Integrated Reading-Writing Instruction for Elementary School Emergent Bilingual Students

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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

INTEGRATED READING-WRITING INSTRUCTION FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL EMERGENT BILINGUAL STUDENTS

By

Irina Malova

A DISSERTATION

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INTEGRATED READING-WRITING INSTRUCTION FOR ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL EMERGENT BILINGUAL STUDENTS

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This comparative case study investigated integrated reading-writing instruction (IRWI) as an approach for writing instruction implemented after the adoption of Common Core State Standards (NGA & CCSSO, 2010a). Specifically, I explored the nature of IRWI through video-recorded observations of writing instruction, teachers’ perspectives towards this approach, and features of critical knowledge (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000) utilized by five teachers in five fourth grade English Language Arts classrooms with emergent bilingual students. This study was guided by the following three research questions: 1) What is the nature of integrated reading-writing instruction in 4th grade ELA classrooms with emergent bilingual students? 2) What are teachers’ perceptions of integrated reading-writing instruction for emergent bilingual students? 3) What types of critical knowledge do teachers use when implementing integrated reading-writing instruction?

This study analyzed videos collected within the frame of an Institute of Education Sciences-funded research-study, Writing for English Language Learners (WELLs): Exploring the Relationship between Writing Instruction and Student Outcomes (Gort, Howard, & Caswell, 2013). Additional data were also collected for this secondary study: teachers’ interviews and play-back sessions.
The findings from this study indicated that the teachers’ instruction was built around three areas of the Florida Department of Education’s state assessment rubric: 1) Purpose, Focus, Organization; 2) Evidence and Elaboration; and 3) Conventions and Grammar. The investigation of classroom instruction showed how teachers paid particular attention to those aspects of writing that were explicitly stated in the assessment rubric. The five teachers saw a number of IRWI disadvantages, which included absence of creativity and genre variety, the approach not corresponding to a 4th grade developmental level, absence of an accurate picture of writing performance, and mismatch between assessment rubric and anchor papers. The teachers suggested a number of adaptations of IRWI, which, from their perspectives, would improve the current state of writing instruction, such as starting IRWI from kindergarten and throughout lower elementary grades, including more genre variety, writing in L1, among others. This study also contributed to the understanding of which elements of critical knowledge were present in the instruction of five teachers (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000).

The results of this study informed the field with regard to the five teachers’ practices and their perspectives of IRWI in 4th grade ELA writing classrooms with emergent bilinguals. This study built on, supported, and added to the existing research on writing instruction for emergent bilinguals in elementary school. Some important implications were suggested regarding what can be done to promote teachers’ implementation of IRWI to deepen their understanding of this approach.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to the people who are most important in my life—my parents, Galina Malova and Yuriy Malov, for their belief in me and for the examples they set for me. Mom and Dad, thank you for your absolute love, support, and for instilling the passion of reading and writing in me since an early age.

Мои дорогие Мама и Папа, эта диссертация посвящается вам. Спасибо за вашу безграничную любовь и поддержку! Без вас эта степень была бы абсолютно не возможна! С любовью и уважением, ваша дочь Ирина.
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Chapter One

Introduction

This dissertation study investigates the nature of integrated reading-writing instruction for Emergent Bilingual students in 4th grade English Language Arts (ELA) classrooms. Chapter 1 provides background, significance, and the purpose of the study; Chapter 2 introduces the theoretical framework guiding the study and the review of the relevant literature; Chapter 3 describes the methodology of the study; Chapters 4-6 report the findings; and Chapter 7 discusses how this study contributes to the field and implications for research and practice.

Background and Significance

According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2015), English Language Learners (ELLs) are the fastest growing segment of school population, constituting about 10% of U.S. K-12 students; in 2011-12 and 2012–13, ELL enrollment increased in 30 states. Being the fastest growing group, ELLs are also the most diverse category, ranging from long-term ELLs, to Generation 1.5 immigrants, and includes students speaking accumulatively 350 languages (Olson, Scarcella, & Matuchniak, 2015).

In this dissertation, I refer to ELLs as emergent bilingual students or emergent bilinguals (EBs) (García, 2009) to highlight students’ potential to develop bilingual proficiency through sustained exposure to and support of multiple languages and to emphasize the complex nature of their linguistic and cultural knowledge across their languages (García, 1983; García, 2009; Garcia Kleifgen, & Falchi, 2008; Gort, 2012; Reyes, 2006).
The current demographics pose challenges primarily for teachers and educators to meet the diverse needs of EBs, who may be at a disadvantage in their preparation for the contemporary workforce where writing skills play an important role to be successful in present day and future careers (Graham, 2013). The situation becomes even more critical and requires an urgent search for new ways of instruction with the existing opportunity gap between EBs and monolingual English-speaking students in U.S. schools (NCES, 2014). The issue of the opportunity gap is exacerbated by standards-based assessment policies that include high expectations for learning the Common Core State Standards (CCSS for ELA/Literacy; National Governor’s Association Center for Best Practices [NGA] & Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 2010a), adopted in 42 states; these standards outline the critical reading skills that all students, including EBs, are supposed to develop in order to understand complex texts and respond to those texts in extensive writing across curriculums, in appropriate genres (Applebee, 2013; Graham, 2013; Olson et al., 2015). The NGA & CCSSO (2010a) create a unified network of standards by placing equal emphasis on reading and writing across the grade levels. This newer approach to measurement, in which reading is assessed through writing, gives the latter even higher stakes than assessing writing in isolation (Calkins, Ehrenworth, & Lehman, 2012). The new paradigm of NGA & CCSSO (2010a) requires teachers to focus on discourse, explanation, argumentation, purpose, typical text and sentence structures, and vocabulary acquisition (TESOL International Association, 2013).

These facts point to the need of new teaching approaches and strategies that would help EBs in achieving better reading and writing skills, and thus narrow the existing performance gap. An example of such an approach is integrated reading-writing
instruction (IRWI), known also as the connection of reading and writing, reading for writing (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Carson & Leki, 1993; Hirvela, 2013; Leki & Carson, 1994) or analytical text-based writing (Matsumura, Correnti, & Wang, 2015). In this study, IRWI is defined as a “literacy event in which readers/writers use text(s) that they read, or have read, as a basis for text(s) that they write…. Reading for writing can also be understood as acknowledging that writing is often the resultant physical artifact or reading/writing encounters” (Carson & Leki, 1993, p. 85). Recent research suggests that using writing to read fosters reading achievement, whereas a reading to write approach boosts writing performance of students (Graham & Hebert, 2010; Graham & Perin, 2007; Tierney & Shanahan, 1991; Tierney, Soter, O’Flahavan, & McGinley, 1989). While the existing research focuses primarily on mainstream students, there is not much known about integrated reading-writing instruction for EBs specifically. In light of the importance of text-based writing and the emphasis given to it by the CCSS (NGA & CCSSO, 2010a), this dissertation will help to better understand the nature of integrated reading-writing instruction in 4th grade English Language Arts classrooms for emergent bilingual students. Grade four is known as a critical age for literacy development (Christie, 2010), when readers and writers concentrate more on interpreting ideas and thoughts (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000).

In the following, I will describe the significance of this study, which unfolds around three aspects—first, the importance of writing for the 21st century knowledge economy; second, the existing opportunity gap between monolingual English and EB students and the necessity to integrate reading and writing as per rigorous standards, such
as the CCSS (NGA & CCSSO, 2010a) and third, the empirically-based benefits for students’ literacy performance from connecting reading and writing.

**Importance of Writing Skills in the 21st Century**

Today we have transitioned to a knowledge economy (Lauder, Young, Daniels, Balarin, & Lowe, 2012, p.1), where economic competitiveness is based on knowledge, that allows upward social mobility and social justice of well-educated people (Lauder et al., 2012). If future members of society fail to meet the demands of high literacy communication skills, and higher-level thinking, they risk falling behind the modern economy (Graham, 2013). In our technology-mediated society, writing is a strong tool to persuade and inform in the professional setting. The ability to interact and compose through multiple technology and media has become a key characteristic of the successful student in the 21st century (Dalton, et al., 2015; Miller & McVee, 2012; Smith, 2014). The “knowledge-based” economy challenges today’s students with more and different tasks and demands than challenges faced by their parents and grandparents. For example, the National Commission on Writing for America’s Families, Schools, and Colleges published report, *Writing: A Ticket to Work…Or a Ticket Out* (2004) reveals that writing is a “threshold skill” for salaried employment and promotion (p. 5). According to the National Commission on Writing (NCW, 2005), writing is an important factor in the hiring and promotion processes in the public sector, and as frequently used means of communication in business, including technical reports, formal reports, memos, and correspondence.

These published reports indicate that writing has helped to transform the world: the economies and popular culture of the Western world have a strong foundation on
writing. Millions of jobs all over the world largely depend on the writing abilities of workers. Writing can become a way or tool for students to understand what they know. In this regard, a lack of writing instruction can negatively affect a “knowledge economy.” But, despite its recognized and critical importance, there is a need to improve writing instruction (Goldenberg, 2008; Graham & Perin, 2007; Magrath et al., 2003). The issue is that students do not write with the skills and at the level expected from them. As stated in the Neglected “R” report (2003), one of the elements in dealing with the nation’s education challenge is addressing writing instruction. It is important because most teachers have little support or high quality professional learning in teaching writing and often do not have a notion of what constitutes good writing performance (NCW, 2003). This issue becomes aggravated when teachers have EBs in classrooms, as they do not have experience or professional learning in developing literacy for bilingual students (Graham et al., 2016; Larsen, 2016; Orzulak, 2016). It is common that teachers perceive EBs as a burden in the mainstream classroom, or as problems who need to be “fixed,” as opposed to being considered as a valuable resource, who enriches classroom experience (Gambrell et al., 2011; Li, 2012). Teachers need to be prepared to teach EBs as they are prepared to teach any other group of students (Lucas, 2010). While in-service teachers can develop their knowledge of linguistically responsive teaching (Gort, Glenn, & Settlage, 2010), pre-service teachers can participate in collaboration across professional boundaries of higher education and the K-12 system, as developed and realized by teacher preparation programs (Athanases & de Oliveira, 2010).

Thus, based on the timely recognition of the importance of writing and its role in contemporary society, this study explores the nature of integrated reading-writing
instruction in 4th grade ELA classrooms, an approach promoting and supporting writing instruction for all students. The reasons EBs need special attention and possibly new approaches for writing instruction are outlined in the following section.

**Opportunity Gap for EBs and Rigor of CCSS**

*Opportunity gap.* Building from the abovementioned factors constituting the importance of writing skills for the “knowledge economy,” special attention needs to be paid to the instructional needs of EBs, who may be at a disadvantage in preparing for the contemporary workforce (Graham, 2013). This group of students needs extra attention and instruction specially designed literacy instruction (Bunch, 2013; de Oliveira, Klassen & Gilmetdinova, 2014; Galguera, 2011). Even though often referred to as an “achievement gap,” this disparity, in fact, constitutes an “opportunity gap,” which is defined by Carter and Welner (2013) as the “deficiencies in the foundational components of societies, schools, and communities that produce significant differences in education—and intimately socioeconomic—opportunities” (p. 3). Children in poverty and disadvantaged communities cannot typically exhibit their full potential because they do not have equitable and meaningful opportunities (Carter & Welner, 2013).

The opportunity gap causes disparities in children’s performance as only a small percentage of U.S. students showed a solid academic performance in writing in 2011. Twenty-seven percent of 8th grade and 12th grade students performed at or above the “proficient” level, and 54 percent of 8th graders and 52 percent of 12th graders performed at the “basic” level in writing. Twenty percent of 8th graders and 21 percent of 12th graders performed below basic level (NCES, 2012). Even though reading integrated with writing is foundational to write academic papers, together they are relatively unexplored
in the field as a critical context for academic success (Ferris, 2005; Hirvela, 2004; Horning & Kraemer, 2013). However, the most recent standards expect and require students to write from sources (i.e., after reading), measuring their performance using high stakes assessments.

Looking at EBs’ reading performance for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2014), the non-EBs reading score has been persistently higher than EBs’ since 1998, when NAEP started assessing EBs’ achievement. In 2013, the opportunity gap between non-EBs and EBs was 38 points at the 4th grade level and 45 points at the 8th grade level (NCES, 2014; NCES 2015).

All above-mentioned factors should be taken into consideration in the context of the Common Core State Standards (NGA & CCSSO, 2010a), an educational initiative, currently adopted in 42 U.S. states for the K-12 system of education. The next section describes the standards for reading and writing that are expected of 4th grade students, according to the CCSS (NGA & CCSSO, 2010a).

**CCSS expectations for the 4th grade.** All students are expected to engage with a variety of sources; use evidence to inform, argue and analyze; differentiate between different types of text as designed for different purposes and audiences; be able to comprehend different perspectives and present multiple points of view (NGA & CCSSO, 2010a). Moreover, students are expected to extensively read and write across content areas: do interpretations, develop appropriate arguments, and gather relevant evidences (Applebee, 2013). The CCSS pay special attention to extensive writing across curriculums, which apply different genres (Graham, 2013). As opposed to little emphasis
placed on writing in No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001), the CCSS (NGA & CCSSO, 2010a) places equal emphasis on reading and writing across the grade levels.

According to the CCSS (NGA & CCSSO, 2010a), there is a certain set of skills for readers and writers in each grade. For example, 4th grade writing standards one, eight, and nine differentiate the purpose when reading the information text to persuade, as opposed to encounter expressive language when reading the literature (Calkins, Ehrenworth, & Lehnman, 2010). In a similar way, 4th grade reading standards seven, eight, and nine continue genre emphasis started in the writing standards and the link of learning about reading from writing. Thus, the suggested link in instruction between reading and writing is a strong side of CCSS that “elevates writing to a central place, not only giving it the same number of individual standards as reading but also making writing the central way in which content knowledge is developed and shared” (Applebee, 2013, p. 27).

The CCSS (NGA & CCSSO, 2010a) embedded language learning with content-learning goals for all grade levels. These goals encompass a new challenge for EBs, who are expected to learn the English language in addition to high-level academic content. In this regard, students and teachers need to have a great deal of support within the curriculum, instruction, and assessment (Goldenberg, 2015), while education policies need to be developed that view students’ home language as a resource (de Jong & Gort, 2015). According to Olson et al. (2015), apart from speaking, understanding, and using the grammatical forms correctly, students are expected to be able to justify, persuade, explain, and convey ideas to different audiences, and synthesize information from different sources. This fact constitutes both an advantage and a disadvantage for EBs. As
per CCSS-aligned (NGA & CCSSO, 2010a) instruction, EBs are expected to meet the same ELA standards as monolingual English-speaking students. This means that they will likely be faced with the texts that are typically beyond their reading level (at least two grade levels above), which they will need to read, comprehend, discuss, and use later to construct their own written texts. EBs can be successful, however with consistent and proficient instruction from teachers, who, in general, do not get sufficient professional development concerning the reading to write approach or integrated reading-writing instruction (Bunch, Kibler, & Pimentel, 2012; Correnti, Matsumura, Hamilton, & Wang, 2012, 2013; Troia & Graham, 2016). Given the emphasis on text-based analytical writing in CCSS (NGA & CCSSO, 2010a), it is crucially important to connect reading and writing (Olson, Scarcella, & Matuchniak, 2015).

In sum, the currently adopted CCSS (NGA & CCSSO, 2010a) require reading-to-write skills from all students, including EBs. The link between reading and writing, which goes through many 4th grade standards, as well as the requirements for students’ performance, provides another aspect to the significance of this study. In this regard, following the call of the CCSS (NGA & CCSSO, 2010a), this study explores the nature of integrated reading-writing instruction with the focus on EBs in the English Language Arts classroom.

**Integrated Reading-Writing Instruction**

In the context of the opportunity gap for EBs and the importance of integrating reading and writing required by the CCSS (NGA & CCSSO, 2010a), new approaches and strategies are needed to help EBs in achieving stronger English language reading/writing
skills that will decrease the existing opportunity gap. An example of such an approach is integrated reading-writing instruction.

As foundational skills, reading and writing can facilitate achievement across all subject areas (Shanahan, 1988). In the 1980s, a number of studies launched a new perspective on literacy instruction and development, according to which, reading and writing develop, not separately, but in conjunction with each other (Shanahan, 1984; 1988; Shanahan & Lomax, 1988).

Reading and writing share some features, which make them very similar, and as a consequence, provide a rationale for teaching them together. These features are: the common underlying cognitive processes, the common structural elements, and mechanisms allowing a transfer of reading and writing skills to happen (Eisterhold, 1990). Writing teachers who are attuned to the role of reading being played in the development of second language (L2) writing are guiding students to become better and more proficient writers (Eisterhold, 1990). Writing should not be taught in isolation from reading because of the cognitive activity, which is contingent upon the writer’s interaction with the text, peers, and writing-reading community (Carrell, Devine, & Eskey, 1988; Johns, 1997, 2003).

As existing research indicates, the connection of reading and writing positively affects students’ outcomes because of the common underlying cognitive processes engaged in the meaning construction process. Using writing-to-read leads to better reading performance (Ball, 2003; Graham & Hebert, 2010; Jenkins, Johnson, & Hileman, 2004; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008; Tierney & Shanahan, 1991), whereas using reading-to-write boosts writing outcomes (Tierney et al., 1989; Tierney & Shanahan, 1991). This
approach treats text for reading, not just to learn about the content, but also for reading-to-write (Kroll, 2003; Hirvela, 2013). By being exposed to different types of texts, students can learn about their organizational structure (Hirvela, 2013), and the decision-making process that writers have to go through in order to construct cohesive writing.

Thus, the above stated propositions that reading and writing have the common underlying cognitive processes, and that approaches of reading to write and writing to read lead to improved students’ outcomes, provide the third aspect of this study’s significance. Accordingly, all these aspects—importance of writing in the 21st century knowledge economy, opportunity gap between monolingual English-speaking students and EBs, necessity to integrate reading and writing as per CCSS (NGA & CCSSO, 2010a), and the research indicated benefits for students’ performance when connecting reading and writing—constitute the significance of this study as timely and needed in the field of writing instruction for EBs.

This study, which examines IRWI in 4th grade ELA classrooms, will make a contribution to the literature in several ways. First, while there is an extensive body of literature on integrated writing assessments and the relationship between test taker’s proficiency level (Gebril & Plakans, 2013; Knoch & Sitajalabhorn, 2013; Wolfersberger, 2013), and on integrated writing assessment for college level students (Gebril & Palakans, 2013; Sawaki, Quinlan, & Lee, 2013), there is scarce research exploring contemporary integrated reading-writing instruction or the ways in which teachers understand, approach, and implement it. Thus, there is a need for studies that explore the construct of IRWI for elementary school EBs, as EBs’ writing development during elementary school is relatively unexplored (August & Shanahan, 2006; Fitzgerald &
Amendment, 2007; Graham, McKeown, Kiuhara, & Harris, 2012). Second, in light of genre emphasis and the connection of reading and writing by the CCSS (NGA & CCSSO, 2010a), this research is critical, on time, and needed for teachers, students, school administrators, and policy makers.

**Dissertation Study**

As stated previously, the purpose of this dissertation study is to investigate integrated reading-writing instruction in 4th grade ELA classrooms from three foci. The first focus is a holistic investigation of IRWI—whether it is present in elementary ELA classrooms and if so, to describe its nature. The second focus is an exploration of teachers’ perspectives on the importance of IRWI and factors affecting or constraining the teachers’ usage of IRWI. Ultimately, I present a general picture of IRWI by adding the third focus—elements of critical knowledge (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000).

To explore all foci and perspectives outlined above, I conducted a qualitative study of five 4th grade elementary ELA classrooms. I analyzed how each of the five teachers approached integrated reading-writing instruction, implemented it during whole-group instruction, and differentiated for EBs, if applicable. By using the three foci to explore IRWI, I provide a detailed picture of writing instruction, informed and supported by the literature on writing instruction.

The in-depth analysis of the observed teachers’ practices and their perspective on IRWI sheds light on what can be done to promote teachers’ implementation of this instruction and its importance for all students, in particular EBs. First, I will describe the theoretical framework that guided this study, which will be followed by a literature review and a section on how this study builds on existing research. Next, I will introduce
the design of the dissertation study, including participant recruitment, data collection, and data analysis. Chapters 4-6 will report findings of this study, while the last chapter will synthesize and discuss the findings.
Chapter Two
Theoretical Framework

This study draws upon three prominent and interrelated theories of learning: sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), genre literacy (Christie 1999, 2002; Christie & Martin 1997; Unsworth, 2000), and the theory of shared knowledge in reading and writing (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000). Below is a description of sociocultural theory, the overarching theory for this study, followed by two other theories that are positioned under the umbrella of sociocultural theory, and how these three theories integrate and are applied to writing instruction for this study.

Definitions of Common Concepts

Before describing each theory, it needs to be stated that the concepts of metaknowledge and metalanguage cut across all three theories, and thus, need to be defined here. Sociocultural theory defines metaknowledge as “readers’ and writers’ sentiments” (Fitzgerald, 1992, p. 24), and “seeing how the Discourses1 you have already got relate to those that you are attempting to acquire, and how the ones you are trying to acquire relate to self and society” (Gee, 1989, p. 13). To rephrase, metaknowledge is the knowledge that unites a reader and a writer and serves as a necessary basis for successful text production and processing. The theory of shared knowledge of reading and writing builds around metaknowledge, which is defined as “knowing about the functions and purposes of reading and writing; knowing that readers and writers interact; monitoring

---

1 Gee (1989) introduced the terms “Discourse” with a capital “D” and “discourse” with a little “d.” Big ‘D’ Discourses are “ways of being in the world; they are forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs and attitudes.” Little ‘d’ discourses are “connected stretches of language that makes sense, so ‘discourse’ is part of ‘Discourse’” (Gee, 1989).
one’s own meaning-making (metacomprehension) and monitoring word identification or production strategies; and monitoring one’s own knowledge” (Shanahan & Fitzgerald, 2000, p. 40).

Along with metaknowledge, metalanguage is another key concept in the three theories guiding this study. The sociocultural theory defines metalanguage as “a term in linguistics for language used to talk about language…often in the register of linguistics in English, in particular that of descriptive grammar” (McArthur, 1992, p. 652). Genre literacy defines metalanguage as “a language with which to make generalizations about language” (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993); a pedagogical tool for learning about language (Halliday, 2004); and “common technical vocabulary, based on shared approach to analyzing language, through which we could specify realization statements in detail” (Eggins, 2004, p. 69).

As can be seen from the definitions above, all three theories guiding this study have the concepts of metalanguage and/or metaknowledge as key tenets. Both concepts are based on higher level/critical thinking, which involve analysis of task—reading and writing—its language, purposes, and functions. Below are the overviews of the three theories guiding this study.

**Sociocultural Theory**

Sociocultural theory is based on the assumption that learning occurs in a social context supported by more competent others, who guide and direct the learning vector of students (Vygotsky, 1978). Sociocultural theory explores how culturally and historically positioned meanings are constructed, reconstructed, and transformed through social mediation (Moll & Greenberg, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978). Social mediation (speech, written
language, mnemonics, drawings) lies at the foundation for understanding psychological development. Sociocultural theory views meaning construction processes as occurring at the intersection of individuals, culture, and activity (Englert, Mariage, & Dunsmore, 2006). Children’s literacy development reflects cultural ideologies and social conventions of the context where children belong (Moll, Saez, & Dworin, 2001). In this regard, children need support and scaffolding to navigate the socially constructed reality, which can be realized through the concept of zone of proximal development or ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978). ZPD is “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Within sociocultural theory, language is viewed as a mediator of cultural understanding and cognitive tools guiding our behavior (Bakhtin, 1986; Gee, 1996). Consequently, literacy events are composed of the text to be read or written, social language, and the cultural world unfolded around this text (Gee, 2012). In this regard, literacy and language have meanings only within the context of sociocultural world.

Sociocultural perspectives often guide the exploration of writing (Bakhtin, 1981; Bourdieu, 1977; Gee, 1996; 1998; Halliday, 1978; Johns, 1997; Kress, 1993; Rogoff, 1990; Swales, 1990) and see writing as “chains of short-and long-term production, representation, reception, and distribution” (Prior, 2006, p. 57). As such, writing has several important factors, pre-determined by a sociocultural stance: identity and social relations, realized through active agency of children, who participate in reconstruction of cultural artifacts they meet (Dyson, 1997); funds of knowledge in students’ families and
communities that stimulate literate and learning processes (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005); classroom discourse, small-group discussions, and texts, talk, reading, and action that constitute literate practices; and classroom interaction (Prior, 2006).

Sociocultural theory will be used as an overarching theory guiding this study because it emphasizes integrated approaches to literacy instruction: “literacy…is more than reading, writing, speaking, and listening; literacy involves the practices in which these processes are embedded […] as tools for engaging in and making sense of social practices (Moje, 1996, p. 175).”

In the dissertation study, integrating a sociocultural stance involves understanding the nature of integrated reading-writing instruction for EBs in 4th grade ELA classrooms. As per the literature guided by the sociocultural framework (Englert, Mariage, & Dunsmore, 2006), students’ participation and thinking about the processes of writing stimulates their metacognition and construction of meaning (Flower, 2002). Students engaged in discussions about text structure and organization, view writing products as objects that can be constantly improved (Roth, 1998; Wells, 1999). Participation in literacy communities allows students to internalize a point of view of the audience, and, thus, improve in text revisions (Wells, 1999). Collaborating readers and writers create a supporting ZPD for each other through feedback and discussions (Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002). Finally, extended and transformed knowledge of writers can positively affect and transform the practices of the sociocultural communities (Russell, 1997). Guided by the sociocultural theory, this study investigates the contexts teachers construct in their classrooms to support EBs’ writing instruction that draws from multiple texts or sources, and engages them with new participation structures and roles.
Genre Literacy

Genre literacy is the second theoretical framework that guided this study, and is based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) developed by Halliday (1978). This theoretical lens is widely used in language education by many researchers (Christie 1999; 2002; Christie & Martin 1997; de Oliveira & Iddings, 2014; Unsworth, 2000). According to SFL, language is used to make three types of meanings—ideational (mode), interpersonal (tenor), and textual (field), which are organized in a semiotic system. When writing, students’ appropriate or inappropriate linguistic choices, in relation to their contexts of use, are made by a semiotic interpretation of the system of language (Eggin, 2004).

Expanding on Halliday’s initial (1978) conceptualization, some linguists (Christie & Martin, 1997; Cope & Kalantzis, 1993; Martin, 1992; 1997) have significantly expanded this approach and pedagogy, which benefits “historically disadvantaged with access to the cultural capital of socially valued genres through an explicit grammar of linguistic choices” (Hylland, 2002, p. 115). Genre is “configuration of meaning that are recurrently phased together to enact social practices” (Martin, 2002, p. 269). Genre also “refers to the staged purposeful social processes through which a culture is realized in a language” (Martin & Rothery, 1986, p. 243). According to SFL theorists, metalanguage (language about the language) can be enacted through the social purpose of genres, which represent varieties of social power. Genre awareness and ability to reproduce genre texts depends on many factors, such as: understanding of genre form and mechanics, understanding of the discourse influencing text development: psychological, sociocultural, political, and ideological (Christie & Martin, 1997). This genre awareness
allows students to see the social nature of academic literacy (Bazerman, 1994). Thus, genres give the community of its readers and writers access to social action, interaction, social influence, and power (Kress, 1989b).

Second language development happens during engagement in the authentic process of meaning making that fosters students’ awareness of form-meaning relationship (de Oliveira & Schleppegrell, 2015; Schleppegrell, 2009, 2013). To produce texts, L1 and L2 writers need to understand the following: a common purpose among the community of readers, value system of the discipline, main content of the discipline’s knowledge, characteristics of the genre texts, audience expectations regarding a particular genre’s structure, register, syntactic, stylistic, lexical, mechanical and other conventions, and text production strategies (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005). It is especially relevant to provide equitable access to explicit instruction of genre literacy for historically marginalized populations and groups because it empowers the discourse of the margins and influences the discourse of the mainstream (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993).

All texts are influenced by previous experiences, culture, and ideological positions (Eggins, 1994). Readers and writers draw from their previous genre experiences to develop a text within a certain context (Johns, 1997). The repeated genre contexts, roles of readers and writers, text forms, and content constitute the phenomenon of intertextuality. Thus, “genre cannot be fruitfully characterized as a facet of the immanent properties of particular texts… genre is quintessentially intertextual” (Briggs & Baumann, 1992, p. 147). Following this line of reasoning, every text relies upon readers and writers’ previous experiences, wide socio-cultural discourses, the accumulated knowledge of content, readers and writers’ roles, and purposes of reading and writing a
particular text (Johns, 1997). In this regard, a writer uses many resources provided by the socio-historical context (languages, genres, motives, technologies), which extends beyond the writing process itself, and moves across modes (Prior, 2006). Genre features, such as “a class of communicative events,” “communicative features,” and “community’s nomenclature” (Swales, 1990. p. 45) explain how genre literacies are placed under the sociocultural framework.

In the dissertation study, I draw from a genre literacy framework to see if teachers capitalize on the social purposes of genre, and if so, to what extent. Particular attention is given to see what aspects of genre awareness are enacted during the IRWI (Schleppegrell, 2013) and how they are implemented in the five classrooms. From the perspective of SFL-informed text characteristics, the opinion-based essay, as a sub-component of expository or argumentative genre, includes the following elements: a title, a thesis statement or claim, a preview of the reasons, series of reasons supported by evidence, and a reinforcement of the position. In order to successfully write an argument, students need to be able to: take a position and give reasons, support reasons with evidence, know the difference between fact and opinion, and consider how audience informs writing in terms of providing background information, and carefully choosing reasons and evidence (Brisk, 2015).

