



Generation 1.5 Preservice Teachers: The Evolution of their Writing Confidence Levels and Self-Efficacy in Writing Intensive Courses

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ABSTRACT

This action research examines how Generation 1.5 preservice teachers develop as writers during writing intensive courses. Generation 1.5 reflects immigrants who have life experiences inclusive of two or more countries including diverse cultures and languages (Roberge, 2009). Understanding the factors impacting how Generation 1.5 students use writing skills and writing as a tool for learning and for communicating is crucial to their development as effective classroom teachers. This research study explored how Generation 1.5 preservice teachers evolved in their writing confidence levels and self-efficacy in Writing Intensive courses to determine: How does self-efficacy relate to preservice teachers' overall writing performance? The results of the study indicate that Generation 1.5 preservice teachers experienced an increase in writing self-efficacy and writing confidence over the course of a Writing Intensive course.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been a focus on improving academic writing in higher education. This is due in part to the demand by various fields for recent graduates who are competent at writing within their field. At the same time there has been a tremendous increase in the number of Generation 1.5 freshmen enrolling in universities (Pew Research Center, 2011). For the purposes of this study, Generation 1.5 is being defined used Roberge's (2009) definition. Generation 1.5 students function between two linguistic and cultural identities. This duality often leaves these students as "users of English" rather than "learners of English" as they maneuver through their college careers (Roberge, 2009). To this end, reading and writing in a second language may be a challenge for Generation 1.5 preservice teachers. Crosby (2009) suggests that Generation 1.5 students utilize a variety of strategies when engaging in reading and writing tasks and that awareness of and practice of these strategies is essential in building academic literacy. Academic literacy is developed over time when students have opportunities to engage in authentic learning. Developing reading and writing skills through authentic learning is key in building self-efficacy and writing confidence. It is imperative that preservice teachers build their self-efficacy and develop their reading and writing skills as they are preparing to enter the K-12 classroom where they will be responsible for engaging learners.

The following action research samples a group of preservice teachers enrolled in Teacher Preparation Writing Intensive (WIN) courses which require extensive reading and writing tasks. A course with the WIN designation requires at least 50% of the grade to come from the evaluation of written assignments. Preservice teachers completed a language survey at the start of the semester and based on their responses were categorized as Generation 1.5 students or as Native English Speakers. For purposes of this action research, only Generation 1.5 preservice teachers were utilized. Additionally, the preservice teachers were pre and post surveyed to determine 1) if they felt confident as writers prior to the start of engagement in extensive reading and writing tasks/opportunities and how they felt as writers post engagement 2) if self-efficacy relates to their overall writing performance.

This research study explored how Generation 1.5 preservice teachers evolved in their writing confidence and self-efficacy in Writing Intensive courses to determine:

How does self-efficacy relate to Generation 1.5 preservice teachers' overall writing performance?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Generation 1.5

The *No Child Left Behind Act* and the Age of Accountability have greatly impacted the educational system in the United States by putting measures into place which would provide similar learning experiences and opportunities for all students. Therefore, when students graduate from an American high school and moves onto higher education, one might assume that these students should have similar levels of confidence in their writing abilities, use of the English, and the tools needed to be successful at that level. Yet, there are many variables that factor into how a student learns. The cultural background of a student often plays an important role as well as their generation in the United States in his learning experiences (Singhal, 2004). 1st Generation immigrants are those who grow up outside of the US in other cultural contexts. 2nd Generation immigrants are those US born children of immigrant parents and are brought up solely in a US cultural context. Generation 1.5 immigrants are those who have life experiences inclusive of two or more countries including diverse cultures and languages. These students may have grown up in America, attended public school, yet have never mastered the English language, or their native language (Huster, 2012; Roberge, 2009; Singhal, 2004).

