four writers considered for their feature articles. They did not produce long enough pieces where drawing would support their compositions or inform the readers in ways that text would not have sufficed or be as efficient. While working in other genres and forms where drawing is more visible, however, one might have most likely observed these behaviors, e.g. in the picture book they worked in earlier that school year.

Process stage	Aspects of the Process	Understanding/behaviors
Drafting and Revising	Adding information	Use footnotes to add information
	Using tools and techniques	Use a number to identify place to add information and an additional paper with numbers to write the information to insert
Drawing		Understand the difference between drawing and sketching and use them to support the writing process
		Use the terms sketching and drawing to refer to these processes and forms

Fig. 12 Not evident or not applicable understandings and behaviors in the artifacts of the four writers

Other understandings and behaviors that were not present at all in neither of the literacy artifacts of some of the events are shown in Figure 13.

Process stage	Aspects of the Process	Understanding/behaviors	Alba	Martha	Adrián	Mateo	
Planning and Rehearsing	Experimenting with writing	Try out titles, different headings and endings				X	
	Inquiry/ Research/ Exploration	Make scientific observations, use notes and sketches to document them, and talk with others about connections and patterns	X		X	X	
		Understand the concepts of plagiarism			X		
		Understand that a writer gains ideas from other writers but should credit the other writers and/or put those ideas into one's own words			X	X	
		Understand that a writer may quote another writer by placing the exact words in quotes and referencing the source			X	X	
		Record sources of information for citation	X		X		
Drafting and Revising	Producing a draft	Bring the piece to closure with an effective summary, parting idea, or satisfying ending			X		
		Show steps or phrases in time order when incorporating temporal or chronological sequence into a nonfiction text	X		X		
		Generate multiple titles to help think about the focus of the piece		X	X	X	
	Rereading	Identify information that may confuse the reader			X		
	Adding information	Add ideas in thought bubbles or dialogue in quotation marks or speech bubbles to provide information, provide narration, or show thoughts and feelings			X		
		Add transitional words and phrases to clarify meaning and make the writing smoother			X		
	Changing a text	Work on transitions to achieve better flow			X		
	Reorganizing information	Reorder pages or paragraphs by laying them out and reassembling them				X	
	Publishing		Produce writing to explain, label, or otherwise accompany drawing			X	
			Understand the importance of citing sources of information and some conventions for citations			X	
Drawing		Use sketches or drawings to represent people, places, and things, and also to communicate mood and abstract ideas as appropriate to the genre and form	X				
		Use sketching to support memory and help in planning		X		X	
		Use sketching to capture detail that is important to a topic		X		X	
		Provide important information in the illustrations		X			
		Use sketching to create quick representations of images, usually an outline in pencil or pen	X	X		X	

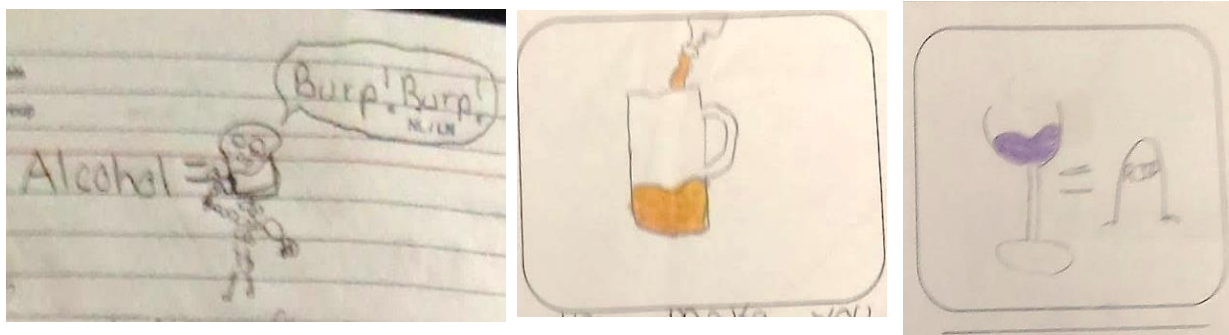
Figure 13. Other understandings and behaviors absent in all literacy events

Here it is evident that those not present understandings and behaviors belong to different writing processes. Some of these understandings and behaviors may have been absent from the young writers' work because they were not ready to integrate them into their literacy artifacts, or because there was not enough emphasis on those behaviors during the direct instruction of the writing workshops in the unit of inquiry, like those behaviors related to citing, quoting, and understanding of plagiarism.

After sharing these findings with the other grade teachers, they shared they had observed similar omissions in the work of their learners, and thus, during our planning sessions, we decided to modify our instruction to make sure we included more evident instruction from which learners could opt to integrate in their work.

Behaviors related to sketching in drawing as a writing process may not have been so evident because there was not direct instruction on the matter during the time of this study, although there was direct instruction on sketching towards the beginning of the school year. The lesson taught on drawing as a writing process in the unit of inquiry in this research, regarded the different kinds of visuals used in feature articles, not sketching or adding information to drawings, although some of the writers expressed their intentions to adding captions to their drawings as they published their feature articles. However, Adrián's notebook shows sketching he made for what he later decided would be the illustration in his feature article. In Figure 14, we observe Adrián's sketch in his writer's notebook (far left) and his illustrations in his published feature article (two images on the right). In his sketch, he represents writes the word 'Alcohol', then adds an equal sign (=), and then the image of a seemingly drinking skeleton with a speech bubble saying 'Burp! Burp'. We can observe on the image on the far right, the evolution of this first sketch into an only pictorial representation of the same message: alcohol equates to death. When asked about his choice for

illustration, Adrián stated that he thought those images helped the readers understand the message of his article. It is notable Adrián's level of abstraction in his illustrations. He went from a word and a talking skeleton, to a cup of wine and a tombstone, seemingly choosing a graver representation to convey the weight of his message. In his sketch, he experimented with a playful tone, but then decided to go for a more severe one in his published article. This evolution shows Adrián's writing process of drawing in informational texts.



Adrián's sketch to illustrate his article.

Adrián's illustrations in his published feature article.

Attempt in his writer's notebook.

Fig. 14 Adrián's attempts to illustrate his feature article

Furthermore, Adrián was one of the writers who experimented the most in his writer's notebook. We can see his use of simple visual organizers, notes on the sides, and evidence of revision (Figure 15). Even though Adrián did not seem to be too engaged during independent writing time –he would be constantly talking and joking with his partners–, he shows high commitment to independent work, trying new things in his writer's notebook, integrating some of the new learning in it, adding and rearranging text. In Figure 15, on the left, Adrián collects his information on the top picture

Alcohol
 Facts about alcohol
 Alcohol is a depressant drug found in some beverages.

Intoxication is the state of being drunk.

An minor is a person underage for an action like drinking ALCOHOL.

Drinking alcohol can harm your physical, mental, emotional, and social health.

Nicotine is a drug found in tobacco.

The nicotine in tobacco is very addictive.

Bad language can be effect in socialization and you can do nothing with bad language. Bad language can affect the relationship of a person and you can get in trouble.

How the alcohol affect the brain?
 The alcohol is bad to the brain because alcohol can make a permenant damage in the brain and alcohol make you addictive.

Alcohol makes you addictive!

How alcohol make you addictive?
 Because the material is so damage to the brain.

Alcohol is not really good to the brain but alcohol kill your neurons.

~~social pressure affect the friend and emotional health~~

social pressure affect the friend and emotional health

social pressure force to do bad things and sometimes good

social pressure affect in our decisions

Fig 15. Evidence of the use of the writer's notebook to revise writing

The understandings and behaviors of the writing process were evident in different degrees in the different kinds of artifacts. The literacy artifact where these were more evident was the writer's notebook, followed by the revising (evaluation) conference where it is discussed how

young writers revise by looking for all key elements in their writing. The literacy events that showed more evident understandings and behaviors were Alba's, Martha's, and Adrián's.

As a final note, although the purpose of the present research was not to observe differences in gender, I chose an even number of boys and girls in case there were data that spoke about gender differences. I did not find them in other dimensions of writing, but there was a specific behavior that was not consistently present in both boys' literacy events but was so in the girls' literacy events. This behavior was "Stay focused on a topic to produce a well-organized piece of writing that is long enough to fully explain the points (e.g., facts, arguments) the writer wants to make". It was introduced during the school year of this research. Both Alba and Martha were able to demonstrate, albeit not in all of their literacy artifacts, but in six of them, how they were able to stay focused, whereas Adrián and Mateo were only able to demonstrate this behavior in three of their literacy artifacts. Neither of the boys were able to write a conclusion. Mateo was not able to provide a conclusion to fully explain the point he wanted to make (i.e., readers of his article should read the book he was reviewing) and Adrián did not conclude his piece satisfactorily either; he ended with a question about how alcohol helps the reader to which he answered with a final remark [sic] "Alcohol don't help you in nothing really but alcohol is a depressant". This research does not aim to generalize on gender and certain writing behaviors; however, this result may guide further lines of gender and composition studies.

4.3 Writing within a Genre

The understandings and behaviors under genre fall into two categories: understanding the genre and writing in the genre. Artifacts of the four writers were analyzed to find evidence of nine understandings (understanding the genre) and eleven behaviors (writing in the genre). There were

two understandings and two behaviors that were consistent in all literacy events (Fig. 16). These understandings show that these young writers understand the purpose of feature articles and what the scope of their content, narrowing down the information to only one aspect of each of the subjects they chose. Alba wanted to discuss how to identify if someone is the reader’s friend and not someone who is exerting social pressure on the reader. Martha chose to discuss what alcohol is and its effects on the body. Adrián decided to inform about the effects of alcohol and Mateo chose to review Judith Viorst’s picture book “Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day” to encourage young readers to read the book. Mateo decided to share two excerpts from the book he thought young readers could relate to when thinking about stress children may undergo day by day. Their choice of topic and the way they were composing chose they had their readers in mind, addressing their article mainly to those intended readers. They also all stated their aim was to inform and composed their articles accordingly.

Process	Understanding/behaviors
Understanding the genre	Understand that a writer creates an expository text for readers to learn about a topic
	Understand that a feature article usually focuses on one aspect of a topic
Writing in the genre	Write about a topic, keeping in mind the audience and their interests and likely background knowledge
	Provide information that teaches or informs readers about a topic

Fig. 16 Salient genre understandings and behaviors across the four literacy events

While the four young writers chose the two topics they were going to write about as a team³, these results show how they were also able to consider their readers, their audience, when

³ Each of the four young writers in this study was working in a different team. These teams wrote different articles they later assembled in a school newspaper, one article per person.

making authorial writing decisions. Overall, they seem to have a strong understanding of informational writing and its feature article form.

Individually, the four writers displayed a few more additional understandings and behaviors (Fig. 17).

Process	Understanding/behaviors	Alba	Adrián	Martha	Mateo
Understanding the genre	Understand that an expository text may require research and will require organization	✓	✓	✓	
	Understand that a feature article reveals the writer's point of view about the topic or subject	✓	✓	✓	
Writing in the genre	Write a piece that is interesting and enjoyable to read			✓	
	Provide interesting supporting details that develop a topic			✓	
	Use some vocabulary specific to the topic		✓	✓	
	Use literary language to make topic interesting to readers		✓	✓	

Fig. 17 Salient genre understandings and behaviors in individual learners

Surprisingly, Mateo did not display other salient understandings nor behaviors. He seemed little invested in demonstrating his understanding of the genre beyond the basic task requirements, let alone in taking risks as a writer. I believe that, being above the level of most of his peers, Mateo must have found most of the instruction beneath his level of performance, therefore, he did not find it motivating to do beyond the very basic. It may be that children who are beyond most of their classmates' Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) lack motivation to outperform. They may need the assistance of the teacher to challenge them to move their ZPD and try more complex or sophisticated approaches to their writing. Unexpectedly as well, Adrián was second to Martha to display more genre understandings and behaviors in his literacy artifacts. Both Martha and Adrián used literary language to engage their readers. Adrián used onomatopoeia and Martha an analogy.

They both used literary language to hook their readers in their introduction. During a different lesson (not in this study), Mateo had shared he might try to use hyperbole in his piece, but then he decided not to. Alba was struggling conveying meaning and using literary language seemed to be much more demanding for her.

There were no understandings and behaviors that were completely absent in all literacy events, however, there were some writers that did lack demonstrating two behaviors. Alba and Adrián did not use quotes from experts either from written texts, speeches, or interviews. They both read literature to get information for their articles, but did not quote. They may still need more direct instruction on how to quote experts from the sources they read.

Finally, most of the genre understandings and behaviors were predominantly evident in the four writers' writer's notebook. This was mainly due to the notes they made during instruction time. However, had there not been conferences, some behaviors might have been not present. For instance, an understanding that a writer can learn how to write various forms of expository text from mentor texts was discussed during conferences and not evident in their writer's notebook nor in their published article. Some behaviors like using illustrations and book and print features (e.g., labeled pictures, diagrams, table of contents, headings, subheadings, sidebars, boxes of facts set off from other text, page numbers) to guide the reader, on the other hand, might not be present in the writer's notebook but it was clearly evident in their published work. This shows how some authorial writing skills are evident when different literacy artifacts are at play.