**Shared Knowledge in Reading and Writing**

The third theoretical perspective guiding this study is the framework of shared knowledge and cognitive processes underlying reading and writing (Eisterhold, 1990; Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000; Hirvela, 2013). Understanding the correlation between the four language systems (reading, writing, speaking, listening) can indicate how writing
progress can be explained by reading, in order to develop the best teaching practices (Shanahan, 2006). According to Shanahan (2006), reading and writing are dependent upon common, or reciprocal cognitive processes, base of knowledge, procedural knowledge, and linguistic features of reading and writing such as phonemic, morphological, orthographic, lexical, semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic. The empirical evidence suggests that reading improves writing, whereas writing instruction positively affects reading (Tierney & Shanahan, 1996). Thus, this theory has a common underlying stance with the first two theories guiding this study—sociocultural theory and genre literacies—the importance of common knowledge for readers and writers.

Based on the proposition that reading and writing share knowledge representations, cognitive processes, context, and contextual constraints (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000; Tierney & Pearson, 1983), Fitzgerald and Shanahan suggest that reading and writing are based on four types of knowledge, called *critical knowledge* that can vary depending on a child’s age or grade level. The features of critical knowledge include: metaknowledge (functions and purposes of reading and writing, knowing that readers and writers interact, metacomprehension, expectations for success among others), knowledge about substance and content, knowledge about universal text attributes, and procedural knowledge and skills to negotiate reading and writing. During the first three stages of this model only some types of shared knowledge are emphasized and represented in learning happening at those stages, whereas at the fourth developmental stage, which corresponds to the ages 9-13 or grades 4-8, all four types of critical knowledge get crucial importance. These include: metaknowledge or metacomprehension, knowledge about content, knowledge about text’s syntactical and organizational structures, and procedural
knowledge (creating and using word meaning and connected texts). These stages can guide teachers in determining stages of literacy development for monolingual English-speakers and EBs in classrooms. The instructional choices should be guided and differentiated by the literacy stages represented in the classroom.

The theory of shared knowledge in reading and writing is positioned under the umbrella of an overarching sociocultural framework in this study because the former builds on the proposition that literacy acquisition is happening within a larger social context, which outlines several principles of IRWI. Hirvela (2004) developed the following principles of connecting reading and writing: providing crucial linguistic input for writing (when the process of writing starts and is informed by reading); teaching writing skills accompanied with teaching of reading; engaging students in reading and writing assignments, with several sources providing a richer context for connecting reading and writing; performing reading and writing across content areas and in different settings; discussing students’ needs for their practice in the area of IRWI; positioning reading and writing as recursive in nature, and in this regard, students need to have ample opportunities for navigating between these two literacy activities.

In the dissertation study, I use the framework of Fitzgerald and Shanahan (2000) to gain an understanding of what features of critical knowledge are capitalized on in the observed classrooms, and if any of them are particularly emphasized during the teachers’ interviews and playback sessions. Through the in-depth analysis of observations, interviews, and play back sessions, I learn how teachers employ and arrange IRWI as an asset built upon the shared knowledge and processes of reading and writing. I analyze how teachers utilize the richness underlying reading and writing in order to achieve their
instructional purposes. As such, this framework guides me in capturing any instances of teachers’ usage or reference to metaknowledge, knowledge about substance and content, knowledge about universal text attributes, as well as procedural knowledge to negotiate reading and writing.

**Three Theories in Relation to Writing**

Even though the specifics slightly differ, all three theories guiding this dissertation study have a common tenet: shared knowledge in reading and writing. The overarching sociocultural theory views writing as a negotiation of meaning between writer and reader where knowledge of writing is created through the mental and constructive aspects of composing, but also via the interaction of minds (Nystrand, 1989). Inconsistencies in knowledge between reader and writer are accommodated through their *metaknowledge*, as “readers’ and writers’ sentiments” (Fitzgerald, 1992, p. 24). Readers and writers share the knowledge of text name, purpose, roles, context, form, content, register, values, and intertextuality that results in successful texts’ production and processing (Johns, 1997). The mutual understanding is possible when readers and writers have this common knowledge. The challenges in texts’ reading and writing emerge when students and teacher do not have shared knowledge of texts (Johns, 1997).

In line with sociocultural theory, genre literacies emphasize the importance of common knowledge for writers, which include, but not limited to: common purpose of writing with the community of readers, main content of the discourse knowledge, characteristics of genre texts, audience expectations, and previous genre experiences (Christie 1999, 2002; Christie & Martin 1997; de Oliveira & Iddings, 2014; Halliday, 1978; Unsworth, 2000). Similar to the previous two theories, the third—shared
knowledge in reading and writing (Shanahan & Fitzgerald, 2000)—suggests that reading and writing are based on four types of common critical knowledge: metaknowledge, knowledge about substance and content, knowledge about text attributes, and procedural knowledge to negotiate reading and writing. Based on the proposition that all three theories share this common tenet—shared knowledge, below I describe how I will build on these three theories to construct an integrated framework that guides this study.

**Integration of Theoretical Frameworks**

I integrate the three different theoretical lenses—sociocultural theory, genre literacies, and shared knowledge in reading and writing—in this dissertation study. The integration of the three theories facilitates a holistic representation of IRWI for EBs in 4th grade ELA classrooms. The design of this study allows me to look at teachers’ practices through recorded classroom instruction. Teachers’ interviews and playback sessions are used as additional data to get a comprehensive picture of how the teachers approach and implement IRWI.

Sociocultural theory allows me to investigate what practices of IRWI teachers incorporate in their instruction to promote writing as socially constructed process. This stance sheds a light on whether teachers instruct writing as such, and if so, what roles and participation structures students are assigned in this social process. Continuing investigation of the social nature of writing, the genre literacies add to the overarching theory by exploring if teachers promote and directly instruct genre awareness, intertextuality and role of mentor texts, as well as the social purpose of genre as a tool for social influence and power. Lastly, the theory of shared knowledge in reading and writing also contributes to the integrated framework by investigating whether the observed
teachers capitalize and design IRWI based on the common nature of reading and writing, which includes shared knowledge and processes.

**Literature Review**

In the following, I will synthesize the relevant literature in the area of integrated reading-writing instruction, and the process of literature search for this study. The studies will be reported in the themes, unifying them. Each of the themes will be concluded with the summary and the description how this study builds off from what is known in the literature and extends to the knowledge on IRWI.

**Method of Review**

The review is organized around elementary and middle school studies on IRWI for two groups—first all learners, and then EBs. This decision is explained by the overarching necessity to integrate reading and writing instruction for all learners (NGA & CCSSO, 2010a), and with a special emphasis on EBs’ opportunity gap, as reported in the literature (NAEP, 2014). This review focused on the research examining literacy practices linking reading and writing instruction in classrooms of elementary and secondary EBs. Initially the focus was solely on the elementary school, but as the review progressed, it became obvious that there were not many relevant studies. In this regard, the age band was increased to include secondary school EBs as well. This review was guided by the following question: *What are the key findings and themes across empirical research investigating integrated reading-writing instruction for elementary and secondary school EBs?*

**Study inclusion criteria.** Empirical studies published in peer-reviewed journals within the time span of 1990-2016 were included, though a few studies that developed
models of connected reading-writing instruction date back to 1980s, were also included.
The Grounded Theory Approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) was used to identify the
relevant themes. Thus, the codes emerged from the data rather than from a previously
developed schema. The strategies and approaches used for IRWI were considered to be
relevant and included for themes if all of the three conditions were met: 1) included
reading and writing as integrated during instruction; 2) the instruction intended to
promote EBs’ achievement; 3) if the themes were consistent across each and all included
studies.

**Literature search process.** The studies were located through several search
strategies. Firstly, the following databases were used to find the studies: ERIC
(EBSCOhost), ERIC (CSA), ERIC (public web portal), Academic Search Premier,
Education Full Text, and PsycINFO. The keywords used for the search are listed next,
with the number in parenthesis indicating how many sources were found for each search
combination: EBs, reading, writing (161); EBs, reading, writing, connection (7); EBs,
literacy (466); EBs, read*, write*, connection (0); EBs, reading, writing, effect (0); EBs,
comprehension, production (11); EBs, comprehension, production, connection (0); EBs,
reading, writing, intervention (28); Mentor texts, writing (12); Texts, integrated writing
(22); Integrated reading, writing (67); Interactive writing instruction (15); Writing from
sources (259); EBs, genre, writing instruction (9); EBS, genre-based, writing instruction
(2); and EBs, genre pedagogy (2).

Secondly, the following peer-reviewed literacy journals were reviewed manually:
*Journal of Literacy Research, Reading Research Quarterly, Reading & Writing
Quarterly, Research in the Teaching of English, Early Childhood Research Quarterly,*
Language Arts, Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, Bilingual Research Journal, Journal of Language and Literacy Education, Journal of Early Childhood Literacy, American Educational Research Journal, Theory into Practice, and TESOL Quarterly; Exceptional children; Learning and Differences; Dyslexia; Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs; British Journal of Special Education. The reviewed databases and journals had some studies on the topic of investigation, which were not included into the review because their focus was either on high school or college-level students. A study was included into review if it was related to IRWI to any degree.

It should be stated upfront that only a couple of the recent studies directly investigate IRWI (Kibler et al., 2015, 2016), whereas the rest of the studies do not explicitly focus on integrated reading-writing instruction, but have it as an element of research activities designed and incorporated in a study. Thus, I had to make a decision regarding each of the reviewed study – whether its research activities include an element of IRWI, namely incorporate teachers’ instructional strategies or students’ learning activities that help EBs to write after reading texts, or engage in text-based writing. Additionally, a study was included only if it was on the focal age: elementary or secondary students, and if it was in relation to English Language Arts context, preferably for EBs.

Lastly, the reference lists of collected studies were reviewed as an additional search. In total, 36 studies referenced were eligible according to the inclusion criteria. After the studies were identified, an excel spread sheet was created where available information was recorded for the following categories: research question(s), ages of participating students, grade level(s), EBs characteristic, EBs program model, languages
spoken, language proficiency, additional context of the study design, framework used, method of analysis, intervention of practice used, significance, findings, recommendations for instruction, limitations, and suggestions for future research. After the Excel sheet was completed, the studies were cross-referenced with the goal of finding similar themes emerging across the data. The themes were integrated after a systematic review of the completed Excel sheet synthesizing all studies, and cross-referencing the guiding ideas across. The theme generation was an iterative process and evolved as more studies were reviewed. The decision regarding each study’s belonging to a certain theme was made based on major research activities undertaken in every study.

Appendix A includes a table with the relevant information from one study divided into categories to show the format of how all the identified studies were segmented with the aim to synthesize common themes across. The categories of intervention, significance, and findings varied depending on the study’s design and implementation. The themes were integrated after a systematic review of the completed excel sheet synthesizing all studies, and cross-referencing the guiding ideas across. Some of the studies could fall under more than one theme category. In this case, I was closely following the definitions of themes, provided in Appendix B (the definitions will also be provided as each theme is introduced in the literature review), and extracting the importance attributed to a theme as per the study’s descriptions. Every study was grouped under a theme of the category that was considered to play the most important role in the study’s design. Nevertheless, it is important to note that as research studies are normally multi-faceted, it can lead to loosing some relevant contrasts and details. In this regard, the themes classification reported in this review is not a solely possible themes gradation.
Finally, each theme reviewed below is organized around studies on two groups of learners—all learners and EBs.

**Themes of Integrated Reading-Writing Instruction**

**Explicit instruction.** The first theme unifying several studies is explicit instruction. The theme of explicit/direct instruction of genre and discourse learning on language forms was defined in this review as instruction that includes naming, describing, and explaining genre functions and features, accompanied by modeling and thinking aloud (Purcell-Gates, Duke, & Martineau, 2007). In each of the following theme reviews, I first describe studies for all learners, and then studies for EBs that fall under each category.

Purcell-Gates, Duke and Martineau (2007) examined how explicit teaching of genre specific features of informational and procedural text in science influenced children's ability to read and write these texts. They also compared if the degree of authenticity of literacy activities or explicit teaching of language features related to the growth in children's ability to read and write. The researchers looked at 2nd and 3rd graders (n=420) in 16 classes. The intervention had two types of instruction: authentic-only (real-life texts, such as a brochure providing content/topic information) and authentic plus explicit teaching of genre features (writing an authentic text for a real audience when a teacher underlines features and function of the genre). After informational and procedural readings, children were assessed on informational and procedural writing. The model of growth was using multiple student variables as predictors of achievement across time. Therefore, the researchers concluded that the more authentic classroom literacy activities on reading and writing of science informational
and procedural texts are, students’ ability to comprehend and compose those texts grows (Purcell-Gates et al., 2007).

Similarly, Corden (2007) examined how explicit discussions of mentor texts can improve the quality of children's narrative writing. This qualitative study looked at 18 teachers who worked in nine elementary schools. The literary sessions in the intervention study included: reading a mentor text aloud, discussion of specific structural and stylistic features, investigation of a mentor text and an independently written work at the end. The writing workshops indicated that children improved in the structure and style of their writing as a result of the explicit instruction of text structure, when they are able to: transfer stylistic features from literature to their writing; gain awareness of the text structure through teacher’s modeling and group discussions; benefit from the explicit teaching of literary devices; and express their aesthetic voices through explicit teaching and during independent writing.

While also talking about the modeling and explicit instruction similar to Corden (2007), Lenski (1998) described how social and cognitive strategic knowledge of six 8th grade students could improve their research report writing after reading a source text. The social dimension included finding a topic, which fits the assignment and interests of a student. The cognitive dimension included the energy that students spend on thinking about the research and writing process. According to Lenski (1998), reading and writing were integrated through the reading-to-write process. Lenski (1998) concluded that the social dimension, involving a selection of a topic and interpretation of the task, could be facilitated through explicit instruction. The facilitation was realized by connecting the assignment to the real life situations of students. The cognitive component of this process
consisted in an explicit instruction of how to divide a big task into a number of subtasks. Instruction on how to evaluate the source can take the form of modeling, examples, and think-alouds (evaluating sources texts, skimming texts for the necessary in planning writing, taking notes while reading).

Direct or explicit instruction in the study by Crowhurst (1991), as in the above reviewed studies, was also realized through guided readings of a target genre text, discussion of text features, and sharing students’ opinion on the topic. Crowhurst (1991) investigated whether the writing of persuasive discourse can be improved by instruction in 6th grade and what is the effect of reading on writing and of writing on reading within the genre of persuasion. The results of Crowhurst’s (1991) study indicated that the reading treatment group had a significant improvement in the quality and organization of writing persuasion, elaboration of reasons, and the use of conclusions. The writing treatment group increased the number of reasons supporting their arguments, but this result was not significant. Finally, the single-lesson-model group did not improve in the quality of writing persuasion from pre-to post-test. Crowhurst (1991) concluded that elaboration of reasons, writing conclusions, and organizational structure positively affects students’ ability to write argument. This study also contributed to the understanding of the IRWI because there was found a relation between reading and writing, when discussing persuasiveness of the reading and providing counter-reasons improved students’ writing.

Apart from reading aloud and discussion of text features utilized in the previous study, Ivey and Broaddus (2007) included a walking tour with a shared writing, students’ suggestions for planning and writing, and teachers’ modeling of writing as ways for
explicit instruction of writing. This was the only study found in the context of EBs’
instruction. In this formative experiment Ivey and Broaddus (2007) studied literacy
engagement among 4th grade students who at the time of the study were beginning to
read, write, and speak English (i.e., emergent speakers). Some students participating in
the study were literate in Spanish (L1) and some had acquired limited English (L2)
literacy skills in their native countries; thus, previous exposure to English literacy
instruction varied. Teachers explicitly taught how to write historical fiction by reading
aloud, followed by discussion of features common across books. Next, the EBs went on a
walking tour to historic sites of the town, followed by a shared writing. It was noticed
that students’ engagement increased when they were allowed to provide suggestions into
planning and writing. The other strategies incorporated into their writing process were:
drafting, teacher conferencing, use of sticky notes, peer group revisions, and teacher
modeling. Ivey and Broaddus (2007) developed an instructional framework in which
teachers modeled a product and the process of writing.

**Summary for the explicit instruction theme.** For the explicit instruction theme,
the degree of authenticity of reading and writing of informational and procedural texts
affected the growth of students’ abilities to comprehend and compose those texts
(Purcell-Gates et al., 2007). Children were able to: transfer stylistic features from
literature to their writing; become aware of the text structure through teacher’s modeling
and group discussions; benefit from the explicit teaching of literary devices; and express
their aesthetic voices through explicit teaching and an independent writing (Corden,
2007). Also, selection of a topic and interpretation of the task could be facilitated through
explicit instruction (Lenski, 1998). Moreover, explicit instruction could improve
elaboration of reasons, writing conclusions, and organizational structure (Crowhurst, 1991). The research also emphasized that teacher’s modeling by think-aloud was helpful for EBs because they could see that writing is a complicated process even for teachers. It was suggested that collaborative writing was an important preceding component of an independent writing, and that publication was also a vital component of a writing process (Ivey and Broaddus, 2007).

**Implications for research and this study.** As evident from the literature, there is a dramatic need to explore explicit instruction for EBs, as most of the studies reviewed in this section included monolingual English-speaking student participants. Building from what is known as beneficial for general students, this study attempts to see whether these practices are present in the observed classrooms with the EBs, and used as a way to integrate reading and writing, as well as whether teachers refer to these practices during the interviews and playback sessions.

**Social engagement.** The next theme was named as a social engagement, even though some studies refer to it as it an authentic task. Thus, I adopted the definition of Edelsky (1991), who suggested that it is an instruction, which includes meaning making, purpose, and ownership; also authentic reading and writing tasks resemble those that people encounter in every day life as opposed to the school-based activities (Gambrell, Hughes, Calvert, Malloy, & Igo 2011). The studies reviewed in this category could also fall under a theme of an authentic purpose of the activity, which was not represented in this review. The decision was made to name this theme as social engagement because it was conceptualized to be broader and deeper than an authentic purpose or authenticity of
an activity. Thus, an activity can be authentic in nature, but not aimed at enhancing students’ social skills, which was a primary objective of these studies.

The study by Gambrell et al. (2011) examined if pen pal intervention focused on authentic reading, writing, and discussion tasks influenced the literacy motivation of 3rd-4th graders. Using mixed-method design and a triangulation-convergence model, researchers looked at 180 students in four schools from three school districts in a southeastern state. The results showed that students who participated in the project indicated that having a pen pal allowed them to share ideas, to think critically about the books, and to become more motivated to read and write. Thus, reading books and writing in response to an authentic audience engaged students in a literacy task involving a cycle of reading, writing, and discussing texts. This reconsideration of literacy activities was possible through socially embedded connections (Gambrell et al., 2011).

Social engagement can take many forms, such as having a physical audience, an online audience, peer interaction, and participating in a school theater, among others. Three studies were identified in the context of EBs’ instruction under this theme. Li (2012) examined the importance of online social networks to EBs’ reading and writing development. This case study looked at one 5th grade student, whose parents were refugees from Thailand. At the beginning of the study the participant had a feeling of frustration and lack of confidence when interacting in English (L2). Reading manga books improved the speaking and writing skills of the student. Not only did the quantity of student’s writing improve, but also the quality of writing in different genres did. The results of the study suggested that communities of supporters and learners, media technologies, and popular culture could exhibit a crucial role in assisting EBs as
beginning readers and writers. Online social networks promoted social relationships, authentic interaction, and linguistic capital while engaging in literacy and language activities. The primary finding of the study indicated that increased linguistic input and communicative contact improved EBs literacy skills. This study was included into the review because its context and methodology made a participant to iteratively go from reading manga books to writing reflections and back. First versions of writing were copies of stories and poems, but later writing transformed into summaries where the student took the identity of one the manga book’s characters.

Similar to social networks and manga books, readers’ theater provided EBs with opportunities to interact with peers, write for an authentic audience, and promote social interactions. Tsou (2011) investigated if readers’ theater (RT) instruction could promote reading proficiency, writing proficiency, and learning motivation of young English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in the context of southern Taiwan. The participants were just beginning to learn English as 2nd graders, with English language proficiency ranging from beginning to low-intermediate. The study had two types of treatment: RT script reading and RT script writing. Results from Tsou’s study (2011) indicated that RT could significantly affect reading accuracy and fluency, but not reading comprehension. The same inconsistent results were found with the effect of RT on writing. RT positively affected word count and vocabulary, but not sentence structure. Open-ended interviews from the qualitative part of the results showed that students believed that RT contributed to their language learning, especially with regard to fluency, comprehension and accuracy, even though the quantitative results did not support these self-reports. RT cultivates language learning, writing proficiency, and learning interest among children.
Tsou (2011) recommended that RT could benefit EBs by providing opportunities to interact with peers, read and write for an audience, and enjoy the process of collective learning.

Continuing the line of reasoning in the previous studies, Black (2005) stated that social engagement through fan fiction serves as a platform enabling EBs to use cultural, social, and personal resources, permitting them to construct an identity of a reader and writer, which may be different from the identity that they are able to show in the classroom. Black (2005) investigated ways fanfiction.net provided adolescent EBs with literacy related activities supporting their composing and interaction in English. Fan fiction authors created linguistically hybrid texts by utilizing symbols, folklore, and themes relevant for anime and manga. This community of professionals established an environment allowing EBs to use English with native speakers outside of the classroom context. The results of Black’s (2005) ethnographic and discourse analysis suggested that fanfiction.net provided a sense of community and audience and underscored the importance of feedback from peers and expert others in the composition process. This online community delivered multiple resources, which EBs could rely on as they revised, edited, and published their texts. It also created a discourse where language, literacy, and texts played a crucial role in forming adolescents’ identity and social world.

**Summary of social engagement theme.** Thus, the studies unified under the theme of social engagement indicated that activities targeting students’ social engagement positively affected the dynamics of EBs literacy development and promoted their achievement in various ways. Having a pen pal allowed children to share ideas, to think critically about books, to become more motivated to read and write (Gambrell et al.,
Popular culture and technology helped students to break social isolation, to collaborate with English speakers and to support students in connecting with communities outside of schools and classrooms (Li, 2012). Readers’ Theater cultivated language learning, writing proficiency, and learning interest among children (Tsou, 2011). Fanfiction provided the sense of community and audience, underscored the importance of feedback from peers and expert others in the composition process, delivered multiple resources available in the community, and created a discourse where language, literacy and texts played a crucial role in forming adolescents’ identity and social world (Black, 2005).

Implications for research and this study. The studies reviewed under the theme of social engagement speak to the importance of linking literacy practices and instruction to the real world and interest of students. This aspect is especially relevant in the context of this study because its overarching framework is sociocultural theory. Even though being extremely engaging for the students’ social interaction and connection with the communities, the reviewed studies took place outside of the classroom scope. This aspect of literacy instruction will allow me to see the social nature of writing instruction in the classrooms of five teachers.

Reciprocity between reading and writing. The theme of reciprocity between reading and writing was defined as a type of instruction that draws students’ attention to certain literary strategies, which allow children to critically evaluate texts and later transfer this knowledge into their own writing (Corden, 2007). This theme incorporated one study for all learners and two studies for EBs. Corden (2000) looked at the ways in which children transfer knowledge from group discussion and critical evaluations of texts
to their own writing. The intervention in this qualitative study involving interactive discourse consisted of whole class readings and discussion of a narrative, followed by a small group work, collaborative feedback, and individual writing. The teacher-student conferences showed that development of metalinguistic awareness and a metalanguage enabled children to describe, categorize, analyze, synthesize, and conceptualize. Teacher modeling, demonstrating, and analyzing text features scaffolded the awareness of text construction for the students. Corden (2000) suggested that being exposed to the analysis of literary devices resulted in children transferring this new knowledge to their own writing. The results of the study showed that students developed an awareness of literary devices used in texts, a metalanguage to discuss and analyze students’ writing, and an ability to utilize the literary devices appropriately in writing.

Similar to Corden (2000), Edelsky (1982) showed that writing development is based on the reading input the child has had in the past, but the context of Edelsky’s study was for bilingual students. The researcher investigated the relations of L1 and L2 texts in a biliteracy program as well as relationship between writing in English and Spanish and changes in code-switching, spelling inventions, non-spelling conventions, structural, and content features across time. Even though the study by Edelsky (1982) is dated, she found several similarities between the L1 and L2 texts of bilingual students; therefore, it was decided to include her study with this theme. Edelsky (1982) interpreted a bilingual child’s writing as complex systems (graphic, grapho-phonetic, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic), which worked together in order to produce a text within a situational context, local and global conventions, and intentions. Regarding the similarities, it was not obvious how student participants segmented language into
conventional words, but they segmented on the syntactic and phonological/morphological basis. Students used invented spelling in English as much as they did in Spanish. But, even though children used Spanish orthography when writing in English, there were some exceptions, as with the letter k, which was retained for English language only. Children developed awareness that tildas and accents are used only in Spanish language. Edelsky (1982) stated that children’s oral code-switching differed from the written ones with oral happening more frequently and containing both types of switches—intra (occurs within a sentence or a clause) and intersentential (occurs outside the sentence or clause level), whereas written switches were less frequent and primarily intrasentential. The difference was also observed in handwriting – the 3rd graders in her study tended to reserve cursive for Spanish, and printed letters for English. Edelsky (1982) concluded that knowledge about some conventions of writing in the first language serves as a basis for writing development in the second language and does not represent an obstacle or point of confusion for children.

Buckwalter and Lo (2002) also looked at emergent biliteracy, but in contrast to Edelsky’s study (1982), their focus was on whether literacy development in one language was interfering or helping with literacy development in another language, rather than on the relations of L1 and L2 texts. This study was a single-subject design with a five year-old boy from Taiwan, Lin Ming (literacy sessions for 1.5-2 hours once a week for 15 weeks). Buckwalter and Lo (2002) differentiated two levels of emergent biliteracy—Foundational Level Awareness and Surface Level Emergent Literacy Awareness. The first type was the awareness that a merged understanding of basic concepts of literacy served as a basis for literacy development in two languages. The second type of
awareness, Surface Level Emergent Literacy Awareness, was when a child knew about specificities of each writing system. The study’s results indicated that first, literacy development in one language fostered development in another on the foundation level, and second, exposure of children to reading and writing at a young age promoted basic literacy awareness and served as a foundation for literacy development in other languages (Buckwalter & Lo, 2002).

The study by Lee and Schallert (2015) looked at a year-long classroom intervention, which was exploring reading-writing connection in second language literacy. Working with 300 eight-grade middle school students in an urban school of South Korea, Lee and Schallert assigned participants to three treatment conditions, which were instructed for one day per week for two semesters: extensive reading treatment (reading one book per week based on students’ interests and proficiency), extensive writing condition (writing essay in English every week), and a control group (extended form of a regular instruction). The results of the study indicated that extensive reading group significantly improved in writing performance; extensive writing group improved in the reading skills, which was equal to the gain of the other two treatment conditions groups. Lee and Schallert (2015) concluded that extensive reading improved writing skills, whereas extensive writing boosted reading abilities, thus, the article backed up the existing research that the two processes were interdependent and contributed to mutual development.

Summary of reciprocity between reading and writing theme. Reciprocity between reading and writing demonstrated an awareness of literary devices used in texts enabling children to transfer new knowledge to their own writing (Corden, 2000).
Specifically for EBs, it indicated that knowledge about some conventions of writing in the first language served as a basis for writing development in the second language and did not represent an obstacle or point of confusion for children (Edelsky, 1982). Exposure of bilingual children to reading and writing at a young age promoted basic literacy awareness (Buckwalter & Lo, 2002). Finally, extensive reading improved writing skills, whereas extensive writing boosted reading performance (Lee & Schallert, 2015).

**Implications for research and this study.** As it can be seen from the review of these few studies, there is a need of research on the reciprocity between reading and writing, or how EBs are taught to discuss, and critically evaluate texts with the purpose to include some of texts’ features into their writing. Applying the theory of shared knowledge in reading and writing, this study explores whether and how teachers capitalize on EBs’ bilingual abilities during IRWI in order to foster their literacy development. This aspect allows me to shed light on whether EBs’ language skills and knowledge are viewed and projected as a value by the teachers.

**Composing from sources.** The theme composing from sources (or reading effecting writing/reading to write) was defined as “tasks in which readers use textual sources to produce their own texts, which have a communicative intent of their own” (Spivey & King, 1989, p. 11). This theme included one study for all learners and three studies for EBs. Spivey and King (1989) investigated developmental differences across 6th, 8th, and 10th grade levels in order to find how students with different reading abilities use sources to write informational texts. The results indicated a significant main effect for grade and reading ability. Older students had more content from sources than the younger ones. Another significant effect was for intertextual importance (i.e., the location of a
certain idea within the hierarchy of a text and its repetition across this text) of content and interaction between grade, importance, and reading ability. Intertextual importance was the feature that older students and better readers exhibited more. The older students had texts that were richer in content, had a higher holistic quality, were better connected, better organized, and were higher elaborated than the texts produced by 6th graders. Thus, better readers produced texts with more local and global coherence. The first was reflected in better connections, and the latter in tighter text organization (Spivey & King, 1989).

Similar to what was found in the previous study when better readers incorporated more content, rhetorical knowledge, and audience’s needs based on reading the sources, Rowe and Fain (2013) suggested that reading a book served as an opportunity to discuss it and write a response. They developed the family backpack project in order to see if families’ interactions with their children around books encompass culturally based communications, values, and beliefs. The project reached 13 low-income pre-kindergarten schools serving students speaking Spanish, Arabic, Kurdish, and Somali at home. The families of students were invited to read a book in their first language or English and to respond to the reading via art or writing in the reader-response journal. While most of the families entered the responses in English, many used their first language or both languages to create the input. It is noteworthy that 52% of entries were produced by the parent-child dyad, 14% by the family member or adult only, and 35% by the child solely. The families of EBs had positive feedback as they felt that their home culture and language were valued. The families incorporated community, family experiences, and school knowledge as they constructed their responses. Children
connected reading and writing through stating the key events in the book, themes, and common elements with the child’s family experiences. Lastly, the project widened the children’s social networking; and the variety of journal inputs illuminated a child’s abilities (Rowe & Fain, 2013).