Generation 1.5 students are becoming more of a norm in the United States due to the influx of Mexican immigrants in recent years (Pew Research Center, 2011). Generation 1.5 students negotiate between two cultural and linguistically identities (Roberge, 2009; Singhal, 2004). These students are actively involved in their native culture and language while at the same time embrace the new one. Generation 1.5 students have language practices and proficiencies that spread across a bilingual range, which they adapt to fit into different social contexts because their environment is multilingual. In the multilingual context, language practices and proficiencies cover a broad spectrum of bilingualism as well as morphing with different social contexts (Roberge, 2009; Valdes, 2000). Multilingualism is more complex than being bilingual, where one develops two monolingual language proficiencies and practices. For example, an international student is fluent in his native language as well as his second language. Because Generation 1.5 students are neither bilingual, ESL, or monolingual they are often placed in remedial English courses as they are often seen as developing native English speakers who are working at deficit level, even though they

have grown up in the American public school system. These remedial courses limit these students' exposure and engagement in a rich reading and writing curriculum (Roberge, 2009). Often as a result, these students do not fully develop language skills in either language, which limits their academic growth (Singhal, 2004).

In the K-12 setting, teachers modify the coursework for Generation 1.5 students. Modifications include shortening of assignments, providing copies of notes/PowerPoints, lectures and discussions. This type of direct instruction is often focused on preparing students to pass a standardized exam by simplifying the content and learning strategies (Allison, 2009). While the modifications are well intended, they may not be preparing the students for college coursework. Academic writing and reading in higher education is often focused on self-directed learning dealing with abstract, complex, and the higher levels of understanding. Generation 1.5 students may develop their social English language skills becoming English dominant, yet are not proficient in academic reading and writing. Unlike, international students, Generation 1.5 students may not be competent in their native language due to their educational experiences (Singhal, 2004).

Generation 1.5 students engage in various reading and writing strategies similar to ESL students. ESL students employ general and specific strategies, which range from decoding unfamiliar vocabulary, questioning text, paraphrasing, rereading, and making text to text connections (Block, 1986; Crosby, 2009; Carson, Chase, Gibson, & Hargrove, 1992; Leki & Carson, 1994). At the college level, students often adapt their strategies depending on the type of academic writing as well as switching strategies during the semester (Crosby, 2009). Unlike ESL students, Generation 1.5 students have varied learning experiences in K-12 education systems, and as a result there is no consistency in which strategies they use to overcome difficulties academic reading and writing tasks (Crosby, 2009; Leki & Carson, 1994).

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is formed based on the perceptions that one holds about ones abilities to be successful at accomplishing a task. These perceptions are formed several different ways. First, the person may have previously experienced success or failure at the task. Second, the person may have observed others having success or failing at the task. Third, the person may make social comparisons against his peers. Finally, the verbal and nonverbal messages related to persuasion also impact one's self-efficacy (Pajares, 2003). Bandura (1997) extensively studied the cause-effect relationship of developing positive or negative self-efficacy. He found that in order to develop self-efficacy one must first know what behavior produces the desired outcome and secondly, one must be able to evaluate himself as capable of performing in order to develop self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1997; Pajares, 2003). Self-efficacy is affected by: anxiety, locus of control and cognitive processing of information (Bandura, 1977). Typically, three degrees of self-efficacy in writing are recognized: low, middle, high.

Self-efficacy is one of the major contributing factors in student motivation for academic success (Graham & Weiner, 1996; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy & Hoy, 1998; Pajares, 2003). Those with strong self-efficacy feel they are capable and are more willing to attempt new tasks (Bandura, 1977). Positive self-belief develops as one increase his abilities to complete a task. This is achieved when one attempts a behavior, receives feedback, and modifies a behavior. In the academic setting students are inundated with messages about their knowledge and skills development. Therefore, they are constantly developing their levels of self-efficacy based off of their performances (Chapman & Tunmer, 2003; Prat-Sala & Redford, 2012; Shah, Mahmud,