4.4 Writing Craft

The writing craft is using language to construct a piece of writing for the purposes of the author while at the same time embedding their unique approach to language and composing. The

behaviors and understandings from this dimension are divided into five categories (Fig. 18). This authorial writing dimension tends to suffer the most when teachers correct writers' work prescriptively. Instead of showing writers alternatives so that they are enabled to make their pick in organization, idea development, language use, word choice and resources to show voice, when we, teachers, prescribe language to be used or how ideas ought to be organized and developed, we rob our apprentice writers of the agency to have control of their compositions. These four writers demonstrated their craft with a myriad of understandings and behaviors.

Craft Dimensions	Aspects of Craft Dimensions
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text structure • Beginnings, Endings, Titles • Presentation of Ideas
Idea Development	
Language Use	
Word Choice	
Voice	

Fig. 18 Writing craft understandings and behaviors categories

The writing craft understandings and behaviors seem to be the most evident on paper, whether the writer's notebook or the published work. However, the fact that craft understandings and behaviors were also evident and implied during conferences needs to be observed closely. The understanding that was the most evident across the four writers' work was how information helps the reader learn about a topic. The four writers were very concerned to collect information from experts to make sure they were having their readers learn from their compositions. Moreover, there were two behaviors that were also evident across the four writers. Firstly, the writers began to use language typical of different genres and they also all showed enthusiasm and energy for their topics. The four writers were using language to both describe informational writing and its purpose in the form of the feature article. They were using language they had learned modeled from mentor texts which they later used to make decisions on their compositions (Fig. 19).

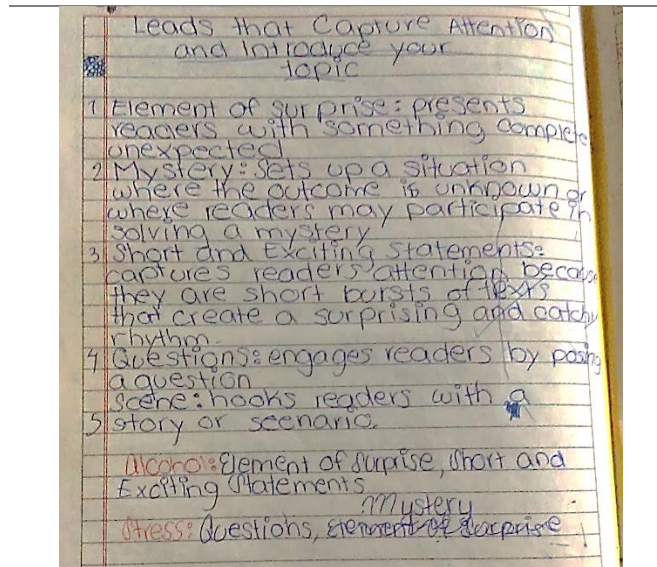


Fig. 19 Martha's writer's notebook with evidence of her craft choices to introduce her two feature articles.

The other behavior evident in all writers was that they showed enthusiasm and energy for their topics. Everyone was highly committed to their pieces, they all worked hard to make sure they were both serving the purpose of the genre and form (informing their readers about a specific aspect of a topic) and creating an engaging piece. It was interesting to observe how even when they were not required to be personally or emotionally invested in their composition by defending a point of view like they might have done in a persuasive piece, they were all engaged and invested in engaging their readers.

Individual writers also demonstrated other understandings and behaviors. Most of these belonged to the language use, word choice and voice dimensions of craft (Fig. 20).

Craft Dimensions	Understanding/behaviors	Mateo	Adrián	Alba	Martha	
Organization (Presentation of Ideas)	Use vocabulary specific to the topic or content		✓		✓	
Language Use	Understand that the writer is using language to communicate meaning		✓	✓	✓	
	Show evidence of using language from story books and informational books that have been read aloud	✓		✓	✓	
	Learn ways of using language and constructing texts from other writers (reading books and hearing them read aloud) and apply understandings to one's own writing	✓	✓	✓		
	Use memorable words or phrases				✓	
Word Choice	Use language to elicit feelings		✓	✓	✓	
	Learn new words from reading and try them out in writing		✓		✓	
	Use vocabulary appropriate for the topic		✓		✓	
	Choose the best words to fit the writer's purpose and meaning		✓		✓	
	Choose words with the audience in mind	✓	✓		✓	
	Use words that convey an intended mood or effect		✓		✓	
	Voice	Write about personal experiences with voice ("as one speaks")	✓	✓		
		Write in a way that speaks directly to the reader		✓		✓
Write in a way that shows care and commitment to the topic			✓		✓	
Use engaging titles and language		✓			✓	
Produce expository writing that reveals the stance of the writer toward the topic			✓		✓	

Fig. 20 Salient craft understandings and behaviors in different writers

The two participants with least observed behaviors in their writing craft were Alba and Mateo. Alba had only but a few salient understandings and behaviors, probably due to her poor control of the language. That is, it might have been difficult for her to make decisions on the words chosen or how to vary sentence length to cause an effect due to her lack of control over lexis and structure. She showed some understandings but did not have clearly salient behaviors in this strand. It is worth mentioning, though, that in working on building strong paragraphs, she discovered how

she wished to use language to convey what she thought friends do to show their friendship. Her main difficulty was making words from others (either from mentor texts or instruction) her own; she would use the same expressions without not really understanding their intention in craft. Mateo, conversely, seemed to have much more control of the language. His choice of words seems to be more deliberate and sophisticated at times, but he did not seem to risk rehearsing with the language too much before his final work. Given that Mateo was the participant who wrote the least (in quantity), there was the least evidence in his work of his craft. This, I found, was closely related to his view of himself as a writer, as I explain in the next section.

Surprisingly, Adrián demonstrated more behaviors and understandings of his writing craft, even though he seemed to have the least control of the language of the four writers. There were three conspicuous behaviors in Adrián's work and conversations that are worth highlighting. The first was his use of vocabulary specific to the topic. Adrián made a point on learning terms related to alcohol consumption to include them appropriately in his writing. Secondly, he wrote in a way that spoke directly to the reader. Adrián even compromised some of his more playful language choices to make sure he was considering his readers and the gravity he wanted to convey. Thirdly, Adrián wrote in a way that showed care and commitment to the topic. Martha, on the other hand, made use of some literary devices to engage her readers (Fig. 21)

Martha (M) and I (T) were having our pre-writing conference, where we were trying different ways to make different topics sound interesting. Martha had not chosen her two topics yet.
T – Okay... who are you talking to?
M – The people who eat junk food.
T – What do you know about those people?
M – That.. uh.. that they like junk food and.. uh.. they don't like doing exercise.
T – Aha...
M – They don't do exercise and they can get sick.
T – What do they do, if they don't do exercise? What do they like doing? How can we engage with these people?
M – Mmm.. they watch TV all day.. like couch potatoes.
T – Couch potatoes! Good! So, how can you address them?
M – Don't be a couch potato. Eat healthy and not junk.
T – Okay... write it down before you forget it.
Towards the end of our second conference, I asked Martha whether she needed further assistance, and she said she wanted to write her lead. Notice how she had already chosen her topic, alcohol.
T – What do you have?
M – I want to put that drinking alcohol..um.. is very dangerous.
T – Okay..
M – Like driving.. and.. um.. the cars.. driving.. (she gestured with her hands two different directions)
T – Oh... like you are driving in the opposite direction?
M – Yes! Opposite.
T – Good, write it down, so you don't forget.
M – Yes, thank you.
T – Oh, I see you used an analogy.
M – Yes.
T – Why did you choose to use an analogy as your lead?
M – Because it engages the reader and they can.. relate..?
T – Oh, relate?
M – Yes, relate to the topic.

Fig. 21 Conferences with Martha displaying craft behaviors

Martha made use of literary devices with a very clear purpose: to engage the readers. In our first conference, she might have tried using an idiomatic expression to create a clear image in the minds of her readers. In our second conference, Martha stated she was using an analogy to engage the readers. She considered that by having readers relate to her analogy, she could engage them. Adrián also made use of onomatopoeia (“Cough, cough” and “burp, burp”) to use a playful voice. These authorial choices give control of the intention of the text to the writer.

4.5 View of Self as a Writer

The four young writers in this study have developed a view of themselves as writers over the past four years. This was one of the most compelling aspects of the writing process I wished to comprehend. Observing writers in the research setting made me inquire how they developed that unique view. This aspect of the writing process was observed consistently across the different literacy events and their artifacts. Yet, this is an aspect of authorial writing that could be better observed while conferring with young writers.

There was an understanding and a behavior that were lastingly present in all four literacy events. They demonstrated they understood writing as a vehicle to communicate something the writer thinks. While this was not an opinion piece, the four writers seemed aware that by sharing their perspective on the topics they chose, they were expressing their unique view on it. They all agreed they wanted to inform their readers about this perspective, which they all supported with information from experts, whether it was mentor texts, books from our classroom library or the school's library, or professionals in the topic, like in the case of Martha's and Adrián's interviews with doctors.

The four writers also demonstrated they were willing to work at the craft or writing, incorporating new learning from instruction. This was very clearly observed across the literacy events. In every lesson, I would provide direct instruction on an aspect of the writing process, the genre or the writing craft and learners made notes on their writer's notebooks. While conferring with them, I could observe how they started integrating the skills and strategies demonstrated during instruction and sometimes I guided them to grasp those. In their published article, there is evidence on how they structured their pieces and chose language that was taught during the unit of inquiry.

During the last conference, all four writers reported to feel proud of the published pieces they chose as best representatives of their authorial writing (Fig. 22).

Towards the end of our final conference, Alba (A) and I (T) had this exchange:

T – Describe your feelings about feature article writing now compared to how you felt at the beginning of the unit.

A – I compare that at the beginning I felt like ‘what?’, I want to do a lot of.. um.. with facts, and pressure and I [screams] aaah!

T – You felt pressure?

A – Yeah, because is that I want to have a lot of work, work, work, work..

T – Oh, so it seems you felt overwhelmed.

A – Yeah.

T – Was it too much?

A – [Nods agreeing] But in the end I feel like is more easy and I like..

T – What changed your feeling?

A – Becau.. uh.. excited.

T – Oh, you got excited?

A – Yeah, because to [sic] pooblish and search.

T – Ah...

A – And uh.. *aprender*?

T – And did you learn a lot?

A – Yeah. [enthusiastically]

T – You are excited to learn, huh? How do you feel now about writing feature articles?

A – Really happy.

T – Yeah? Why?

A – Because is like.. I understand and is like.. more easily. Easy. Right here in this moment, than in the beginning.

Fig. 22 Excerpt from the view of self as a writer conference with Alba

This pride, as they expressed, might have been the result of the hard work they put on researching for their pieces. Mateo even stated that he thought he would not be able to finish at first. Both Martha and Adrián spent considerable amount of time collecting information to compose their articles. Alba decided to work on learning how to write paragraphs to express her ideas on friendship and social pressure. All four writers reported the most challenging part of writing an informational piece was to have enough research (information) to draft their pieces.

There were other salient understandings and behaviors in the four literacy events. As shown in Figure 23, Alba, Martha, and Mateo’s literacy artifacts were consistently demonstrating other understandings and behaviors besides the two ones that were present in the four writers’ literacy artifacts. While Adrián did not demonstrate other salient behaviors or understandings, they were

present in a few of his artifacts. They were just present in fewer of them. There was only one view-of-self-as-a-writer behavior that was not present at all, and that was in Martha’s work. Martha did not mark the most important part of her piece, where the other writers did, albeit in just a couple of their artifacts, mainly the last couple of conferences.

Understanding/behaviors	Alba	Adrián	Martha	Mateo
Produce a reasonable quantity of writing within the time available			✓	
Write routinely over extended timeframes and shorter timeframes from a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences	✓			✓
Write with independent initiative and investment			✓	✓
Take risks as a writer	✓		✓	✓
Show ability in a conference to discuss what is being worked on as a writer	✓			
Show interest in and work at crafting good writing, incorporating new learning from instruction			✓	✓

Fig. 23 Salient view of self as a writer understandings and behaviors in different writers

Overall, there are several ways in which writers can see themselves as writers. Mainly, these writers felt ownership of their writing as extension of their thinking but they also seemed to feel in control of the resources they used to express that thinking. They seemed to be active agents of their compositions, regardless their level of control of the second language.

4.6 Literacy Artifacts and Authorial Writing Skills

Based on these findings, there may be arguments that favor the use of a variety of literacy artifacts in developing authorial writing skills. Some may argue young writer’s written evidence may suffice to assess whether they are developing their authorial writing through content and linguistic analysis. There are, indeed, behaviors and understandings that may be evident or implied in the written work of students even without carrying out a single conference. For instance,

learner's writing craft seems to be more evident in learners' writing, both writer's notebook and published texts. Teaching in traditional contexts where the teacher is the sole carrier of knowledge and ultimate authority may find these artifacts may suffice. Even when including conferences in such teaching approach, the teacher may regard conferences an artifact that serves them by giving alternatives to instruction. Regarding conferences as means to provide prescriptive feedback may be a quite limited way to view them. Ideally, when conferring, teachers coach young writers to discover how to relay their message, procuring not to impose their own voice in learners' writing. Rather than prescribing, during conferring teachers show learners options and have them notice aspects of their writing that otherwise might hinder to their novice eyes. During these conferences, teachers function as providers of scaffolds to compose writing that is both clear and engaging to the readers and true to the writers.