While Rowe and Fain (2013) invested on cultural and background knowledge of families that could be connected to readings to inform families’ writing in journal entries, Ranker (2007) used readings to inform students about different text features that could be utilized in their own writing. This case study looked at the teacher implementation of a reading/writing workshop with read-alouds and shared reading for first grade EBs. The teacher in the observed classroom used comic books during read aloud as a springboard to bring students’ attention to certain features of texts, such as: dialogue, narrative structures, and critical reading stances. Writing was happening several times throughout the lesson—at after the reading and after the group discussion. Students were encouraged to include a textual feature they had been exposed to in their own writing. The elements of critical reading lessons were transferred to the writing practice of students (e.g., creating superheroes of students after reading a text about a superhero). Ranker (2007) indicated that having comic books as a foundation to develop students’ literacy learning is especially important for EBs because they use comic books’ visuals as an additional mode of support when engaging with other literacy activities.

Ranker (2007) used comic books as a springboard for composing from sources, whereas Cahnmann (2006) utilized poetry for the same purpose. Cahnmann (2006) explored 3rd grade bilingual (Spanish/English) participating students’ experiences with language, culture, and power through the use of poetry. Cahnmann (2006) stated that
poetry shaped bilingual perspectives and connections, which were often omitted between English and Spanish. Allowing students to utilize their two languages in reading and writing poetry freed their form of self-expression and provided access to other resources, which would not be available in the monolingual context. According to Cahnmann (2006), reading poetry about bilingual experiences came alive for students when they started writing their own poetry. On the side of the teacher, writing poetry required reconsideration of many perspectives: multicultural, racial, linguistic, and cultural. Poetry became another platform for teachers, which they could, in turn, connect reading and writing for EBs to show them that their cultures and languages were as valued as the mainstream one. In the same way, poetry made reading and writing one of the domains of the multiliteracies (Cahnmann, 2006).

In line with the above reviewed studies on composing from sources, Wharton-McDonald (2001) suggested instructional characteristics of exemplary teachers, whose monolingual English-speaking students performed much better in writing at the end of the 1st grade than students of typical teachers. Students from exemplary teachers’ classrooms composed in many different genres, were able to revise their work, use conventional spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. The exemplary teachers were routinely incorporating reading and writing in their instruction across content areas. Wharton-McDonald (2001) provided a list of instructional characteristics that differentiated exemplary teachers from the typical ones in the study. First, exemplary teachers had high expectations of their students, such as: using conventional spelling of high frequency words and words that the class had been using before. Second, the instruction of exemplary teachers covered more than the sentence-level writing, but also
structure, content, and a message of students’ writing. Third, successful teachers had their students read books in multiple genres, such as narratives, information, adventures, and historical fiction, among others. Some other instructional characteristics of these teachers included: teaching story grammar; teaching strategies for choosing a topic, monitoring writing progress, and evaluation of completed work; incorporation of writing conferences; scaffolding with multiple resources (word walls, spelling dictionaries, charts, books), group brainstorming sessions, graphic organizers, checklists, and individualized feedback.

Kibler, Walqui, and Bunch (2015) outlined the major demands by the CCSS English Language Arts and proposed three reconceptualizations for ELA teachers illustrated on an example of an ELA instructional unit for a middle school. Kibler et al. (2015) developed a unit of five multiple day lessons for 50 minutes to be instructed for five-six weeks. Teachers were encouraged to draw on students’ first language to activate students’ background knowledge and engage them in meaningful discussions and communication. The five lessons on persuasive essay developed in a spiral manner: analyzing message, tone, and mode in persuasive texts, building background knowledge for reading, critical analysis of other persuasive texts, comparing and contrasting macro and micro level textual choices in speeches, and, finally, an independent analysis of a speech and writing of a persuasive essay. Kibler et al. (2015) suggested three reconceptualizations of learning opportunities for EBs. The first reconceptualization was that language acquisition was an apprenticeship process that took place in social contexts. Multiple formats of groupings helped students to build social engagement. The second reconceptualization was towards pedagogical activities that scaffolded students’
development and increasing autonomy. The study emphasized that the right kind of
differentiation for EBs was the one when it allowed all students in the class to accomplish
the same learning goal. The third reconceptualization was toward engagement with
complex amplified texts. According to Kibler et al. (2015), it is possible to focus on some
aspects of text complexity, while lightening the load on some other aspects.

Continuing to explore the CCSS English Language Arts demands, Kibler, Heny,
and Andrei (2016) investigated in-service ESL and ELA teachers’ perspectives on
adolescent EBs writing instruction. Drawing on ecological language learning theory, the
study implemented a focus group with ten teachers and follow-up interviews with six of
them. As a part of a focus group discussion, teachers were asked to read ten writing
samples from EBs in 10th grade of upper beginning and intermediate English proficiency
in order to comment on the essays’ strengths and weaknesses. Noteworthy, there was no
consensus regarding attention ESL and ELA teachers paid to different elements of EBs’
writing, what, according to Kibler et al. (2016), suggested a lack of common knowledge
on writing instruction for EBs. The findings of the study indicated that teachers identified
the following areas as tensions arising from professional and institutional contexts:
pedagogical expertise, high stakes testing, classroom grading, placement and tracking,
and disciplinary disconnects.

**Summary of composing from sources theme.** The composing from sources theme
showed that better readers produce texts with more local and global coherence, including
more content, the most important information, more connected discourse, rhetorical
knowledge, and an awareness of the needs of their audience (Spivey & King, 1989).
Composing from sources could take different forms and influence multiple domains of
EBs’ life (Rowe & Fain, 2013). Reading comic books increased student awareness of certain features and language structures, which they were able to reconstruct in their own writing (Ranker, 2007). Utilizing students’ two languages in reading and writing provided them the access to other resources that were not available in the monolingual context (Cahnmann, 2006). The general ability of monolingual English-speaking first graders in a large degree depended on teachers’ instructional characteristics, such as: high expectations of students, teaching structure, content, and a message of students’ writing, reading books in multiple genres, among others (Wharton-McDonald, 2001). Kibler et al. (2015) suggested the reconceptualizations of learning opportunities for EBs and a sample instructional unit with learning tools, which would help EBs to write from sources, or integrate texts they read in their writing. In continuation, Kibler et al. (2016) provided professional, pedagogical, and institutional tensions from the perspective of ESL and ELA teachers. These studies combined unique circumstances of social bilingual context, availability of literacy materials in two languages, and a community support that valued students’ home language and culture.

**Implications for research and this study.** The reviewed studies indicated that writing from sources allowed students to create better writing in terms of coherence, content, and audience’s needs. Building on the integrated framework of this study and taking into consideration the CCSS’s (NGA & CCSSO, 2010a) focus on students’ writing from sources, this study takes a closer look at what is emphasized by teachers in IRWI, and what aspects of writing from sources, according to teachers, create successful writing.
**Cognitive strategies.** A new theme is focusing on *cognitive* strategies emerged from the review of studies on IRWI for EBs. These strategies include planning and goal setting, tapping prior knowledge, asking questions and making predictions, constructing the gist, monitoring, revising meaning, drafting, reflecting and relating, and evaluating. It was suggested to conduct the strategies instruction through modeling, scaffolding, guided practice, and independent use of strategies, so that students are able to select the necessary strategy and monitor their progress with its usage (Olson et al., 2015). Short and Fitzsimmons (2007) suggested that strategy instruction also provided EBs with an explicit focus on language, increased their exposure to academic texts, and increased comprehensibility of texts. This instruction assisted EBs in learning language features with a context of their uses for academic purposes, and gave students an opportunity to acquire a language independently (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007).

The first cognitive strategy—rational cloze procedure (RCP)—was explored in the study by Lee (2008), who looked at it as stimulus for integrated reading, writing, vocabulary instruction, and teacher-student interaction in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. The results of Lee’s (2008) study indicated that the ESL group made significant improvements in receptive single words and lexical phrases. As for the production of vocabulary, the results showed that EBs also obtained a significant gain. It was concluded that RCP was beneficial for different learners, but to a higher degree. RCP was a constructive strategy for ESL according to a number of reasons: RCP passages served as model texts for writing; word lists at the end of passages were attracting students’ attention; and these passages functioned as an additional written input of the text they read (Lee, 2008).
Olson and Land (2007) also designed their study to find effective cognitive strategies for EBs’ reading and writing instruction. In particular, they investigated if declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge improves EBs’ reading and writing skills. It was done through Pathway project, the goal of which was to provide teachers with pedagogical tools to explicitly teach, model, and practice cognitive strategies used by successful readers and writers. In order to foster procedural and conditional knowledge, Pathway teachers used many cognitive strategies, some of which included: guided reading, discussion of the story’s key points and strategies employed, modeling of strategy use, incorporation of sentence openers in reflection on the reading, metacognition reflected in think-aloud, and writing reflection over the meaning-making process. While reading a story and introducing different thinking tools, Pathway teachers stopped at key places of the story to discuss a particular cognitive strategy that the effective readers would use when working with the text. For example, after reading the title of the text, effective readers could apply a strategy of tapping prior knowledge, which allows predicting what the text is going to be about. The purpose of this activity was an independent use of this strategy by students later or a gradual release of responsibility. Thus, Pathway teachers accelerated the learning process for students by linking reading and writing together. The connection was made through the modeling of meaning construction via think-aloud strategy, where teacher together with students interpreted complex texts and wrote metacognitive reflections about their meaning making. The results of this large-scale, longitudinal study demonstrated that EBs’ literacy learning is impacted significantly when their teachers participate in high-quality professional development, set high expectations for their students, teach students a
variety of cognitive strategies, link reading and writing using demanding texts, and create collaborative and supporting communities of learners (Olson & Land, 2007).

Building on Olson and Land’ study (2007), Olson, Land, Anselmi and AuBuchon (2010) also looked at data from the Pathway project. Similar to the initial study, they recommended that teachers needed to explicitly teach strategies employed by successful readers and writers. The researcher extend the list of strategies provided in the earlier study, and here they add the following ones: capitalizing on EBs’ previous knowledge, formulating questions, visualizing, providing interpretations, monitoring, revisiting shaped meaning, and reflecting (Olson et al., 2010).

Olson et al. (2012) looked at Latino EBs taught by Pathway teachers in order to see if these students’ performance on the California Standards Test would improve based on the cognitive strategy instruction received. The findings of this quantitative study indicated that basing instruction on cognitive strategies approach was beneficial for EBs, who were exposed to the thinking tools employed by good readers and writers during the meaning construction process. The results of the study tied EBs’ improvement in writing to the instruction of cognitive strategies, but the article emphasized that there might be other factors contributing to the improved performance. The important factor of why this study was included into the review was that its design allowed teachers to instruct cognitive strategies through interpretive reading and analytical writing, what fell under the definition of writing from sources or IRWI. Mentor texts were presented as good examples to follow in EBs’ independent reading and writing practice. Olson et al. (2012) suggested that teachers needed to provide students with interpretive reading and analytical writing through explicit strategy instruction and modeling of their use, as well
as providing the classroom environment where students would practice and apply these skills.

It is noteworthy that several of Olson et al. studies (2007; 2010; 2012) described above did not explicitly talk or referred to IRWI or reading for writing. Nevertheless, it was important to include them into this review as they highlighted crucial cognitive skills necessary for successful construction of a written text. When working with EBs, teachers need to make sure that they delineate and distinguish challenges experienced by students as attributed to a lack of cognitive strategies development versus linguistic issues. In this regard, cognitive strategies require explicit instruction in English to make sure they successfully transfer from L1 to L2.

In line with common knowledge-based strategies in reading and writing, Parodi (2007) conducted a study to investigate the text reading-writing relations from a discourse and cognitive perspectives to assess correlations between comprehension and production. 439 students from 10 eight grades from low middle class schools in Chile took four tests—two writing and two comprehension tests. The tests were administered in Spanish as a daily school activity with the interval of ten days between each test. The highest positive and significant correlations were reported for argumentative superstructure; thus, Parodi (2007) concluded that the strongest connections were for the schematic text structures. This study suggested that the sample of 439 eights graders used a common set of knowledge-based/cognitive strategies when working on reading and writing assignments. Though the study by Parodi (2007) was conducted on monolingual English-speaking students, but not EBs, it added to the long-established proposition of a connection between reading and writing and common underlying cognitive strategies.
Similar to other studies included into this category, the study by Guthrie et al. (2004) looked at how engagement influences reading comprehension. The study suggested that motivated students more frequently engaged in deep understanding of the text, what prompted their comprehension. This study was included into the group of CORI studies (concept-oriented reading instruction) where students were taught to use cognitive strategies: using background knowledge, generating questions, summarizing, searching for information, organizing the information in the graphic form, learning structures of the text, monitoring comprehension. The CORI study used the same approach as sheltered instruction (SI), but in combination with motivational strategy. Thus, Guthrie et al. (2004) implemented CORI model in two schools in eight third grade classrooms. The model was taught for 12 weeks 90 minutes daily. SI model was implemented in two schools in eleven classrooms for the same amount of time.

Quantitative analysis indicated that CORI model increased students’ use of cognitive strategies, such as activation of background knowledge, searching for information in texts, and organizing information form reading. CORI students were assessed higher than SI students in reading comprehension, in this regard the study inferred that combination of cognitive strategies with the motivational strategy was a better approach that purely strategy support. Even though the study by Guthrie et al. (2004) did not speak directly to the writing instruction or transfer of theses cognitive strategies from reading to writing, I grouped this study under the theme of cognitive strategies because all the strategies taught in CORI model went beyond reading. Searching for information and organizing information from reading graphically can be classified as the planning stage in the writing process.
Summary of cognitive strategies theme. The studies reviewed in this section indicated that EBs benefited from the instruction of cognitive strategies employed by successful readers and writers (Olson & Land, 2007, 2010, 2012; Lee, 2008). The cognitive strategies approach allowed EBs to write essays with a clearer structure, include an introduction, a more substantial analysis, less dependence on retelling, sufficient evidence from the text, variety of the sentence structure, and advanced written conventions (Olson et al., 2012).

Implications for research and this study. Building from what is known about the importance of cognitive strategies for EBs and applying the theory of shared knowledge in reading and writing, this inquiry targets to find what other possible cognitive strategies teachers incorporate in their integrated reading-writing instruction for EBs and how often they apply, model, and scaffold these strategies.

Genre-based instruction. The last theme that emerged from the review of the literature on IRWI for EBs is genre-based instruction through the lens of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). Genre-based instruction is instruction of reading and writing of different genres, which highlights the connection between the communicative purpose and the discourse features of a text (based on the propositions of Halliday’s [1978] Systemic Functional Linguistics).

The first study under this theme is the one by Harman (2013), who explored literary intertextuality as lexical cohesion (i.e., semantic relations among lexical and grammatical elements at the level of the clause and discourse) and how it was developed in writing through borrowing and playing with the patterns of meaning in source texts and other resources. The lexical relations in students’ writings and mentor texts were
analyzed with SFL, and in particular, how intertextual linguistic resources helped students with meaning expression. During lessons, students borrowed strategies from a novel or a picture book into their independent writing, and kept a writer’s tool box—a collection of the linguistic resources with invented students’ explanations of how these resources might be helpful in their writing. The results of the study suggested that well-crafted instruction and usage of authentic literature boosted students’ academic writing, whereas SFL analysis validated that IRWI reinforced development of academic literacy.

The usage of mentor texts, joint deconstruction, and construction of the texts are the key terms that can be found in many studies exploring genre-based instruction. The study by Brisk and Hodgson-Drysdale (2010/2011) also focused on genre-based instruction, but their focus was on elementary school students’ report writing (pre-K through 5th grade). Pre-K up to third grade teachers used the following strategies to teach report as a genre: genre structure (statement, subtopics, and a concluding statement), graphic organizer, reading aloud mentor texts, modeling how to find relevant information, occasional code-switching between Spanish and English as an additional form of scaffolding, and discussion of sample reports. Brisk et al. (2010/2011) suggested that students understood the purpose of the report in general from the integrated reading-writing instruction. The students were challenged with expressing their ideas in a logical order. Fourth and fifth grade students perceived that the author and the audience were supposed to be present in the report. Shared writing, using questions, or text deconstructing with the support of graphic organizers turned out to be beneficial techniques for EBs.
Continuing the theme of the first two studies, Gebhard, Harman and Seger (2007)’s case-study also looked at the they ways how genre-based instruction could be particularly beneficial for EBs. In this study they looked at the genre of persuasion. The lesson objective was aimed at getting back recess, which was taken out of the students’ daily schedule due to pressures related to test preparation. After free writing and brainstorming ideas about what could be done, students decided to write a letter to the principal to present their arguments for having time for recess. The teacher developed a number of lessons on persuasive writing, which incorporated: necessary words, sentence patterns, and structures used in a sample letter, and teacher-student conferences. The final draft included linguistic features, which were explicitly taught: an opening statement, a thesis, arguments, evaluation, and a concluding request (Gebhard et al., 2007). During an SFL centered approach to teaching argument or persuasion, the focal student developed the organizational structures, syntactic patterns, and word choices of an argumentative business letter (Gebhard et al., 2007).

As can be seen from the above reviews under this theme, every genre-based study solved an authentic case based on a real-life situation, be it an argumentative business letter to the principal or a bibliography of a famous person, as in the study by Pavlak (2013). The teacher and students deconstructed and jointly constructed the text, which was IRWI, in order to learn how to extract key events from the subject’s life. Based on the students’ knowledge about the biography exposed in pre-writing, the teacher divided the teaching tasks into three sections: person's early life, later life, and why he/she was remembered. During discussion and elicitation of ideas, the teacher helped students to transform their oral language into writing. She showed them how to clarify ideas, find
synonyms, and edit writing. Peer editing was an obligatory part of students’ conferencing. Pavlak (2013) suggested some successful teaching strategies such as reading aloud genre-specific mentor texts, deconstruction of model writing, studying and extraction of key vocabulary, and encouraging students to actively experience oral and written language, reference to mentor text during independent writing, and providing ample time for students can be effective techniques as well. Reading aloud genre-specific texts set expectations for students’ independent writing, whereas joint construction and deconstruction of the text helped students to read through the lens of a writer (Pavlak, 2013).

Even though not stated explicitly, the studies reviewed above developed students’ metalinguistic awareness of a genre writing based on the features taught through readings. The following two studies explicitly addressed the issue of metalinguistic awareness through genre-based instruction. Palinscar and Schleppegrell (2014) engaged in the iterative curricula design process for 2nd through 5th grades that would align with the district’s educational standards. They focused on something they called a “likelihood scale” defined as a scale to help understand the notion of modality (modal verbs, modal adjuncts, adjectives, nouns, while clauses), which had been a challenging area for EBs to master in English (L2). Teachers and students transferred the discussion of likelihood from the context attributed to everyday life to the one in science texts. Metalanguage, as per Palinscar and Schleppegrell’s study (2014), was students’ ability to identify the likelihood scale, provide additional examples to the text, and come up with a range of academic language means to express the scale readings. They concluded that the likelihood scale along with the metalanguage was a beneficial tool engaging EBs to
discuss their understanding of language choices pertaining to modal verbs when writing; small and whole group discussions supported the development of disciplinary meanings of texts; and EBs were able to perform at the grade level when scaffolded with the teacher’s metalanguage about the meaning in context.

Like in a previous study, Moore and Schleppegrell (2014) showed that metalanguage served as a mediator of IRWI to connect language forms with their meanings, stimulating students’ discussions about the author’s word choices within the text and developing understanding of it. This study considered the ways SFL metalanguage can support students’ talk about literary text, such as interpretation and evaluation of characters. The researchers paid special attention to the metalanguage of appraisal (i.e., polarity and force of characters’ attitudes), used by the authors of a text by looking at word choice and language features. In reading-focused lessons, SFL metalanguage was used to pinpoint and interpret the attitudes of textual characters; whereas in writing-focused lessons, students were explicitly taught the language features to conduct character analysis. Initial one-word interpretations of the characters provided by students were further developed through the whole class participation structure. At the final stage the students wrote their interpretations, connecting them with the personal experiences. Moore and Schleppegrell (2014) illustrated how reading can be the first step towards students’ independent text construction. Throughout the whole process of joint construction and deconstruction of a text, students read through the eyes of a writer paying attention to different features of a text and understanding their function.

Continuing to emphasize the importance of metalanguage, de Oliveira and Schleppegrell (2015) stated that it was an important skill that needed to be taught to EBs
in order for them to be able to talk about the texts they read and wrote. Metalanguage instruction served as meaningful when it aligned with the content goals. The usage of metalanguage allowed students to recognize the ways in which language made meanings through discussion of what a character did, said, and thought. By pointing attention to the form, functional metalanguage supported all learners, even the young ones, to make meaning of the text. de Oliveira and Schleppegrell (2015) differentiated functional and traditional metalanguage, saying that the first one looked not only at individual words, but also at meaningful phrases. The enactment of metalanguage in classroom should happen in progression from local immediate and spoken context to a written mode, which had more condense sentences, complex structures, and more abstract ideas (Christie, 2012; Gibbons, 2006a). Gibbons suggested that moving between the modes (spoken vs. written) and shifting between technical and everyday language provided students with an opportunity to enrich meaning making process by building on their existing knowledge.

The existing literature on genre-based instruction emphasized teaching writing though Teaching Learning Cycle, which consists of four stages: negotiation of filed/content knowledge, deconstruction of text, joint construction of text, and independent construction of text (Rothery, 1996). TLC is not a linear process as students can go back and forth between multiple foci and stages of their work. Brisk (2015) emphasized the importance of using TLC and metalanguage when teaching students language features of different genres; she also extended this approach further suggesting that genre-based instruction or TLC was not a juxtaposition of Process Writing (an approach to writing instruction where writers are encouraged to iteratively modify and improve their work through various stages of it), traditionally preferred for writing instruction. According
Brisk (2015), Process Writing and SFL-informed or genre-based instruction could work together and complement each other, where the first focused on a certain stage of a writing process, whereas the latter directed students to the content or focus of the instruction during those stages. By combining the two approaches—TLC and Process Writing, Brisk claimed that students explored and learned multiple genres through multiple re-visiting of mentor texts and collaborative writing with teachers and other students.

Recently more studies that explore how genre-based instruction informs content-area writing and benefits EBs have been published (Accurso, Gebhard, & Selden, 2016; Brisk, Nelson, & O’Connor’, 2016; Hodgson-Drysdale, 2016). Accurso, Gebhard, and Selden (2016) reported a successful case of how an elementary school teacher applied genre-based instruction to support fifth grade EBs’ science writing. During the course of a 12-week writing unit, the teacher carried out SFL-based instruction of scientific explanation. This study reported the teacher’s implementation of Teaching and Learning cycle and writing progress of the student, suggesting that this pedagogical approach supported EBs’ literacy development (Accurso et al., 2016). The case student exhibited the ability to make linguistic choices while writing scientific explanations. By the end of the 12-week unit, the student was able to apply specific text features of the focal genre.

A recent study by Brisk, Nelson, & Connor (2016) suggested that children have difficulties with character development in narratives. They explored whether fourth graders were able to develop narrative characters after targeted instruction. Two teachers conducted the study in an elementary classroom with students of Spanish and Vietnamese background. The fictional narrative unit lasted around eight weeks. All in-process
artifacts of four students’ writing were collected for the analysis (initial graphic organizers with research, drawing of animals as the main characters of the narratives, graphic organizer with character features, writing drafts, and a final product). Following Teaching and Learning Cycle, the teachers guided students through mentor texts’ features of characters, modeled how to develop a character, guided them throughout the planning stages, and conferences throughout the process. The results of the study indicated that students were able to develop those features of their characters, which were related to the plot of their narrative. Students were particular confident in using dialogs, descriptions, and a variety of verb types (Brisk et al., 2016).

Similar to Brisk, Nelson, & Connor (2016), Hodgson-Drysdale (2016) investigated the experiences of two elementary teachers in SFL-informed writing instruction. The instruction of two teachers had been observed for almost a year after their participation in a two-day summer institute and then a monthly professional development on SFL-informed writing pedagogy. The analysis indicated that both teachers exhibited a change in their teaching as they approached writing from a functional perspective. The study concluded that SFL-based writing instruction supported EBs to improve their second language writing (Hodgson-Drysdale, 2016).

**Summary of genre-based instruction theme.** Use of genre-based instruction showed that well-crafted instruction and usage of authentic literature boosted students’ academic writing, and SFL analysis validated that reading and writing reinforced development of academic literacy (Harman, 2013). Shared writing, questions, and deconstructing text with the support of graphic organizers were beneficial techniques for EBs (Brisk & Hodgson-Drysdale, 2010/2011). An SFL centered approach to teaching the
persuasive genre allowed students to develop organizational structures, syntactic patterns, and word choices of an argumentative business letter (Gebhard et al., 2007). Metalanguage was a beneficial tool engaging EBs to discuss their understanding and writing process of texts (Christie, 2012; Gibbons 2006a; de Oliveira & Schleppegrell, 2015); small and whole group discussions supported the development of disciplinary meanings of texts; and EBs were able to perform at the grade level when scaffolded with the teacher’s metalanguage about the meaning in context (Palinscar & Schleppegrell, 2014). Process Writing and SFL-informed instruction could work together to focus on both—different stages of writing process and content of the instruction (Brisk, 2015). The studies by Accurso, Gebhard, and Selden (2016), Brisk, Nelson, and O’Connor’ (2016), and Hodgson-Drysdale (2016) indicated how SFL-informed pedagogy supports and benefits EBs’ writing development.

**Implications for research and this study.** As indicated in the reviewed studies, genre-based instruction is a powerful approach for instructing students, and EBs in particular. More still needs to be learned about incorporation of metalanguage in the elementary school instruction, teachers’ modeling techniques, and how EBs comprehend, interpret, and apply metalanguage. In all the reviewed studies teachers were exposed to professional development or some kind of professional learning beforehand. In this study, I look at the teachers who did not have special preparation in genre-based instruction in order to see whether they use any genre-based tools in their practices and instruction. Applying genre literacies and the theory of shared knowledge in reading and writing, I explore how often and to what degree teachers capitalize on metalanguage as a tool of IRWI.
Implications for research. Most of the reviewed studies defined EBs as a very general and homogenous group, whereas in reality they are a very dynamic and complex group. The lack of longitudinal EBs achievement data adds a crucially important layer, which needs to be addressed when dealing with the opportunity gap between non-EBs and EBs (NAEP, 2014). In this regard, EBs may be counted as EBs one year, and as non-EBs the following year, after they were mainstreamed to the general classroom (Abella, Urrutia, & Shneyderman, 2005). Thus, more longitudinal studies are needed to follow EBs as they join more mainstreamed classrooms.

There is scarce research exploring IRWI or the ways how teachers understand and approach it, their perspectives, and implementation of this approach. Next, even though every reviewed study talked about the usage and reference towards the mentor texts during the writing instruction to some degree, in particular under the theme of genre-based instruction, there were no identified studies directly investigating the role of mentor texts for the writing instruction. Moving forward, an important issue for researchers to consider is conducting more studies on the mentor texts' influence as a way of connecting two domains of literacy. Next, so far it became clear that there are some general trends on IRWI. They need to be understood at a finer grain of detail: what are the real-classroom applications out of these themes? How can teachers be guided to address the needs of EBs in order to provide genre-informed instruction to prepare students for the future job market requirements? In what ways can reading inform writing instruction and vice versa? Do strategies recommended in the research for IRWI stay consistent as EBs move up in their language proficiency level (from ESOL level 1 to ESOL level 5) and across the grade level? These and many other research questions need
to be addressed by the field in the nearest future to support EBs’ literacy development in two languages.

**Research Questions**

Based on the current gaps in knowledge on integrated reading-writing instruction, this study will address three main research questions:

1. **What is the nature of integrated reading-writing instruction in 4th grade ELA classrooms with emergent bilingual students?**

2. **What are teachers’ perceptions of integrated reading-writing instruction for emergent bilingual students?**

3. **What types of critical knowledge do teachers use when implementing integrated reading-writing instruction?**

As a reminder, critical knowledge is approached in this study as consisting of the following elements: metaknowledge (functions and purposes of reading and writing, knowing that readers and writers interact, metacomprehension, expectations for success among others), knowledge about substance and content, knowledge about universal text attributes, and procedural knowledge and skills to negotiate reading and writing (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000).

In the next chapter I will describe the rationale for the study design, describe sampling and recruitment procedures, data collection, and data analysis. Then, I will outline my role as a researcher and how I worked to establish trustworthiness.
Chapter Three

Methods

The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine closely how urban 4th grade ELA teachers implement and understand integrated reading-writing instruction. This study contributes to our understanding of the nature of IRWI from the perspectives of sociocultural theory, genre literacy, and the theory of shared knowledge in reading and writing. In this study, I investigate the factors of IRWI emphasized by the teachers during this instruction, constraining and furthering factors affecting teacher’s usage of integrated instruction, as well as teachers’ perspectives on incorporating it.

Research Design Rationale

Qualitative research methods best fit the purpose of this dissertation study to explore the nature of the phenomenon of IRWI for several reasons. First, context-dependent knowledge and experience are the center of this study, which also comprise the focus of case studies (Flyvbjerg, 2011) as a type of qualitative methods. Thus, the design of this study helps to study “the real life situations and its multiple wealth of details” (Flyvbjerg, 2011, p. 302). Second, although the construct of IRWI has been investigated, not much research has been conducted in this area recently, as demonstrated in the literature review chapter. Qualitative methods allowed me an in-depth exploration of this underdeveloped area: “the qualitative case researcher tries to preserve the multiple realities, the different and even contradictory views of what is happening” (Stake, 1995, p. 12). Third, new and rigorous standards, such as the CCSS (NGA & CCSSO, 2010a) emphasize the importance of implementing IRWI instruction.
Site and Participants

This study is a secondary video analysis of the data of an Institute of Education Sciences-funded research-study *Writing for English Language Learners (WELLs): Exploring the Relationship between Writing Instruction and Student Outcomes* (Gort, Howard, & Caswell, 2013). The WELLs project (2014-2017) took place in 4th grade general education classrooms in a large, urban district with a majority Spanish-speaking population from low-income minority backgrounds (Ruiz, Hooker, & Batalova, 2015). WELLs primary data collection included video observations of writing instruction, student bilingual vocabulary assessments in English and Spanish, parent surveys, teacher background surveys, and opinion writing samples. Additionally, the project collected district data on student background information such as EL status, third and fourth grade reading achievement scores, gender, free and reduced lunch eligibility, special education identification, and attendance over the academic year.