Din, Yusoh, & Pardi, 2011; Williams & Williams, 2010). Self-efficacy significantly impacts writing performance both in writing skills (grammar and mechanics) as well as writing tasks (clearly communicate an idea) (McCarthy, Meier, & Rinderer, 1985; Pajares & Johnson, 1994; Prat-Sala & Redford, 2011). One may have high levels of self-efficacy in one area of writing and low levels in another area (McCarthy et al., 1985; Pajares & Johnson, 1994; Prat-Sala & Redford, 2011). For example, one may have high self-efficacy in writing mechanics but low self-efficacy in critical thinking. Pajares and Johnson (1994) studied undergraduate teaching students' self-efficacy in a writing course. They found self-efficacy and writing skill was linked to the student's writing performance. As well as self-efficacy related to writing tasks increase over the course of the semester (Pajares & Johnson, 1994; Prat-Sala & Redford, 2011). Prat-Sala and Redford (2011) also found a correlation between undergraduate students' writing self-efficacy and writing performance. Al-Hazmi (2006) found that Saudi college students struggled with self-efficacy and writing; specifically the components of paper organization, revision and flow. In higher education, students are expected to be able to writing in different domains using content specific skills. In 2011, Shah et al., found that Malaysian ESL learners with high levels of self-efficacy were more proficient at writing skills and tasks. Participants had lower self-efficacy in the areas of coming up with ideas for writing, setting writing goals, organization and grammar/mechanics (Shah et al., 2011). Significant correlations have been found between self-efficacy and content writing and specific writing skills (Al-Hazmi, 2006; Pajares, 2003; Prat-Sala & Redford, 2011). Upper level undergraduate students tend to have higher levels of self-efficacy as they have spent more time developing the writing skills specific to the academic domains (Prat-Sala & Redford, 2011).

Research also shows that minority groups tend to have lower self-efficacy in academic areas, including writing. Pajares and Johnson (1996) found that Hispanic students had lower writing self-efficacy and greater anxiety about writing than non-Hispanic students. Levels of self-efficacy affect the decisions students make regarding their academics. Low levels of self-efficacy may lead to lower levels of self-confidence. By the time a student with low levels of self-efficacy reaches higher education, it may become more difficult to remediate areas of weakness if the student has repeated experiences of failure at the tasks (Al-Hazmi, 2006; Pajares, 2003).

Generation 1.5 students may struggle with self-efficacy and confidence in their writing abilities due to their struggle to belong. Often Generation 1.5 students have a self-perception of being in-between two groups (Roberge, 2009). This struggle to belong is reinforced in school when they are placed into the remedial courses impacting their writing skill development, and writing confidence levels. This struggle with self-efficacy may differ from monolingual or International students who have developed self-efficacy and writing confidence overtime in their native language.

Confidence Levels

A student's self-evaluation of their abilities to succeed significantly impacts their writing confidence levels. If one's performance improves than one's self-belief will increase, likewise, self-belief decreases if one continues to experience failure (Bandura, 1977). Students' confidence in their ability to write correlates to self-efficacy in writing (Lavelle & Zuercher, 2001; Lavelle, 2006). Confidence levels are impacted in three different ways. First, students may experience anxiety related to writing assignments. Writing apprehension hinders development of writing skills as students anticipate failure or have a fear of failure (McCarthy et al., 1985; Schunk, 2003). Secondly, confidence levels are impacted by the locus of control. Students who feel they lack

control may have trouble setting writing goals, coming up with ideas to write about, as well as adjusting writing styles depending on the audience (Lavelle, 2006; McCarthy et al., 1985; Schunk, 2003). This lack of control is amplified in higher education where students are expected to write using domain specific writing styles. Finally, writing confidence levels are impacted by the student's cognitive processing of information. Students who have trouble critically thinking about writing, comparing and contrasting abstract ideas or evaluating information tend to lack self-confidence related to writing tasks (Lavelle, 2006; McCarthy et al., 1985; Schunk, 2003).

During writing intensive courses, students have many opportunities to experience this growth through assignments that require self-reflection, peer evaluation, instructor feedback, and repeated tasks. This structured format provides a venue for students to increase their levels of self-confidence (low, medium, high) in regards to academic writing as they have multiple opportunities for success as well as to receive constructive feedback. This may not occur as frequently in a course outside of a writing intensive class due to other course requirements. As a student's level of confidence increase often it correlates to an increase in self-efficacy as there is a link between the three levels of self-efficacy and the three levels of self-confidence in writing. For example, someone with low self-confidence in their writing abilities has low self-efficacy in writing. While, self-efficacy is tied directly to a task; confidence is a more of global term. It is possible for a Generation 1.5 student to be a confident person, but have low self-efficacy in writing.

