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KENT STATE UNIVERSITY College of Education, Health, and Human Services

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION DEFENSE

of

Kristen I. Evans

For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Curriculum and Instruction

Concentration: Literacy

**ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF FIRST-DRAFT WRITING THROUGH VERBAL
REHEARSAL WITH THIRD-GRADE WRITERS**

September 22, 2023

10:00 a.m.

403 White Hall

Kent State University

Kristen I. Evans

M.Ed. in Elementary Education
John Carroll University

B.S. Community Health Services
Ohio University

Kristen has been an elementary teacher for 19 years. In addition to being a classroom teacher, she has also been a (K-5) reading specialist and literacy instructional coach. Kristen teaches third-grade and elementary writing methods courses as an adjunct at Kent State University.

Kristen's research focuses on literacy practices in both reading and writing of elementary-aged students centered on how to enhance students' written communication and use of the writing process, how teachers can assist students in developing and understanding themes, and a research synthesis on guided reading. Connected to her work with elementary writing research is her research with pre-service teachers focused on course design and how to prepare preservice teachers to teach writing, specifically investigating what and how they respond to students' writing. She has presented at several Literacy Research Association (LRA) conferences and the National K-8 Literacy & Reading Recovery Conference. Additionally, her work has been published in *The Reading Teacher*, *Literacy Research and Instruction*, *Ohio Journal of English Language Arts*, *Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education*, and *Literacy Today*.

ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF FIRST-DRAFT WRITING THROUGH VERBAL REHEARSAL WITH THIRD-GRADE WRITERS

This formative experiment aimed to examine how teachers can enhance the quality of first-draft writing in the content and discourse of third-grade writers across narrative, informational, and opinion writing using an oral language intervention termed verbal rehearsal. The verbal rehearsal intervention allowed students to experiment with their writing orally by “saying” their intended message aloud several times before committing words to the page. This study was grounded in theoretical approaches to writing synthesized from cognitive, sociocultural, and critical humanizing perspectives. A case study was embedded within the formative experiment and included nine third-grade focal student participants from one writing workshop classroom. Data was collected from multiple sources: 1) video and audiotaped verbal rehearsal conferences, 2) student video reflections, 3) video and audiotaped follow-up teacher-student interviews, 4) completed student pieces, and 5) reflective teacher journal. Information from these data sources was used to determine the intervention’s effectiveness and efficiency in meeting the pedagogical goal of enhanced first-draft writing.

Findings revealed that progress could be made toward the goal by making several modifications to the intervention based on enhancing and inhibiting factors. One of the most considerable progressions of the intervention was the writers’ ability to elaborate and revise their oral composition by transforming their initial content for writing through a recursive cycle of oral revision until their ideas were ready for a commitment to the page. Additionally, the intervention allowed the writers to focus on and repeat key details throughout the rehearsal process, bringing cohesiveness to their writing.