The secondary study I conducted used the video observations of the five teachers collected within the scope of WELLs study. Due to the design of the present study, which includes the data from WELLs study and the secondary study, the following two sections—‘Sampling and Recruiting’ and ‘Data Collection’—will be organized around two phases, each one describing the procedures for a corresponding study.

Sampling and Recruiting

Sampling involved two phases—the first phase was within the scope of a larger study, while the second phase involved procedures for the secondary study focusing on collecting additional data—interviews and video playback sessions. The details of each phase are outlined below.
**Phase I.** The present study used five existing video observations conducted within the scope of WELLs project. In this regard, it is necessary to describe WELLs sampling and recruiting procedures conducted during 2014-2015 academic year. The selection and reaching of participants for WELLs study was guided by the following procedures: selecting schools from a district recommended list with high numbers of Latino students, sending mass e-mails to the principals of schools with high enrollment of Spanish speaking students, and giving follow-up calls and messages to administrators (e.g., principals, assistant principals, reading coaches, and secretaries) of these schools. After making appointments with schools’ principals and fourth grade ELA teachers, WELLs researchers visited schools to describe the study and what participation entailed for potential participants. WELLs researchers were able to recruit and consent seventeen teachers working in seven schools spread throughout the school district. Project personnel assented students in these teachers’ classrooms after consenting the participating teachers. Those students who agreed to participate and signed assent forms took a consent form home to be reviewed and signed by their parents or guardians, and returned to their classroom for pick up by WELLs researchers.

**Phase II.** For the second phase of data collection, I conducted semi-structured interviews (Fontana & Frey, 2000) and video playback sessions (Goldman, Pea, & Barron, 2007) with five teachers sampled from a pool of ten WELLs teachers. The details of data collection will be described in the following section; here I will outline the recruitment and sampling procedures. I sent a recruitment e-mail to those WELLs teachers whose recorded class observations were longer than 45 minutes, thus providing a more comprehensive writing lesson and more depth for the analysis (n=10). The text of
the e-mail included the purpose of the dissertation study, what participation entailed, and the incentive for participation, which was a $50 gift card for a 90 minute to two hours interview/video playback session.

I purposefully targeted teachers who implemented different instructional approaches to IRWI as occurring at different stages of the *Writing Process*, an instructional approach where writers are encouraged to re-visit and edit their writing repeatedly (Graves, 1983). Often referred to as Writers’ Workshop, this pedagogy creates an environment where students write with the support of an expert teacher (Fletcher & Portalupi, 2001). The response rate to recruitment e-mails and personal visits to schools was the following: out of ten teachers, three agreed to participate, six declined, and one did not respond. After recruiting three teachers, I had to increase the pool of possible participants and include two teachers from the larger study, whose recorded observations were shorter (one 46 minutes long and another 49 minutes long). After these two teachers agreed to participate in the study, the total number of participants reached five. The demographic information of five participating teachers is provided in Table 1. Due to the fact that the video observations were already collected within the scope of the larger study for which I was involved as a Research Assistant, I was familiar with the videos and the difference between teachers’ instructional practices and approaches by the time of the second phase of data collection.
Table 1

**Self-Reported Demographic Information of Participating Teachers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Highest Degree</th>
<th>Total Years of Teaching</th>
<th>Total Years of Teaching 4(^{th}) Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Nielson</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>Master's Degree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Rodriguez</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Education Specialist</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Gilbert</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Master's Degree</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Maceda</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Bachelor's Degree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Lopez</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Master's Degree</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Collection**

Similar to sampling and recruiting, the data collection procedures consisted of two phases: Phase I corresponds to the WELLs study and Phase II refers to the secondary dissertation study.

**Phase I. Video observations.** Within the scope of WELLs study, the participating teachers were contacted with a request to schedule a video observation(s) of a “typical writing lesson” of opinion genre. WELLs researchers explained in detail to the teachers that they wanted to capture a complete writing lesson over multiple days, if necessary, which would include introducing a writing prompt, reading the sources related to the writing lesson, drafting an essay, editing, revising, and publishing the final product. No time boundaries were given to the teachers regarding the duration of the lesson. After
scheduling the dates for video-recorded writing lessons, trained Research Assistants, including myself, observed and recorded those lessons for each participating teacher.

During each observation, several Research Assistants, including myself, operated a video camera positioned at the back of the room, and captured the widest angle of the classroom focusing primarily on the teacher. Those students whose parents opted not to participate in the study or who did not wish for their child to be in any video recording during school hours were not in the camera view; only consented students with permission to be video recorded were in the focus of the camera during the video recorded observations. The video recording of all participating teachers’ instruction occurred in Spring 2016. The duration of writing lessons (a lesson defined as consisting of the following elements: introducing a writing prompt, reading the sources, drafting an essay, editing, revising, and getting the final product) varied across the teachers, and took from several instructional days up to a week or two until students’ final writing products were completed. Consequently, the recorded videos ranged in length from 45 to 800 minutes for the seventeen participating teachers in a larger study.

**Phase II. Interviews and video playback sessions.** The five teachers recruited to participate in this secondary study were asked to set a date, time, and place, based on their convenience, for an interview and a video playback session, which were conducted in November 2016. A short overview of the interview and playback session was given to each participating teacher before the interview session. Each session with the teachers was audio recorded and lasted around two hours (one hour for an interview and a second hour for a playback session).
Semi-structured interviews (Fontana & Frey, 2000) were guided by an interview protocol (Appendix C) and audio recorded for the purpose of future analysis. The interview questions were adjusted as information emerged; thus, modifications depended on participants’ responses. Examples of interview questions included: *What strategies and skills are important for students to develop in order for them to be able to write from sources? Do you see integrated reading-writing approach as a beneficial strategy teaching writing to ELLs? If yes, how exactly?* According to Gall et al. (2007), a semi-structured interview “involves asking a series of structured questions and then probing more deeply with open-form questions to obtain additional information” (p. 246). Interviews helped me to shed light on teachers’ practices, understanding of, general perspectives, and attitudes toward IRWI.

During the video playback sessions, a second part of the interview meeting, teachers were shown segments of the video with their instruction recorded during Phase I of data collection and asked to comment on some specific instructional moments in relation to the interview discussion of their IRWI implementation in the classroom. According to Gallager (2002), it is necessary to have access to teachers’ self-reports through video introspection or reflections in order to understand their consciousness in the process of teaching. Reflection leads to better practical and theoretical understanding of teaching practices (Roth, 2007). I used video playback sessions as a methodological tool “on postactive metacognitions towards a focus on constructive, share reflections on present and future actions” (Tochon, 2007, p. 60). Video reflexivity is an element of conceptualization and social action that allowed me to construct a collaborative conversation during the playback sessions (Tochon, 2007).
The selection of video segments that were shown to teachers during the video playback sessions was guided by two criteria: inclusion of IRWI within a video segment and commonalities/differences of IRWI implementation across the teachers. In order to choose the instructional episodes within IRWI, I was guided by indices. The indices were brief descriptions of instructional episodes within the videos created as an initial step for analyses within the larger study. During the indices construction process, for which I was involved actively as a Research Assistant, an episode was defined as a coherent classroom activity unfolding around a class objective or purpose (Hillocks, 1999). A beginning of a new episode was marked when a shift in a classroom activity or grouping happened. Thus, an index is a map of the lesson, with a brief description of each activity and a time stamp to indicate how long each episode lasted. Guided by these indices as an initial step in exploring IRWI episodes, I watched the recorded classroom observations in order to determine and select the segments prior to the playback sessions. Selection of video segments was based on the commonalities/differences of IRWI implementation across teachers’ videos as well as occurrence/reference of IRWI during different stages of the Writing Process (Graves, 1983). This process of selecting video segments allowed me to get the most of teachers’ reflections as well as to construct a holistic picture of IRWI.

Having both sources of data—videos of instruction and teachers’ perspectives on and how they implemented IRWI instruction—provided me with an opportunity to see any discrepancies between the participants’ words and actions. As described by Jordan and Henderson (1995), “Video provides optimal data when we are interested in what ‘really’ happened rather than in accounts of what happened” (p. 50). Building from the interview discussion of IRWI and teachers’ understanding of it, during playback sessions
I asked the participants to comment on instructional instances, reflect upon IRWI, and guide me through their thoughts about possible applications, benefits and drawbacks of IRWI for students, and their instructional plans regarding this approach for the near future. As a form of collective analysis between teachers and me, video playback session was “a step in reaching configurational validity” (Roth, 2007, p. 371). Table 2 illustrates the types of data, which were collected in order to answer three research questions guiding this study.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>RQ1: What is the nature of IRWI in 4th grade ELA classrooms with emergent bilingual students?</th>
<th>RQ2: What are teachers’ understandings and perceptions of IRWI for emergent bilingual students?</th>
<th>RQ3: What types of critical knowledge do teachers use when implementing IRWI?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Video analysis</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources read and referred to</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction pertaining to writing prompt and/or opinion genre</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other materials used/referred to</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio recorded interviews with the teachers</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio recorded video playback sessions</td>
<td>•</td>
<td></td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples/artifacts used during the video observations</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Analysis

Data analysis of this study involved constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and multiple case studies (Yin, 1984; Stake, 2006). Below I describe why these methodologies were chosen and what constitutes a “case” of this study. After that, I explain the analysis procedures implemented during the data analysis stage, and how they allowed me to answer the three research questions.

Yin (1984) defines a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (p. 23). Creswell (2013) provides a similar definition saying that an investigator “explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information, and reports a case description and case themes” (p. 97). The case study design fits the purposes of this study because case studies: 1) explore real life cases bounded within certain parameters; 2) provide an in-depth understanding of a case; 3) allow a description of the case themes; 4) draw similarities and differences across cases and develop a theoretical framework; and 5) draw conclusions from the cases (Creswell, 2013). Guided by the overarching purpose of this study to explore the nature of IRWI and provide a thick description (i.e., “statements that re-create a situation and as much of its context as possible, accompanied by the meanings and intentions inherent in that situation,” Gall et al., 2007, p. 451), the above enumerated features of case study design provide a rationale for choosing this research method over others.
In this study, a single case was a writing lesson of each teacher. Writing lessons ranged in duration across the teachers from one class period up to a few days, depending on the length of the collected video data. Each case was analyzed via three data sources, such as: video observations, interviews, and playback sessions. The analysis of the five teachers’ implementation and perception of IRWI allowed me to have a fully developed scope for multiple-case design. The multiple-case was chosen over a single-case design because the latter is used under three circumstances: a critical case (to confirm or challenge well-formulated theory), extreme or unique case, and a revelatory case (phenomenon previously inaccessible for scientific exploration) (Yin, 1984; 2003). None of these circumstances applied to the context of the present study. Multiple-case design is considered to be a more compelling and robust type of design (Yin, 1984; 2003). Following a replication logic, when multiple cases are viewed as multiple experiments, multiple-case design is “selected so that it either (a) predicts similar results (a literal replication) or (b) produces contrary results but for predictable reasons (a theoretical replication) (Yin, 1984, p. 48).

Research Question 1: What is the nature of integrated reading-writing instruction in 4th grade ELA classrooms with emergent bilingual students? To answer this research question, I approached IRWI at different levels. First, to gain a fine-grained understanding, I looked at each case separately to see how each teacher implements IRWI. I approached the five recorded class observations from the standpoint of writing instruction as an unfolding process, where each task is spread and taught across time (VanDerHeide & Newell, 2013). Grounded Theory was utilized to identify the relevant themes across the data. As described by Charmaz (2006), “Grounded theory
consists of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories 'grounded' in the data themselves" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 2). I conducted inductive coding of videos, interviews, and play-back sessions, which consisted of four main stages: open coding, conceptual categories, concept families, and thematic coding (Charmaz, 2006).

Applying the constant comparative method and Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), video and interview data were coded using StudioCode qualitative software, which is designed to capture concepts and themes derived from analysis. The video and audio files for each teacher were combined together into one StudioCode timeline—a program composite of video/audio data that captures all the codes happening at any time point within the data. Thus, there were five separate timelines (one per teacher) that were coded while constantly comparing and contrasting. First, hundreds of codes emerged from the data at the stage of open coding representing a general picture of IRWI. These codes were grouped into large categories when they were related or referred to the same thing. After the open coding stage was completed, I referred back to re-reading the existing research on writing instruction emphasizing or mentioning the IRWI approach. This way, the process of developing broad categories within and across the five cases was not only data driven, but also literature-based. These broad categories allowed me compare and contrast the emerging codes.

The next step involved producing code families based on earlier generated broad categories through the process of noticing key words, patterns, roles, and attributed importance by participants to certain categories derived from the data. This was done through the StudioCode software by color-coding function that allowed merging and
regrouping multiple codes that belonged to the same category. The process of constant comparison (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) between the codes families emerged from the data (and accumulated in the “coding framework window” of StudioCode) with the literature on writing instruction allowed me to see the intersections between the codes and important strategies of writing instruction emphasized in the literature, and to come up with the titles of themes using the terminology existing and recognized in the field. The coding framework accumulated all the codes that emerged from the data, which were later combined or re-grouped into conceptual categories and concept families. This function allowed me to have a general perspective of IRWI as the coding process progressed. Lastly, I developed the themes based on the existing codes’ families to interpret the nature of IRWI through its implementation by participants and their perspectives of IRWI.

Thus, following this iterative process of coding, categories and subcategories of codes developed by adding, enriching, confirming, or disconfirming earlier constructed findings. By using constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and multiple case studies (Yin, 1984; Stake, 2006), I compared all five cases to find out the commonalities and differences regarding IRWI implementations across them. In order to do so, the data analysis was the following: IRWI of each teacher; patterns of IRWI across teachers; nature of IRWI based on the investigation of the five teachers. In order to validate the findings emerged from the analysis of the video observations, I triangulated them with the interviews and play-back session data. This way, I was able to see whether the instruction happening in classroom instruction, was confirmed in the teachers’ interviews.
Research Question 2: What are teachers’ understandings and perceptions of integrated reading-writing instruction for emergent bilingual students? The analysis for this research question illuminated the issues that are usually hard to capture during the analysis of video observations, sources, and other materials used during the class instruction. Guided by the integrated framework of this study, I analyzed teachers’ interviews and video playback sessions to gain understanding of not only what and how teachers did for IRWI, but also their perceptions of IRWI, and the level of importance to which they attribute IRWI, whether they see a benefit for children in the future, and if so, the possible constraining and furthering factors affecting their usage of IRWI. Using the same methodological approach as for the analysis of the video observations, teachers’ interviews were analyzed one by one to compare and contrast differences and similarities across cases. Teachers’ interviews and playback sessions let me obtain the thinking behind teachers’ instruction and get the fine-grain details about what might have been beyond the camera’s focus. After gaining and analyzing teachers’ insights, I aligned teachers’ perspectives on IRWI with the conducted analyses for the first research question of what they actually did in the classroom to get a holistic picture of the nature of IRWI as a complex multi-level phenomenon.

Research Question 3: What types of critical knowledge do teachers use when implementing integrated reading-writing instruction? In the third question, I approached IRWI from the standpoint of critical knowledge as defined in one of the frameworks guiding this dissertation study (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000) and consisting of the following elements: metaknowledge (e.g., functions and purposes of reading and writing, knowing that readers and writers interact, metacomprehension, expectations for
success among others), knowledge about substance and content, knowledge about universal text attributes, and procedural knowledge and skills to negotiate reading and writing. I viewed the analysis conducted to answer the third research question as a continuation of the work for the previous two research questions, but using a narrower and more focused lens. While answering the first two questions, I approached IRWI holistically as implemented by the five teachers and interpreted from their perspectives. For the third research question, I was particularly interested to see if teachers address the following critical components of reading and writing during IRWI: metalanguage, knowledge about substance and content, knowledge about universal text attributes, and procedural knowledge and skills, all of which are inherent for the developmental stage at the age of 9-13 years old (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000). Building from the emerged code categories and families, I traced if there are any types of critical knowledge in the analyzed case studies, namely whether teachers turn their instructional focus to the elements of critical knowledge. At this stage of the analysis, I applied deductive coding in order to examine if any elements of critical knowledge emerged in the video observations or were discussed in the teachers’ interviews.

To ensure the reliability (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982) of the study’s results and validity of its findings, I conducted the inter-rater reliability procedures comparing my coding with the coding of another rater. Upon familiarizing a co-rater with my coding procedures, we coded several episodes together to determine that we developed a mutual understanding of the coding process. Taking into consideration a varying duration of video observations across five cases, the reliability person coded 20% of each video and interview/playback session. For example, if a video recording lasted three hours (180
minutes), the reliability coding was conducted for 33 minutes of this video. The IRR person received a list with randomly selected time stamps for each video and interview that needed to be coded. If discrepancies emerged during the IRR process, the discussion was held until an agreement was reached regarding the coded instance. After the IRR process was completed, a detailed report of discrepancies was used in order to calculate the IRR and ensure the validity of the findings. Our final inter-rater agreement rates were appropriate and reached 95% for videos and 87.5% for interview coding.

**Role of Researcher**

My role in this study was the one of the observer in the first phase of data collection (videos) and an observer-participant (Gall et al., 2007) in the second phase (interviews). For the first phase, even though I (or other data collectors—one person for each video recording) was present in the classrooms for the purpose of video recording only, I am aware that even this presence might have affected the normal practices of the participating teachers and their students, and not reflect a typical writing instruction or flow of the class. For the second phase of data collection—interviews and video playback sessions with the teachers—I was an observer-participant (Gall et al., 2007) with a minimal presence. This means that these interviews and playback sessions were guided with a semi-structured interview protocol, but I was listening to teachers’ voices and perspectives on the phenomenon as much as possible. In the next section I will describe how I addressed my biases and issues of trustworthiness of this study.

**Trustworthiness**

To ensure the rigor and the quality of the present study, I followed several procedures to support the trustworthiness of findings: credibility, transferability,
dependability, and confirmability (Erlandson et al., 1993; Lincon & Guba, 1985). In this section I will describe in detail how I followed each standard of trustworthiness in this study.

**Credibility.** Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that credibility is one of the most important factors for a study’s trustworthiness. To accurately investigate the phenomenon of IRWI, I followed a number of provisions (Shenton, 2004). The first provision was the adoption of well-established research methods, which were successfully used in the previous studies (Shenton, 2004). Additionally, Erlandson et al. (1993) recommend developing a relationship of trust between the research parties. I had an early-established familiarity with the culture of participants because I was involved in a larger study as a Research Assistant. Thus, this extended engagement with the participants allowed me having a good foundation for collecting the data in Phase II.

**Triangulation** was another approach to ensure the credibility of the dissertation study. It was achieved via the use of different data sources—video observations, interviews, and playback sessions. According to Brewer and Hunter (1989), usage of different methods balances their individual limitations. Another approach was the tactic to ensure honesty in informants while data collection. I was able to fulfill this provision by a voluntary recruitment of participants, and informing them at the beginning of interviews and playback sessions that they could withdraw from the study at any point of data collection. They were notified that the information provided would be strictly confidential, and their identities would remain anonymous when disseminating results or findings. **Frequent debriefing sessions** with my advisors helped me to see my biases, positionality, and discuss emerging themes. Lastly, I used “reflective commentary”
(Shenton, 2004) in a form of an analysis log where I recorded all the procedures as well as my thinking and reflections, and how it influenced my approach to the data analysis.

**Transferability.** Transferability allows determining whether the findings of a study can be transferred to other contexts and settings (Erlandson et al., 1993). *Thick description* is a way to achieve transferability through numerous details when describing cases, categories or themes. I was able to demonstrate how the context of this study compared to other settings by providing readers with the following information: the number of participants, restrictions in the participants, data collection methods involved, the number and length of data collection sessions, and the overall time period of data collection (Cole & Gardner, 1979).

**Dependability.** Dependability “employs techniques to show that, if the work were repeated, in the same context, with the same methods and with the same participants, similar results would be obtained” (Shenton, 2004, p. 71). To ensure the dependability of the findings, I reported the study processes in details, in particular: the research design and its implementation, the data collection procedures, and a reflective log containing methodological, theoretical, and observational notes.

**Confirmability.** Confirmability is the degree to which a researcher acknowledges predispositions, positionality, biases, and any other factors, which may potentially influence a study’s results. In addition to triangulation, I used an audit trail to trace each step of the study procedures. According to Rice and Ezzy (2000), “maintaining and reporting an audit trail of methodological and analytic decisions allows others to assess the significance of the research” (p. 36). Thus, audit trail allowed me to provide an account of my research decisions and activities throughout the study implementation.
Engaging in qualitative methods study, I was aware of my biases and the positionality from the background knowledge, which can affect my interpretation of the data that I was collecting and analyzing (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). My lived experiences positioned me as a white female born and raised in Russia, speaking English as a second language, and being exposed to different cultures, systems of education, and sociocultural, political, economic, historical, racial, and other contexts. Additionally, being a doctoral student in a language and literacy program, I might have had some expectations and set beliefs about literacy instruction, and how it should be conducted. To confront the involvement of my possible biases and positionality into the findings’ interpretation, I had frequent debriefing sessions with my advisors discussed above. I also ensured to have ample examples from the data such as reflections and interview quotes to increase the study’s confirmability.

Limitations

The present study had some limitations due to its scope and design. The first limitation was the sample size—there were only five participating teachers. In this regard, the findings of this study should not be generalized to other settings and populations. One more limitations built into the study design, which was the time interval between the two phases of data collection. Building on the existing data (videos), and adding other components into it (teachers’ interviews and video playback sessions), phase two of data collection took place nine months after the first phase. This long interval between two phases might have affected teachers’ memories of their instructional actions. Taking this fact into consideration, the primary focus of interview and playback session
was understanding teachers’ perceptions on IRWI, rather than their reasoning behind using certain instructional strategies and approaches.

Another limitation related to the data collection was that the videos collected across five teachers varied in length, with the shortest being 46 minutes, and the longest 334 minutes. Thus, even though I provide a range of time on how much instructional time each teacher spent on different themes, the time range difference across teachers needs to be taken into consideration. Additionally, the video observations were collected right before the state assessment took place. In this regard, the instruction recorded was often just the review of the material covered earlier during the year. Consequently, many instructional approaches like modeling and explicit instruction of strategies, even though being addressed in teachers’ interviews, were not observed extensively due to the fact that teachers were preparing students to the test, and reviewing what was previously taught.

A final limitation was that purposeful sampling could not be implemented during the participants’ recruitment for the secondary study. Out of ten teachers who were invited to participate in the secondary study only five responded, the number needed for this multiple case study. If more teachers had agreed to participate, I would have been able to conduct purposeful sampling based on the differences/similarities of their IRWI implementation, as determined by the video recordings from the larger study.
Chapter Four

The Nature of Integrated Reading-Writing Instruction in 4th grade ELA Classrooms with Emergent Bilingual Students

This chapter addresses the first research question: What is the nature of integrated reading-writing instruction in 4th grade ELA classrooms with emergent bilingual students? Here I present five major findings that emerged through analysis of interviews, video observations, and playback sessions. These main themes will be presented in order of prevalence across the five teachers. Each theme concludes with a summary of findings and explanation of how they relate to the overarching research question. At the end of the chapter, I present an overall summary of all the findings.

Analytic Text-Based Writing in Response to New State Assessment

Findings revealed that the five teachers implemented IRWI through analytic text-based writing in response to a new form of state assessment. Analytic text-based writing, strongly emphasized by the CCSS, suggests writing where students need to “read complex texts and adopt an analytic stance in their writing about text by focusing on the proofs rather than the emotions” (Correnti, Matsumura, Hamilton, and Wang, 2012). The testing requirements and state assessment in general were a driving force of the teachers’ instruction, as well as a pivotal point in their interviews. Consequently, the writing instruction of the teachers was built around the requirements that students needed to meet in order to get a passing score on the state testing and three domains in the state assessment rubric (Appendix C): 1) Purpose, Focus, Organization (PFO), 2) Evidence and Elaboration (EE), 3) and Conventions and Grammar (C). The main characteristics of the three areas in the state assessment rubric are provided in Table 3. The entire state
writing assessment rubric with the variety of scores and its characteristics can be found in Appendix D.

Table 3

FSA ELA Text-Based Writing Rubric for the Top Scores of the 4th Grade Opinion-Based Essay in the Academic Year 2015-2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose, Focus, and Organization</th>
<th>Evidence and Elaboration</th>
<th>Conventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The response is fully sustained and consistently focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has a clearly stated opinion and effective organizational structure creating coherence and completeness. Main elements: Strongly maintained material, variety of transitional strategies, logical progression of ideas</td>
<td>The response provides thorough and convincing support/evidence for the writer’s opinion that includes the effective use of sources, facts, and details. Main elements: smoothly integrated evidence with reference to sources, effective use of elaborative techniques, clear and effective expression of ideas, academic and domain-specific vocabulary, varied sentence structure</td>
<td>The response demonstrated an adequate command of basic conventions. The response may include the following: Some minor errors in usage but no pattern of errors; adequate use of punctuation, capitalization, sentence formation and spelling.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Below is the description of the three areas of analytic text-based writing instruction as per the analysis of the teachers’ video observations.

**Purpose, Focus, Organization (PFO) as the first instructional area of analytic text-based writing.** Within the first instructional area all five teachers had instructional instances regarding the purpose of the opinion-based essay, structure or organization, and focus of the essay, as well as characteristics of the rubric scores. Some teachers consistently utilized the term “focused” in relation to the prompt or topic of the essay. The quote from Ms. Gilbert’s classroom observation can serve as an example of instruction for Purpose, Focus, and Organization:
Domain one—we need to really be writing about what they ask us to write about, not about something else. You need to keep that focus in mind all the time. And also the purpose of writing—in this case we are writing to express our opinion. The purpose is either to inform or express your opinion. (Video observation, 02/08/16)

Ms. Gilbert emphasized the importance of keeping the essay focused on the topic or main idea and reminded the students the overall purpose of the essay. In addition to focus, all five teachers taught mini-lessons on the opinion essay components or structure, which were unanimously referred to as: a prompt, topic, main idea (or essential question), hook (or grabber), introduction, body of the essay, and conclusion. In the interviews and playback sessions teachers elaborated that they taught different components of the essay gradually throughout the year with a consistent modeling of each component of the essay. For instance, early in the year students first practiced writing only an introduction in response to a prompt after teacher’s modeling took place.

Furthermore, when talking about the purpose of the essay, teachers frequently referred to the students’ “reader” or “audience.” I should note that in the analyzed videos, there was no explicit instruction of how to achieve the purpose or how the focus on the reader or audience could help in writing. All five teachers mentioned the reader and the importance of engaging the reader at different stages of the writing lesson. In the following quote from the classroom observation, Ms. Nielson briefly defined who the “reader” was: “This tells the reader, which is myself in this case and Ms. K., that you know what you are talking about” (Video observation, 02/17/16).
In this quote, the teacher made it explicit who the reader was, whereas the other teachers mainly used the word “reader” as an abstract term in the analyzed videos, without explaining or providing the context of who specifically was the students’ audience.

Evidence and Elaboration (EE) as the second instructional area of analytic text-based writing. The second aspect of analytic text-based writing was instruction targeting the evidence and elaboration of the essay, which included the following components: purposeful selection of reasons from the texts (referred to by teachers, and from here on as sources) that support students’ opinions on the prompt, finding text evidence that backs those reasons, elaborating (e.g., bringing in an outside experience to connect with the topic of writing), and correctly citing evidence using direct quotes or paraphrasing. The findings indicated that out of the three components of text-based writing, the area of Evidence and Elaboration and Purpose, Focus, and Organization were the most frequently referred to during classroom instruction. Several teachers explained that Evidence and Elaboration was one of the most challenging areas for instruction, which was described by Ms. Gilbert: “They do not know how to write reasons, they have an opinion, but they do not know why they think this way” (Interview, 11/09/16).

The quote above touched upon the issue raised in most teachers’ interviews, which was that students found it challenging to elaborate or find a relevant connection between their lives and a topic of the essay. It should be noted that as per the state assessment rubric, elaborations can be of three types—facts, examples, and anecdotes or personal experiences. Out of the five teachers, two incorporated instruction of different types of evidence as it was revealed through the video and interview analyses. The other
three teachers did not integrate a variety of elaboration types, and provided instruction only in relation to personal anecdotes or experiences. The difficulties with Evidence and Elaboration were frequently addressed through the feedback and correction during whole class and small group instruction, as well individual conferencing. In the example from Ms. Nielson’s classroom observation below, she addressed Evidence and Elaboration during conferencing with a student:

You are trying to prove to me that in order to play sports after school, you must get good grades. So, the reasons that you choose or the evidence that you choose must back it up…Students needing physical education does not really tell me that must have good grades in order to play sports after school. (Video observation, 02/18/16)

This example illustrated that students had difficulty providing corresponding evidence to prove their argument. When this kind of difficulty emerged teachers used individual conferencing or whole group discussion to help students with matching reasons and proper evidence. According to most teachers, when students found a connection with their lives, they often lost focus of the essay by adding too many irrelevant details. The fact that students lost focus was often brought up during the scoring activity, and teachers then noted how irrelevant information made an essay less focused and lowered scores.

Conventions and Grammar as the third instructional area of analytic text-based writing. Lastly, the analytic text-based writing in the five classrooms also included the component of Conventions and Grammar. This type of instruction targeted conventions and spelling, referred to by the five teachers as Grammar. An excerpt from
Ms. Gilbert’s classroom observation below illustrated a typical example of grammar instruction:

If you always forget to put that coma after the transition—bueno [well], you might forget the first time, but the second time you put the comma, they say—this student knows that she/he forgot to put it here. So, if you have a pattern—it is a problem that you have—you do not know that rule. (Video observation, 02/09/16)

In this observational instance, Ms. Gilbert reminded students of the main reason for losing test points in the domain of Conventions and Grammar, which was a pattern of mistakes. The idea of a pattern of mistakes was one of the most common instructional areas in relation to Grammar because as per the state assessment rubric, random mistakes did not affect the score, while patterns of mistakes did. It is worth mentioning that when talking about scoring criteria and points, teachers often used the pronoun “they,” as in the quote above. From the context of the videos, it became clear that students had a clear notion that by using “they,” teachers referred to writing judges who score state assessment essays.