Research has shown that English Language Learners (ELL) students have low levels of confidence in writing in the second language which translate to low levels of performance and self-efficacy (Al-Hazmi, 2006; Al-Hazmi & Scholfield, 2007). These students have lower levels of confidence in English language writing because they may not fully understand the writing process, structures and elements in English. But, in their native language they report high levels of writing confidence (Al-Hazmi, 2006; Al-Hazmi & Scholfield, 2007). Generation 1.5 students may not have a full understanding of the writing process in either language, resulting in low levels of writing confidence.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The participants for this study were undergraduate preservice teachers who attend a four year university on the southwest border. The majority of the undergraduate student population is Hispanic bilingual students who are first or second generation college students. The participants were selected based on their enrollment in a required upper level writing intensive (WIN) courses.

Description of WIN course

Throughout the semester, students who enrolled in these Upper Level Teacher Preparation WIN courses completed, weekly discussion posts connecting text to text and text to world, two reflective papers focused on current events, four chapter reflective summaries, as well as a research paper. The instructor designed the course so that each week there was structured writing assignments allowing opportunities for practicing writing skills as well as for targeted instructor feedback. The weekly discussion posts centered on the weekly topic and required students to respond in a paragraph using the text for support. Students were also required to respond to two peers either agreeing or dissenting supporting their claims with documentation from the book.

This format allowed for repeated tasks, peer feedback, engaging in critical thinking as well as targeting specific writing skills. The reflective papers required students to make connections between the text and themselves through a critical thinking process. This is a powerful teaching strategy as it engages students in the content by making personal connections and developing writing skills. The chapter reflective summaries combined the skills developed both in the weekly discussions and the reflective essays into a lengthier and more formal writing task. This teaching strategy sets the students up for success, as they have been practicing the critical thinking and writing skills in smaller assignments, and they are now applying their understandings in a more complex assignment. Finally, the students are required to complete a research paper, which has been scaffolded into several smaller assignments allowing for revisions and instructor feedback.

Students were encouraged to make appointments for conferencing with the instructor as well as tutoring sessions in the Writing Center. Through the repeated writing assignments the students were able to develop their writing style after receiving the instructor's feedback and participating in the revision process. Finally, the writing tasks levels of complexity and critical thinking steadily increased over the course of the semester.

Instrument

Participants were asked to complete the Writing Self-Assessment Survey, developed by the researchers. Previously, the survey had been pilot tested for quality of the questions (Sanchez & Lewis, 2013). Participants completed the survey at the beginning and end of the semester in order to collect a pre and post data set. The Writing Self-Assessment is composed of quantitative and qualitative questions; including 19 demographic questions. The demographic questions provided information on participants' primary language use, secondary language use, and generational standing. The instrument also included 31 quantitative Likert-scale questions and qualitative open-ended questions related to writing skills, practices, performances and self-reflection on writing growth. 131 participants completed the Writing Self-Assessment Survey, however for the purpose of this study; only those who identified as Generation 1.5 preservice teachers and completed both pre- and post- surveys were included; reducing the sample size to 93 participants. Out of the 93 participants, only 76 participants completed both the pre and post qualitative portion of the surveys.

RESULTS

Generation 1.5 Preservice Teachers

Participants self-evaluated themselves on the demographic portion of the Writing Self-Assessment Survey and were categorized based on their responses as first, second, third or 1.5 generations. Only those who identified as Generation 1.5 were included in the results of this study.

Forty-seven percent of the Generation 1.5 preservice teachers self-identified as English native speakers, and fifty-three percent as native Spanish speakers (see Table 1). 69% of the Generation 1.5 preservice teachers' parents' native language was Spanish, while only 26% were native English speakers. While the majority (81%) of the preservice teachers' primary language of communication in the work/social settings is English, 19% of the preservice teachers' reported speaking English as the primary language of communication in the home environment. This data illustrate some of the duality of the Generation 1.5 students.

Table 1. Language Self-Assessment

	English	Spanish
What is your native language?	44(47%)	49 (53%)
What is your parents' native language?	24 (26%)	69 (69%)
What is your primary language of communication in your home environment?	47 (49%)	46 (48%)
What is your primary language of communication in work/social settings?	75 (81%)	18 (19%)

85% of the Generation 1.5 preservice teachers received formal schooling in the United States. Of which 76% had nine or more years of formal schooling in United States Public Schools. When asked to reflect on the primary language in which they process information in when completing academic work 87% indicated in English, 13% in Spanish.