A variety of artifacts may assist triangulation in researching writing. One of the reasons why three different kinds of artifacts (writer's notebook, conferences, and a published text) were chosen for data collection was to make sure there was a possibility for triangulation of data to observe the different authorial skills young writers may understand or use. While getting prepared for this research, as I was piloting collecting data through conferences, I noticed, unsurprisingly, these conferences were supported on other artifacts, either learners' writer's notebooks or their published works. I therefore considered that if an authorial skill was observed across different artifacts, I would be providing triangulation required to sustain that a given understanding or behavior was, in fact, in place for the young writer under scrutiny. As a result, I was able to challenge whether an understanding or behavior should be indeed in place when examining the different artifacts. I found that some understandings and behaviors, regardless whether belonging to process, genre or craft, were evident in certain artifacts, while, conversely, only inferred in some,

as explained in the results above. I also found that there were some understandings or behaviors that would most likely not be present in determined artifacts. Figure 24 provides examples of understandings and behaviors under different artifacts to illustrate this point.

Understanding or behavior	Artifact	Observation	Example that confirms expectation
Genre; Use the term feature article to describe the genre and forms	Pre-writing conference	Evident. It was expected to observe this behavior in understanding of the nature of the artifact. When discussing about feature articles, for instance, it is expected that young writers use the term to describe the genre and forms, as part of the conference deals with metalinguistic and metacognitive discussion.	In Martha's pre-writing conference, she replies after I ask her what she had learned about feature articles: "That feature articles (..) um (..) inform (..)", using the term and its purpose.
Craft; Idea development: Understand how information helps the reader learn about a topic	Gathering information conference	Implied. While the understanding may not be evident, it can be inferred from an analysis of the artifact.	When I asked Adrián about why he considered interviews to experts would help him write a feature article, he stated: "Because(..) uh(..) they know about that. Because things(..) the(..) um(..) the experts say(..) that other children no know?", which implies that experts would provide information to the reader that might help them learn about a topic.
Process; drawing: Use sketching to create quick representations of images, usually an outline in pencil or pen	Writer's notebook	Not evident. This behavior is expected to be observed in an artifact as the writer's notebook due to its purpose as a tool for experimentation when composing, where drawing and sketching may take place.	The behavior was not evident in neither writer's notebooks, except for Adrian's, where one can observe he used sketching to practice illustrating his feature article (Fig. 9)
Process; drafting and revising: Understand the role of the writer, teacher, or peer writer in conference	Published feature article (text)	Not applicable. This is an understanding that is meant to be evident during the drafting and revising process of composing an informational piece, not after having it published.	Neither of the four published feature articles presented or suggested this understanding.

Fig. 24 Evident, implied, not evident, and not applicable understandings or behaviors

I was surprised to find that although I had anticipated not observing some understandings or behaviors in certain artifacts, some of the young writers surprised me by making them either evident or implied, particularly during conferences. Despite the unlikelihood of a given understanding or behavior to be present, it made me reconsider the malleability of artifacts when

developing authorial writing skills. Therefore, this finding may imply that for practitioners to be able to observe different authorial writing skills, we should be open to not only make use of different artifacts, but also avoid having fixed expectations of how these artifacts promote the development of authorial writing skills or the way in which these may exhibit understandings and behaviors. However, we may need to consider that to observe different aspects of writing as a system, some artifacts may yield some understandings and behaviors more easily than others, and thus, a variety beyond the three kinds of artifacts used in this research for data collection (writer's notebook, conferences, and published text) may provide young writers with more appropriate scaffolds for their composition (e.g. peer oral or written feedback, reading to a partner, etc.).

The purpose of observing different artifacts in this research is to represent different ways to support learners in developing their authorial writing skills. While the writer's notebook represented a place to harbor writing seeds and experiment with writing, conferences provided opportunity to engage in dialogue to discuss ideas and the writing skills and strategies used. Additionally, the published article provided an opportunity for learners to skim their ideas and their writing attempts into what and how they wanted to ultimately convey their message to their respective audiences.

The use of these different artifacts provided learners with different means to develop their writing and cognition. While some learners, like Alba, may feel more comfortable discussing copiously in conferences before writing, other learners like Martha and Adrián may embrace the safety of independent writing in their writer's notebook, whether it is to organize their ideas (Martha), or experiment and take risks (Adrián); although other learners like Mateo, may consider that publishing is the best vessel for their thinking. In sum, whether it is to cater learner's needs and preferences or to find different ways to develop authorial writing skills, I found that having a

variety of artifacts from the different artifacts facilitated not only data collection but promoted more thoughtful composition.

4.7 Beyond Authorial Skill Behaviors and Understandings

The focus of this study, as stated before, was to provide an understanding of authorial writing skill development. Yet, even when authorial writing was the focus, and the lessons and conferences in the sessions chosen for this study all focus on developing different authorial writing skills, I found that secretarial skills were still addressed. During conferences, I would go to the different writers and while discussing their pieces and asking them to write or modify their writing, I did not neglect language conventions. I had writers notice punctuation, capitalization, and correct spelling. Look at the interaction below (Fig. 25-27). I (T) was having a conference with Alba (A) to revise her feature article (Conference 4 – Revision). She asked me for help to write paragraphs.

T – Ok, so you were telling me...

A – That I am doing what is a friend, is like the topic sentence, that is like, a friend is a person who likes and support you.

T – Oh, so that is your topic sentence.

A – Yeah. How...

T – Ok, does it work?

A – Yyyyes?

T – Yes? How?

A – Mmmm...

T –Why is it a topic sentence?

A – Because is like is explaining what is a friend?

Fig. 25 Excerpt A from the revision conference with Alba

At this point, I am asking her to notice and recall the structure of a paragraph in the expository genre as we had already seen in a previous session. So, here, we are working on the writing conventions of the genre. Following, I am helping her identify the difference between a topic sentence and a supporting sentence.

T – And what will you do next?

M – Show how... what... like I am going to explain how is the friends together and how is the list... of... how... do together things.

T – Okay, so share some of your supporting sentences.

M – A friend is a person who likes and support you, o...

T – No, that's your topic sentence.

M – Yes.

T – But supporting sentences? Give me one supporting sentence.

M – Mmm... Friends... speed together...

T – Speed? What is speed? What do you mean?

M – Like... *tener tiempo juntos*?

T – Ah... Friends spend time... (I wait until she starts writing) spend time...

M – ...time... together.

T – Together. That's one sentence. Good. Period. Now, can you explain.. No, but period goes after together.

M – (chuckles)

Fig. 26 Excerpt B from the revision conference with Alba

As one can see, we work out one supporting sentence. As Alba writes, I remind her of conventions by asking her to add a period at the end of her sentence. A little further on in our conference, she adds another supporting idea, about how friends offer us their help.

T – Good! I like that idea! Why don't you write it down? Spending time... (I wait for Alba to write it down) ... together...

A – ...together...

T – Helps us, you said?

A – Help... (nodding and then squinting as she did not remember the rest)

T – Helps us?

A – (she starts writing down but writes down 'help us')

T – HelpS... us... HelpSsss

A – (chuckles) ...helps...

T – ...us...

A – ...I... (continues to write)

T – ...all the time... what did you say it helps you with?

A – With a big problem...

T – Oh, okay. Helps us solve... problems.

A – ...solve...

T – Problems... (I wait for her to finish) Good! See? There you have another supporting detail. But your main idea is...

Fig. 27 Excerpt C from the revision conference with Alba

Here, I accompanied her as she wrote down an idea we had discussed could become a good supporting detail. I guided her to notice adding 's' to the verb and went back to having her identify her main idea.

In sum, during writing conferences, the focus, in general, is not on secretarial writing skills. Those could be addressed in other ways. Having a conference implies having a conversation. An

exchange where learners share without fear or the usual restriction of solely focusing on writing conventions. While conferring, these writers were praised on their choices and guided to make their intended messages easily understood to their intended readers, instead of solely making their writing easy to read (i.e. neat handwriting, correct spelling, grammar and punctuation). Nonetheless, the boundaries of secretarial and authorial writing skills, I found, sometimes are not as clear. Looking back at the previous exchange, having Alba develop supporting details surely serves the intention of making her message more easily understood but it is the conventions of the genre to expose ideas in paragraphs with a certain structure (topic sentences and supporting details). Alba makes the (authorial) choices of what she wants to convey as her main point (topic sentence), but had she stopped there, she would just have a string of isolated sentences, instead of paragraphs. These require a somewhat strict structure; a sort of syntax learners need to follow. A good paragraph, balances the structure expected in the genre (related to secretarial skills) and the right choice of words to convey the intended message (related to authorial writing skills).

In the following chapter, I discuss my conclusions, including my pedagogical reflections. I address a discussion about both learning to write and teaching to write.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

In this chapter I start with two discussions, one on learning to write and the next one on teaching to write. In the first discussion, I go over four literacy principles described by Fountas and Pinnell (2017), how they relate to the findings of this research and authors who have discussed similar findings. In the second discussion, I focus on writing pedagogy.

5.1 Discussion about Learning to Write

To follow up on the results presented in last chapter, this chapter aims to compare these results by engaging in a conversation with other researchers that have found supporting or challenging research. These conversations discuss what I have found in this research. On the one hand, learners developed authorial writing skills through talk, processing large amounts of text, and talking of what they read and wrote and writing of what they read and talked with their teacher and peers. On the other, how they perceived themselves as writers by taking ownership and being agents of their own writing, which became evident in their talk, the writing choices they made through this talk and the texts they chose to support their writing and learning.

5.1.1 Talking Enables Writing

Fountas and Pinnell (2017), as addressed in Chapter 2.4, state that “students learn by talking” (p. 2). Supporting this, Short and Echevarria (2004), when proposing their own Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model, state that to promote English language learners’ (ELL’s) academic literacy, among other strategies, we should “promote oral interaction and extended academic talk”, which entails engaging learners “in extended discussions” where ELLs are able to “give more than one-word responses” (p. 11). They also encourage establishing

discussion routines to provide structure that facilitate dialogue and where learners can become active listeners. This seems to be relevant when supporting those of our low performing learners. Having non-evaluative dialogues like those held in conferences may encourage learners to risk beyond one-word answers and start engaging in rich conversations that help them expand their thinking. Learners like Alba, who lack linguistic skills but are enthusiastic learners who are eager to share their thoughts on topics close to their hearts, may find it helpful to have conversation protocols to develop their academic language and help them express their unique perspectives.

When having learners like Adrián, who have not developed linguistic competence in the second language to suffice the expectations of the standards in class, interaction becomes key. Verplaetse (2008) argues that one way to promote language development among ELLs is to promote interaction in the classroom and proposes strategies for this interaction; one of which is to allow learners to use their first language. In our conferences, Adrián and Alba would resort to Spanish to ask for terms they had thought would help them make their points. Adrián would do so less reluctantly than Alba. This may be a gender issue or a personality issue. Both learners have different personalities, Alba being more apprehensive than Adrián. In any case, both learners did find L1 to support their writing process rather than hindering it, just as described by Verplaetse.

Fisher, Frey, and Rothenberg (2008) discuss the relevance of talk in the content-area classroom. They acknowledge that ELLs may have an increased challenge compared to learners who speak English as a first language, since they had not developed talk for years before facing the English language classroom. This is clear in any language classroom, but it raises concern in the content-area classroom, where language is a vehicle to acquire knowledge across different disciplines, like the one in this study. Fisher, Frey, and Rothenberg also acknowledge that classroom talk is often limited and limiting, serving the purpose to check comprehension, rather

than developing higher order thinking skills. When conferring with learners, as done with this study, teachers might steer the dialogue to serve different functions, beyond checking comprehension. Fisher, Frey, and Rothenberg agree with Fountas and Pinnell (2017) in that talk is key to develop literacy and that the quality of that talk is key to develop learning as well. In learners such as Martha, where their language proficiency allows them to dwell not only in content but in metalinguistic and meta rhetoric discussions, talk provides them with different ways to approach knowledge. For talk to promote learning, Fisher, Frey, and Rothenberg state, it should be purposeful. They outline four kinds of input: teacher modeling, guided instruction, collaborative tasks, and independent tasks. When conferring with learners, teachers rely on the modeling they had provided during direct instruction, but make use of guided instruction to ask questions, clarify understanding, provide feedback, but also empower learners to do the same with their peers. In return, learners are able to reflect on their learning, just as Martha did during our conferences. Although Fisher, Frey, and Rothenberg describe middle school settings, their assertions may also be relevant to bilingual content-based primary classrooms, like the one in this study.

Some artifacts may help to mediate talk. Reportedly, however, there are writers like American author Cynthia Rylant —whom the four young writers in this research had studied in a prior unit of inquiry— who do not rely on a writer’s notebook nor a habit to write habitually. Just as Rylant (as described in Fletcher, 2003), instead of jotting down his writing processes, Mateo reports many of his ideas came as he wrote his final draft. Learners like Mateo, who had well-developed literacy skills in the second language but was reluctant to write extensively or habitually, may not need tools like a writer’s notebook to take risks as a writer. Nevertheless, they could find other uses for it. These learners may not feel the need to experiment with strategies they already master, but probably with those which are still at their instructional level (Chen & Mora-

Flores, 2006). Learners like Mateo are willing to take risks with or without a writer's notebook. What they may need while making use of artifacts like conferences or their writer's notebook may be to challenge them into entering a culture of writers that challenges them and have them find a niche of like-abled authors who may help them develop their craft.