Conventions and Grammar was the least used and referred to instructional area as opposed to Purpose, Focus, and Organization and Evidence and Elaboration. This result, which emerged from the analysis of the video observations, was also supported in teachers’ interviews, where they indicated that Conventions and Grammar were given the most attention at the beginning of the academic year, whereas later it was given only a peripheral focus in the form of paper revisions, feedback, and conferencing.

**Summary of writing instruction around the Florida state assessment rubric.**

The findings indicated that the five teachers implemented IRWI through the instruction of
analytic text-based writing, which was done in alignment with the three domains of the state assessment rubric: Purpose, Focus, and Organization; Evidence and Elaboration; and Conventions and Grammar. These three areas of instruction were taught in relation to the rubric scoring criteria and explanations of how to score higher on the state assessment. Structure or Organization of an essay was taught through the instruction of essay elements, such as topic, main idea, hook, introduction, body, and conclusion. The analysis of teachers’ interviews revealed that the teachers found Evidence and Elaboration the most challenging instructional area of analytic text-based writing. The instruction related to Conventions and Grammar was the least used or referred to area in video observations and teachers’ interviews.

Explicit Instruction

The findings showed that in the five classrooms, instruction of analytic text-based writing happened through explicit instruction, which took several forms, such as: modeling, feedback, meaning-making, and instruction of strategies. Among other things, Archer and Hughes (2011) define explicit instruction to incorporate: breaking down complex skills and strategies into smaller instructional units, providing step-by-step demonstrations, providing immediate affirmative and corrective feedback, and basing instruction on students’ prior knowledge. Below is the description of all four types of explicit instruction identified in the five video observations.

Modeling as a type of explicit instruction. Modeling pertained to an instructional activity led by a teacher, which could include, but was not limited to: filling out a graphic organizer with reasons and evidence, annotating, color coding, scoring, etc. Students followed the teacher activity and then performed a similar activity
independently. For example, at the stage of planning some students were instructed to read and annotate sources, and find reasons and evidence supporting their opinion towards the prompt, as shown in the excerpt below from Ms. Maceda’s class observation:

What was the phrase that we underlined? Look at your plus [plus sign marking the evidence supporting students’ opinion]. What else did we underline…Remember we are putting a phrase…Cause I am not going to write obviously the whole line. (Video observation, 02/09/16)

In this instructional instance Ms. Maceda was modeling how to fill out a graphic organizer at the planning stage. In other analyzed video observations, there was modeling of the following activities: Planning, drafting, scoring, and color-coding an essay. Even though these activities corresponded to different stages of the writing process, they showed that modeling was a widely used type of explicit instruction, which broke the process of writing into discrete components, and helped students to reconstruct it piece by piece. Despite the fact that modeling was frequently mentioned in the analyzed interviews, it was not a frequent code in the video observations across the five teachers. All five teachers repeatedly stated in the interviews that modeling was a crucial component of the writing process, and that they modeled stages of the writing process. For example, in the description below Ms. Nielson commented on the usage of modeling:

Pre-writing includes dissecting the prompt, giving them the outline, which is their planner, and searching for evidence in those sources. So, what we will do—they will write down those notes, and then I will bring it to life for them. I will model exactly how it looks like…Everything has to be very concrete. (Interview, 11/08/16)
Four of the teachers stated that they had two weeks of opinion-based genre instruction, followed by two weeks of informative genre instruction for each prompt, whereas the fifth teacher, Ms. Nielson, normally spent the first half of the academic year (August-December) on the opinion-based genre, and the rest of the time on the other genre until the state testing took place. Thus, Ms. Nielson had more freedom not to follow the Pacing Guide closely as compared to other teachers. The fact that modeling was a prominent theme in teachers’ interviews, and not as frequently observed in the video observations might be explained by the condition of data collection. Namely, the video recordings for the larger study were collected late in the academic year (February), a couple of weeks before the state testing took place, when teachers were generally reviewing the skills and knowledge taught earlier in the year.

**Feedback as a type of explicit instruction.** Along with modeling, feedback was another approach of explicit instruction widely used by all teachers. The analysis revealed that the teachers also used a variety of feedback types, which targeted different areas of analytic text-based writing and was realized through multiple formats—whole class feedback, individual and group conferencing, and peer revisions.

The analysis of classroom observations showed that the teachers applied most of their corrective feedback in the area of Evidence and Elaboration and in the Structure or Organization of an essay. Individual teachers had feedback regarding grammar, scoring, color-coding, and paraphrasing. In the interviews all five teachers indicated that they provided feedback depending on what needed to be reviewed or retaught as a mini-lesson to a small group, individual students, or a whole class.
An example from Ms. Nielson’s classroom observation below illustrated the use of corrective feedback in relation to Evidence and Elaboration and to Structure in a format of conferencing with a pair of students:

Ok, this is a complete sentence, but incomplete thought…This is your main idea, but your main idea needs to be infused with the topic. You just did that by saying it “Since sports take so much time comma, schoolwork should come first.” And in your argument, you will explain what you just said. (Video observation, 02/19/16)

Even though Ms. Nielson was providing feedback regarding the essay’s reasons and elaboration in the quote above, the main focus of this conferencing session was on stating the essay’s reasons by infusing the topic with the main idea. It was often difficult to determine the focus of teachers’ feedback as it constantly shifted between three components—Purpose, Focus, and Organization; Evidence and Elaboration; and Grammar. Additionally, the teachers provided their feedback on the features of academic language (transitions, vocabulary, voice, figurative language, and complex sentences, which will be discussed in the next theme) or strategies that students needed to successfully utilize in order to score higher on the state writing assessment.

**Meaning-making as a type of explicit instruction.** Another type of explicit instruction utilized by the teachers was meaning-making, which was implemented through the background knowledge and usage of students’ first language (L1) (Ajayi, 2008; Helman & Burns, 2008). In the five classroom observations, several short instances were identified where teachers realized meaning-making through the use of Spanish or drew a parallel between English and Spanish Grammar. In the quote below Ms. Lopez
brought students’ attention to English and Spanish suffixes categorizing words within the same part of speech:

I also love that she spelled the word enormous correctly. What domain is that?…Which is domain 3 – Conventions of the English language. And if it ends in –ous, or in Spanish -oso, -osa, what part of speech is enormous? Yes, adjective. (Video observation, 01/28/16)

Even though this particular instance addressed the instruction of Conventions and Grammar, the teacher also used Spanish to provide a clarifying example, which served as an instance of meaning-making for the EBs. Other teachers mentioned in the interviews that they sometimes used cognates or other words in Spanish in order to advance understanding of concepts or text comprehension. It is important to emphasize another common feature about meaning-making that arose from teachers’ interviews: all five teachers stated that the district did not encourage them to speak Spanish during the reading block, but they could infuse some Spanish during writing instructional time.

**Strategies instruction as a type of explicit instruction.** Apart from modeling, feedback, and meaning-making, the teachers incorporated one more type of explicit instruction —instruction of strategies, which can be divided into three categories: paraphrasing, annotating, and color-coding. The teachers indicated that the abilities to paraphrase, annotate, or color-code were crucially important skills for students engaging in analytic text-based writing.

Paraphrasing was the first strategy consistently utilized by the teachers. All teachers considered paraphrasing as a complicated skill to master, and they stated in the interviews that the ability to paraphrase indicated text comprehension. Even though
paraphrasing was frequently addressed by the teachers in video observations, and emphasized as a critically important comprehension and writing skill in the interviews, there were no identified instances of direct instruction of paraphrasing in the video observations, only mentions of it.

Additionally, the teachers discussed annotating as an important skill in their interviews. Text-coding, underlining, and analyzing the text were other terms used by the teachers in relation to annotating. All five teachers had instruction of annotation but to a different extent. Three teachers indicated that they used it more extensively with an elaborated coding script (annotating abbreviation), because it allowed students to quickly identify main ideas that could be used as supporting evidence in their essays. The other two teachers utilized only plus and minus signs as annotations explaining that students might lose valuable testing time if they engaged in detailed annotations. Most teachers differentiated between annotating during the reading block (used to improve text comprehension, identify text structure, find new vocabulary, among others) versus annotating during the writing block, which was used for the sole purpose of locating relevant reasons and evidence. A possible cause as to why students found providing Evidence and Elaboration challenging might be low text comprehension because, as per teachers, they engaged students in doing annotations only with the purpose of identifying relevant reasons.

Color-coding was one more strategy identified in the analysis, which stood out because only one teacher used it in the video observation, and two teachers mentioned it in the interviews. When using this instructional activity, Ms. Rodriguez first modeled how to color-code a student’s anchor paper from the previous year. Different colors were
used to identify different parts of the essay—opinion in the introduction and conclusion, reasons, evidence, and transition words. The teacher explained to students that color-coding made them conscious of mistakes that they could potentially avoid in their future writing. The purpose of this activity was noticing color-patterns, being able to identify strong and weak parts of the essay. All five teachers used scoring activity with the state assessment rubric (in relation to three components—Purpose, Focus, and Organization; Evidence and Elaboration; and Conventions and Grammar). In the interviews, teachers similarly stated that color-coding and scoring were important instructional strategies, which made students think more analytically and raised their awareness about what needs to be included in the essay in order to get a high score. However, it needs to be noted that teachers did not build on the activities of scoring and color-coding to let students write the second draft and publish their work.

**Summary of explicit instruction.** The first prominent type of explicit instruction utilized by the teachers was modeling. Even though, according to the teachers, they used it at different stages of the writing process, its presence was more evident in the interviews than in the classroom observations. The focus of feedback, which was another type of explicit instruction, shifted between three areas of text-based writing: Purpose, Focus, and Organization; Evidence and Elaboration; and Conventions and Grammar; as well as other instructional foci such as features of academic language, and reading/writing strategies. Meaning-making emerged in the instruction of several teachers through minimal usage of Spanish or bringing a parallel between English and Spanish grammar. Finally, instruction of strategies as a type of explicit instruction included activities such as paraphrasing, annotating, scoring, and color-coding.
Attention to the Features of Academic Language

Another characteristic of IRWI, implemented through the analytic text-based writing was that the teachers implemented instruction of the features of academic language, which included: vocabulary, transition words, figurative language, voice, and complex sentences. As important constituent parts of academic language (Matsumura, 2015), these elements were also assessed by the state test. These features were embedded into the instruction throughout different stages of the writing process as a whole group instruction of mini-lessons, differentiated instruction, short reminders before independent drafting, and revisions during individual work and conferencing.

Transitions. All five teachers paid attention to the instruction of transitions. The instances related to transitions from the video observations were either a review or a reminder of transitions as an important element of essay structure. Four out of five teachers had some instructional instances devoted to transitions. When asked in the interviews and playback sessions what a typical lesson for transitions included, most of the teachers responded that normally it was a mini-lesson embedded in the two-weeks of instruction allocated for every district-mandated prompt.

The analysis revealed that some teachers had a minimalistic approach towards the instruction of transitions, which was to give students just a couple of transition words with the purpose of not confusing them. For example, in the quote below Ms. Maceda commented on her approach of instructing transition words for EBs:

And we told them [EBs]—once you find three or four that you like—use them [transitions]…You pick the three that you want to use, and you use them no
matter how many writings we do—those are the three that you use in each paragraph. (Interview, 11/10/16)

Even though two teachers utilized this type of approach towards the instruction of transitions, it should be noted that the other teachers did not follow the same pattern in instruction. One teacher, for example, had an instance in the video observation where she asked students to enumerate all transition words that they had learned, to what students responded by enumerating a long list of transitions. This difference in the instruction of transitions indicated that even within the range of five teachers, the approach to the instruction of the academic language features differed.

**Academic vocabulary.** One more feature of academic language that all five teachers paid attention to in their classroom instruction was academic vocabulary. When highlighting the importance of using vocabulary from sources, the teachers used a variety of terms in their classrooms, such as: *vocabulary, word choice, words from sources, not being repetitive, using synonyms,* etc. In the quote below from Ms. Maceda’s classroom observation, she brought students’ attention to a key vocabulary word in the source:

Is *edible* a good vocabulary word?…Of course. Remember guys—vocabulary—very important, you are going to have a lot of vocabulary…We know what it is saying over here, so can we use it? Yes. It is going to show the reader that your vocabulary has expanded. (Video observation, 02/09/16)

Similar to Ms. Maceda in the quote above, most teachers normally pinpointed the key vocabulary words used in the sources and emphasized that these words need to be included into the students’ writing. Thus, the vocabulary instruction was realized through numerous reminders to use text specific words at different stages of the writing process.
Along with the emphasis of using text-specific words, all teachers often reminded students to use synonyms and not to be repetitive in their essays.

The next three features of academic language—figurative language, voice, and complex sentences—emerged in the analysis of the teachers’ interviews. When compared with the video observations, the instruction related to these features of academic language was found only in Ms. Nielson’s classroom observation. In the interviews, all teachers explained that voice and figurative language were not encouraged in students’ essays because they were not measured as part of the state’s assessment rubric. Ms. Nielson, as opposed to the other four teachers, stated in her interview that she integrated these features of academic language in her writing instruction because after examining highly scored anchor papers from the previous years assessments, she realized that the presence of voice and figurative language added strength to students’ essays and helped them to score higher.

**Summary of academic language features instruction.** Two features of academic language—transition words and vocabulary—emerged during the instruction of all five teachers. The other three features—figurative language, voice, and complex sentences—were present in the instruction of only one teacher. Even though all the other teachers emphasized the importance of figurative language and voice in the interviews, they stated that the district did not encourage infusing these features into students’ writing because they were not evident in the state assessment rubric.

**Reflection as a Tool to Evaluate Analytic Text-Based Writing**

One more finding was that analytic text-based writing instruction, as a form of IRWI in the five classroom observations, happened in the context of a class reflection.
The reflection was realized through teachers’ comments in regard to “What is writing?” and also through the instructional activity of scoring. At different stages of the writing process many teachers included short phrases and comments, which were directed at creating a metaphoric picture of what writing was, with a particular emphasis put on the ongoing revision and importance of writing skills. For example, the teachers frequently used metaphors and idiomatic expressions in reference to writing, such as “writing is not a cookie-cutter,” or “writing is like a sandwich, which begins and ends with the bread,” or general statements that referred to the process and skills of writers, such as “a good writer is never satisfied,” “revision is an ongoing process,” and “writing is a life-long skill.”

For example, the following extensive metaphor was used in the classroom observation of Ms. Lopez:

A vase is your writing, your main idea is the vase, and you put in the flowers, which are the details…I don’t want you to work on ending today at all, I just want to work on meat part – is it a peanut butter jelly sandwich, is it a fish sandwich, is it ham and cheese, is it turkey? (Video observation, 01/29/16)

When asked to comment on this instance in the play-back session, Ms. Lopez responded that she purposefully used metaphoric language on a regular basis with an effort to make students think holistically and in abstract terms. It is worth mentioning that some teachers used metaphors and idiomatic language more frequently than others. Thus, being an omnipresent element of some teachers’ classrooms, metaphors constituted a component of the writing instruction, though to a different degree for every teacher.
Another form of how reflection took place in the analyzed video observations was through scoring activity. The analysis of video observations, teachers’ interviews, and playback sessions revealed that scoring was an important and large component of writing classrooms. It was especially true later in the academic year, when students got familiarized and exposed to the details and nuances of the state assessment rubric.

Additionally, the teachers drew students’ attention to the mistakes and drawbacks that could make them lose testing points, and to what could be done to improve the score. The quote below from Ms. Rodriguez’ classroom observation was a typical example of a scoring instance:

Looking at PFO…is her paper fairly organized? Yes, so I know that I am not even going to pay attention to 1 and 2, because I know that the paper is higher than either 1 or 2. She has an organized paper. (Video observation, 02/11/16)

Like in the excerpt above, all teachers believed that the more students got familiar with the rubric and learned to adequately score their work, the more they would be able to see the weak aspects of their writing in order to avoid them in the future. The analysis did not reveal any instances where teachers would build on the moments of reflection to scaffold writing instruction further.

**Summary of reflection as a tool to evaluate analytic text-based writing.** IRWI was also characterized with a reflection component in the form of applying metaphorical language and using a scoring activity. Thus, the teachers focused their instruction on analytic text-based writing, provided explicit instruction, included features of academic language, and also taught students how to objectively score their papers and monitor their progress in preparation towards a state assessment.
**Emphasis on Genre**

The last characteristic of IRWI was the emphasis on genre purpose and text structure within a genre. Even though this theme was not as prominent as the other ones described earlier in this chapter, it is important to mention here, since it also emerged as a finding. This component of analytic text-based writing, as a form of IRWI, did not pertain to genre-informed instruction, but rather to a genre awareness of students. I purposefully used the word “genre” in the title of this component because teachers introduced students to two different “genres,” and compared/contrasted them (though in a five paragraph structure), so that students could differentiate the purposes of genre and write in response to a prompt.

**Comparing and contrasting two types of essays.** Most of the teachers reviewed, compared, and contrasted opinion and informative essays (two types of genres tested in reading and writing) and their purposes in order to highlight differences and similarities. This type of instruction normally took the form of a class-based discussion and included a review of the genre “features” (as referred to by the teachers), such as opinion, essay structure, and features of academic language. Some teachers had a more elaborated and detailed comparison of genres using a graphic organizer, whereas others only orally discussed the differences and similarities.

In the quote from Ms. Lopez’s classroom observation, she briefly compared and contrasted two types of essays:

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2 Genre names are used here as referred to by the district: informative and opinion/opinion-based. It should be noted that most genre scholars do not view opinion as a genre by itself, but a preliminary sub-genre of argument (Brisk, 2015).
When you are given an informative essay, you are not giving your opinion, you are not telling the way you feel about something...They are just asking you to provide information. And when you have an opinion essay, you have to tell how you feel about something. (Video observation, 01/26/16)

As can be seen in this example, Ms. Lopez only generally compared the purpose of two types of genres. Overall, the teachers’ interviews indicated that it was necessary to review, compare, and contrast the purposes of genres because students could mix them up and provide an opinion in an informative essay. When instructing genres the teachers had different approaches. For example, emphasizing key words for an opinion essay (“I believe,” “I think,” “In my opinion,” etc.) one teacher instructed a plethora of opinion words, whereas the other two teachers limited EBs to only a few of those words: “I tell them to keep a couple, to practice a couple… as they get better, I tell them they can branch out. But usually with ESOL, they will stay with two or three...” (Ms. Maceda).

Thus, even across the five teachers, there were different approaches towards the instruction of opinion words, in particular instruction for EBs, similar to the pattern that emerged with the instruction of transition words. Some teachers provided a variety of choices for the whole class, without dropping the expectations and requirements for EBs, whereas other teachers instructed and expected EBs to use only two or three key opinion words.

**Summary of IRWI in 4th grade Classrooms with EBs**

In this section, I will summarize the main findings reported in Chapter 4 on the nature of IRWI. The distribution of instructional time allocated to different themes across five teachers can be found in Figure 1.
Accumulative report of percentages in Figure 1 shows that four teachers devoted most of their instructional time to explicit instruction of analytical text-based writing, followed by instruction of analytic text-based writing. Occurrence of reflection was high between two teachers, whereas attention to features of academic language and emphasis on genre purpose were the least frequently found instructional areas across all the teachers. The distribution of themes as a holistic nature of IRWI is graphically represented in Figure 2 below.
Figure 2. Characteristics of IRWI across the five teachers.

As can be seen in Figure 2, the most central theme of IRWI was instruction of analytic text-based writing, which was supported by explicit instruction (modeling, feedback, meaning-making, and instruction of strategies) throughout different stages of the writing process. The other three characteristics of IRWI were features of academic language, genre purpose, and reflection, which were paid less instructional attention, though to a different extent across the teachers.

In five analyzed classroom observations, IRWI was realized through the instruction of analytic text-based writing in three areas represented in the state assessment rubric—Purpose, Focus, and Organization; Evidence and Elaboration; and Conventions and Grammar. With some differences across the five teachers, they instructed IRWI in the form of a five-paragraph essay with a formulaic structure and organization utilizing
the reasons and evidence extracted from the sources, as well as elaboration from students’ background knowledge and personal experiences.

The five teachers provided explicit instruction of analytic text-based writing through modeling, feedback, instruction of strategies, and meaning-making. Incorporation of these types of explicit instruction served to prepare students to write a structured and focused essay (Purpose, Focus, and Organization), include relevant reasons, cite evidence properly, and provide elaboration (Evidence and Elaboration), as well as avoid a pattern of mistakes in conventions (Conventions and Grammar). IRWI also included an emphasis on the features of academic language. All five teachers had instruction pertaining to transitions and academic vocabulary, which were explicitly emphasized in the state assessment. The other three features—figurative language, voice, and complex sentences—were present in the instruction of only one teacher, even though the other teachers emphasized importance of these features in the interviews.

Additionally, IRWI was characterized by reflection in the five classroom observations, which included using metaphoric language and engaging in scoring activity. Teachers often commented in the classroom on the nature of writing as a recursive process. Nevertheless, students produced only one draft in the analyzed classrooms, which teachers explained in their interviews by time limitation. Scoring activity was also utilized to engage students in a reflection on their process of writing. However, teachers did not build from scoring instances to connect with future revisions of students’ essays. Lastly, students were only exposed to instruction for the two focal genres assessed in the state testing—opinion-based and informative.
Chapter Five

Teachers’ Perceptions of Integrated Reading-Writing Instruction for Emergent Bilingual Students

This chapter addresses the second research question: What are teachers’ perceptions of integrated reading-writing instruction for emergent bilingual students? I will begin with an overview of teachers’ perceptions of integrated reading-writing instruction (IRWI) in comparison with their previous forms of writing instruction. Next, I will present the main themes that emerged of their understandings and perceptions of IRWI, including advantages, disadvantages, and needed changes. The findings reported here are based on teachers’ interviews and video playback sessions, along with video observations of their instruction.

Overview of Teacher’s Perceptions and Understandings of IRWI

When providing a general perspective on IRWI, all teachers compared it to previous forms of writing instruction they had implemented in their classrooms for the purpose of the state assessment. They also stated whether they were in favor of the IRWI approach, as compared with their previous approach to writing instruction, and provided reasoning. Namely, when describing their perceptions, the teachers spoke about the strengths and weaknesses of IRWI.

Ms. Gilbert: “They are Getting a Better Education”

Ms. Gilbert (55 years-old, self-identified as black) had earned a Master’s degree and taught a total of 19 years, with 15 of those years teaching the 4th grade at the time of data collection. According to Ms. Gilbert (all names used are pseudonyms), writing instruction changed significantly from the previous state standards and assessment (FCAT) to the current FSA, which integrated reading and writing. From her perspective,
the previous writing instruction had focused on “random topics” and not related to the reading of texts. After the adoption of new standards, there existed an explicit relationship between writing instruction and the reading of sources. Additionally, the genres taught during writing instruction changed. In the previous state assessment, narrative and expository had been the focal genres, whereas now it was informative and opinion-based. When describing the new form of writing instruction (IRWI), Ms. Gilbert underlined that it became analytic in nature, which presupposed supporting opinion with the evidence gathered from the sources that students read. This particular characteristic of writing instruction—basing opinion on the reasons and evidence extracted from sources—comprised the main difference between the two types of writing instruction. Ms. Gilbert had a mixed attitude towards IRWI. At the beginning of the interview she stated, “It is better for them, way better. It is harder to teach it, and it takes more time, but it is worth it; I think it is good.” However, by the end of the interview she identified several disadvantages of IRWI, which will be described in detail in the corresponding section of this chapter.

Ms. Lopez: “I Actually Think [IRWI] is Easier”

Ms. Lopez (53 years-old, self-identified as white) had earned a Master’s degree and had taught a total of more than 30 years, with 19 of those years teaching the 4th grade at the time of data collection. Her perception of IRWI could be best described with the quote from her interview: “Writing has shifted from that brain-to-paper model to what is now more of college preparatory type of writing” (Ms. Lopez, 11/02/16). She stated that the old type of writing instruction (FCAT) had been implemented without any literature support, whereas IRWI included not only on reading sources, but also citing text
evidence. Ms. Lopez called this type of writing “better and easier to teach” because now students had a model with which to support their writing. Ms. Lopez was in favor of IRWI more than any other teacher interviewed.

**Ms. Maceda: “I Find it Really Challenging for ELLs, at Least for the Ones Who at All don’t Speak any English”**

Ms. Maceda (44 years-old, self-identified as white) had earned a Bachelor’s degree, taught a total of thirteen years, with six of those years teaching the 4th grade at the time of data collection. In line with the previous two teachers, Ms. Maceda underlined the difference between the previous (without text support) and current form (text-based) of writing instruction. From her perspective, during the previous state standards students needed “to think outside of the box… like out of the blue, [without any text support]” while now the essence of IRWI was writing from sources. Despite the fact that Ms. Maceda identified the difference in the nature of the old and the current writing approaches in terms of absence vs. presence of text support, she perceived IRWI to be problematic for some EBs (in particular ESOL level 1). She explained that sometimes EBs had below-grade level reading and comprehension skills that hindered them from fully comprehending texts and writing text-based essays.

**Ms. Nielson: “I Can Honestly Say We are Teaching Them to Be Long-Lasting Writers”**

Ms. Nielson (34 years-old, self-identified as indigenous) had earned a Master’s Degree, and taught a total of twelve years, with five of those years teaching the 4th grade at the time of data collection. Ms. Nielson’s general attitude towards IRWI was that it was more rigorous than the previous state assessment because it was based on the notion
of text complexity. This teacher differentiated between standards as a mark of students’ growth by the end of the academic year and standards implementation. She viewed the first as a positive change that happened after the adoption of CCSS because standards emphasized integration of reading and writing, while the latter, standards implementation, constituted a problematic area of writing instruction. Thus, Ms. Nielson perceived standards and IRWI as overall a positive change in the writing instruction; however, she saw many challenges and obstacles in implementation of this approach.

Ms. Rodriguez: “There is No Chance for Students to Be Creative”

Ms. Rodriguez, (35 years-old, self-identified as white) had earned an Education Specialist degree, and had taught a total of twelve years, with six of those years teaching the 4th grade at the time of data collection. Ms. Rodriguez’ perception of IRWI was similar to that of Ms. Maceda’s and based on teachers’ perceived shortcomings, which will be addressed in depth in the section on IRWI disadvantages. According to Ms. Rodriguez, even though the current standards paid more attention to writing, the total score of writing was worth less on the state assessment than it used to be. This disadvantage was based on the integrated nature of IRWI, where reading and writing were assessed together with one holistic score. Additionally, Ms. Rodriguez asserted that during the previous state assessment, EBs could use a dictionary to translate the prompt and help in their writing. Now the existing accommodations for EBs, such as permission to use a dictionary and extended test time, did not support EBs’ writing because the assessment was also based on text comprehension. Hence, Ms. Rodriguez had a generally negative attitude towards IRWI.
Summary of Teachers’ Overall Perceptions

Out of the five teachers, three teachers had some favorable attitudes towards IRWI, emphasizing positive changes that occurred during the transition to new standards and state assessment, while the other two teachers’ perceptions indicated the disadvantages of IRWI. Across all five teachers the number of identified disadvantages of IRWI significantly outweighed the advantages. This fact might be explained by insufficient professional development support from the state and the district during the transition to the new approach for writing instruction. Teachers’ experiences and perceptions of their professional preparedness will be addressed at the end of this chapter.

Advantages of Integrated Reading Writing Instruction

A Better Approach for Writing Instruction

According to all five teachers, IRWI was a better approach to writing instruction compared to their previous approach (writing an essay in a response to a prompt without any texts support) based on different reasons. Some teachers acknowledged IRWI in general being a better approach to writing instruction (not text-based) than the previous one because of three reasons: it connected reading and writing, helped EBs with writing because they had a text in front of them, and prepared students for college-like writing.

Connected reading and writing. All five teachers acknowledged that the link between reading and writing had been absent in the previous state standards and assessment when writing was not integrated within reading, whereas the IRWI approach explicitly made the connection. For example, Ms. Gilbert accentuated this idea: “For me, reading and writing—you cannot separate them. You can’t separate reading and writing
because these good readers are the best writers. The ones that enjoy reading so much—
these are my best writers” (Interview, 11/09/15).

Similar to Ms. Gilbert, some other teachers also saw a positive change in the
writing instruction approach after implementation of the new state assessment. They
found this approach more difficult to teach than the previous one; however, the
connection between reading and writing made instruction stronger and helped to prepare
better writers. All five teachers unanimously asserted that writing instruction changed
significantly in the way that integrated reading and writing, but only one teacher
explicitly talked about this change as having an advantage for EB’s writing.

**Improved reading comprehension.** From the perspective of four teachers, IRWI
also improved reading comprehension. For example, Ms. Nielson explained her students’
improved reading comprehension when they were engaged in IRWI:

I know that with all the writing that we teach, the kids’ reading automatically
improves. Because with their planner they are being forced … to find three main
ideas that come directly from your sources. So, in order to do that, you have to be
able to synthesize that information. (Interview, 11/08/16)

Ms. Nielson believed that IRWI advanced reading comprehension not only
because students were supposed to read several sources before they started writing, but
also because they had to work closely with texts at planning stage, where they extracted
reasons and evidence from sources. Planning was one of the areas that changed
significantly with the adoption of new standards. Before, students needed to plan their
writing without text support and come up with reasons explaining their opinion, while
now planning has become very text dependent. Out of five teachers, Ms. Nielson saw
more advantages brought by IRWI to the adopted writing instruction than any other teacher. Along with improved reading comprehension, some other positive changes that she indicated were: An increase in rigor in terms of using sources with high text complexity, incorporation of more developed planning, and infusion of reading and writing. The other teachers who mentioned improved reading comprehension as an advantage of IRWI, also stated that the nature of the newer approach made students read more, and, as a consequence, should improve their reading comprehension.