Preservice teachers also reflected on how they process information from their native language into another language. These qualitative responses were code and analyzed. Overarching themes were developing from the data set through the process of coding. Each response was initially broken down by phrase and then coded. These codes were formed based on the main idea of the phrase. After all data was coded, the researcher reviewed the data for similar codes, and then compiled them into overarching themes (Glesne, 2006; Rossman, G.B., & Rallis, S.F., 2003). Four overarching themes were identified in the data.

1. Generation 1.5 preservice teachers who processed information from the native language to a second language automatically. An example of a student's response "*It just comes naturally. Many times I find myself understanding better in my native language but its easy to transfer to my second language.*"
2. Generation 1.5 preservice teachers who think first in the native language and then translated into the second language. An example of a participants response is "*Thinking about it twice in my native language and then translate it to English.*"
3. Generation 1.5 preservice teachers who code switch, mixing the two languages in their thoughts and have difficulty separating. An example of this "*I use both English and Spanish to function. I can't talk or think in only one language. If there is something that I don't know or understand in one language maybe I do in the other. I don't use my native language to process information, I use both languages.*"
4. Generation 1.5 preservice teachers who feel that they can automatically move between oral languages but struggle processing between languages when it comes to written language. One example of a preservice teacher who expresses this "*Well my process information from Spanish to English is that I start thinking everything in Spanish then I start writing it on English. I can understand and talk English but when it comes to write something my ideas just blocked and its harder for me to express myself.*"

Measures of Self-Efficacy in Writing

Self-efficacy in writing is linked to the levels of confidence one has in writing (Lavelle, 2006; Lavelle & Zuercher, 2001). In order to evaluate how self-efficacy is related to overall

performance, this research study examined how the preservice teachers' levels of confidence in writing changed over the course of the semester.

Table 2 shows that over the course of the semester there was a positive increase in students' levels of self-confidence in their writing abilities. The data shows a 15.7% decrease in the number of Generation 1.5 preservice teachers reporting in the categories of *once in a while* or *rarely* or *never* have confidence as a writer. Pre- to post-survey there was a positive increase in the numbers of preservice teachers reporting *almost always* or *sometimes* having confidence as a writer. There was a medium effect size

Table 2. Have Confidence as a Writer

	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	<i>M</i>		<i>M</i>	
	2.82		3.11	
	SD	1.05	SD	.85
Almost Always	26	(28%)	32	(34.4%)
Sometimes	38	(40.86 %)	46	(49.4%)
Once in a While	19	(20.4%)	11	(11.2%)
Rarely	6	(6.5%)	4	(4.3%)
Never	4	(4.3%)	0	(0%)

Table 3 data indicates that over the course of the semester there was a positive increase in students' levels of self-confidence in their writing abilities, as 90.4% of the students *agree* or *strongly agree* that they were more willing to undertake writing tasks.

Table 3. After taking this course, I am more willing to undertake writing tasks

	Post-Survey Results	
	<i>M</i>	
	3.25	
	SD	.75
Strongly Agree	36	(38.7%)
Agree	48	(51.7%)
Disagree	5	(5.38%)
Strongly Disagree	4	(4.3%)

Data indicates the over the course of the semester there was a positive increase in students' level of self-confidence in their writing abilities, as 87.1% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they had increased their writing confidence (see Table 4).

Table 4. After taking this course, I have increased confidence in myself as a writer

	Pre-Survey Results	
	<i>M</i>	
	3.26	
	.77	
Strongly Agree	39 (41.94%)	
Agree	42 (45.16%)	
Disagree	9 (9.68%)	
Strongly Disagree	3 (3.22%)	

The quantitative data from Tables 2-4 all show a positive increase in Generation 1.5 preservice teachers' confidence as writers over the course of the semester which correlates to an increase in writing self-efficacy.

Qualitative Measures of Self-Efficacy

The qualitative results also indicate that the Generation 1.5 preservice teachers' levels of self-confidence in their writing abilities increased throughout the semester. The sample size for the qualitative data was 76, as only those who completed both the pre and post survey and identified as Generation 1.5 preservice teachers were included. The following two open ended prompts "*I feel that I am a _____ writer*" and "*Do you have confidence as a writer?*" are focused on in this study.