5.1.2 Reading Enables Writing

Fountas and Pinnell (2017) have found that “students need to process a large amount of written language” (p. 2). In the same way, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, 2015) state that children need a constant and systematic active interaction with print. In accordance with Chen and Mora-Flores (2006) and Fountas and Pinnell (2017), the NAEYC also acknowledge that learners need to process a large amount of written language to first understand the relationship between letters and sounds, word identification that lead to comprehension of texts. Learners later learn beyond decoding and start using deliberate metacognitive strategies. Learners like Alba who have been exposed to copious exposure to print, even if primarily in their first language, they might learn to transfer these strategies to decoding and comprehending texts in a second language.

For some learners, the difference between social and academic language may be a challenge when comprehending texts, whether fictional or non-fictional. Fountas and Pinnell (2017) promote specific strategies like guided reading to differentiate instruction and promote reading at different reading levels. In an article they presented in 2012, they discuss the importance of working with a small group of learners at a time to analyze text qualitatively. These groups work mainly on either decoding or comprehension. Decoding works with guiding learners to figure out the relationship between print and spoken language, and in comprehension learners show their

understanding by either talking or writing. By having access to this approach to text in different genres and working at the reading level learners are ready to access, we would be providing them with scaffold to develop their compositions. Finley (2014), alternatively, proposes specific strategies to help learners access academic language. Learners like Adrián might benefit from these interventions. Finley proposes, for instance, to teach learners Tier 2, high-frequency, general instruction words to help them process academic tasks successfully (e.g. notice, investigate, analyze, persuade, describe). Finley also discusses the importance of allowing informal communication to not only promote social bonding, cooperative learning but also to interpret literature and process information. This talk might help as a necessary pre-reading stage for learners to later access different genres. In helping our learners comprehend a myriad of texts, we help them expand their comprehension of different texts. Other relevant strategies might include having learners make connections when exposed to different texts. Learners who do not only possess limited second language proficiency but also struggle reading, like Adrián, might need the aforementioned additional support to help them succeed in acquiring literacy skills. By having learners exposed to sufficient amounts of print, they might soon notice, among other things, differences between social and academic language.

Woolley (2014) describes how literacy is developed when engaging in different practices, where the learner takes on different roles when related to text. Some highly motivated learners like Martha, who are also at least transitional readers (Chen & Mora-Flores, 2006) may be able to take on those different roles with relative ease. It is our early readers who might struggle with some aspects of decoding and/or comprehension. The challenge of current practice may rely in having learners move through the different roles whether in print or screen. Learners might need to move beyond early readers to be able to interact with texts taking up different roles while at it.

Grant, Golden and Wilson (2014), when addressing elements of learning to read with specific instructional strategies, identify elements like language processing, phonological processing, use of background knowledge to construct meaning, among others. By understanding these different elements teachers might be able to differentiate instruction to provide learners at different literacy levels with the right support. Grant, Golden and Wilson even propose strategies at a primary and intermediate levels. For several of these strategies, they propose readers' choice. They also acknowledge that proficient readers might find it easier to navigate through the different systems of reading, while some less proficient readers (sometimes regarded as struggling readers) might find it difficult to decode words, monitor and correct, and/or even comprehend texts. Grant, Golden, and Wilson even explicitly agree with Fountas and Pinnell in a view of struggling readers disregarding overall cognitive deficits, given that even "intelligent children have difficulty learning to read" (2008, p. 30, in Grant, Golden, & Wilson, 2014). This means that learners like Mateo, who may be described as 'intelligent', might need help in accessing different elements of learning to read. One recurrent theme in Grant, Golden, & Wilson's suggested strategies is choice. As discussed by Laman (2014), choice, including choice of texts to read, empowers multilingual learners to increase their command of the language. This was clear in the case of Mateo, who made very specific choices for his writing, based on a book he chose to read, analyze, to later recommend to other young readers.

5.1.3 Talking and Writing Expand Comprehension

Fountas and Pinnell propose that "the ability to read and comprehend texts expands through talking and writing" (p.2). This was evident for the four writers in the present study but mostly evident for Alba and Adrián. Alba, for instance, struggled the most with coherence in her writing.

Lee (1998) states that for writing to be coherent, writers need to understand that they need to write ideas considering six mechanisms: i) purpose, audience, and context; ii) text structure; iii) order of information; iv) idea development; v) cohesion; and vi) metadiscourse. Fountas and Pinnell (2017) place these mainly as the writer's craft. Alba was the young writer in this study who struggled with her writing craft the most. Although all young writers in this study have a clear sense of purpose and acknowledgment of their audience and they all chose the structure that best suited this, the struggle in idea development was clear for Alba. This may be the case for learners who may have a good sense of how language works in writing, but may lack sociolinguistic competence. While young learners at the age of the writers in this study (in their preteens) are trying to make sense of the world, having it described in a second language may represent a higher challenge. What might have helped Alba during the span of this study, was to discuss her writing decisions and write her attempts in her writer's notebook. Lee discusses aspects of writing that can be seen using mentor texts (although she does not use this term, Fountas and Pinnell do), expanding the comprehension of composition. The three authors discuss the interplay among reading, talking and writing. I consider that each can support the others. In Alba's case, for instance, her reading skills in her first language might have helped her compensate her still somewhat limited ability to speak and write in the second language. By balancing these aspects, as often discussed in literacy and second language studies, we may provide our learners with better opportunity to develop their communicative skills.

In emergent second language literate learners like Adrián, exposure to a copious amount of print may provide them with tools to develop their composition. Nevertheless, what I consider helped Adrián the most, was discussing his ideas as he was exploring how to write his feature article. Purcell-Gates (2001), discusses how "young children learn the underlying concepts of the

reading and writing processes as they experience written language in use in their lives” (p. 9). She emphasizes on the use of references in decontextualized language as a marker of emergent literacy; that is, references feature in written language to provide readers with the necessary support to understand the writer’s intended message. In the case of this study, Adrián made use of onomatopoeia to provide such support. This might have not been his approach had he not a) been exposed to using onomatopoeia as playful language to create a vivid image in the reader’s mind, and b) discussed this as a possibility, using me, his teacher, as a sounding board for his word choice. Purcell-Gates (2001), Fountas and Pinnell (2017) agree that emergent literate learners show their development of written language knowledge (reading and writing) through talk.

Writing about texts, according to Wallace et al. (2007), can help learners get meaning from texts. Fountas and Pinnell (2017) describe how writing may become a window to learners’ thinking about texts they had read. They also include a continuum on ‘writing about reading’ in their literacy continuum, showing how important they consider this to be. Supporting this, Martha, for instance, found that writing about what she had learned, seemed to make it clearer for her to understand the texts where she found information for her articles, as she shared with me during conferences. Learners like Martha and Mateo, who already have sufficient control of the language and are functioning as at least transitional readers, may be able to participate in more of these instructional approaches to writing and reading with ease.

5.1.4 Reading, Talking, and Writing are Conducive to Learning

Fountas and Pinnell (2017) assert that “learning deepens when students engage in reading, talking, and writing about texts across many different instructional contexts” (p. 2). Graham and Herbert (2010), comparably, propose three recommendations to deepen learning: i) have learners

write about the texts they read, their comprehension of content improves when they do; ii) teach writing skills and processes that go in transcribing and composing; and iii) increase the amount of writing of learners. In second language instruction, these recommendations may also apply. Learners like Alba and Adrián who function as early readers and writers would benefit from these recommendations the most. By expanding their knowledge of language, about the language and content through reading and writing, they might be placed at a position to compete and advance academically with their partners who may be functioning at more proficient levels of language and literacy, leveling their odds in school and beyond.

Wallace, et al. (2007) also discuss how writing to learn has been shown to improve academic performance and metacognition in elementary school learners. Wallace, et al., propose using writing as part of the reading process through different strategies. Similarly, Fountas and Pinnell (2017), state that learners could further their literacy skills when writing about what they read. Learners who are relatively fluent in writing and reading like Martha and Mateo might be challenged by strategies like this, which foster higher order thinking skills, therefore, promote learning.

5.2 Discussion about Teaching to Write

There were some lessons beyond understanding how young learners acquire their authorial writing skills I learned during this research. In the process of collecting and analyzing data, I was able to look at my practice critically. The aspects of my teaching I was able to reflect the most upon was how I confer with my learners during the writing workshop and how I encouraged (or not) the use of their writer's notebook to facilitate reading and writing processes as well as learning in general. I found that their perception as writers might have been nurtured in part through the

kind of scaffolding I provided these writers. This realization impacted my own perception as a teacher, researcher, reader and writer.

5.2.1 Pedagogical Reflections: Balancing Literacy in Writing Pedagogy

There were different aspects of my teaching that became (more) evident during this research. The first was how I established a relationship with my students to help them compose their articles. In conferring with them and then analyzing our conferences, I was able to see my role with a different light. I was more aware on how important it was to listen to them. It was my job to elicit the writing stage they were at, and what they were working on. What I become increasingly aware was how these conversations facilitated their sharing concerns about their compositions and how they wanted to convey their ideas. I listened to their concerns, and I tried not to become prescriptive in our interactions. I found that the more questions I asked and less explanations I provided, learners were more open and confident to ask for help if they needed. It also made me quite aware of the different pace different young learners take, independently from their second language proficiency. It might be more an issue on individual differences and preferences. Some learners were exploring ideas longer than others, others took longer in developing those ideas in their compositions, and others took longer in revising and finally publishing. Although instruction followed a timetable, their compositions did not necessarily. Also, even though this timetabled instruction followed the writing process from generating ideas to publishing, I have noticed that learners do not necessarily follow a plan-draft-revise-publish strict order, as proposed in the scholarship addressed in Chapter 2, but rather approach the writing process recursively, and thus, it would be my job, as a teacher assisting their writing to be ready to help them make the most of each of those stages when conferring with them, which often meant

thinking on my feet. Finally, when conferring, I also made a point of praising them in their road to authorship as well as asking them for their goals and plans; something I might have not been too adamant about in my practice before this research was planned and ultimately implemented.

I was also able to look at and challenge my beliefs about writing and writing instruction. In researching for the literature that would support this research, I found some scholarship that made me question how I was carrying out my practice. The work of Ivanič (2004) helped me place my beliefs in a continuum depicting different kinds of discourses and layers in the view of language. I noticed that my practice in the setting of this research placed my teaching in more than one approach. I realized that it would move from a skills approach, when I taught phonological awareness, towards, mostly to teaching creative self-expression, the writing process, teaching genre, and purposeful communication. This clearer view of my written pedagogy practice dissection provided me with a new view on not only how I interacted with my learners, but also on how I presented writing skills, strategies and processes, and how I assessed writing in general.

On balancing literacy instruction, I sure have had a fair share of new understandings of my practice and its effects. Having worked with young EFL learners in the past, when I first observed classes in this context of balanced literacy where learners are encouraged to be active agents of their own learning, I felt curious and inspired. It was the first time I had seen learners so committed to their work. In this setting, at the grade level of these four young writers, the time learners receive direct instruction is significantly short in comparison with the time they were expected to devote to independent work in as much as a 1:3 ratio. This means, I spent 10 to 15 minutes of scaffolded direct instruction followed by 30 to 45 minutes of learner independent work. It is during this independent work where other devices to guide and coach these young writers take place: conferences and small group instruction. It was quite surprising to observe that when learners

understood they were not part of the conference or small group instruction, they worked on their pieces independently and enthusiastically. I also learned it takes time to establish the class routines to facilitate this, but when they are in place, it is amazing how much focused work would take place during independent work time. I am still relatively new to this teaching approach and I am still learning how to help my learners reach their full potential as readers and writers, but it has been quite rewarding to observe the effects of what feels like a new awakening as a teacher.

5.2.2 The Teacher as a Reader, Writer and Researcher

The most salient lesson I take with me after this research is how I was faced with the challenge of balancing my roles of reader, writer and researcher. In this balanced literacy approach, I quickly realized I needed to reassess how I was a teacher who functioned as a reader and a writer. I would not only need to read abundant literature to catch up with what learners in fifth grade had been and would be exposed to, but also consider taking my writing practice more seriously. Most of my writing was devoted to research during my graduate studies, but I needed to look at writing to serve other purposes, professionally and personally. I wanted to not only sound honest but also empathetic with my learners. To assess reading and writing, I also had to look at myself as a reader. I had to self-assess my approach to text and start looking at text as a writer as well to make authorial writing instruction more smoothly seamed into my repertoire.

As an emergent researcher, I underwent a grueling process. It became even more demanding during the past year, when my research was taking shape. Among the myriad of lessons learned in the process, I came to terms with the understanding that, as Fountas and Pinnell (2012) agree, sometimes practice is inconsistent with research and theory that informed that very same practice. They discuss how much of a challenge is to have teachers move beyond having learners

read accurately, for instance, and start thinking within the text, beyond the text and about the text. As a literacy teacher, I had to do that myself, and as a researcher, I was able to look at it as an observer, trying to understand how I experienced it in hopes to understand how my learners did as well. In using their literacy continuum to assess whether understandings and behaviors were evident in the chosen artifacts, I also learned how to transfer that into my teaching.

5.3 Other Considerations: Limitations and Delimitations

Regarding limitations, the biggest ones might have regarded potential biases and perceptual misrepresentations due to my role as a teacher researcher. To avoid issues of validity and reliability, the data was collected systematically throughout six weeks, constantly triangulating information from observations with the analysis of different artifacts in the different artifacts under the supervision of my thesis advisor and latter feedback from my other thesis readers.