**Text-based writing.** An additional reason of why teachers believed IRWI to be better was its text-based nature. For the previous state assessment, students were supposed to write in response to a prompt without any reference to texts, whereas now they needed to base their essays on three sources, which according to the teachers helped EBs. For example, Ms. Lopez elaborated that this improvement in writing instruction created an advantage for EBs:

> Now you have a text in front of you when before you did not. So, actually that is a pro for text-based writing for the ELLs. Now you have something to fall back on and look at, when before it was just you creating the whole thing. You were given a prompt, but nothing to read. (Interview, 11/02/16)

It should be stated here that Ms. Lopez was in favor of IRWI and repeatedly emphasized throughout her interview that having a text in front of students, especially EBs, was an advantage. The other teachers viewed text-based nature of IRWI as a limitation because, according to them, in order to write from sources, EBs needed to comprehend sources first. Ms. Rodriguez, for example, saw primarily the disadvantages of IRWI, as it was indicated in her overall perspective, one of which was reading
comprehension. She stated that having a text in front of EBs allowed them to write a
“scorable” essay; however, she did not say that it helped students to develop their reading
skills. This perspective will be described in the section on disadvantages of IRWI.

**College-like writing.** The last advantage that the adoption of a new curriculum
and state assessment brought, from the perspective of the teachers, was that it introduced
college-like writing, which would help students in middle and high school and make
them college-ready. In the following quote Ms. Nielson referred to the analytic text-based
writing as a “college research paper:”

> But they are basically writing a college paper, that is basically what it is—a
college research paper. If this is something they continue to practice in the other
grades, they will be able to have it as a skill when they enter college. (Interview,
11/08/16)

Three out of five teachers indicated being in favor of this approach to writing
instruction because it helped students to write college-like essays and would prepare them
for their future careers. The other two teachers also mentioned that this type of writing
instruction produced college-like writing; however, they did not view it as a positive
change. On the contrary, they saw it as a disadvantage by requiring a cognitive task not
corresponding to the developmental level of 4th graders.

**Summary of IRWI advantages.** From the perspective of the five teachers, the
adoption of a new curriculum and implementation of a new state assessment represented
a number of advantages, although there were mixed opinions among the teachers about
whether or not these were actually advantages for 4th grade EBs. First, the new approach
to writing instruction emphasized the link between two domains of literacy—reading and
writing. Second, it improved reading comprehension. Third, it provided a text for EBs as a foundation of their writing. Fourth, it would prepare students for college-like writing.

**Disadvantages of IRWI**

In this section, I describe the disadvantages of IRWI that emerged from the teachers’ interviews and playback sessions. These disadvantages were broadly grouped into three categories—challenges for EBs, high stakes testing as a driving force of instruction, and lack of professional preparedness for IRWI. Each category will be described separately below. Similar to the advantages, the disadvantages were identified across all or most teachers based on the cross-case comparison.

**Challenges of Integrated Reading-Writing Instruction for EBs**

**Text comprehension and vocabulary.** Text comprehension was seen by the teachers as both an advantage and a disadvantage—“it is good and bad.” This contradicting perspective towards one skill might indicate that teachers felt lost in requirements and experienced a lack of supporting information. From one side, they saw IRWI as an improvement of writing instruction format when compared to the previous writing approach and state assessment (FCAT). From the other side, however, they saw it as an obstacle for EBs (ESOL level one and two), whose reading proficiency level sometimes did not allow them to fully comprehend sources. The current format of IRWI, which was analytic text-based writing, made students’ writing contingent upon their text comprehension. The lack of text comprehension directly affected students’ work with the sources, where they were supposed to extract necessary information and use it in their essays. Four out of five teachers were concerned about EBs’ achievement; especially for students categorized in ESOL level one. Their concern was that some of those students
had come to the 4th grade not being able to speak English and in a few months they were expected to produce a five-paragraph essay, which was assessed according to the same requirements as the writing of monolingual English-speaking students:

The language barrier is huge...cause comprehension is such a big part of this writing test now. I have to tackle the fact that they need to understand what the source is about first, and then once they do that, we have to go back to the prompt and say OK, let's see what the prompt is asking us to do. (Interview, 11/14/16)

Echoing the idea expressed in the excerpt from Ms. Rodriguez’ interview above, all teachers emphasized that their main challenge in writing instruction was directly linked to the form of writing assessment—analytic text-based writing. In order for students to pass the assessment, teachers had to teach not only writing skills, but also simultaneously reading comprehension as the main prerequisite of successful text-based writing. I should note that work with the sources happened solely with one purpose—finding three reasons and evidence that could be incorporated in the essay. The instruction of text comprehension at a deeper level (e.g., text features, purpose, text structure, answering comprehension questions) happened during the reading block in relation to other texts, which were used specifically for reading instruction. Thus, teachers stated that during the writing block students had to start writing in response to sources without necessary time devoted to deep understanding of those texts.

Another challenge for EBs identified by the teachers and directly linked to text comprehension was a “limited vocabulary.” Ms. Lopez commented that this challenge might be explained by the fact that many students primarily used their L1 outside of school context:
The children in our community have a limited vocabulary, because the language that they speak at home is not the English language...So, we have to expose them a lot. That is why I think teacher modeling is very important. (Interview, 11/02/16)

The teachers reported that they addressed academic vocabulary while working with the text sources, doing annotations, filling out graphic organizers, and identifying the key academic words, which students needed to use in their writing.

Notably, text-based nature of IRWI was seen as both a disadvantage and an advantage, as described in the section above, in which teachers expressed the opinion that having a text in front of students made EBs’ writing easier. Some teachers acknowledged this controversy themselves calling IRWI “good and bad.” IRWI provided students with texts to write from, but, at the same time their comprehension levels needed to be at the 4th grade level in order to fully comprehend sources and develop a thoroughly structured essay based on the sources.

**Evidence and elaboration and absence of background knowledge.** Another challenge, characterized by the teachers as the most difficult out of the three areas on the state assessment rubric, was instruction of evidence and elaboration; from teachers’ perspectives, students varied in their background knowledge in relation to the topics used. The teachers explained this challenge by saying that this form of writing assessment was based on complex topics, which EBs often had neither personal connection and experiences with, nor background knowledge. In this regard, students could not elaborate on the reasons extracted from the texts when they were supposed to provide a personal anecdote or additional information in relation to the text content. Ms. Neilson explained
that absence of background knowledge served as an obstacle for students to engage in analytic text-based writing:

This population is very low, in the sense academically low. They don't have academic vocabulary, they don't have many experiences, which affect how much background knowledge they have with as simple as—if we are writing about plastic bottles, they don't know what tap water is. If we are writing about recycling, they don't know what a landfill is. (Interview, 11/08/16)

As perceived and explained by Ms. Nielson, the fact that students did not have experiences with recycling and plastic bottles prevented them from elaborating on these topics and incorporating personal anecdotes in their writing. In addition, other teachers stated that topics for text-based writing provided by the district were not engaging for 4th graders. This notion also contributed to the fact that students could not elaborate on these topics, as they did not feel interested or motivated.

**Grammar as a challenge for EBs.** Grammar was identified as another problematic area for EBs’ writing from the perspective of teachers, though not to the same extent as the previous challenges. Ms. Gilbert pointed out particular difficulties for EBs, such as sentence syntax and subject-verb agreement:

The ESOL students, their weakness is in the structure of the sentences, what we call domain 3, which is mechanics of the language…When they grab a pencil and try to put into a thought [start writing]—like [correctly using] subject and verb agreement—forget about that. (Interview, 11/09/16)

Despite the fact that grammar was also an area on the state assessment rubric, Evidence and Elaboration was more frequently addressed in classroom observations and
teachers’ interviews. A possible explanation could be that out of the ten scoring points on the writing assessment, Grammar was given only two points maximum, whereas Evidence and Elaboration and Purpose, Focus, and Organization were weighted four points each. Another reason why teachers may have devoted more instructional time to Evidence and Elaboration than Grammar could be that in order to score low in the Conventions and Grammar domain of the assessment rubric, students needed to have a consistent pattern of mistakes; for example, misspellings or improper usage of capitalizations. In this regard, teachers often emphasized the importance of revision during the writing process to avoid a pattern of mistakes.

**Lack of students’ motivation and family support.** The last two components in the category of teachers’ perceived challenges for EBs (and teaching EBs) were related—lack of motivation and parental support. When talking about motivation, teachers identified two possible reasons for a lack in students’ motivation. One reason was linked to the absence of interest to learn and study, whereas another reason was related to the structure of writing instruction, predetermined by the curriculum and state assessment format. Ms. Rodriguez was the only teacher who linked these two factors together—lack of motivation and a format of writing instruction:

> By the time we get to that part where we are actually ready to write, the students are like fried. There is nothing left of them cause they have just spent all of their effort trying to translate three stories first, to then be able to go back and actually write what it is asking them to write…Every other week we just start all over again this horrible cycle. (Interview, 11/14/16)
Ms. Rodriguez suggested that a possible explanation of students’ lack of motivation in writing was built into the design of the curriculum with the iterative two weeks instruction per genre, and into the structure of the analytic text-based writing, where students were expected to write according to a formula. Thus, some teachers believed that the reason why students might have lacked motivation and were not engaged in the text-based writing was external to instruction, be it the curriculum or assessment format, but not internal—teacher’s attitude and instruction. Nevertheless, all the teachers stated that students’ motivation could be directly affected and boosted by parental/family support. It should be stated here that the level of family support varied across the five teachers. According to one teacher, she did not have any parental support, which posed an additional challenge for her teaching. In sum, all teachers expressed their opinion that motivation and parental support were crucial factors in teaching in general, as well as in writing instruction. However, this factor was not relevant for all the teachers, with some of their students having more parental involvement and support than others.

**High Stakes Testing as a Driving Force of Writing Instruction**

A second category of IRWI disadvantages emerged from the analysis of teachers’ interviews, play-back sessions, and video observations was that the writing instruction across the five teachers was very structured and built around the three areas on the state assessment rubric. High stakes testing became the driving force of writing instruction and created the following drawbacks of IRWI: Absence of creativity and a lack of genre variety, mismatch to the developmental level of 4th graders, and lack of an accurate picture of writing performance.
**Absence of creativity and no genre variety.** A disadvantage of IRWI that emerged from all five teachers’ interviews was that it lacked creativity and did not provide a variety of genres for writing instruction. Teachers explained it was due to the state assessment requirements, which devoted attention to only two genres:

> It was like with [old curriculum], we could not take it anymore—this expository and this narrative. All the kids in Florida began their writing in the same way. It was like little robots we are creating. We want them to express freely…or we want them all these kids with the same—“as it is stated in the passage.” Is that what we want? (Ms. Gilbert, 11/09/16)

As suggested by Ms. Gilbert, the structured and formulaic writing that the new form of assessment generated, did not provide any affordances for creativity in writing. Additionally, Ms. Gerber expressed a concern that this formulaic type of writing might be dangerous and create a generation of structured writers who would not know how to be creative.

**Approach not corresponding to a 4th grade developmental stage.** Two teachers indicated that IRWI did not correspond to the developmental stage of 4th graders. This was another limitation, but was seen as both an advantage and a disadvantage. As it was reported in the section on advantages, many teachers suggested that IRWI was a college-like style of writing aimed at preparing students for college. At the same time, however, some teachers believed that 4th grade was too early to introduce this type of writing to students. For example, Ms. Rodriguez explained:

> I just really don’t think that they are at that ability level to be able to differentiate what is actually going on. They can comprehend the text better, so you will get a
little bit better writing style that way, but as far as to put that reason and that
evidence together coherently, I don’t think [it happens]. (Interview, 11/14/16)

The disadvantage that Ms. Rodriguez talked about—mismatch between
developmental stage and the approach to writing instruction—was explained by a lack of
creativity and absence of genre variety. Teachers advocated for narrative as an
“appropriate” and obligatory genre of writing instruction in the elementary school, when
students were very creative and enjoyed story-telling, as opposed to writing opinion-
based and informative essays.

**Inaccurate picture of writing performance.** Another limitation indicated by
three teachers was that IRWI in the form of analytic text-based writing did not provide an
accurate picture of the students’ writing performance. Due to the fact that the nature of
this approach was based on integrating reading and writing, students were assessed on
their ability to read the texts, comprehend them, and write an essay in response to those
texts. In this regard, only 10% of the overall score corresponded to the writing
performance:

> Since writing is part of the reading, they just get a score for both. So, we don’t
know exactly how they did in the writing, but I would love to know—OK, my
students were stronger in domain one, or two, or three…Before we used to see
that, the scores for writing were apart for the scores for reading. (Ms. Gilbert
interview, 11/09/16)

Ms. Gilbert accentuated that knowing separate scores for reading and writing
would allow teachers to find out the weak areas of their instruction in relation to the state
assessment rubric—Purpose, Focus, Organization; Evidence and Elaboration; and
Conventions and Grammar. This suggested that teachers would like to have a separate score of students’ writing performance as feedback on their instruction to know specific areas where they needed to improve their teaching.

**Mismatch between assessment rubric and anchor papers.** In addition to the limitation of a holistic score of reading and writing performance, teachers pointed out that the state assessment rubric did not match the anchor papers provided by the district from the previous assessment years. For instance, two teachers stated that figurative language was not indicated as an obligatory component in the assessment rubric and was not encouraged by the district. This inconsistency became clear to teachers after they explored district-provided anchor papers. The mismatch between the scoring criteria (rubric) and actual scoring (anchor papers) left teachers lost in the requirements from the inconsistent information coming from the district and the state.

**Lack of Professional Preparedness for Integrated Reading-Writing Instruction**

The third main disadvantage teachers perceived was lack of professional preparedness to teach IRWI. Teachers pointed out that there was, in particular, insufficient support from the district, limited and contradictory information about the state assessment, and absence of high quality professional development.

**Insufficient support from the district.** Most teachers stated that even though they were provided with some graphic organizers and mini-lessons (short focused delivery of explicit instruction), they needed more support: “I also wonder—do they have to have a connection [elaboration] in every one of the passages? I need to know what they want in the state of Florida” (Ms. Gilbert). Out of five teachers only one was satisfied with the level of support available during the transition to a new curriculum and state
assessment. The other four teachers accentuated that they were provided with some materials from the district, but this level of support was not adequate.

**Limited and contradictory information.** The analysis indicated that the four teachers who felt lack of support pointed to several problematic areas. One of the problems, emphasized by two teachers, was that the district did not provide anchor papers on the prompt that was tested. In the description below Ms. Rodriguez commented on absence of any support and lack of information:

I think they left us out in the cold, I am not gonna lie. We had no anchor papers. What has been released has been very few and far between. So, at time we were feeling we were going blind[ly] (sic). We are doing what we feel as what they [students] need depending on the very limited amount that they have released.

[Interview, 11/14/16]

The same issue of limited information was also raised in several teachers’ interviews, where they expressed that the only guidance provided by the district was the scoring rubric, whereas the rest of the information was incomplete and constantly changing. The excerpt from Ms. Rodriguez’ interview above indicated that the absence of anchor papers on the tested prompt added to the limited information released by the district. Two teachers stated that they would have liked to see the anchor papers written in response to the actual prompt that had been used in the state assessment of the previous academic year.

**Absence of high quality professional development.** In addition to the issues identified above, teachers did not find professional development provided by the district to be helpful or supportive of their instruction. For example, Ms. Rodriguez commented
that the materials provided to teachers during professional development sessions were not feasible to use at the day of the state assessment:

We want to know strategies—how can we help these kids really grab the evidence from the story, and then grab it and use it in their writing. They gave us different graphic organizers and stuff like that, which can be helpful at times, but then at the day of the test, you are not gonna have a chance to have kids set up a nice three column organizer. (Interview, 11/14/16)

Several teachers voiced the concern that the district provided materials and professional development with a variety of strategies, but teachers would like to see other types of support—how to incorporate evidence from sources and provide elaboration on the reasons used. One teacher expressed her opinion that none of the district professional development sessions that she attended were helpful to her.

**Summary of IRWI Disadvantages**

Across teachers, there were three main themes for disadvantages to the IRWI approach. First, the teachers identified several challenges of this approach specifically for EBs: they need to comprehend grade level texts and to have a developed vocabulary; difficult to provide evidence and elaboration; absence of background knowledge in relation to topics used; lack of motivation; and difficulties with using grammar. The second disadvantage was that high stakes testing was the driving force of writing instruction. The teachers stated that IRWI did not correspond to the developmental stage of 4th graders, that there was an absence of creativity and an accurate picture on the writing performance. Lastly, they felt a lack of professional preparedness to teach IRWI.
Needed Adaptations to IRWI

This section will be devoted to solutions or adaptations that, from teachers’ perspectives, needed to take place in order to improve IRWI and to support EBs’ writing. These adaptations will address the disadvantages of IRWI described in the previous section.

Writing Instruction to Begin in Kindergarten and Lower Elementary School

Despite the fact that writing instruction was in the district’s Pacing Guide for earlier grades, all fourth grade teachers were concerned that writing in general was not taught earlier; and, in particular, in third grade when teachers focused only on reading instruction. The reading assessment in the third grade has higher stakes than in earlier grades because if a student does not read at the third grade level, s/he does not get promoted to the fourth grade (Florida Statutes Chapter 1008. 25, Part I, 2011).

Consequently, the challenge of instructing analytic text-based writing was exacerbated because some students had come to the 4th grade not knowing how to write a sentence or a paragraph. Ms. Maceda stated that if writing instruction started in the earlier grades, 4th grade teachers would be able to concentrate on the skills targeted specifically at this grade:

And then when they come to us, some of them are like the sheet of paper... So, now you have to start from scratch. But if they had a base or foundation, which comes from the earlier grades; I am talking [about] kindergarten, because now in kindergarten they have them writing. By the time they come to us—all we are doing is polishing, but at least they have a base. (Interview, 11/10/16)
All five teachers advocated for starting writing instruction much earlier than the 4th grade—even in kindergarten as well. For example, Ms. Gilbert suggested that kindergarten students would be able to draw pictures and scribble in response to a simple opinion question. Another teacher expressed that it was “not fair” (Ms. Rodriguez) that all the load of writing instruction was given only to the 4th grade teachers.

**Genre Variety**

The second adaptation that would need to be implemented, according to the teachers, was including more genre variety into writing instruction to address the disadvantage of the absence of creativity. Four teachers repeatedly stated throughout their interviews that there should be more creative writing, such as writing of stories, plays, and poems:

“They should write other things, such as plays, creative stories, because that is part of writing. One of my writing goals is be able to write across the genres, write a biography, not just write an opinion, or give information based on a text. I think it is very regimented. (Ms. Lopez interview, 11/02/16)”

Notably, with the current state assessment requirements and speed of pacing guides, four teachers stated that the only time when they could incorporate some instruction of creative writing was after the testing period, namely, at the end of the academic year (March-June) when teachers had some freedom to make writing instruction more engaging through projects and hands-on activities. The fifth teacher indicated that she managed to find time for creative writing during the academic year. Additionally, two teachers suggested that writing should be “age appropriate” in terms of genres instructed:
And elementary students right now don't want to think analytically about bike-sharing program, and how it is going to work in their community...I mean, I understand that we want to bring the students and make sure that they are college ready, but it is a little much, in my opinion. (Ms. Rodriguez interview, 11/14/16)

Ms. Rodriguez and others argued that there should be a balance between college-preparedness and free/creative writing (i.e. narrative genre) instruction, which would allow students to explore writing in its diverse and multiple forms.

**More Accommodations for Emergent Bilinguals**

The teachers also believed that there should be more accommodations during the writing assessment for EBs. With adoption of new writing standards in the form of analytic text-based writing there were only two accommodations in place during the testing time, one was permission to use a dictionary and the other was unlimited time to write an essay. Some teachers suggested that having fewer sources to read would make the writing assessment more feasible for EBs to complete. Teachers explained the necessity for this accommodation by highlighting the mismatch between the high text complexity and below grade level reading skills of some students, in particular those designated as ESOL 1, who typically come to the 4th grade not speaking any English. Additionally, one teacher pointed out that some prompts were mixed up in such a way that students were expected to do both—provide information and give an opinion within one essay; this kind of two-part prompt confused EBs. The teacher, who suggested this adaptation, advocated for assigning only one-part prompts, which would make it clear within which genre students needed to write—informative or opinion.
**Writing in first language as an option.** Another accommodation suggested by the teachers was having an option for EBs to write a whole, or a section of the essay, in the first language (L1). Two teachers expressed their opinion that writing in L1 (Spanish) would help EBs, because the ability to write, regardless of the language, showed students’ text comprehension, which was a pivotal point in the analytic text-based writing. They believed that a language transfer of writing from L1 to English would happen later as students got more comfortable with the English language. One teacher, who was opposed, was against students’ writing in L1. She explained her position from the point of view that students needed to get used to the English language as fast as possible. Moreover, this teacher stated that the dictionary that EBs were allowed to use should be English-English, not English-Spanish.

**Additional adaptations.** Individual teachers voiced different adaptations that would need to take place during writing instruction. These adaptations included the following: 1) testing format outside of the classroom (take-home writing assessment or a portfolio of writing progress over an academic year); 2) writing instruction across content areas; 3) using materials feasible to use (provided on printouts but not in textbooks because students cannot write in them); 4) writing instruction without time constraints (teachers stated that it was spread across the week with 30 minutes a day during the writing block); 5) having a multimedia component as one of the resources that students read; and 6) providing less structured writing instruction.

**Summary of Needed Adaptations to IRWI.** The teachers provided a number of adaptations that would need to be implemented in order to improve writing instruction for EBs. Even though writing should be instructed in every grade throughout the elementary
school (Language Arts Florida Standards K-12), teachers emphasized that EBs often came to the 4th grade not being able to write a sentence or a short paragraph. The teachers expressed their opinion that they would like IRWI to be introduced in kindergarten and lower elementary grades. They also believed that there should be more writing of other genres, in particular narrative, which would correspond to the developmental age of 4th graders. Additionally, all the teachers advocated for more assessment accommodations for EBs.

Summary of Teachers’ Perceptions of IRWI

In this chapter, I examined the perspectives and attitudes of teachers towards IRWI. Even though teachers saw the advantages of IRWI as a new form of writing instruction and state assessment, they also saw its disadvantages where the latter significantly outweighed the former. The main advantages of IRWI, according to most of the teachers, included: 1) it provided a better approach of writing instruction because it connected reading and writing and improved reading comprehension; 2) it represented a text-based writing that constituted an advantage for EBs because students had a text in front of them as a foundation of their writing; and 3) it constituted a college-like writing approach that would prepare students for higher grade levels and college.

When providing disadvantages of IRWI, teachers highlighted several main issues. First, language barrier, reading comprehension, vocabulary, evidence and elaboration, usage of grammar, and low motivation posed challenges for EBs’ text-based writing. Secondly, teachers believed that IRWI lacked creativity and variety of genres. Accordingly, they thought this approach did not correspond to the 4th grade developmental stage. The scoring system of the writing assessment also represented a
difficulty for 4th grade ELA teachers. Namely, teachers were concerned that the assessment of analytic text-based writing did not show an accurate picture of students’ writing performance. Moreover, there was a mismatch between the state assessment rubric and anchor papers provided by the district. These kinds of inconsistencies put an additional pressure on teachers to instruct analytic text-based writing.

There were also a number of challenges pinpointed by teachers, which they had to face during the transition to a new curriculum and state assessment. Thus, they reported that they experienced an insufficient level of support when implementing the IRWI approach, had limited and contradictory information coming from the district and the state, and did not view professional development provided by the district as helpful or of high quality.

In order to address some of the challenges of writing instruction introduced with a new form of state standards and assessment, teachers recommended several adaptations that would need to take place, including starting IRWI instruction in kindergarten and lower elementary grades, incorporating a wider genre variety in writing instruction, and including more accommodations for EBs.
Chapter Six

Types of Critical Knowledge Used by Teachers to Implement IRWI

This chapter focuses on the third research question of this secondary study: What types of critical knowledge do teachers use when implementing integrating reading-writing instruction? To address this research question, I build on the findings that emerged from the analysis of video observations and interviews in the previous two chapters. I applied a narrower lens of a deductive approach to the coded data to explore the extent to which critical knowledge features (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000) were found within the five teachers’ instruction. In the following, I will first outline the features of critical knowledge as defined in the model by Fitzgerald and Shanahan (2000). Then I will report how each of them was present in the classroom instruction of five teachers.

Definition of Critical Knowledge

According to the developmental model of critical markers (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000), reading and writing should be effectively instructed together because they are based on correlated mental processes. There are critical cognitive features, or markers, important for proficiency in literacy practices at different developmental stages. The model of critical knowledge or markers suggests that there are six stages of literacy development: 1) Literacy roots (birth – age 6); 2) Initial literacy (grades 1-2, ages 6-7); 3) Confirmation, fluency, ungluing from print (grades 2-3, ages 7-8); 4) Reading and writing for learning the new: a first step (grades 4-8, ages 9-13); 5) Multiple viewpoints (high school, ages 14-18); 6) Construction and reconstruction—a worldview (college, age
18 and above). Fitzgerald & Shanahan (2000) describe the types of critical knowledge that are common to reading at different developmental stages:

1) Metaknowledge: functions and purposes of reading and writing, knowing that readers and writers interact, monitoring one’s own metacomprehension, and expectations for success among others;

2) Knowledge about substance and content: prior knowledge, knowledge from interaction of reading and writing; knowledge of word meanings and that ideas are constructed through the connected text;

3) Knowledge about universal text attributes: graphophonics, syntax (the rules of grammar to construct sentences and to use punctuation), and forms of text organization (relationship between pictures and print, directionality, structural organization of text, and formatting features);

4) Procedural knowledge and skills to negotiate reading and writing: recalling relevant information, prediction, questioning, trying to find analogies. Figure 3 below illustrates the four types of critical knowledge.
This study explored only one focal stage in Fitzgerald and Shanahan’s (2000) model—stage four (grades 4-8 and ages 9-13), which includes the focal age of this study – 4th grade. At this stage, the following features of critical knowledge are expected to be developed: 1) metaknowledge or metacomprehension through self-monitoring of one’s knowledge; 2) knowledge about substance and content through application of prior knowledge, learning new vocabulary, and meaning creation through a connected text; 3) knowledge about universal text attributes and syntax through learning about complicated syntactical structures and organization within texts; and lastly, 4) procedural knowledge and skills through knowing how to use word meanings and connected texts for different purposes. Below, I describe how and the extent to which each of the four types of critical knowledge (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000) for the relevant stage was represented in the five teachers’ instructional practices.
Metaknowledge or Metacomprehension

Fitzgerald and Shanahan (2000) define metaknowledge or metacomprehension as self-monitoring of one’s knowledge. Findings from the secondary study revealed that this type of critical knowledge was addressed through the instructional activities of scoring their own or peers’ essays against the state assessment rubric and color-coding by most participating teachers. Color-coding took place in the classroom observation of only one teacher, but two teachers mentioned it in their interviews. As for the scoring, all five teachers used it in their instruction and talked about it in the interviews. The process of scoring anchor papers or their individual work required students’ knowledge of the assessment rubric and its three areas for which they would be assessed – Purpose, Focus, and Organization; Evidence and Elaboration; and Conventions and Grammar. As explained by teachers during their interviews, they taught students how to use the assessment rubric and engaged them in scoring their own or a peer’s writing using the state rubric and color-coding with the purpose of increasing students’ awareness of their mistakes. Teachers believed that these activities would help students to avoid the same mistakes in their future writing. In the observational instance below from Ms. Rodriguez’ classroom, she explained to students why she assigned them the scoring activity:

One reason for why I like to do this…when you are reading somebody else’s work, it is easier for you guys to find mistakes in somebody else’s work than it is to find mistakes in your own work…We are not going to be as critical on ourselves as we are on other people. (Video observation, 02/09/16)

In this example, Ms. Rodriguez implemented the scoring activity because she believed that it would help students to engage in the process of self-monitoring. As
described in the previous chapters, the teachers did not build on the instructional opportunities to engage students in improving their papers after scoring and color-coding took place. Consequently, teachers approached these activities primarily with the intent to engage students’ self-monitoring.

Summary. According to the model of critical knowledge (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000), metaknowledge or metacomprehension at the 4th developmental stage are realized through self-monitoring of one’s knowledge. The five teachers examined in this study, engaged students with self-monitoring via instructional activities, such as color-coding and scoring essays. Even though the data sources did not allow measuring whether the activities of coding and color-coding were enough to develop students’ metaknowledge and metacomprehension, the classroom observation and teachers’ interviews indicated that students felt comfortable using the assessment rubric and identifying strengths and weaknesses of their essays.

Knowledge about Substance and Content

According to the model of critical markers (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000), the following aspects of critical knowledge about substance and content are developed during stage four, the focal stage of this study: application of prior knowledge, learning new ideas and vocabulary, and creating meaning through a connected text. These three sub-components were represented in the analyzed teachers’ instruction to a different extent.

Application of prior knowledge. The analysis of the five teachers’ instruction indicated that all the teachers taught the application of prior knowledge through the direct instruction of Evidence and Elaboration area of the assessment rubric. As it was reported in the previous two chapters, the teachers found the instruction of Evidence and
Elaboration the most challenging instructional area. They believed that this challenge was related to the level of text complexity that students read. According to the teachers, there are differences in EBs’ background knowledge that they could build on in order to elaborate on the topics of their essays. Ms. Gilbert touched upon the issue of elaboration in this instance from her classroom observation:

Now, this was a good location for her to say that “this is a school in a poor neighborhood and the parents and the kids in here cannot afford to buy bottled water every day” cause it would make a good connection. You need to think about your school, the situation in your school, the students that come to your school. (Video observation, 02/09/16)

In this example, Ms. Gilbert requested students to find a connection between the life in poor neighborhoods and the prompt—“Whether selling water would be a good choice for your school.” During this observational instance, the teacher repeatedly brought students’ attention to the fact that the school is located in economically disadvantaged neighborhood, and many families might not be able to afford bottled water on a regular basis. But as it was revealed in the interview with Ms. Gilbert that students did not see this connection between the cost of bottled water and economical disadvantage of the school neighborhood. Therefore, it appears as if the process of teachers’ drawing on students’ background knowledge as a type of critical knowledge was hindered by the absence of students’ familiarity and experiences with the topics of sources that they read.