The responses to "*I feel that I am a _____ writer*" were coded and sorted into three themes: above average, average, and poor indicating their perceived levels of ability as a writer (see Table 5). Pre-survey results show 65 of the participants' felt they were *average* writers, 6 felt they were *above average*, and 5 felt they were *poor* writers. Post-survey result indicates that the Generation 1.5 preservice teachers' levels of self-confidence in their writing abilities increased throughout the semester. Post-survey only 2 participants indicated that they felt that they were *poor* writers, while 58 felt they were *average*, 16 felt that they were *above average* writers (see Table 5).

Table 5. I feel that I am _____ writer

	Pre-Survey Results		Post-Survey Results	
	<i>M</i>		<i>M</i>	
	2.01		2.18	
	.38		.45	
Above Average	6 (7.9%)		16 (21.05%)	
Average	65 (85.53%)		58 (76.32%)	
Poor	5(6.58%)		2 (2.63%)	

Qualitative responses of those preservice teachers who experienced a change in their opinion of their writing abilities from pre- to post-survey were further studied. A sample response from a preservice teacher who initially self-evaluated as a poor writer but post surveyed felt that they were an average writer.

Pre-survey response: "*I feel that I am a horrible writer. When my papers get revised, I always receive deducted points for grammar, punctuations, fragments, and more*"

Post- survey response: *“I feel that I am an average writer because I can write, but still have some difficulty. I am not proficient writer I still do mistakes by repeating what I say, grammar, and fragments. I do not write because I like to do so, I write only because I have to with assignments and such.”*

A sample response from a preservice teacher who initially self-evaluated as an average writer but post surveyed felt that they were an above average writer.

Pre-survey response: *“Good writer if I’m interested in the subject”*

Post-survey response: *“better writer than before. I used to struggle with sentence structure and used to write so many run on sentences. With practice and experience I have grown and feel more confident when I write.”*

The responses to *“Do you have confidence as a writer”* were coded and sorted into three themes based on levels of writing confidence: high, medium, low, based on current research categorization (Lavelle & Zuercher, 2001; Lavelle, 2006). Pre-survey results show 29 preservice teachers had high levels of writing confidence, 29 had medium levels and 18 had low levels of confidence. Post-survey shows positive growth as 31 preservice teachers indicate high levels, 39 had medium levels and 6 had low levels (see Table 6). The greatest growth in writing confidence levels from pre- to post- survey is seen in those writers with medium levels of confidence.

Table 6. Do you have confidence as a writer?

	Pre-Survey Results	Post-Survey Results
	<i>M</i> 25.33	<i>M</i> 25.33
	<i>SD</i> 6.35	<i>SD</i> 17.24
High Confidence	29 (38.16%)	31 (40.79%)
Medium Confidence	29 (38.16%)	39 (51.32%)
Low Confidence	18 (23.68%)	6 (7.9%)

Three overarching themes emerged from the coding of the question *“Do you have confidence as a writer?”*

1. Generation 1.5 preservice teachers expressed more confidence in their native languages as a writer. Examples of these responses include:
 1. *“I have full confidence writing in Spanish, however, in english I know that I am missing some strategies to write completely correctly.”*
 2. *“I believe I can write more than others. I feel confident of what I have reach due to my situation: English is my second language and I am continuing learning.*
 3. *“I feel positive about improving my writing since my primary language is Spanish, I don’t feel very confident about my English.”*
2. Generation 1.5 preservice teachers felt their writing improved because of writing opportunities during the semester. Examples of these responses include:
 1. *“Before I took intensive writing courses I was not confident in my writing. I felt that I was not as proficient as I needed to be, but after all*

- the writing that I have done in my courses, I feel much more confident as a writer.”*
2. *“I guess recently I have felt better as a writer and that is due to all the writing that had to be done this semester. I have learned to be a little open and express myself.”*
 3. *“for the past two semesters I have noticed that the professors have required students to have more writing assignments which has given me the opportunity to have more confident while writing.”*
3. Generation 1.5 preservice teachers struggled with three major areas: grammar/mechanics, expressing ideas, and the essay format. Examples of these responses include:
1. *“I have trouble with my grammar, repeating words and fragments”*
 2. *“Somewhat I do lack confidence in spelling and need to extend my vocabulary to be able to express my self when writing”*
 3. *“I often have a hard time coming up with ideas or even starting” and “depending on the purpose of the writing I have confidence.”*