The scope of the current study was within the realm of qualitative research. For this study, the delimitations were determined by the number and quality of participants and their literacy events. These learners' written works and oral interactions during conferences, provided with explanations and accounts that gave content to this study.

5.4 Further Research

Regarding further research in the different possible areas of inquiry, first I am discussing research about learning to write and then on teaching to write. In learning to write and the role of talk in the writing class, further research might include assessing the degree of evaluating language from the teacher in interactions between teacher and learners during conferences, how the first language facilitates dialogue in the young learner classroom, different kinds of dialogue in the

young learner language classroom, and sociocultural factors that may promote or hinder talk in Mexican young English language learners. About how learners need to process a large amount of written language, there could be research on the transfer of strategies to decode and comprehend print from a first to a second language, there could also be inquiry on different strategies used by struggling readers to process text in a second language. Another research topic might be about the role of choice in developing command of a second language or level of literacy. Given that the current inquiry explores authorial writing skills in expository texts, it might be interesting to observe these skills in different genres. To advance research on how reading and comprehension of texts is expanded through talking and writing, there may be place for inquiry on how exposure to literature influences young writers' craft, or how specific writing pedagogy strategies may improve second language reading comprehension in the second or even first language. Finally, to continue inquiry on how learning deepens when learners engage in reading, talking and writing about texts, further scholarship might include how learning occurs in the content-based second language classroom through reading and writing skills and strategies.

Regarding teaching to write, further research might include teacher's instructional choices in the second language writing class; identity of teachers as readers, writers and researchers and how their perception may influence their practice; perceptions of second language literacy instruction; and, how teachers' understandings of second language literacy learning and teaching may shape second language writing pedagogy. Given that this study mainly focused on the interaction held between teacher and learners during conferences, the exploration of other instructional strategies within the same balanced literacy approach, like small group instruction, may be of great interest as well.

5.5 Conclusions

Researching the present inquiry was an immensely enriching experience. The four learners in this study showed me, through their different literacy artifacts, how they developed their authorial writing skills. I found some of the results surprising. Although I understood talk played a key role in the balance literacy approach of this research setting, I did not expect to observe, in the relatively limited time I collected data, to find how important talk was in developing authorial writing skills. I was also gladly surprised of how much help the scaffolds provided were to learners, whether during our interactions, or by having them access the vast resources they had access to for their research. It was reassuring to learn how talking, reading, and writing may deepen their learning, while at the same time being a humbling experience to appreciate how my role promotes their writing and learning. I found that writing is not an individual journey, but a social process, where genre provides valuable context.

In this research, I provided a picture of four roads to authorship. These four writers provided different insight on their perception as writers. I was surprised to learn that regardless their command of the second language, these four learners agreed on feeling proud of the result of their journey. These four writers regarded themselves as authors of expository texts, not without acknowledging the hardships they underwent. The four of them provided their best sample of authorial writing in the form of a feature article. At this young age, few may argue this is no small feat, especially in a second language. Choice seemed to be pivotal in not only empowering them, but in engaging them in the process. Consequently, these learners showed great commitment, providing quite interesting approaches to the topics they chose to write about.

In sum, I learned that in order to foster writing, I should regard my learners as writers, and read their work regarding them as authors.

References

- Abbott, R. D., & Berninger, V. W. (1993). Structural equation modeling of relationships among developmental skills and writing skills in primary- and intermediate-grade writers. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 85(3), 478-508.
- Addelman Reyes, S., & Vallone, T. L. (2008). *Constructivist Strategies for Teaching English Language Learners*. Thousand Oaks/CA: Corwin Press.
- Akhavan, N. (2007). *The Content-Rich Reading & Writing Workshop. A Time-Saving Approach for Making the Most of Your Literacy Block*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Allan, K. K., McMackin, M. C., Dawes, E. T., & Spadorcia, S. A. (2009). *Learning to write with purpose: effective instruction in grades 4-8*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Anderson, C. (2009). *Strategic writing conferences: smart conversations that move young writers forward: grades 3-6*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Atkinson, D. (2002). Toward a Sociocognitive Approach to Second Language Acquisition. *The Modern Language Journal*, 86, 4, 525-545.
- Au, K.H., Carroll, J.H., & Scheu, J.A. (2001). *Balanced literacy instruction: A teacher's resource book* (2nd ed.). Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon.
- Au, K.H. (2002). In C.M. Roller (Ed.), *Comprehensive Reading Instruction Across the Grade Levels: A Collection of Papers from the Reading Research 2001 Conference* (pp. 70-87).
- Baker, C. (2001). *Foundations of bilingual education and bilingualism*. USA: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- Baker, C. & Jones, S. (1998). *Encyclopedia of bilingualism and bilingual education*. UK: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- Bandura, A. (1989). Human agency in social cognitive theory. *American Psychologist*, 44, 1175-1184.
- Barron, B., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2008). Teaching for meaningful learning: A review of research on inquiry-based and cooperative learning. *Powerful Learning: What We Know About Teaching for Understanding* (pp. 11-70). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Barrow, L. (2006). A brief history of inquiry-From Dewey to Standards. *Journal of Science Teacher Education*. 17, 265-78

- Barton, D., Hamilton, M., & Ivanič, R. (2000). *Situated literacies: Reading and writing in context*. London: Routledge.
- Bell, B., & Cowie, B. (2001). *Formative assessment and science education*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer.
- Benson, P. (1997). The philosophy and politics of learner autonomy. In P. Benson and P. Voller (eds.) *Autonomy and independence in language learning*. London: Longman. 18-34.
- Benson, P. (2007). Autonomy in language teaching and learning. *Language Teaching* 40(1), 21–40.
- Bereiter, C., & Scardamelia, M. (1982). From conversation to composition: the role of instruction in a developmental process. In R. Glasser (Ed.) *Advances in instructional psychology, Volume 2*, Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Brown, H. D., & Abeywickrama, P. (2010). *Language assessment: Principles and classroom practices*. White Plains, NY: Pearson education.
- Bruna, K. R., Chamberlin, D., Lewis, H., & Lopez Ceballos, E. M. (2007). Teaching Science to Students from Rural Mexico: Learning more about ELL Students' Communities of Origin. *Education Publications*. 35. http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/edu_pubs/35
- Bruner, J. (1987). *Actual minds, possible worlds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Butler, Y. & Hakuta, K. (2004). Bilingualism and second language acquisition. In Bhatia, T. & Ritchie, W. (Eds.), *The handbook of bilingualism* (pp.114-144). Malden, MA, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Calderón López, M. (2017). Self-generated Literacy Practices in Disadvantaged Environments in Chile.
- Calkins, L., Hartman, A., & White, Z. (2005). *One to One: The Art of Conferring with Young Writers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Campbell, C. (1998). *Teaching Second-Language Writing. Interacting with Text*. Toronto, Canada: Heinle & Heinle.
- Chen, L. & Mora-Flores, E. (2006). *Balanced Literacy for English Language Learners, K-2*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Cimasko, T., & Reichelt, M. (2011). *Foreign Language Writing Instruction: Principles and Practices*. Anderson, SC: Parlor Press.
- Coady, M., & Escamilla, K. (2005). Audible Voices, Visible Tongues: Exploring Social Realities in Spanish-Speaking Students' Writing. *Language Arts*, 82(6), 462-471.

- Connor, U., & Johns AM. (1990). *Coherence in writing: Research and pedagogical perspectives*. Alexandria, VA: Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages.
- Cook, A. L. (2015). Building Connections to Literacy Learning among English Language Learners: Exploring the Role of School Counselors. *Journal of School Counseling, 13*(9), n9.
- Cremin, T., Baker, S. (2010). Exploring teacher-writer identities in the classroom: Conceptualising the struggle. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique, 9* (3) pp. 8–25.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Cruz, M. C. (2008). *A Quick Guide to Reaching Struggling Writers*. Portsmouth, NH: Firsthand Heinemann.
- Cumming, A. (2001). Learning to write in a second language: Two decades of research. *International Journal of English Studies, 1*, 1-23.
- Cummins, J. (2008). *Teaching for transfer: Challenging the two solitudes assumption in bilingual education* (pp. 1528-1538). Springer US.
- Cunningham, P. M, & Allington R. L. (2007). *Classrooms that Work: They Can All Read and Write*. Boston, MA: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon.
- Daffern, T., & Mackenzie, N. (2015). Building strong writers: Creating a balance between the authorial and secretarial elements of writing. *Literacy Learning: The Middle Years, 23*(1), 23-32.
- DeWalt, Kathleen M. & DeWalt, Billie R. (2002). *Participant observation: a guide for fieldworkers*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Dewey, J. (1933). *How We Think: A restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process*. Boston: D.C. Heath.
- Duke, N. K., & Mallette, M. H. (Eds.). (2011). *Literacy research methodologies*. Guilford Press.
- Dunn, K. E., & Mulvenon, S. W. (2009). A critical review of research on formative assessment: The limited scientific evidence of the impact of formative assessment in education. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation, 14*(7), 1-11.
- Dworin, J. E. (2003). Insights into biliteracy development: Toward a bidirectional theory of bilingual pedagogy. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, 2*(2), 171-186.

- Escalante Arauz, P. (2013). Inquiry-Based Learning in an English as a Foreign Language Class: A Proposal. *Revista de Lenguas Modernas*, 19, 479-485
- Escamilla, K. (2000, April). Bilingual means two: Assessment issues, early literacy and Spanish-speaking children. In *A research symposium on high standards in reading for students from diverse language groups: Research, practice & policy* (pp. 100-128).
- Escamilla, K., & Coady, M. (2001). Assessing the writing of Spanish-speaking students. *Literacy assessment of second language learners*, 43-58.
- Escamilla, K. (2006). Semilingualism applied to the literacy behaviors of Spanish-speaking emerging bilinguals: Bi-illiteracy or emerging biliteracy?. *Teachers College Record*, 108(11), 2329.
- Fang, Z., & Wang, Z. (2011). Beyond rubrics: Using functional language analysis to evaluate student writing. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 34(2), 147.
- Ferreiro, R. (2005). *Estrategias didácticas del aprendizaje colaborativo: el constructivismo social, una nueva forma de enseñar y aprender*. México: Editorial Trillas.
- Finley, T. (2014). 8 Strategies for Teaching Academic Language. *Edutopia*. Retrieved from <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/8-strategies-teaching-academic-language-todd-finley>
- Fisher, D., Frey, N., & Rothenberg, C. (2008). *Content-Area Conversations*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Fitzgerald, J. (1999). What is this thing called “balance?” *The Reading Teacher*, 53, 100–107.
- Fletcher, R. (2001). The Writer’s Notebook. *School Talk*, 6 (4), 1-2.
- Fletcher, R. (2003). *A Writer’s Notebook. Unlocking the Writer Within You*. NY: Harper Trophy.
- Flower, L., Hayes, J. R. (1981). A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing. *College Composition and Communication*, 32, (4), 365-387.
- Flower, L., Hayes, J. R., Carey, L., Schriver, K., Stratman, J. (1986). Detection, Diagnosis, and the Strategies of Revision. *College Composition and Communication*, 37 (1), 16-55.
- Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G. S. (2001). *Guiding Readers and Writers, Grades 3-6: Teaching Comprehension, Genre, and Content Literacy*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G. S. (2012). Guided Reading. The Romance and Reality. *The Reading Teacher*, 66 (4), 268-284.

- Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G. S. (2017). *The Fountas & Pinnell Literacy Continuum, Expanded Edition: A Tool for Assessment, Planning, and Teaching, PreK-8*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Friesen, S. & Jardine, D. (2009). *21st century learning and learners*. Calgary, AB: Galileo Educational Network. Retrieved from [http://education.alberta.ca/media/1087278/wncp%2021st%20cent%20learning%20\(2\).pdf](http://education.alberta.ca/media/1087278/wncp%2021st%20cent%20learning%20(2).pdf)
- Gavelek, J. R., Raphael, T. E., Biondo, S. M., & Wang, D. (1999). *Integrated Literacy Instruction: A Review of the Literature*. (Report No. 2-001). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan – Ann Arbor.
- Geva, E., & Yaghoub Zadeh, Z. (2006). Reading efficiency in native English-speaking and English-as-a-second-language children: The role of oral proficiency and underlying cognitive-linguistic processes. *Scientific Studies of Reading, 10*(1), 31–57.
- González, N. (2016, September 12). Imagining Literacy Equity: Theorizing Flows of Community Practices. *Literacy Research: Theory, Method, and Practice, 65*(1), 69-93. doi:10.1177/2381336916661528
- Gort, M. (2006). Strategic codeswitching, interliteracy, and other phenomena of emergent bilingual writing: Lessons from first grade dual language classrooms. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy, 6*(3), 323-354.
- Graham, S., and Hebert, M. A. (2010). *Writing to read: Evidence for how writing can improve reading*. A Carnegie Corporation Time to Act Report. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.
- Grant, K. B., Golden, S. E., & Wilson, N. S. (2014). *Literacy Assessment and Instructional Strategies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Guerrero, C. H. (2010). Elite Vs. Folk Bilingualism: The Mismatch between Theories and Educational and Social Conditions. *HOW, 17*, 165-179.
- Halliday, M.A.K. (2004). Three Aspects of Children's Language Development: Learning Language, Learning through Language, Learning about Language. In J.J. Webster (ed.), *The Language of Early Childhood: M.A.K. Halliday*, pp 308-326, Ch. 14. New York: Continuum
- Halliday, M. A. K. (2004). Appendix: The Functional Basis of Language. *Class, codes, and control, 343-366*.
- Hanks J. (2017) From Research to Practitioner Research: Setting Exploratory Practice in Context. In: *Exploratory Practice in Language Teaching. Research and Practice in Applied Linguistics*. Macmillan, London: Palgrave.