Learning new ideas and vocabulary. Another feature of knowledge about substance and content, according to the model of Fitzgerald and Shanahan (2000), is
learning new ideas and vocabulary through reading and writing. During analytic text-based writing, as a form of IRWI, students read three sources in order to write text-based essays. As explained during the teachers’ interviews, students read three sources with different points of views for each writing prompt. Accordingly, reading multiple texts and responding to those texts in writing exposed students to the diverse information, new ideas, and concepts. For example, in one of the observational instances of Ms. Gilbert’s conferencing with a student, she realized that the student might not have understood a key concept about fossil fuel introduced in one of the sources:

Do you understand that – the thing about fossil fuels? That they use it to make plastic bottles...To make the bottles, they need to use a specific machine, that machine needs fuel, you understand? That is the reason of why the Earth is being damaged because we need to use so much fuel (Video observation, 02/04/16)

In this example, both a key concept about fossil fuel and the collocation were new for the student. “Fossil fuels” was one of the collocations that students needed to know/learn from sources and potentially use in their essays. The teachers emphasized in the interviews that the reading of sources had only one purpose—finding text-based evidence—because the pace of the curriculum did not allow time for deep comprehension of sources. The analysis of teachers’ video observations and interviews indicated that sources contained multiple new concepts and vocabulary. Nevertheless, this study’s findings did not indicate whether students had a deep understanding of new concepts and retention of new vocabulary after reading sources.

Creating meaning through a connected text. This aspect of critical knowledge was implemented by the five teachers through the direct instruction of two areas on the
state assessment rubric: 1) Purposes, Focus, and Organization, and 2) Evidence and Elaboration. The teachers constantly explained, referred to, and modeled that an essay should be clearly structured, focused (i.e., include details relevant only to the main idea of the essay), and integrate reasons and text-based evidence. Additionally, teachers repeatedly reminded the elements of an opinion-based essay for the state assessment, such as: the hook (a statement to attract readers’ attention); introduction with a thesis; main body with three reasons and supporting evidence; and conclusion. Through the instruction of Purpose, Focus, and Organization and Evidence and Elaboration areas of the assessment rubric, teachers showed students how to create meaning through a connected text. For instance, in the observation below, Ms. Nielson emphasized the difference between an essay introduction and conclusion:

Intro and closure need to be strong. Do they need to say exact same thing? No. Do they have to be focused on the same topic? Yes. The same exact thing? No. We need to learn how to paraphrase our own thoughts. (Video observation, 02/22/16)

All the teachers mentioned that even though introduction and conclusion stated the same main idea, they should not be written using the same language. Similar to the observation above, all five teachers had instruction on the essay structure as a way of creating meaning through a connected text. Additionally, teachers instructed how ideas connect to each other at the sentence and paragraph level during individual and group conferencing. This was often addressed through teachers’ emphasis of not using irrelevant details and including reasons that support student’s opinion or main idea.

**Summary.** According to the model of critical markers (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000), knowledge about substance and content is realized through three sub-components:
application of prior knowledge, learning new ideas and vocabulary, and creating meaning through a connected text. Application of prior knowledge was realized in the five video observations through the instruction of elaboration and finding a connection between students’ lives and the topic of the essay. Furthermore, students were exposed to learning new ideas and vocabulary through reading sources and including those ideas and vocabulary within their written essays; however the findings did not indicate whether reading sources with the primary goal of finding reasons for the essay led to deep learning of concepts and retention of vocabulary by students. Finally, creating meaning in a connected text was taught through the instruction of text structure and parts of an opinion-based essay.

Knowledge about Universal Text Attributes

Another feature of critical knowledge at the 4th developmental stage, according to the model of critical markers (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000), is realized through syntax at two levels: sentence level—learning about complicated syntactical structure (constructing sentences and using punctuation) and text level—learning about organizational structures within texts. As it was reported in Chapter 4, only one teacher, Ms. Nielson, had an instructional instance in relation to sentence level syntax: “Complex sentences, we even learned some mnemonic to remind us of using complex sentences. Use them today when you start writing with your partner” (Ms. Nielson, 02/22/16). The other four teachers did not have any identified instruction of sentence-level syntax in the analyzed data.

Text format, according to the model of critical markers, includes story grammar and text organization, such as understanding relations between pictures and print, structural organization of text, and formatting features (paragraphing, graphical
Out of these possible features of text format, the five teachers taught primarily structural organization of text. It was addressed through the direct instruction of the essay organization within Purpose, Focus, and Organization area of the assessment rubric. All teachers had instruction related to the structure of an opinion-based essay, which included the following parts: the hook, opinion statement with a main idea, main body with the text-based evidence, and conclusion with the same clearly stated opinion. In the following observation, Ms. Gilbert reminded students the structure of an opinion-based essay:

You need an introduction, that introduction needs to have a sentence so that the reader says, “OK, I want to keep on reading this.” And in the introduction you need to have your clearly stated opinion: “I believe,” “I think,” “In my opinion.” Then after that comes the body of your essay, the meat of this, support of your opinion using information from passages, and conclusion that is related to your opinion. (Video observation, 02/04/16)

Instruction of text attributes can be observed in this example of Ms. Gilbert video observation through the emphasis on the structural organization of text. As reported in Chapter 6, the five teachers paid particular instruction to the structure of the essay. Even though never explicitly referring to it as a five-paragraph essay, the teachers approached IRWI as a very structured and formulaic type of five-paragraph essay writing.

**Summary.** Under universal text features, Fitzgerald and Shanahan (2000) point out two sub-components—learning about complicated syntactical structures and learning about organizational structures within texts or text format. In this study’s observed lessons only one teacher explicitly taught syntactical structures, whereas all five teachers
taught the text format and meaning in a connected text through Purpose, Focus, and Organization (in particular the organization of an opinion-based essay), and Evidence and Elaboration areas of the assessment rubric. The teachers talked about how a well-structured essay could assist with creating the intended meaning of the essay. In addition to the instruction on essay structure, teachers repeatedly reminded to students that transition words could make their essay flow better. The findings did not reveal any instruction of relations between pictures and print or formatting features of texts.

**Procedural Knowledge and Skills**

Procedural knowledge and skills is the last type of critical knowledge developed at stage four, according to Fitzgerald & Shanahan (2000). Procedural knowledge and skills include knowing how to use word meanings and connected texts for different purposes.

**Using word meanings.** In the classroom video observations of the five teachers, knowing how to use word meanings was realized through the instruction of vocabulary, text-specific words, opinion words, and transition words. The teachers brought students’ attention to the key words and phrases in the sources and instructed genre-specific words. For example, for opinion-based writing, special emphasis was given to opinion words/phrases, such as “I think,” “I believe,” and “In my opinion.” When working with sources teachers often defined the key words and phrases. For example, in the observational instance below, Ms. Maceda defined the word “supervision” while searching for the reasons supporting students’ opinion during the whole-class annotation of the source: “Supervision means somebody needs to be there with you, to what—to watch you, to watch you doing the activity, to make sure that nobody gets hurt, that
everybody is working together” (Video observation, 02/09/16). Similar to this instance, the findings indicated that all the teachers had instruction of key vocabulary words and phrases from the sources, so that students would be able to incorporate text-specific vocabulary into their writing.

Using connected texts for different purposes. According to the model of critical markers, procedural knowledge and skills also includes the knowledge of how to use connected texts for different purposes. The notion of using connected texts for different purposes emerged in the analyzed classroom observations through the emphasis on genre purpose and mentions of the students’ “readership” or “audience.” During the few identified instances of instructing genre purpose, the teachers usually compared and contrasted informative and opinion-based genres, while highlighting the main difference as “giving information versus providing your opinion” (Ms. Lopez, 01/26/16). Out of all the teachers Ms. Nielson compared and contrasted the purposes of the two genres in the most detailed form—through whole class discussion of differences and similarities while filling out a graphic organizer:

In explanatory writing that elaboration is called explanation, right? What is the elaboration called in opinion-based writing? It is argument…In opinion-based writing you are explaining your opinion, in explanatory writing you are explaining an idea. In an opinion-based writing, you are able to choose a side. (Video observation, 02/22/16)

Similar to this observation, other teachers compared and contrasted genres’ purposes before the testing time, when students had learned both genres. Most teachers shared in their interviews that they exposed students to the writing instruction of other
genres, such as poems, folk tales, fables, among others, only at the end of the academic year, when the testing period was over.

In addition to contrasting the purpose of two different genres, teachers emphasized the usage of connected texts for different purposes through multiple mentions of students’ “readership” or “audience.” For instance, in the following observation, Ms. Gilbert briefly mentioned the term “audience” broadly, but did not explicitly explained how keeping the focus on a text’s readers could help students in their writing:

Audience—who is going to read your paper. This time it’s going to be me reading first, and then the other students, who read with you…The day of the test it’s going to be somebody you don’t know in Tallahassee. Why do you need to keep in mind your audience? Because you need to write properly, in a formal way, you don’t write in the same way if she is going to read your paper, or I am going to read your paper or people we don’t know in Tallahassee. (Video observation, 02/08/16)

This example from Ms. Gilbert’s classroom was a typical instance of “readership” reference when the teachers did not expand on the audience’s role in the purpose of the writing, but just reminded students that there would be other people, except the teacher, who would read their essays.

Summary. According to Fitzgerald and Shanahan’s model of critical knowledge (2000), procedural knowledge and skills incorporate two sub-components: using word meanings and using connected texts for different purposes. Word meanings were instructed during the writing period when reading the sources and learning new concepts.
The five teachers paid particular attention to the instruction of text-specific words, opinion words, and transition words. The second sub-component – using connected texts for different purposes—was targeted in the five writing classrooms through the instruction of purpose under Purpose, Focus, and Organization area of the assessment rubric and multiple mentions of students “readership.”

**Summary of Critical Knowledge Used by the Teachers to Implement IRWI**

The five teachers incorporated self-monitoring through the instructional activities of scoring and color-coding; however, teachers did not build on these activities in order for students to improve their writing in another draft. Under the second feature of critical knowledge—knowledge about substance and content—teachers taught application of prior knowledge through the instruction of elaboration and attempting to find a connection between students’ lives and the topic of the essay. Furthermore, students were exposed to learning new ideas/concepts and vocabulary through reading sources and writing analytical text-based essay. Nevertheless, the data sources for this study do not allow for analyses to determine whether students obtained a deep understanding of new concepts and retained the new vocabulary.

The instruction of syntax at sentence and text levels, the third feature of critical knowledge, was not equally presented in the teachers’ video observations. There was almost no instruction of more complex syntactical structures in the five classrooms, with the exception of one teacher. However, teaching organizational text structures was realized by all five teachers through the direct instruction of Purpose, Focus, and Organization and Evidence and Elaboration areas of the assessment rubric.
Finally, the last feature of critical knowledge—procedural knowledge and skills—was implemented through two sub-components: word meanings and emphasis on different purposes of genres. Word meanings encompassed the instruction of vocabulary, text-specific words, opinion words, and transitions. Emphasis on using connected texts for different purpose was fulfilled by comparing and contrasting informative and opinion-based genres, as well as through multiple mentions of “readership” or “audience” of students’ essays. Table 4 provides some examples for all four types of critical knowledge.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of critical knowledge</th>
<th>Sub-component</th>
<th>Examples from video observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metaknowledge</td>
<td>Self-monitoring</td>
<td>One reason for [sic] why I like to do this…when you are reading somebody else’s work, it is easier for you guys to find mistakes in somebody else’s work than it is to find mistakes in your own work…We are not going to be as critical on ourselves as we are on other people. (02/09/16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge about substance and content</td>
<td>Application of prior knowledge</td>
<td>Now, this was a good location for her to say that “this is a school in a poor neighborhood and the parents and the kids in here cannot afford to buy bottled water every day” cause it would make a good connection. You need to think about your school, the situation in your school, the students that come to your school. (02/09/16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge about Universal Text Attributes</td>
<td>Structural organization of text</td>
<td>You need an introduction, that introduction needs to have a sentence so that the reader says, “OK, I want to keep on reading this.” And in the introduction you need to have your clearly stated opinion: “I believe,” “I think,” “In my opinion.” Then after that comes the body of your essay, the meat of this, support of your opinion using information from passages, and conclusion that is related to your opinion. (02/04/16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural Knowledge and Skills</td>
<td>Using connected texts for different purposes</td>
<td>In explanatory writing that elaboration is called explanation, right? What is the elaboration called in opinion-based writing? It is argument…In opinion-based writing you are explaining your opinion, in explanatory writing you are explaining an idea. In an opinion-based writing, you are able to choose a side. (02/22/16)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Seven

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to investigate integrated reading-writing instruction (IRWI) for emergent bilingual students (EBs) in five 4th grade ELA classrooms with three foci: implementation of IRWI in the classrooms, exploration of teachers’ perspectives on IRWI, and investigation of critical knowledge components (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000) identified in the analyzed classrooms. This secondary study adds five teachers’ perceptions of IRWI to a larger project designed to explore IRWI in 4th grade classrooms in schools with large populations of Spanish-speaking Latino students. Applying constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and multiple case study (Yin, 1984; Stake, 2006), I closely followed five teachers’ writing instruction and their reflections on their instruction through their interviews and play-back sessions.

The research questions guiding this study were the following:

1. What is the nature of integrated reading-writing instruction in 4th grade ELA classrooms with emergent bilingual students?

2. What are teachers’ perceptions of integrated reading-writing instruction for emergent bilingual students?

3. What types of critical knowledge do teachers use when implementing integrated reading-writing instruction?

In this chapter, I will discuss the significance of the findings that emerged in relation to the research literature on teachers’ implementation and perceptions of IRWI. I will also highlight the implications of these findings for practice and research.
Contributions to Understanding Teachers’ Implementation and Perceptions of IRWI

The findings of this secondary study support and expand on the limited classroom-based research of IRWI. The majority of existing research on writing instruction has focused on teachers’ perceptions of practices utilized in the classroom and their professional preparedness to teach writing (Gilbert & Graham, 2010; Graham et al., 2014; Hall et al., 2015; Kibler et al., 2015; Troia & Graham, 2016), whereas the design of this study incorporated the investigation of actual writing classroom practices. Consequently, I was able to reflect on the practical implications that emerged from the constant comparison between the five teachers who taught at three different schools within the same large metropolitan school district. Although I caution against generalization beyond the scope of this study’s participants, the findings address classroom-based challenges and issues during the transition to CCSS (NGA & CCSSO, 2010a), which many teachers may have experienced. Moreover, while an assessment-related iteration of IRWI is just emerging, most of the existing studies focus on monolingual English-speaking students. By contrast, the focus of this secondary study was on the use of IRWI in classes with EBs (Spanish-speaking Latino/as) and on the ways to better support their instructional writing needs.

Summary of the Study Findings

Observational research on how CCSS affects instruction is only beginning to emerge because implementation of standards began during 2012-2013 (Wilcox et al., 2016). Consistent with the existing research, in this study IRWI was taught within a writing process approach (Cowley, 1958; Day, 1947; Mills, 1953). Most of the teachers’
instructional attention was devoted to the structure of the essay, focus, and incorporation of text-evidence. To varying extents, the teachers modeled some stages of the writing process, incorporated a variety of types of feedback—including whole group, individual conferencing, and peer revisions (Crinon, 2012; Crinon & Marin, 2010; Philippakos & MacArthur, 2016)—and provided instruction of writing strategies, such as paraphrasing, annotation, scoring, and color-coding (Graham et al., 2012; Olson, Scarcella, & Matuchniak, 2015). Additionally, the teachers taught the following features of academic language: transitions, academic vocabulary, figurative language, voice, and complex sentences (Crosson, Matsumura, Correnti, Arlotta-Guerrero, 2012). The teachers compared and contrasted the purpose of two genres and repeatedly mentioned students’ “readership.”

This study also contributes to our limited understanding of teachers’ perception of IRWI for EBs. Understanding teachers’ perceptions of new standards and assessment may predict how the new changes would affect students and schools in general (Porter, 2013; Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002). When comparing the current form of writing instruction (IRWI or analytical text-based writing) to the previous form (writing in a response to a prompt without text support), some teachers noticed positive changes, which occurred because of the transition to the new standards. However, there were a number of IRWI disadvantages specifically for EBs identified by the teachers in this study, such as: text comprehension; vocabulary; providing evidence and elaboration; and maintaining motivation during the iterative nature of analytic text-based writing. Also, some identified challenges addressed teaching IRWI as implemented by the district and teachers in order for students to do well on the FSA writing assessment: absence of an
accurate picture of writing performance, mismatch between assessment rubric and anchor papers, and an approach that does not correspond to a 4th grade developmental level. Additionally, the teachers felt that they lacked sufficient support from the state and the district during their transition to the new standards and curriculum. They suggested a number of adaptations of IRWI, which could improve the current state of their writing instruction, such as starting IRWI from lower elementary grades, even in kindergarten, including more genre variety, writing in L1, among others.

This study also contributes to our understanding of how elements of critical knowledge were present in the instruction of five teachers (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000). First, the teachers utilized self-monitoring through the activities of scoring and color-coding. However, as it was stated above, teachers did not build on these activities in order to develop the cognitive processes of metaknowledge and metacomprehension. Second, within the knowledge about substance and content teachers taught application of prior knowledge through the instruction of elaboration and finding a connection between students’ lives and the topic of the essay. Third, while there was almost no instruction of complicated syntactical structures in the five classrooms, teaching organizational text structures was emphasized by all five teachers through the areas of state assessment rubric. And lastly, within procedural knowledge and skills, there was instruction of word meanings and emphasis on different purposes of genres (through comparing/contrasting two genres and multiple reminders of “readership” or “audience” of students’ essays). Consequently, it became clear that there is a need of more instructional activities designed to develop metaknowledge (knowing the functions and purposes of reading and writing, monitoring one’s metacomprehension and knowledge), deeper learning and
comprehension of new concepts and new vocabulary, as well as more instruction of complicated syntactical structures. In the following, I will problematize several issues existing in the field of writing instruction for EBs, which are supported by some findings from this study.

Additionally, it is important to add strength to studies using critical knowledge because the latest report of What Works Clearinghouse (WWC), sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences, incorporated elements of critical knowledge as one of the recommendations within a practice guide for teachers. WWC reviews the research, summarizes the findings, and determines what studies meet rigorous standards that help answering the question “What works in education?” While conducting systematic review of the research, WWC takes into consideration study methods, populations, settings, and outcomes, framed by the the parameters for a specific WWC review. Based on these rigorous standards and research reviews, WWC publishes practice guides, which include practical suggestions for classroom teachers. Thus, one of the latest guides (Graham et al., 2016) suggests “…integrate [ing] writing and reading to emphasize key writing features.” The WWC report suggested that integrating reading and writing benefits’ students’ literacy development because they share the same cognitive processes and knowledge.

Noteworthy, the definitions of metalanguage and metacomprehension have expanded in comparison with the one used by Fitzgerald and Shanahan (2000). In 2016 the panel of WWC researchers recommended developing metaknowledge or metacomprehension through the instruction of cause-effect structure and signal words, reminding students that the strategies used during reading can be also used during
writing, evaluating and synthesizing information into a cohesive summary, and incorporating opposing perspectives (Graham et al., 2016). One teacher in this study directed students’ attention to cause-effect relationship when answering a prompt question of the essay. It is important to develop metalanguage because it supports comprehension by helping EBs to deconstruct the language into small meaningful components, which make meaning when combined together (Schleppegrell, 2013). It also assists EBs to recognize the patterns of how language presents multiple meanings and make appropriate language choices when constructing their own meaning of texts they read and write (de Oliveira & Schleppegrell, 2015).

**Alignment of SFL-related Pedagogy with the Study Findings**

Even though the instruction of the five teachers was not closely aligned with a genre-based approach as defined by Brisk (2015), it is necessary to look at the findings of the study through the prism of an SFL-informed approach of writing instruction, where each genre purpose is achieved through particular genre stages and language features. According to SFL, every situation of language choice has three metafunctions: ideational (aspects of grammar involved in representation of the world and its experiences), interpersonal (aspects of grammar that reflect relationships of communicators), and textual (organizing language into a message) (Christie, 2002). The immediate context of the situation affects how language is used: there are three dimensions or metafunctions around which the language context is organized: field (topic development), tenor (audience and voice), and mode (text cohesion). Field refers to the content of text in terms of participants, processes, and circumstances; tenor is the relationship between
language users, while mode refers to language resources used for creating the meaning (Eggins, 2004).

According to genre-based instruction, writing process should be accompanied with the Teaching-Learning Cycle, where a target genre is instructed through the stages of text deconstruction, joint construction of text (including filling out a graphic organizer with different stages of genre text and demonstration of how to write from notes), and independent or group construction of text (Brisk, 2015). In this study, one teacher had partial deconstruction of mentor text (a teacher guided essay) with the focus on general features of the text (transition words, text-specific vocabulary, thesis statement). Some teachers also deconstructed parts of students’ essays (introduction or a paragraph with one of the reasons supporting opinion) through small group or whole class feedback in relation to three areas of the assessment rubric (Purpose, Focus, Organization; Evidence and Elaboration; and Conventions and Grammar).

Another important feature characterizing genre-based instruction is the use of metalanguage, or language about the language for genre-specific features (Schleppegrell, 2013). In this study, teachers unanimously referred to different parts of an essay as an introduction (opinion, hook-sentence, main idea), body paragraphs (with text-based evidence and elaboration) and conclusion. When talking about the text features at the sentence-level, teachers used the word “details” as opposed to SFL-informed “adjectives,” “adverbials,” or other specific language features related to the genre.

The first metafunction of genre—field—or topic development can be addressed not only through vocabulary, but also through multiple structures, such as: clauses; processes (relational verbs, action verbs, sensing verbs, saying verbs); participants
(subject pronouns, nouns, the sequence of noun and adjective depending on students’ first language, possessive modifying structure, generalized participants); circumstances or adverbials of time, place, manner, reason, accomplishment, and cause; and complex sentences (Derewianka, 2011). Out of these possible grammatical structures addressing the topic development, the analyzed data indicated that only some teachers in this study had instructional instances in relation to parts of speech and complex sentences. According to teachers’ interviews, grammar was instructed in mini-lessons throughout the year. The video-recorded classroom observations did not indicate that teachers referred to or mentioned those grammatical features during writing instruction.

The second metafunction of text register—tenor—or audience and voice, can be realized through specific language, syntactic complexity, grammatical person, modality, evaluative vocabulary, and grading (de Oliveira & Schleppegrell, 2015). According to genre-based instruction, it is recommended that students are taught how to write on one topic for different possible audiences. In this study, teachers only generally referred to an abstract “reader” and “audience.” Sometimes students were told that their readers were scorers of the state assessment. The five teachers did not build on how students’ audience awareness should inform their writing in terms of choosing a grammatical person or word choice.

The third metafunction of text register—mode—or text cohesion is achieved through the connection of paragraphs to the topic sentences, relationships between theme/rhyme in each clause in respect to a larger text. Text cohesion is also achieved through text connectives, reference ties (pronouns and determiners), ellipsis, and lexical ties (synonyms, antonyms, repetitions and collocations) (Brisk, 2015). In this study,
teachers paid particular attention to the instruction of text connectives, as it was an element explicitly mentioned in the state assessment rubric. During classroom observations some teachers also reminded students that they should use synonyms and not be repetitive.

To summarize, SFL-informed research (Brisk, 2015; Christie 1999; 2002; Christie & Martin, 1997; de Oliveira & Iddings, 2014; de Oliveira & Schleppegrell, 2015; Halliday, 1978; Hyland, 2002; Martin & Rothery, 1986; Martin & Rose, 2006; Schleppegrell, 2009, 2013; Unsworth, 2000) indicates that genre-based writing instruction and pedagogy are beneficial and effective for EBs, even though it is not the approach that is widely enacted in classrooms. The teachers in this study did not receive professional development to implement genre-based instruction; therefore it should not be expected that they would utilize this approach for writing instruction.

**State Assessment Drove Writing Instruction and Affected Teachers’ Perceptions**

This study demonstrated that the state assessment was the driving force in the design and implementation of writing instruction for these five teachers. They felt impelled to structure their instruction in a certain way so that their students would be able to pass the test. This structured and formulaic approach to writing instruction influenced the teachers’ perceptions of IRWI in a negative way. The teachers felt that IRWI implemented according to the assessment requirements did not give them the freedom to adapt the instruction to the particular needs of their students in a way that could benefit their writing development. Some findings reported in this study, specifically a strong tendency to teach to the state’s test, add to the understanding of this on-going issue in the
field when teachers have to closely align their instruction with the state standards and assessment.

For example, the teachers built their writing instruction around the three areas of the Florida state assessment rubric: 1) Purpose, Focus, Organization; 2) Evidence and Elaboration; and 3) Conventions and Grammar. The investigation of their classroom instruction documents that the teachers paid particular attention to those aspects of writing, which were explicitly stated in the assessment rubric. For example, as specified in the state assessment rubric, a student’s essay would get a top score within the area of Purpose, Focus, and Organization if it included: a “strongly maintained opinion,” “skillful use of a variety of transitional strategies,” and “logical progression of ideas from beginning to end.” Correspondingly, all teachers taught mini-lessons (short focused delivery of explicit instruction) on the use of transitional words and phrases, maintaining the focus on the topic of the essay, and following a strict essay structure (introduction, main body with reasons and text evidence, and conclusion). The same pattern was observed in relation to all three areas of the rubric—the teachers taught those features of academic language, which were explicitly indicated in the rubric. Thus, the teachers in this study did not teach certain language features unless they were explicitly present in the state assessment rubric. For instance, all teachers believed that figurative language was an important feature of students’ writing, but most of them did not include it in their writing instruction because it was not present in the rubric.

Also, the teachers in this study consistently used the assessment rubric to assist students with self-evaluation (Graham et al., 2016) to detect possible weaknesses and strengths of their writing, which was accomplished through the activities of scoring and
color-coding. It should be acknowledged that the use of writing rubrics as integral to the
instructional approach has been found to develop students’ writing competencies and
motivations (Wilcox, Jeffery, & Garden-Bixler, 2016). Some of these studies reported
that usage of rubrics was one of the evidence-based practices that used to be absent in the
K-12 standards (Troia & Olinghouse, 2013). In this regard, it was encouraging to find
that teachers in this study frequently taught students how to apply the state assessment
rubric to their own writing.

The main purpose of using rubrics is to help students identify their weaknesses in
writing and guide them to improve an essay in the next draft. Accordingly, the students of
the five teachers self- or peer-assessed the essays and identified strengths and weaknesses
of their writing. However, while teachers provided feedback about different parts of
essays (introduction, main body with three reasons and elaboration, or conclusion) and
had students revise certain parts of their writing, it was not observed that students were
given a chance to write another whole draft after scoring and color-coding activities.
Previous work has found that writing another draft or plan based on revisions is an
important characteristic of an effective writer (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Delpit,
1987, 1988; Van Gelderen, 1997). Thus, even though teachers taught a number of
revision strategies, such as using rubrics, unpacking the prompt before planning, and
engaging in a self- or peer-assessed scoring activity, students were not given a chance to
improve their writing by completing another draft. This finding highlights the issue that
even though teachers emphasized the idea of writing being a “never ending process” and
of “a good writer is never satisfied,” the speed and requirements of the pacing guide
forced teachers to emphasize a writing product versus writing process. Concerns about
the negative impact of high stakes assessments on writing instruction have been raised in previous research because teachers closely aligned their instruction with the state’s accountability tests (Applebee & Langer, 2013; Graham, Capizzi, Harris, Hebert, & Morphy, 2014; Koretz & Hamilton, 2006; Matsumura, Correnti, & Wang, 2015). Thus, it seems as if the way the policies were enacted by teachers who are held accountable for their students’ assessment scores gives a higher market value to grades rather than to the writing proficiency and progress of students.

**Will IRWI Prepare Students to Become Successful Future Writers of the 21st Century?**

The overarching sociocultural theoretical lens (Bakhtin, 1986; Bourdieu, 1977; Gee, 1996; Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978) of this study, and one of the themes of the conducted literature review (social engagement) posit that literacy skills are social by nature. If every reader and writer adds to the interpretation of any topic or idea, then the instruction of reading and writing should emphasize this connection. However, under the influence of the state assessment requirements, it appears that IRWI in its assessment-related iteration does not allow students to express their individuality, apply creative thinking or unique interpretation. According to the teachers’ perceptions, there is a need for a combination of analytical text-based writing with free/creative writing, the latter of which could be assessed with an alternative evaluation system.

It is necessary to emphasize that CCSS 4th grade ELA Writing standards do not encourage formulaic writing, but highlight the variation of writing based on a specific genre, purpose, and audience. For example, according to standard four, students are expected to “Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and
organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience” (CCSSO & NGA, 2010).

Nevertheless, the teachers felt forced to follow a certain structure or formula in their writing instruction, as it was descriptively voiced in Ms. Gilbert’s interview:

As it is stated in the passage that and that… Is that what we want? … You don't want to do that, but you say: "You better have in your second paragraph your transition, followed by the reason, you cite the evidence, and right after that please let me see your elaboration." Aren't you giving them a formula to follow? (Interview, 11/09/16)

Simultaneously with their disapproval of structured and formulaic writing, the teachers also believed that IRWI is “good and bad,” referring to some advantages of this approach of writing instruction over the previous one (without using text to support reasons for writing). This contradiction in teachers’ perceptions may be explained by the absence of sufficient support for teachers, who felt unprepared to teach writing with IRWI. They acknowledged that the new approach emphasized a connection between reading and writing and helped to improve students’ reading comprehension (Collins, Lee, Fox, & Madigan, 2017; Correnti, Matsumura, Hamilton, & Wang, 2012; Graham & Hebert; 2010; Tierney & Shanahan, 1991). Moreover, when engaged in IRWI, students have to complete a higher quality task that “guides students to construct, rather than reproduce knowledge from texts” (Matsumura, Correnti, & Wang, 2015, p. 419).