DISCUSSION

The data indicates an overall increase in the levels of the preservice teachers’ levels of writing confidence over the course of the semester. The positive impact of writing intensive courses on Generation 1.5 preservice teachers is seen in the data where initially 31.2% of the participants reported lower levels of confidence in writing (*once in a while, rarely, never*) but over the course of the semester many experience positive growth, and only 15.25% indicated lower levels of confidence post- survey (see Table 2). Writing intensive courses are effective in building writing confidence because these courses provide scaffolding for students. The results of this study support this finding as 87.1% of the participants *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that after taking the course that had increased confidence as a writer (see Table 4). 90.4% of the participants *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that after taking the course they are more willing to undertake writing tasks, this indicates a positive increase in self-efficacy. The qualitative data sheds light on some of the causes of this effect; as participants’ share that the opportunities for repeated writing assignments, and instructor feedback that contributed to their increase in confidence. This data is aligned with current research that suggests confidence and self-efficacy levels are related to opportunities for practice, revision, and instructor feedback (Al-Hazmi, 2006; Lavelle & Zuercher, 2001; McCarthy, et al., 1985; Pajares, 2003; Prata-Sala & Redford, 2011).

The struggles of the Generation 1.5 student with writing self-efficacy are apparent when examining the qualitative data. The emerging themes from this study reflect; 1) higher confidence levels in native language, 2) struggles with three major areas of writing skills: grammar/mechanics, expressing ideas, and 3) the essay format. This is consistent with research where Generation 1.5 students struggle with academic reading and writing in content areas (Allison, 2009; Crosby, 2009; Prata-Sala & Redford, 2011; Shah et al., 2011; Roberge, 2009). The participants struggles with confidence in writing in a second language mirror the findings in research (Al-Hazmi, 2006; Al-Hazmi & Scholfield, 2007) where students struggle with writing tasks and skills, but show growth over time in writing intensive programs (Prat-Sala & Redford, 2011).

The duality of Generation 1.5 preservice teacher is seen in how they are struggling in building their academic literacy. The four overarching themes found in the qualitative data; related to how Generation 1.5 preservice teachers' process information from their native language to a second language, provide some insight into their duality. The themes of the Generation 1.5 preservice teacher processing; 1) automatically between languages, 2) first in native language and then translating, 3) code switching with difficulties differentiated between the two languages, 4) automatically being able to move between oral languages but struggling with processing written languages illustrate the many different strategies the students use to think. These patterns are consistent with the research which shows that Generation 1.5 students implement a variety of strategies (Crosby, 2009; Roberge, 2009; Shah et al., 2011) as well as struggles with written languages due to their duality (Allison, 2009; Roberge, 2009).

Overall, Generation 1.5 preservice teachers showed positive growth in levels of self-efficacy and levels of confidence in writing after taking a writing intensive course. These findings suggest that the nature of a WIN course allows for an environment where Generation 1.5 students can be successful. Instructors should be cognizant of how they structure their writing assignments; including repeating tasks, revision opportunities, scaffolding critical thinking assignments, and instructor feedback.

CONCLUSION

Increasing the levels of success Generation 1.5 students have in writing intensive courses may be dependent on first increasing students' levels of self-efficacy in writing. This may be achieved through multiple measures including but not limited to; recognizing which strategies Generation 1.5 learners use to cope with academic difficulties in writing, providing opportunities for students to engage in repeated practice of these writing skills and develop understanding, as well as providing opportunities for feedback (peer, instructor & self-evaluation). Requiring Generation 1.5 preservice teachers to enroll in upper level writing intensive courses benefit the students' development as a writer by increasing writing skills, writing confidence and self-efficacy.

Areas of further study should explore the types of writing tasks and skills which the Generation 1.5 preservice teachers indicated as areas of weakness. Research should also explore the impact, if any, the Generation 1.5 preservice teachers' levels of self-efficacy in writing influences their future K-12 classroom instructional methods.

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