- Harrison, G. L., Ogle, K. C., & Keilty, M. (2013). Linguistic, reading, and transcription influences on kindergarten writing in children with English as a second language. *Journal of Writing Research*, 5(1), 61–87.
- Haynes, F. (2014). Editorial. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*. 46, 11, 1197-1202.
- Hmelo-Silver, C. E., Duncan, R. G., & Chinn, C. A. (2007). Scaffolding and achievement in problem-based and inquiry learning: A response to Kirschner, Sweller, and Clark (2006). *Educational psychologist*, 42(2), 99-107.
- Hsieh, H. F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative health research*, 15(9), 1277-1288.
- Hunt, S. (1995). Choice in the Writing Class. How Do Students Decide What to Write and How to Write It? *Quarterly of the National Writing Project and the Center for the Study of Writing and Literacy*, 17, (2), 7.
- Hyland, K. (2007). Genre pedagogy: Language, literacy and L2 writing instruction. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 16(3), 148-164. doi:10.1016/j.jslw.2007.07.005
- Hyland, K. (2009). *Second Language Writing*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- International Baccalaureate Organization. (2008). *Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes*. Cardiff, UK. IBO.
- International Baccalaureate Organization. (2009). *Making the PYP Happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education*. Cardiff, UK. IBO.
- International Baccalaureate Organization. (2009b). *Language scope and sequence*. Cardiff, UK. IBO.
- International Literacy Association. (2015). *The Multiple roles of school-based specialized literacy professionals* [Research brief]. Newark, DE: ILA.
- Isaacson, S. (1989a). Role of Secretary vs. Author: Resolving the Conflict in Writing Instruction. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 12 (3), 209-217.
- Isaacson, S. (1989b). Confused Dichotomies: A Response to DuCharme, Earl, and Poplin. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 12 (3), 243-247.
- Ivanič, R. (2004). Discourses of Writing and Learning to Write. *Language and Education*, 18 (3), 220-245.
- Johns, A. M. (1995) Genre and pedagogical purposes. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 4(2), 181-190

- Kawulich, Barbara B. (2005). Participant Observation as a Data Collection Method [81 paragraphs]. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 6(2), Art. 43, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0502430>.
- Ketabi, S., & Ketabi, S. (2014). Classroom and formative assessment in second/foreign language teaching and learning. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 4(2), 435.
- Kellogg, R. T. (1996). A model of working memory in writing. In C. M. Levy & S. Ransdell (Eds.), *The science of writing: Theories, methods, individual differences, and applications* (pp. 57-71). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Kellogg, R. T. (2001). Long-term working memory in text production. *Memory & cognition*, 29(1), 43-52.
- Kellogg, R. T., Whiteford, A. P., Turner, C. E., Cahill, M., & Merlens, A. (2013). Working memory in written composition: an evaluation of the 1996 model. *Journal of Writing Research*, 5(2).
- Kirschner, P. A., Sweller, J., & Clark, R. E. (2006). Why minimal guidance during instruction does not work: An analysis of the failure of constructivist, discovery, problem-based, experiential, and inquiry-based teaching. *Educational Psychologist*, 41, 75–86.
- Kuby, C. R., Rucker, T. G., & Kirchhofer, J. M. (2015). ‘Go Be a Writer’: Intra-activity with materials, time and space in literacy learning. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 15(3), 394-419. Retrieved August 22, 2017, from <https://www.researchgate.net/>.
- Laman, T. T. (2014). Transforming Literate Identities: Writing and Multilingual Children at Work. *Talking Points*, 26, 1, 2-10.
- Lee, H. (2014). Inquiry-based Teaching in Second and Foreign Language Pedagogy. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research JLTR*, 5(6), 1236-1244.
- Lee, I. (1998). Enhancing ESL Students' Awareness of Coherence-Creating Mechanisms in Writing. *TESL Canada Journal*, 15 (2), 36-49.
- Lipman, M. (1988). Critical Thinking – What Can It Be? *Educational Leadership*. 46, 38-43.
- López Gopar M., Núñez Méndez, O., Montes, L. & Cantera M. (2009). Inglés Enciclomedia: A ground-breaking program for young Mexican children? *Mextesol Journal*, 33(1), 67-86.
- Maletta, L. M., (2016) Literacy choice in a first grade classroom. *Theses and Dissertations*. 579. <http://rdw.rowan.edu/etd/579>
- Matsuda, P. K., & Silva, T. (2005). *Second Language Writing Research. Perspectives on the Process of Knowledge Construction*. Mahwah, NJ: Laurence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

- Matsuda, P. K., Cox, M., Jordan, J., & Ortmeier-Hooper, C. (Eds.) (2006). *Second-Language Writing in the Composition Classroom. A Critical Sourcebook*. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's.
- Mercau, M. (2009). Very Young Learners' Ability to Produce Yes-No Questions. *MEXTESOL*, 31.
- NAEYC. (2015). Learning to Read and Write: What Research Reveals. *Reading Rockets*. Retrieved from <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/learning-read-and-write-what-research-reveals>
- Naismith, J. Z. K. (2004). Literacy Learning and Instruction in a Mexican Bilingual School. (Master's Thesis). Retrieved from http://catarina.udlap.mx/u_dl_a/tales/documentos/mla/kimbrough_n_jz/resumen.html#
- Neumann, R. (1992). Perceptions of the teaching-research nexus: A framework for analysis. *Higher Education*, 23(2), 159-171.
- Nickoson, L., & Sheridan, M. P. (2012). *Writing Studies Research in Practice. Methods and Methodologies*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Ovando, C., Collier, V., & Combs, M. (2003). *Bilingual and ESL classrooms: Teaching multicultural contexts* (3rd ed.). Boston: McGrawHill.
- Ordoñez, C. L. (2010). Educación para el bilingüismo en contexto monolingüe: dos lenguas conectadas desde el currículo. *ELIA*, 10, 41-76.
- Paltridge, B. (2014). Genre and second-language academic writing. *Language Teaching*, 47(3), 303-318.
- Pennycook, A. (1990). Critical pedagogy and second language education. *System*, 18(3), 303-314.
- Perales Escudero, M. D., Reyes Cruz, M., & Murrieta Loyo, G. (2012). The English in public elementary schools program of a Mexican state: A critical, exploratory study. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 13(4), 267-283. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2012.722599>
- Petrón, M. A., & Greybeck, B. (2014). Borderlands Epistemologies and the Transnational Experience. *GIST Education and Learning Research Journal*, 8, 137-155.
- Piaget, J. (1958). The growth of logical thinking from childhood to adolescence. *AMC*, 10, 12.
- Purcell-Gates, V. (2001). Emergent Literacy Is Emerging Knowledge of Written, Not Oral, Language. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 92, 7-22.

- Ramírez-Romero, J. L. (2013). La enseñanza del inglés en las primarias públicas de México: las problemáticas de los sujetos. *Mextesol Journal*, 37(3), 1-16.
- Ramírez-Romero, J. L., Pamplón-Irigoyen, N., Chuc, I. Dzul-Escamilla, & Paredes, B. (2015). Descripción de los Programas para la Enseñanza del Inglés de las Primarias Públicas Mexicanas. In J. L. Ramírez-Romero (Ed.), *La enseñanza del inglés en las primarias públicas mexicanas* (pp. 127-132). Mexico City: Pearson-Universidad de Sonora-Universidad Autónoma de Baja California.
- Ramírez-Romero, J. L., Sayer, P. (2016). The Teaching of English in Public Primary Schools in Mexico: More Heat than Light? *Education Policy Analysis Archives*. 24 (84), 1-25
- Rigg, P. (1991). Whole language in TESOL. *Tesol Quarterly*, 521-542.
- Ritchie, J., & Lewis, J. (Eds.). (2003). *Qualitative Research Practice: a Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Romaine, S. (1999). Early bilingual development: from elite to folk. *Bilingualism and migration*, 61-73.
- Rubin, R., & Carlan, V. G. (2005). Using writing to understand bilingual children's literacy development. *The reading teacher*, 58(8), 728-739.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2001). On happiness and human potential: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 141–166.
- Scriven, M. (1967). The methodology of evaluation. In Tylor W. R., Gagne, R. M. and Scriven, M. (Eds.). *Perspectives of Curriculum Evaluation*. Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Scharer, P. L., & Pinnell, G. S. (2008). *Guiding K-3 Writers to Independence: The New Essentials*. New York: Scholastic.
- Serafini, F. (2012). Expanding the four resources model: reading visual and multi-modal texts. *Pedagogies: An International Journal*, 7 (2), 150-164
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1554480X.2012.656347>
- Short, D., & Echevarria, J. (2004). Teacher Skills to Support English Language Learners. *Educating Language Learners*, 62, (4), 8-13.
- Swartz, R., & McGuiness, C. (2014). *Developing and Assessing Thinking Skills. Final Report of Thinking Skills Project*. Boston & Northern Ireland: The International Baccalaureate Organisation.
- Strober, M. H. (2006). Habits of the mind: challenges for multidisciplinary engagement. *Social Epistemology*, 20(3-4), 315-331.

- Verplaetse, L. S. (2008). Developing academic language through an abundance of interaction. In L. S. Verplaetse & N. Migliacci (Eds.), *Inclusive pedagogy for English language learners: A handbook of research-informed practices* (pp. 167–180). New York, NY: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England: Harvard University Press.
- Wallace, R., Pearman, C., Hail, C., & Hurst, B. (2007). Writing for Comprehension. *Reading Horizons*, 48 (1), 41-56.
- Weissberg, R. (2006). *Connecting Speaking & Writing in Second Language Writing Instruction* (Michigan Series on Teaching Multilingual Writers) (D. Belcher & J. Liu, Eds.). Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan.
- Wood Ray, K., & Laminack, L. L. (2001). *The writing workshop: working through the hard parts (and they're all hard parts)*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Woolley, G. (2014). *Developing Literacy in the Primary Classroom*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Appendix A. Participants' Diagnostic Test Results

The following are the results of the diagnostic tests held at the beginning and in the middle of the school_year –last diagnostic assessment before the time of the current study.

	Alba	Adrián	Martha	Mateo
Overall	Level 1	Level 1	Level 3	Level 3
Phonological Awareness	Tested Out	Tested Out	Tested Out	Tested Out
Phonics	Level K	Level K	Level 2	Level 2
High- Frequency Words	Level 1	Level K	Tested Out	Tested Out
Vocabulary	Level 2	Level 1	Level 4	Level 3
Comprehension: Literature	Level 1	Level 1	Level 3	Level 3
Comprehension: Informational Text	Level 1	Level K	Level 3	Level 2

Chart showing Overall Placement and Placement by Domain at Initial Assessment (September 2016)

	Alba	Adrián	Martha	Mateo
Overall	Level 3	Level 1	Level 4	Level 3
Phonological Awareness	Tested Out	Tested Out	Tested Out	Tested Out
Phonics	Level 1	Level 2	Tested Out	Level 2
High- Frequency Words	Tested Out	Tested Out	Tested Out	Tested Out
Vocabulary	Level 4	Level 1	Level 3	Level 4
Comprehension: Literature	Level 3	Level K	Level 4	Level 4
Comprehension: Informational Text	Level 3	Level 1	Early 5	Level 3

Chart showing Overall Placement and Placement by Domain at Midterm Assessment (January 2017)

Appendix B. The Writing Continuum.

The following are the Understandings and Behaviors adapted from the Fountas & Pinnell Literacy Continuum (2017), used to analyze data. These were expected for learners to make evident (or implied) when writing their feature articles. The last column shows the grade level where those understandings or behaviors were first introduced in the research setting, i.e., kindergarten (K), and grades 1 to 5. The segment from the continuum used for this research only regard those understandings and behaviors to develop authorial writing, therefore all elements from writing conventions of the writing process are not considered below. The four aspects of writing observed are described below: 1) Writing Process, 2) Writing Genre, 3) Writing Craft, and 4) View of Self as a Writer (originally included in the writing process understandings and behaviors outlined by Fountas and Pinnell, 2017).