Noteworthy, the teachers believed that IRWI would prepare students better for writing in higher grades and college, calling IRWI “college-like writing.” This perception needs to be highlighted because the current K-5 writing standards call for a “foundation for college and career readiness” (NGA & CCSSO, 2010a, p. 18). However, taking into
consideration that writing instruction became structured and the teachers taught it in a five-paragraph essay format, the question arises—how well or to what degree does this formulaic type of writing prepare students for 21st century literacy skills and knowledge? The five-paragraph essay “hinders students from freely probing their own thoughts and interpretations about a text” (Campbell, 2014, p. 62). Moreover, the structured writing of a five-paragraph essay does not prepare students for writing skills that they will need to exhibit in college (Argys, 2008; Campbell, 2014; Hillocks, 2002; Wesley, 2000; Wiley, 2000). College professors often have to un-teach the five-paragraph writing of first year students, as it does not correspond to expectations for college-level writing (Courtney, 2008; Fanwetti, Bushrow, & DeWeese, 2010) and does not prepare students for the requirements of real world professional writing.

**IRWI in its Current Form Posed Disadvantages for EBs**

Even though the teachers saw some improvements of IRWI over the previous approach (without text support), the teachers believed that IRWI had a number of disadvantages, which were related to the state assessment. Thus, the findings from this study suggest that the way in which the standards-based learning and teacher accountability policies have been enacted was an obstacle for EBs. In order to pass the writing test, students are supposed to have grade-level text comprehension skills and be able to provide evidence from and elaboration on the sources. Furthermore, the ELA curricular pacing guide provides instructional time for teaching writing for two genres—informative and opinion-based—because these two genres are assessed in the 4th grade. Consequently, the pacing guide does not provide teachers with any instructional time allocated for writing in other genres. Each of these reasons is discussed below.
Text-comprehension as a challenge for EBs. One of the challenging issues to write in response to texts, according to teachers, was text comprehension of EBs, who are often below grade-level readers (Hall, Hutchison, & White, 2015). As reported in the findings chapters of this study, in order to engage in analytical text-based writing, students need to read sources, comprehend, plan their response, and write a text-based essay. The teachers were concerned that some of EBs were faced with a double challenge when they were supposed to comprehend the complex sources and then write an essay in their second language, which would be assessed according to the same scoring criteria as the writing of monolingual English-speaking students (Bunch, Kibler, & Pimentel, 2012). Furthermore, the teachers in this study voiced their concern that this type of “teach[ing] to a test” when students have to read sources several times and then respond to those texts in writing negatively affects students’ motivation (Wilcox, Jeffery, & Garner-Bixler, 2016), as most teachers had to address the problem of EBs’ low motivation when writing an essay in English in response to sources (Kibler et al., 2015). The issue of text comprehension becomes exacerbated because the language proficiency of EBs is not taken into consideration while scoring students’ writing produced for a standardized test (Fisher, Rothenberg, & Frey, 2007). The teachers felt frustrated that both monolingual English-speaking students and EBs are assessed using the same scoring criteria and with the same expectations, regardless of their English language proficiency and progress in writing (Kibler, Heny, & Andrei, 2015).

Challenging topics for elaboration. It is disappointing that the pedagogies that have been acknowledged in the seminal and recent research as beneficial for multicultural and multilingual learners are not taken into consideration when policies are enacted and
curricula are developed. For example, the field widely embraces culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy (Avalos et al., 2015; de Oliveira & Shoffner, 2016; Gay, 2010; Valdes, 2001) and drawing on students’ background knowledge (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1988; de Jong & Harper, 2005; Diaz, Moll, & Mehan, 1986); however, the findings of this study pointed out that students did not always have experiences or exposure to the topics explored in the sources used for analytical text-based writing. To illustrate this point, the teachers highlighted that Evidence and Elaboration, an area on the assessment rubric, was one of the hardest areas of instruction for EBs to understand (Correnti, Hamilton, & Wang, 2013). The teachers explained that EBs had differences in their experiences and sometimes less background knowledge related to the topics of texts that they needed to read and respond to a prompt for an opinion-based essay. Nevertheless, it needs to be stated that teachers should make an attempt finding a connection between students’ experiences and topics used in the curriculum and not exclude students’ experiences that can help them with this connection. Furthermore, Beck and McKeown (2001) suggested that texts should have “grist” in order for students to “explore ideas and to use language to explain ideas” (p. 14). Through text grist, students are posed with a problem, made to infer the meaning or consider multiple points of view. Text grist can be achieved through: moral dilemmas, real-life problems without easy solutions, and controversial figures and historical characters (Matsumura, Correnti, & Wang, 2015). Supporting previous research, this study points to the critical need for research in the area of selecting sources for analytical text-based writing.

Mismatch between IRWI and developmental level of 4th graders. Another issue that is worth further investigation and that this study alludes to is that there may be
a mismatch between the new standards’ grade-level requirements and the developmental level of 4th grade students. Being rigorous by nature and driven by the critical need for preparing students for college and developing skills for a contemporary competitive world, it appears that the standards-based curriculum suggests IRWI approach may benefit students to a greater degree if introduced later, when students are more developmentally advance (e.g., 5th or 6th grade). For example, the teachers in this study considered IRWI as not developmentally appropriate for 4th graders, who have difficulty integrating necessary text evidence that supports their opinion and organizing it into a logically cohesive text. All five teachers emphasized that the students normally struggled to have an essay focused and included irrelevant details that did not support the main idea of the essay. Brisk (2015) similarly points out that up to the 5th grade, students may not differentiate between major events and detailed information. The teachers’ perception of IRWI being not developmentally appropriate for 4th graders should be problematized because this approach is new not only for the teachers, but also for students, especially EBs and those, who have limited instruction in writing opinion-based essay prior to the 4th grade (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1991). Additionally, it should be accentuated that there should not be lowering of expectations in elementary school writing instruction, on the contrary, effective instruction for cognitively demanding tasks, which include text-based writing, develops students’ higher level thinking, such as their ability to reason analytically in their writing (Matsumura et al., 2015; Olson et al., 2015). However, the teachers believed that there is a need for a precise and delicate match of grade-level performance requirements with students’ developmental level corresponding to their age.
Inter-Related Findings for the Three Research Questions

The findings for this study’s three research questions indicated that the three components under investigation in this study—nature of IRWI, teachers’ perceptions, and elements of critical knowledge—were inter-related. The nature of IRWI, which was driven by state assessments and teacher accountability requirements, promoted a rigid and structured approach to writing instruction. The absence of freedom to adapt writing instruction in a way that would benefit all students, including EBs, affected teachers’ perceptions of IRWI negatively. Teachers’ perceptions were divided into two categories—advantages and disadvantages, with the latter being a larger and more significant group to include: disadvantages for EBs, analytic text-based writing as a driving force of writing instruction, and absence of professional preparedness to teach IRWI. Some examples of how the nature of IRWI affected teachers’ perceptions are provided below. The fact that only two genres—informative and opinion-based—were assessed during the state assessment explained why only these two genres received most of the instructional attention. The state assessment influenced IRWI to take the form of a rigid and structure approach, which lacked creativity and genre variety. Thus, the district’s enactment of new state standards negatively affected teachers’ perceptions of IRWI. Another example illustrating how nature of IRWI influenced teachers’ perceptions was that teachers felt impelled to structure their instruction in a scripted way that closely aligned with the components of the state assessment rubric, some of which were text-specific vocabulary and transition words. Another component of academic language—figurative language—was not included into the assessment rubric, in this regard, most teachers did not teach it. However, the teachers’ interviews revealed that top scored
anchor papers provided by the district were rich with figurative language. The teachers would like to see a better match between anchor papers and the requirements highlighted in the assessment rubric.

The exploration of the third research question—critical knowledge—indicated that some of the critical knowledge features were represented in the characteristics of IRWI investigated in the first research question. Metaknowledge and metacomprehension as the first components of critical knowledge were realized through the reflection component of IRWI, such as scoring and color-coding. Knowledge about substance and content and knowledge about universal text attributes were realized through the instruction of three domains of the assessment rubric and features of academic language. Finally, procedural knowledge and skills were addressed through the instruction of vocabulary and emphasis on genre purpose. Figure 4 below illustrates how the findings to three research questions are inter-related.

*Figure 4. Inter-relation of study findings to three research questions.*

[* CN signifies “critical knowledge”*]
Study Implications

Implications for Practice

Below I discuss the practical implications of this study’s findings on writing instruction, specifically: having a match between the rubric requirements and anchor papers, including more genre variety, starting writing instruction in lower elementary grades, drawing on EB’s L1 knowledge, eliminating deficit perspectives of EBs, and providing more professional development on writing instruction.

Match between the requirements highlighted in the rubric and anchor papers. This research has implications for how IRWI was realized in the participating classrooms and how teachers’ perceptions of state assessment affected their instruction. As findings of this study demonstrate, the state assessment drove teachers’ instruction of IRWI, which, as a consequence, shaped their perceptions and predetermined what aspects of writing were given primary instructional attention. However, the teachers felt that there was a mismatch between the scoring criteria of the state assessment rubric and the top scored anchor papers from the previous year’s assessment. This inconsistency made teachers feel uncertain of how students’ writing is actually assessed and what should be given attention during writing instruction. Accordingly, to support teachers’ understanding of the state standards and the assessment expectations, there needs to be a close match between the requirements highlighted in the rubric and the anchor papers provided to the teachers.

More genre variety. In order to improve writing instruction, the curriculum and standards need to incorporate more genre variety into elementary school writing (Llosa et al., 2011). It should be emphasized that the previous research conducted before
enactment of CCSS (NGA & CCSSO, 2010a) called for more meaningful and useful for future writing activities, because the primary focus was given to writing narratives, stories, and poems (Applebee & Langer, 2006; Cutler & Graham, 2008; Gilbert & Graham, 2010). Currently the teachers in this study were concerned that there was no time assigned to the instruction of other genres in the present curriculum, other than informative and opinion-based; therefore, unless teachers could find some instructional time at the end of the academic year, after the testing period was over, writing instruction for these genres did not occur. Thus, the teachers in this study would have liked to incorporate more instruction for creative writing, such as narrative, poetry, folk tales, among others.

Writing instruction to begin in lower elementary school. As repeatedly stated by the participating teachers, because writing instruction was not tested until the 4th grade, teachers in the lower grades did not devote enough time to the instruction of writing. Consequently, some EBs often come into the 4th grade not able to write a complete sentence or a short paragraph. The 4th grade teachers believed that if writing instruction in general (and IRWI in particular) started earlier, it would lower their teaching load and would help to better prepare students, especially EBs, who may need longer time to acquire the features of academic language (Scarcella, 2003; Schleppegrell, 2007). Therefore, aside from genre variety, in general, writing instruction should be incorporated across content areas (de Oliveira, 2007; Graham, Capizzi, Harris, Hebert, & Morphy, 2014) and start in kindergarten to include lower elementary grades, as well.

Drawing on EB’s first language knowledge. Additionally, the findings of this study indicate that EBs need to be provided with opportunities to draw on both languages
(i.e., all linguistic resources) and be allowed to write a whole or a part of an essay in L1. As it is emphasized in recent research, bilinguals accomplish their daily and learning goals through translanguaging (Garcia, 2009; García & Wei, 2014)—“the complex and fluid discursive practices in which emergent bilinguals engage to make meaning and communicate in the many cultural and sociolinguistic contexts in which they live” (Gort, 2015, p. 2). Teachers, practitioners, and researchers should frame bilingualism as a resource that enhances EB’s literacy development and prepares multilingual students to engage and navigate in complex and diverse literacy practices (Gort & Reyes, 2016; Velasco & García 2014).

**Eliminating deficit perspective.** Unfortunately, the issue of not drawing on students’ L1 gets exacerbated because teachers often have a deficit perspective of EBs (August, Shanahan, & Escamilla, 2009; Flores, 2013). Thus, as the majority of the participating teachers in this study stated during interviews that EBs had “limited academic vocabulary” or “lacked experiences” and were “academically low,” it was evident that they held deficit perspectives of their EBs. Additionally, some teachers had low expectations of EB’s based on students’ proficiency in English, when they were concerned that EBs would be confused if exposed to too many options, leading them to instruct only a few opinion words and transitions. Moreover, when teaching EBs, there is a need for culturally responsive teaching (Avalos et al., 2015; de Oliveira & Shoffner, 2016; Valdes, 2001) and drawing on students’ *funds of knowledge* (Diaz, Moll, & Mehan, 1986) to successfully utilize the richness of EB’s experiences and cultural knowledge. It is also recognized that literacy and genre knowledge in L1 can be a valuable resource for developing writing in English (Harklau, 2002). The fact that most of the teachers viewed
their EBs as blank slates without possible L1 resources upon which they could build, indicates that the students’ L1 was not seen as an asset or means to develop proficiency in English. Some of the possible ways to promote EBs’ funds of knowledge are to make connections to students’ lives, acknowledge students’ voices more fully, and create collaborative spaces for students’ group work when they read and write (Meltzer & Hamann, 2005).

**Professional development.** Finally, there is a need for high quality professional development to support teachers in better preparing students for IRWI and standardized writing assessment (de Oliveira & Shoffner, 2016; Kibler et al., 2016). The teachers felt a need for more high quality professional development (Hall et al., 2015; Troia & Graham, 2016) that would provide them with materials on how to better instruct incorporation of evidence and elaboration into the essay. There is also a need for teachers’ support in integration of Evidence Based Practices in classrooms (Wilcox et al., 2016). Additionally, it is crucially important to provide teachers with timely feedback on the writing performance of their students (Graham, Capizzi, Harris, Hebert, & Morphy, 2014) to give them guidance regarding students’ instructional needs and what area of their instruction needs particular improvement. Finally, because future teachers often graduate feeling unprepared to teach writing (Coker & Lewis, 2011; de Oliveira & Silva, 2016; Harklau, 2002; Hilvera & Belcher, 2007; Larsen, 2016), teacher preparation programs need to pay more attention to writing pedagogy.
Implications for Teacher Education

The findings of this study also have implications for teacher education, some of which include:

- Teacher preparatory programs need to prepare future teachers for all types of writing instruction, and strengthen their understanding of writing for different purposes and audiences (Accurso, Gebhard, & Selden, 2016; Lee, 2016; Brisk, Nelson, & O’Connor’, 2016; Hodgson-Drysdale, 2016; Shin, 2016);

- Future teachers need to be aware that reading and writing are not separate entities, but reciprocal ones, which should be instructed together (Ball, 2003; Graham & Hebert, 2010; Jenkins, Johnson, & Hileman, 2004; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008; Tierney & Shanahan, 1991);

- Teacher preparatory programs need to prepare future teachers to use metalanguage during writing instruction as it benefits EBs and supports their literacy and writing skills development (Brisk, Nelson, & O’Connor’, 2016; Christie, 2012; Gibbons 2006a; de Oliveira & Schleppegrell, 2015; Palinscar & Schleppegrell, 2014; Schleppegrell, 2013);

- Future teachers need to be informed how to teach writing in light of the state testing requirements (Kibler et al., 2016; Matsumura, et al., 2015; Wilcox, et al., 2016);

- Pre-service teachers need to have preparation in how to incorporate the instruction of different types of genres into the curriculum, not only the ones assessed in high-stakes testing (Applebee & Langer, 2006; Cutler & Graham, 2008; Gilbert & Graham, 2010; Llosa et al., 2011);
Teacher preparatory programs need to ensure that future teachers are well-aware of the importance of all stages of the writing process, including revising and writing a second draft (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Delpit, 1987, 1988; Philippakos & MacArthur, 2016; Van Gelderen, 1997);

Make sure that teacher candidates view EB’s culture and L1 as a value and asset, which can be built upon when writing in response to different topics (Garcia, 2009; García & Wei, 2014; Gort & Reyes, 2016; Velasco & García, 2014);

Expose future teachers to the concept of “evidence and elaboration” and how it can be addressed by drawing on students’ cultural and linguistic knowledge and background knowledge (Matsumura et al., 2015; Wilcox et al., 2016);

In order to avoid teachers’ confusion about limited and contradictory information coming from the district, teachers need to be provided with ample information about the state assessment requirements in their content area (ELA) and grade level (Coker & Lewis, 2011; de Oliveira & Silva, 2016; Harklau, 2002; Hilvera & Belcher, 2007; Larsen, 2016);

Make teacher candidates well aware of the perils of a five-paragraph essay approach to eliminate the perspective of it being “college-like writing” (Argys, 2008; Campbell, 2014; Hillocks, 2002; Wesley, 2000; Wiley, 2000).

These implications suggest that there is more research needed in the area of EBs’ writing instruction and pedagogy. Additional work will enrich and problematize these findings in other contexts and settings. Below I provide the implications for future research.
Implications for Research

Along with providing insights into IRWI implementation and teachers’ perspectives, this study suggests directions for possible further investigation. This study explored writing instruction of opinion-based genre in the classrooms of five teachers. More needs to be investigated in writing instruction of a variety of genres in all elementary grades. Additionally, it is interesting to compare how the writing performance of EBs taught within an assessment-driven analytic text-based writing approach differs from the writing performance of EBs taught within an alternative approach to IRWI (e.g., SFL-informed and collaborative writing as laid out by Brisk, 2015). Furthermore, in this study I looked at writing instruction of the teachers for only one writing lesson across multiple instructional days. It would be beneficial to have longitudinal studies examining how writing instruction is implemented across an academic year in order to see which aspects of IRWI are instructed consistently across a year, and how the teachers begin and build IRWI instruction over time.

Moving forward, an important issue for researchers to consider is incorporation of technology (Graham et al., 2014) and multimodality into writing instruction (Black, 2009; Lam, 2006; Smith, 2014), especially in the era of CCSS (NGA & CCSSO, 2010a) when young learners are expected to successfully compose with multiple modes in digital formats. As recent research indicates, when composing across multiple modes (image, sound, and animations) students, particularly EBs, are able to purposefully integrate writing and media not just to repeat information, but also synergistically create new complex meanings (Dalton et al., 2015; Pacheco & Smith, 2015; Smith, Pacheco, & de Almeida, 2017).
Finally, FSA and the state assessment rubric turned out to be the driving force behind writing instruction in this study and pivotal points in the teachers’ interviews. In this regard, researchers who are interested in further exploring IRWI or analytic text-based writing and its influences on students’ performance, should consider exploring this phenomenon from different foci: what the intended outcome of grade-level writing standards is; how it is interpreted at the state level and translated into curriculum implementation; how district and professional development specialists foster or impede teachers’ implementation of and perceptions toward IRWI; and how information related to standardized testing is delivered to teachers by districts and schools’ administrations.

**Conclusion**

By examining the overall nature of IRWI and exploring teachers’ perceptions of it, this study shed light upon how five teachers in classrooms with EBs approached and implemented IRWI. Their instruction was built around and driven by the state assessment rubric. By approaching writing instruction through the writing process, teachers paid particular attention to those features of academic language, which were present in the assessment rubric. The implementation of IRWI was further informed by teachers’ interviews and play-back sessions. Seeing some improvements of IRWI over the previous traditional approach to writing instruction when students composed in response to a prompt without text-support, teachers, however, pointed out a significant number of IRWI disadvantages and challenges imposed on EBs with this approach. The teachers would like to see some accommodations in place for EBs, as well as more professional development and sufficient information regarding instruction requirements, scoring criteria, and ways to support EBs when teaching writing with IRWI.
These findings indicate the need for increased research in the area of writing instruction for EBs. This study points to specific issues within the current situation of writing instruction for EBs, specifically how students’ performance in high stakes state assessment serve as a final goal of the instruction. By problematizing this tendency, the findings suggest that there is a critical need to explore this area further to find out ways to better support EBs become successful writers for 21st century college and career expectations.
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**Appendix A. Format for Synthesizing Common Themes across Identified Studies for the Literature Review**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Grade level</th>
<th>EBs characteristic</th>
<th>Language spoken</th>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cahnmann, M. (2006).</td>
<td>How can poetry become a place for bilingual students and their teachers to explore a wide range of linguistic and cultural competencies?</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Spanish/ English bilingual students</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Socio-cultural; Freire</td>
<td>The schoolARTistry goal was to use poetry with students and teachers to better understand the experiences of bilingual, Latino youth as they negotiate multiple varieties of English and Spanish and the relationship between language, culture, and power (tools used by the literary, visual, and/or performing arts).</td>
<td>Reading about bilingual experiences and participating in language learning and bilingual community comes accentuated through the writing of poetry. Writing poetry also engages teachers in multicultural introspection, recalling processes of linguistic, cultural, and racial shifts in their family histories.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix B. Definitions of Themes for the Literature Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme Based on Study Objective(s)</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Studies Where the Theme was Identified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Explicit Instruction</strong></td>
<td>Instruction that includes naming, describing, and explaining genre functions and features, accompanied by modeling and thinking aloud (from Purcell-Gates, Duke, &amp; Martineau, 2007).</td>
<td>Purcell-Gates, Duke, &amp; Martineau (2007); Corden (2007); Lenski (1998); Crowhurst (1991); Ivey and Broadus (2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Engagement</strong></td>
<td>Instruction that includes meaning making, purpose, and ownership; also authentic reading and writing tasks resemble those that people encounter in every day life as opposed to the school-based activities (adapted from: Edelsky, 1991).</td>
<td>Gambrell, Hughes, Calvert, Malloy, &amp; Igo (2011); Li (2012); Tsou (2011); Back (2005);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reciprocity between Reading and Writing</strong></td>
<td>A type of instruction that draws students’ attention to certain literary strategies, which allow children to critically evaluate texts and later transfer this knowledge into their own writing (adapted from: Corden, 2007).</td>
<td>Corden (2000); Edelsky (1982); Buckwalter &amp; Lo (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Composing from Sources</strong></td>
<td>“Tasks in which readers use textual sources to produce their own texts, which have a communicative intent of their own” (Spivey &amp; King, 1989, p. 11).</td>
<td>Spivey &amp; King (1989); Rowe &amp; Fain (2013); Ranker (2007); Cahnmann (2006); Kibler, Walqui, &amp; Bunch (2015); Kibler, Heny, &amp; Andrei (2016); Wharton-McDonald (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cognitive Strategies</strong></td>
<td>Instruction that includes modeling, scaffolding, guided practice, and independent use of strategies, so that students are able to select the necessary strategy and monitor their progress with its usage (adapted from Olson et al., 2015).</td>
<td>Lee (2008); Olson &amp; Land (2007); Olson, Land, Anselmi, &amp; AuBuchon (2010); Olson, Kim, Scarcella, Kramer, Pearson, van Dyk, Collins, &amp; Land (2012); Parodi (2007); Guthrie et al. (2004)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C. Teacher Interview and Playback Session: Integrated Reading-Writing Instruction

Teacher ID: ________________________________
Date of Interview: _____________________________

The purpose of this interview and a playback session is to help me better understand your perspective on integrated reading-writing instruction (IRWI), known also as the connection of reading and writing or reading for writing. For the purpose of this study IRWI is defined as a “literacy event in which readers/writers use text(s) that they read, or have read, as a basis for text(s) that they write…. Reading for writing can also be understood as acknowledging that writing is often the resultant physical artifact or reading/writing encounters” (Carson & Leki, 1993, p. 85). During the first part of our meeting we will have an interview about integrated reading writing instruction, followed by a video playback session. In the video playback session you will be shown segments of the video with your instruction recorded during WELLs data collection, and asked to comment on some specific instructional moments in relation to the interview discussion of your IRWI implementation in the classroom and reflect on some of the instructional practices that were video-recorded. Please feel free to ask me to repeat anything you would like to hear again or re-phrase the question. This interview and a playback session are estimated to take about 1.5- 2 hours. This meeting will be audio recorded, but all the responses will be de-identified and used under a pseudonym. Your participation in this secondary study is voluntary, as it was for the WELLs study last year. If you become uncomfortable or wish to stop the interview at any time, please let me know and we will turn off the audio recorder. You are free to stop participating at any time.

1) Can you describe the students you had in your reading/language arts classroom during the 2015-16 school year?
   a) Prompt: What were their ESOL levels, home language(s), SES background, ability levels?

2) Looking at the index (the researcher provides the index) briefly outlining the WELLs recorded instruction of your class, could you tell me please, how much the recorded observation represents your typical writing instruction (eg. expectations for drafts/revisions, final drafts, students discuss their writing, etc.)?
   a) Prompt: Can you describe what your students would experience as students in your writing classroom?
   b) How do you introduce a writing assignment and prepare them to write?

3) How would you say the writing instruction has changed after the adoption of Florida standards?
   a) Prompt: In what way does the current E/LA curriculum pay more attention to the writing instruction than it used to?

4) What is particularly challenging for you teaching writing, and particularly opinion genre with the current standards in place?
   a) And in teaching writing for EBs?
5) How has teaching information and opinion genres changed from FCAT to FSA?
   a) Which genres, such as narrative, persuasive, five paragraph essays, poetry, expository, letters, etc., would you say you actually spend the majority of your writing instructional time working on with your students? In other words, which genres get the most instructional attention overall?
   b) To what extend do you think it is important to introduce students to writing information and opinion texts in elementary school?

6) What are the guidelines/curricula/plans that you follow for the writing instruction?
   a) How do you determine what the students will write about in your classroom?
   b) Where do you find sources/mentor texts?

7) How do you determine your students’ writing instructional needs?
   a) How do you accommodate for EBs during writing instruction?

8) How do you provide your students with feedback on their writing? (Prompt to elicit the type of feedback: conventions/form, content, vocabulary, structure/organization, other?)

9) The FL English Language Arts Standards emphasize the importance of integrating reading and writing. How much of your instructional time is devoted to integrated reading-writing instruction?
   a) What strategies and skills are important for students to develop in order for them to be able to write from sources or being able to integrate what they read about in their writing?
   b) How do you feel IRWI impacts your writing instruction for EBs? What advantages and disadvantages of this approach do you see?
   c) In an ideal world of teaching, how do you envision your writing instruction?

10) What did you see as your students’ greatest writing strengths when they left 4th grade last year?

11) Tell me about the transition to the new FL English Language Arts standards?
   a) Prompt: What are the curriculum adoption and professional development available/attended (the level of support experienced)?

12) Reading to write approach is strongly emphasized in FSA and the FL standards. What is your perspective on it?
   a) What is your vision for future of writing instruction? In case you think anything should be changed in writing instruction, what would be the first thing to make this change?
   b) Which approach from your point of view holds a lot of potential for teaching writing? EBs’ writing?

Thank you for your valuable time!
Appendix D. FSA ELA Text-based Writing Rubric, Grades 4-5, Opinion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Purpose, Focus, and Organization (4-point Rubric)</th>
<th>Evidence and Elaboration (4-point Rubric)</th>
<th>Conventions of Standard English (2-point Rubric begins at score point 2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 4     | The response is fully sustained and consistently focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has a clearly stated opinion and effective organizational structure creating coherence and completeness. The response includes most of the following:  
  - Strongly maintained opinion with little or no loosely related material  
  - Skillful use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas  
  - Logical progression of ideas from beginning to end with a satisfying introduction and conclusion | The response provides thorough and convincing support/evidence for the writer’s opinion that includes the effective use of sources, facts, and details. The response includes most of the following:  
  - Relevant evidence integrated smoothly and thoroughly with references to sources  
  - Effective use of a variety of elaborative techniques, demonstrating understanding of the topic and text  
  - Clear and effective expression of ideas, using precise language  
  - Academic and domain-specific vocabulary clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose  
  - Varied sentence structure, demonstrating language facility | |
| 3     | The response is adequately sustained and generally focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has an opinion and evident organizational structure with a sense of completeness. The response includes most of the following:  
  - A maintained opinion, though some loosely related material may be present  
  - Adequate use of transitional strategies with some variety to clarify the relationships between and among ideas  
  - Adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end with a sufficient introduction and conclusion | The response provides adequate support/evidence for the writer’s opinion that includes the use of sources, facts, and details. The response includes most of the following:  
  - Generally integrated evidence from sources, though references may be general, imprecise, or inconsistent  
  - Adequate use of some elaborative techniques  
  - Adequate expression of ideas, employing a mix of precise and general language  
  - Domain-specific vocabulary generally appropriate for the audience and purpose  
  - Some variation in sentence structure | |

Continued on the following page
## Appendix D Continuation. FSA ELA Text-based Writing Rubric, Grades 4-5, Opinion

**FINAL ELA Text-based Writing Rubrics, Grades 4–5: Opinion**  
**Florida Standards Assessments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Purpose, Focus, and Organization (4-point Rubric)</th>
<th>Evidence and Elaboration (4-point Rubric)</th>
<th>Conventions of Standard English (2-point Rubric)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2     | The response is somewhat sustained within the purpose, audience, and task but may include loosely related or extraneous material, and it may have an opinion with an inconsistent organizational structure. The response may include the following:  
• Partially focused opinion but insufficiently sustained or unclear  
• Inconsistent use of transitional strategies with little variety  
• Uneven progression of ideas from beginning to end and inadequate introduction or conclusion | The response provides uneven, cursory support/evidence for the writer’s opinion that includes ineffective use of sources, facts, and details. The response may include the following:  
• Weakly integrated evidence from sources and erratic or irrelevant references  
• Repetitive or ineffective use of elaborative techniques  
• Imprecise or simplistic expression of ideas  
• Inappropriate or ineffective domain-specific vocabulary  
• Sentences possibly limited to simple constructions | The response demonstrates an adequate command of basic conventions. The response may include the following:  
• Some minor errors in usage but no patterns of errors  
• Adequate use of punctuation, capitalization, sentence formation, and spelling |
| 1     | The response is related to the topic but may demonstrate little or no awareness of the purpose, audience, and task; and it may have no discernible opinion and little or no discernible organizational structure. The response may include the following:  
• Absent, confusing, or ambiguous opinion  
• Frequent extraneous ideas impeding understanding  
• Few or no transitional strategies  
• Too brief to demonstrate knowledge of focus or organization | The response provides minimal support/evidence for the writer’s opinion, including little if any use of sources, facts, and details. The response may include the following:  
• Minimal, absent, erroneous, or irrelevant evidence from the source material  
• Expression of ideas that is vague, unclear, or confusing  
• Limited or inappropriate language or domain-specific vocabulary  
• Sentences limited to simple constructions | The response demonstrates a partial command of basic conventions. The response may include the following:  
• Various errors in usage  
• Inconsistent use of correct punctuation, capitalization, sentence formation, and spelling |
| 0     |                                                |                                        | The response demonstrates a lack of command of conventions, with frequent and severe errors often obscuring meaning. |