1. The Writing Process

1.1 Planning and Rehearsing

1.1.1 Purpose

Understanding/behaviors	Grade introduced
Write for a specific purpose: e.g., to inform, entertain, persuade, reflect, instruct, retell, maintain relationships, plan	3
Tell whether a piece of writing is functional, narrative, informational, or poetic	3
Have clear goals and understand how the goals will affect the writing	4
1.1.2 Audience	
Write with specific readers or audience in mind	3
Understand that writing is shaped by the writer's purpose and understanding of the audience	3
Plan and organize information for the intended readers	3
Understand audience as all readers rather than just the teacher	3
1.1.3 Oral Language	
Generate and expand ideas through talk with peers and teacher	K
Look for ideas and topics in personal experiences, shared through talk	K
Use talk and storytelling to generate and rehearse language that may be written later	K
Explore relevant questions in talking about a topic	3
When rehearsing language for an informational piece, use vocabulary specific to the topic	3
1.1.4 Gathering Seeds/ Resources/ Experimenting with Writing	
Use a writer's notebook or booklet as a tool for collecting ideas, experimenting, planning, sketching, or drafting	3
Reread a writer's notebook to select topics: e.g., select small moments that can be expanded	3
Use sketching, webs, lists, and freewriting to think about, plan for, and try out writing	3
Gather a variety of entries (e.g., timeline, sketches, observations, freewrites, drafts, lists) in a writer's notebook	5
Think through a topic, focus, organization, and audience	5
Try out titles, different headings and endings	5
Use notebooks to plan, gather, and rehearse for future published writing	5
Choose helpful tools: e.g., webs, T-charts, sketches, charts, diagrams, lists, outlines, flowcharts	5

1.1.5 Content/ Topic/ Theme

Understanding/behaviors	Grade introduced
Observe carefully events, people, settings, and other aspects of the world to gather information on a topic	3
Select information that will support the topic	1
Choose topics that one knows about, cares about, or wants to learn about	2
Choose topics that are interesting to the writer	2
Tell about topic in an interesting way	2
Stay focused on a topic to produce a well-organized piece of writing that is long enough to fully explain the points (e.g., facts, arguments) the writer wants to make	5
Get ideas from other books and writers about how to approach a topic: e.g., organization, point of view, layout	3
Communicate the significance of the topic to an audience	3
Show the audience (by stating or providing important information) what is important about the topic	5
Use resources (print and online) to get information on a topic	4
Select details that will support a topic	3
Select title that fits the content to publish or complete as final draft	5
Develop a clear, main idea around which a piece of writing will be planned	5

1.1.6 Inquiry/ Research/ Exploration

Make scientific observations, use notes and sketches to document them, and talk with others about connections and patterns	4
Form questions to explore and locate sources for information about a topic, characters, or setting	5
Select and include only the information that is appropriate to the topic (3) and to the category (5)	3 and 5
Use notes to record and organize information	5
Conduct research to gather information in planning a writing project: e.g., live interviews, Internet, artifacts, articles, books	5
Create categories of information	5
Determine when research is necessary to cover a nonfiction topic adequately	5
Search for appropriate information from multiple sources: e.g., books and other print materials, websites, interview	5
Understand the concepts of plagiarism	5
Understand that a writer gains ideas from other writers but should credit the other writers and/or put those ideas into one's own words	4
Understand that a writer may quote another writer by placing the exact words in quotes and referencing the source	5
Record sources of information for citation	5

1.1.7 Genre/ Forms

Understand that illustrations play different roles in a text: e.g., increase reader's enjoyment, add information, show sequence	3
---	---

1.2 Drafting and Revising**1.2.1 Understanding the Process**

Understanding/behaviors	Grade introduced
Understand the role of the writer, teacher, or peer writer in conference	3
Change writing in response to peer or teacher feedback	3
Understand revision as a means for making written messages stronger and clearer to readers	1
Use writers as mentors in making revisions and revisions while drafting (recursive process)	5

1.2.2 Producing a Draft

Understanding/behaviors	Grade introduced
Write a continuous message, sometimes organized into categories that are related to a larger topic or idea	5
Use drawings to add information to, elaborate on, or increase readers' enjoyment and understanding	2
Write a draft or discovery draft (writing fast and as much as possible on a topic)	3
Understand the importance of the lead in a story or nonfiction piece	3
Revise the lead to find the most interesting and engaging language	5
Bring the piece to closure with an effective summary, parting idea, or satisfying ending	3
Present ideas in logical order across the piece	3
Maintain central idea or focus across paragraphs	5
Organize and present information in paragraphs in a way that demonstrates clear understanding of their structure to group ideas	4
Show steps or phrases in time order when incorporating temporal or chronological sequence into a nonfiction text	4
Generate multiple titles to help think about the focus of the piece	5
Select a title that fits the content	5

1.2.3 Rereading

Reread writing to think about what to write next	5
Reread writing to rethink and make changes	5
Reread and revise the discovery draft or rewrite sections to clarify meaning	3
Reread the text to be sure there are no missing words or information	1
Identify the statement (and sometimes restatement) of the main idea of a piece	3
Reread a piece asking self, "Have I made clear what I want readers to understand?"	4
Reread writing to check for clarity and purpose	5
Identify information that may confuse the reader	5
Identify information that may be related to the topic	5
Identify information that either distracts from or does not contribute to the central purpose and message	5

1.2.4 Adding Information

Add ideas in thought bubbles or dialogue in quotation marks or speech bubbles to provide information, provide narration, or show thoughts and feelings	K
Add descriptive words (adjectives, adverbs) and phrases to help readers visualize and understand events, actions, processes, or topics	2
Add words, phrases, or sentences to make the writing more interesting or exciting for readers	1
Add word, phrases, or sentences to clarify meaning for readers	2
After reflection and rereading, add substantial pieces of text (paragraphs, pages) to provide further explanation, clarify points, add interest, or support points	4
Add details or examples to make the piece clearer or more interesting	5
Add transitional words and phrases to clarify meaning and make the writing smoother	5
Reread and change or add words to ensure that meaning is clear	5
Add descriptive words and details to writing or drawings	5
Use footnotes to add information	5

1.2.5 Deleting Information

Delete text to better express meaning and make more logical	1
Delete words or sentences that do not make sense (1) or do not fit the topic or message (2)	1 and 2
Delete pages or paragraphs when the information is not needed	5
Identify redundant words, phrases, or sentences and remove if they do not serve a purpose or enhance the voice	5
Reread and cross out words to ensure that meaning is clear	5

1.2.6 Changing a Text

Understanding/behaviors	Grade introduced
Identify vague parts and provide specificity	2
Vary word choice to make the piece more interesting	3
Work on transitions to achieve better flow	5
1.2.7 Reorganizing	
Rearrange and revise writing to better express meaning or make the text more logical (reorder drawings, reorder pages, cut and paste)	1
Reorganize and revise the writing to better express the writer's meaning or make the text more logical	4
Reorder pages or paragraphs by laying them out and reassembling them	2
1.2.8 Using Tools and Techniques	
Add words, letters, phrases, or sentences using a variety of techniques: e.g., caret, sticky notes, spider's legs, numbered items on a separate page, word-processing	1
Use a number to identify place to add information and an additional paper with numbers to write the information to insert	2
Delete words, phrases, or sentences from a text (crossing out or using word-processing) to make the meaning clearer	3
1.3 Publishing	
Produce writing to explain, label, or otherwise accompany drawing	2
Create illustrations and writing that work together to express the meaning	1
Create illustrations or other art for pieces that are in final form	K
Select a poem, story, or informational book to publish in a variety of appropriate ways: e.g., typed/printed, framed or mounted or otherwise displayed	1
In anticipation of an audience, add book and print features during the publishing process: e.g., illustrations and other graphics, cover spread, title, dedication, table of contents, about the author piece, headings, subheadings	3
Attend to layout of text in final publication	3
Understand publishing as the sharing of a piece of writing with a purpose and an audience in mind	3
Understand the importance of citing sources of information and some conventions for citations	5
1.4 Drawing	
Understand that when both writing and drawing are on a page, they are mutually supportive, with each extending the other	1
Use sketches or drawings to represent people, places, and things, (K) and also to communicate mood and abstract ideas as appropriate to the genre and form (3)	K and 3
Create drawings that are related to the written text and increase readers' understanding and enjoyment	4
Use sketching to support memory and help in planning	3
Use sketching to capture detail that is important to a topic	5
Provide important information in the illustrations	3
Add detail to drawings to add information or increase interest	3
Create drawings that employ careful attention to color or detail	1
Understand the difference between drawing and sketching and use them to support the writing process	4
Use sketching to create quick representations of images, usually an outline in pencil or pen	4
Sometimes use diagrams or other graphics to support the process and/or add meaning	5
Sketch and draw with a sense of relative size and perspective	5
Use the terms sketching and drawing to refer to these processes and forms	5

2. Writing in a Genre

2.1 Understanding the Genre

Understanding/behaviors	Grade introduced
Understand that a writer creates an expository text for readers to learn about a topic	4
Understand that to write an expository text, the writer needs to become very knowledgeable about a topic	3
Understand that an expository text may require research and will require organization	5
Understand that a feature article usually focuses on one aspect of a topic	5
Understand that a feature article begins with a lead paragraph, with more detailed information in subsequent paragraphs, and a conclusion	5
Understand that a feature article reveals the writer's point of view about the topic or subject	5
Understand that a factual text may use literary language and literary techniques to engage and entertain readers as it gives them factual information	3
Understand that a writer can learn how to write various forms of expository text from mentor texts	1
Use the term feature article to describe the genre and forms	5

2.2 Writing in the Genre

Use illustrations and book and print features (e.g., labeled pictures, diagrams, table of contents, headings, subheadings, sidebars, boxes of facts set off from other text, page numbers) to guide the reader	4
Write a piece that is interesting and enjoyable to read	1
Write about a topic, keeping in mind the audience (K) and their interests (2) and likely background knowledge	5
Provide information that teaches or informs readers about a topic	3
Write an effective lead paragraph and conclusion	5
Organize information using categorization or another underlying structural pattern: e.g., description, temporal sequence, question and answer, cause and effect, chronological sequence, compare and contrast, problem and solution	5
Provide interesting supporting details that develop a topic	5
Include facts, figures, statistics, examples, and anecdotes when appropriate	5
Use quotes from experts (written texts, speeches, or interviews) when appropriate	5
Use some vocabulary specific to the topic	3
Use literary language to make topic interesting to readers	5

3. Writing Craft

3.1 Organization

3.1.1 Text Structure

Use organization in writing that is related to purpose and genre (letters, essays)	5
Use underlying structural patterns to present different kinds of information in nonfiction: e.g., description, temporal sequence, question and answer, cause and effect, chronological sequence, compare and contrast, problem and solution, categorization	5
Make decisions about where in a text to place features such as photographs with legends, insets, sidebars, and graphics	1
Write fiction and nonfiction narratives that are ordered chronologically	1

3.1.2 Beginnings, Endings, Titles

Begin with a purposeful and engaging lead	5
Use a variety of beginning and endings to engage the reader	1
Bring a piece to closure with a concluding statement	5
End an informational piece with a thoughtful or enlightening conclusion	5
Generate multiple titles for the piece and select the one that best fits the content of an informational piece	3

3.1.3 Presentation of Ideas

Understanding/behaviors	Grade introduced
Present ideas clearly and in a logical sequence	1
Organize information according to purpose (3) and genre (4)	3 and 4
Show topics and subtopics by using headings and subheadings	5
Use paragraphs to organize ideas	5
Use well-crafted transitions to support the pace and flow of the writing	5
Introduce ideas with facts, details, examples, and explanations from multiple authorities	5
Introduce ideas followed by supportive details and examples	1
Show steps in enough detail that a reader can follow a sequence	2
Bring a piece to closure through an ending or summary statement	3
Use headings, subheadings, and other features to help the reader find information and understand how facts are related in expository writing	3
Use graphics (diagrams, illustrations photos, charts) to provide information	3
Use vocabulary specific to the topic or content	3
3.2 Idea Development	
Understand the difference between developing a narrative (or plot) and giving information using description, cause and effect, compare and contrast, problem and solution, or categorization	3
Introduce, develop, and conclude the topic or story	4
Hold the reader's attention with clear, focused content	5
Understand how information helps the reader learn about a topic	2
Gather and internalize information and then write it in own words	2
Engage the reader with ideas that show strong knowledge of the topic	5
Communicate clearly the main points intended for the reader to understand	1
Arrange information in a logical way so that ideas build on one another	3
Provide details that are accurate, relevant, interesting, and vivid	5
3.3 Language Use	
Understand that the writer is using language to communicate meaning	1
Show evidence of using language from story books and informational books that have been read aloud	2
Learn ways of using language and constructing texts from other writers (reading books and hearing them read aloud) and apply understandings to one's own writing	2
Continue to learn from other writers by borrowing ways with words, phrases, and sentences	3
Use memorable words or phrases	3
Vary language and style as appropriate to audience and purpose	5
Use language to give directions	5
Find and write language to explain abstract concepts and ideas	5
Use language to clearly state main ideas and supporting details	5
Use examples to make meaning clear	3
Begin to use particular language typical of different genres	4
Use language to elicit feelings	5
Use variety in sentence structure and sentence length	5
Use descriptive language and dialogue to present characters/subjects who appear in informational writing	5
Arrange simple and complex sentences for an easy flow and sentence transition	5
Vary sentence length to create feeling or mood	5
Use variety of transitions and connections: e.g., words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs	4

3.4 Word Choice

Understanding/behaviors	Grade introduced
Learn new words from reading and try them out in writing	1
Use vocabulary appropriate for the topic	1
Choose the best words to fit the writer's purpose and meaning	5
Choose words with the audience in mind	5
Use range of descriptive words to enhance meaning	5
Vary word choice to create interesting description and dialogue	2
Select words to make meanings memorable	5
Use strong nouns and verbs	5
Use colorful modifiers and style as appropriate to audience and purpose	5
Use words that convey an intended mood or effect	5
Show ability to vary the text by choosing alternative words: e.g., replied for said	3
Learn and use content words typical of disciplinary language: e.g., science, history, math, social studies	5
Where needed, use academic language in an appropriate way to write about topics in various disciplines	5
Use common (simple) connectives and some sophisticated connectives (words that link ideas and clarify meaning) that are used in written texts but do not appear often in everyday oral language: e.g., although, however, therefore, though, unless, whenever	4

3.5 Voice

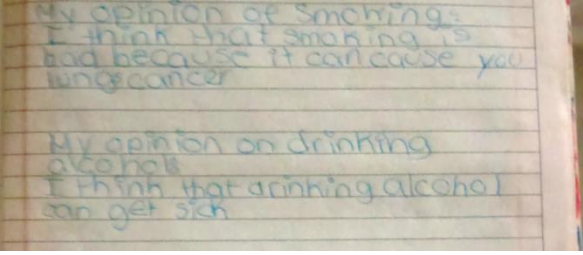
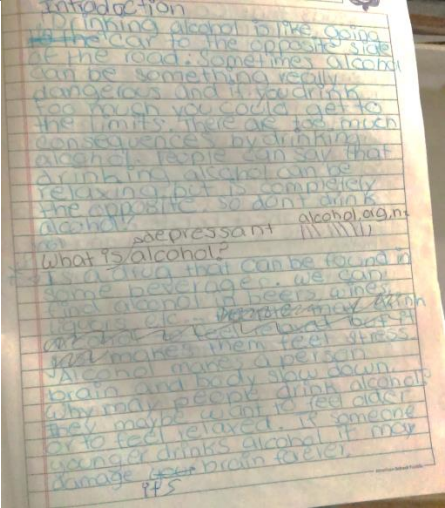
Write about personal experiences with voice ("as one speaks")	3
Write in an expressive way (1) but also recognize how language in a book would sound (3)	1 and 3
Write in a way that speaks directly to the reader	3
Show enthusiasm and energy for the topic	2
Write in a way that shows care and commitment to the topic	4
Use engaging titles and language	4
Include details that add to the voice	5
Use punctuation to make the text clear, effective, interesting, and to support voice	3
Produce expository writing that reveals the stance of the writer toward the topic	5
Read writing aloud to help think critically about voice	2

4. View of Self as a Writer

Have topics and ideas for writing in a list or notebook	3
Select examples of best writing in all genres attempted	K
Self-evaluate writing and talk about what is good about it and what techniques were used	1
Self-evaluate pieces of writing in light of what is known about a genre	5
Produce a reasonable quantity of writing within the time available	3
Write routinely over extended timeframes and shorter timeframes from a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences	4
Write with independent initiative and investment	3
Attend to the nuances of illustrations and how they enhance a text in order to try them out for oneself	3
Take risks as a writer	1
Write in a variety of genres across the year	3
Understand writing as a vehicle to communicate something the writer thinks	3
Show ability in a conference to discuss what is being worked on as a writer	3
Seek feedback on writing	3
Be willing to work at the craft or writing, incorporating new learning from instruction	3
Compare previous writing to revised writing and notice and talk about the differences	3
State what was learned from each piece of writing	3
Articulate goals as a writer	4
Write with fluency and ease	3
Notice what makes writing effective and name the craft or technique	3
Show interest in and work at crafting good writing, incorporating new learning from instruction	5
Mark the most important part of a piece of one's own or others' writing	3

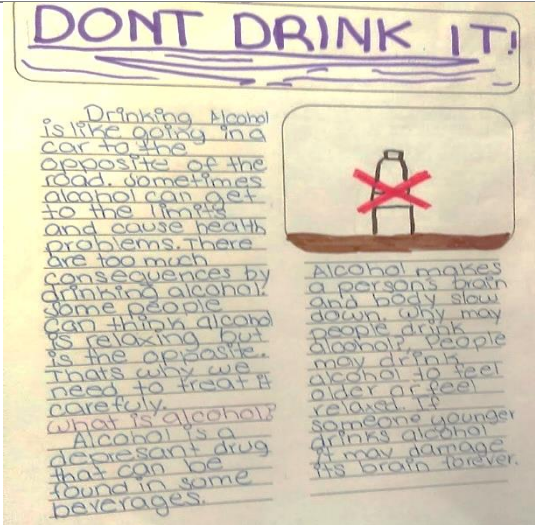
Appendix C. Samples from Data Analysis.

Data from the different artifacts was analyzed in different ways. First, the written texts were scanned and behaviors were identified in the scanned pages. I numbered all understandings and behaviors to know not only the aspect of writing observed, but its different subcategories. That is, Process would be 1, then its first subcategory, 1, the first behavior/understanding, 1; Genre would be 2, Craft, 3, and View of Self as a Writer, 4. I also used different colors for the four aspects of writing I wanted to observe: process, genre, craft, view of self as a writer, to make it visually easier to identify.

Martha - Page 1/13	Martha - Page 7/13
	
Understanding/Behavior	Understanding/Behavior
Evident 2.1.7 Understand that a feature article reveals the writer's point of view about the topic or subject	Evident 4.1.9 Take risks as a writer 1.2.4.9 Add descriptive words and details to writing or drawings
	Implied 4.1.11 Understand writing as a vehicle to communicate something the writer thinks 1.1.5.7 Get ideas from other books and writers about how to approach a topic: e.g., organization, point of view, layout 3.3.1 Understand that the writer is using language to communicate meaning

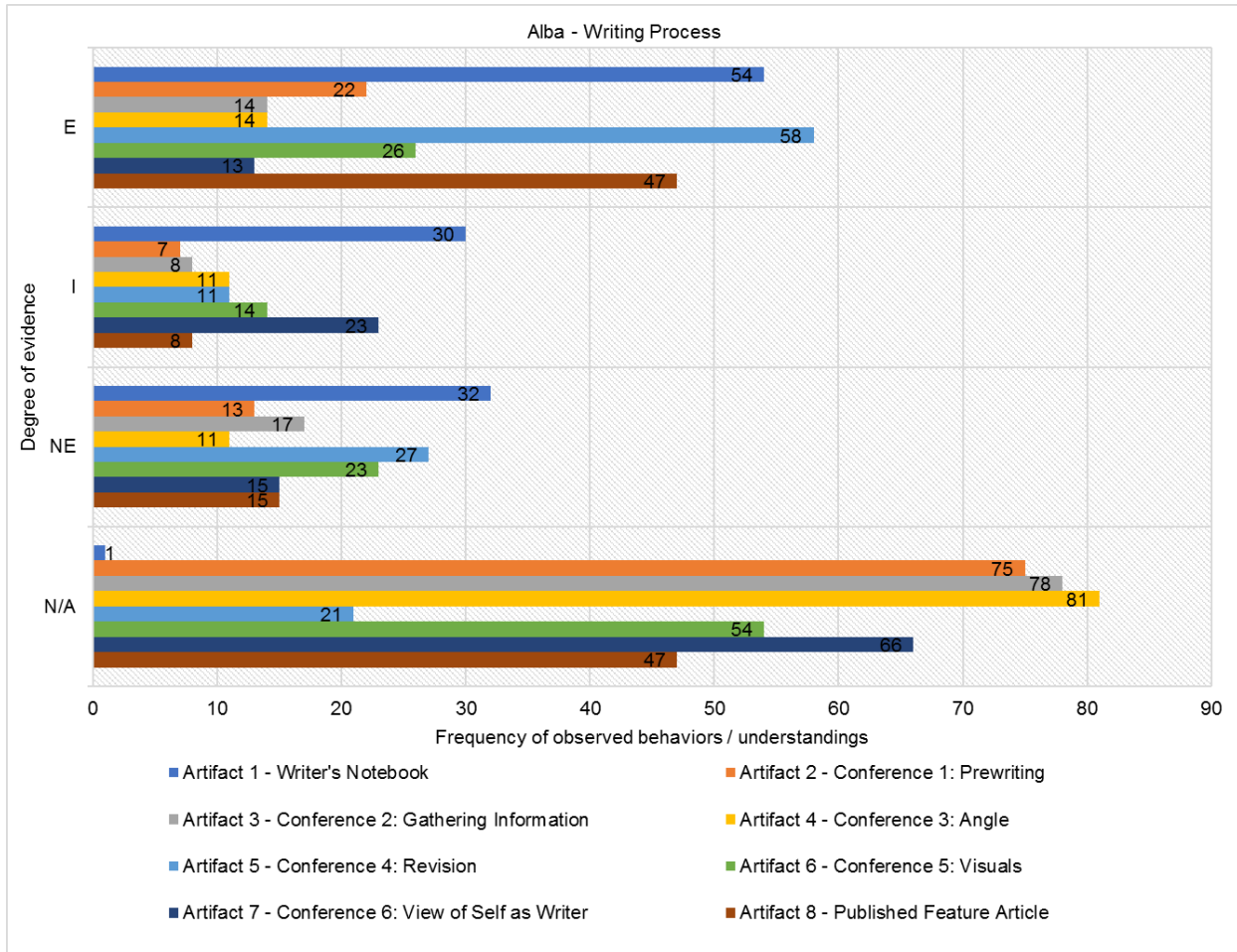
Sample analysis of the writer's notebook of one of the writers

In a similar way, I also analyzed the published feature article each writer chose as the best representative of their authorial writing. Here is an excerpt, with a few sample behaviors observed.

Martha - Page 1/2	Transcript
 <p>DONT DRINK IT!</p> <p>Drinking Alcohol is like going in a car to the opposite of the road. Sometimes alcohol can get to the limits and cause health problems. There are too much consequences by drinking alcohol. Some people can think alcohol is relaxing but is the opposite. That's why we need to treat it carefully.</p> <p>What is alcohol? Alcohol is a depressant drug that can be found in some beverages.</p> <p>Alcohol makes a person's brain and body slow down. Why may people drink alcohol? People may drink alcohol to feel older or feel relaxed. If someone younger drinks alcohol it may damage its brain forever.</p>	<p>DONT DRINK IT!</p> <p>Drinking Alcohol is like going in a car to the opposite of the road. Sometimes alcohol can get to the limits and cause health problems. There are too much consequences by drinking alcohol. Some people can think alcohol is relaxing but is the opposite. That's why we need to treat it carefully.</p> <p>What is alcohol? Alcohol is a depressant drug that can be found in some beverages.</p> <p>Alcohol makes a person's brain and body slow down. Why may people drink alcohol?, People may drink alcohol to feel older or feel relaxed. If someone younger drinks alcohol it may damage its brain forever.</p>
<p>Background</p>	<p>Understanding/Behavior</p>
<p>This is the article Martha shared as her best authorial writing. At the moment of our last conference, she had not published her second article on stress yet, which may mean she prioritize resources to the article she thought represented her authorship the best. All writers knew they would have to choose the article from the beginning of the unit, hence the assumption.</p>	<p>2.2.1 Use illustrations and book and print features to guide the reader Evident. Here Martha demonstrates using illustrations to guide the reader.</p> <p>3.1.2.1 Begin with a purposeful and engaging lead Evident "Drinking Alcohol is like going in a car to the opposite of the road." is her lead.</p> <p>1.1.5.5 Tell about topic in an interesting way Evident</p> <p>4.1.11 Understand writing as a vehicle to communicate something the writer thinks Evident</p>
<p>Implied</p>	
<p>1.1.1.1 Write for a specific purpose: e.g., to inform, entertain, persuade, reflect, instruct, retell, maintain relationships, plan</p> <p>2.1.1 Understand that a writer creates an expository text for readers to learn about a topic</p> <p>4.1.8 Attend to the nuances of illustrations and how they enhance a text in order to try them out for oneself</p>	

Sample analysis of a feature article

I also accounted for all observed behaviors, whether they were evident (E), implied (I), not evident (NE), or not applicable (N/A). The following is a chart from one of the aspects of writing analyzed from one of the young writers in the study. It helped me see how behaviors and understandings would fluctuate between artifacts and the degree in which they were evident.



Alba's observed writing process understandings and behaviors

As I accounted for all understandings and behaviors in every artifact, I created a tally to make sure I had included all understandings and behaviors and to see their overall prominence. Below are two of those tallies from two different writers, from two different aspects of writing.

	Artifact 1 – Writer's notebook	Artifact 2 - conference 1: Prewriting	Artifact 3 - conference 2: Gathering information	Artifact 4 - conference 3: Angle	Artifact 5 - conference 4: Revision	Artifact 6 - conference 5: visual elements	Artifact 7 - conference 6: View of self as a writer	Artifact 8 – Published feature article	
NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)	0	9	12	4	0	7	10	1	27%
NOT EVIDENT (NE)	3	0	1	6	10	3	1	3	17%
IMPLIED (I)	2	4	6	4	0	6	3	4	18%
EVIDENT (E)	15	7	1	6	10	4	6	12	38%
TOTAL	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	100.0%

Tally of genre understandings and behaviors per artifact – Adrián

	Artifact 1 – Writer's notebook	Artifact 2 - conference 1: Prewriting	Artifact 3 - conference 2: Gathering information	Artifact 4 - conference 3: Angle	Artifact 5 - conference 4: Revision	Artifact 6 - conference 5: visual elements	Artifact 7 - conference 6: View of self as a writer	Artifact 8 – Published feature article	
NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)	4	11	12	3	3	4	6	12	33%
NOT EVIDENT (NE)	3	0	1	4	5	2	0	0	9%
IMPLIED (I)	4	1	2	2	1	7	5	3	15%
EVIDENT (E)	10	9	6	12	12	8	10	6	43%
TOTAL	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	100.0%

Tally of view of self as a writer understandings and behaviors per artifact – Mateo