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Secondary English Teachers' Perceptions and Expectations of High School Athletes

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SECONDARY ENGLISH TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS
OF HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETES

By

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Honors in the Major Program in English Education
in the College of Education
and in The Burnett Honors College
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ABSTRACT

In the United States, there are currently over seven million high school athletes, all of whom are required to take four years of core classes as well as elective classes. Core subject areas consist of math, science, social sciences, and English language arts. Of the four core subject areas, both national and state education committees place emphasis and scrutiny on English language arts. The research within this thesis, conducted in the form of an interview, is meant to explore English language arts teachers' possible attitudes and expectations of their student athletes in concern to their writing abilities. Special emphasis will be placed on secondary English language arts teachers' perceptions of student-athletes' use of the standard conventions of English, such as spelling, punctuation, syntax, and grammar, within their writing.

The results of four interviews with secondary English language arts teachers revealed that these secondary English language arts teachers did not hold different perceptions of their student-athletes writing abilities as compared to their non-athlete peers. All four participants revealed that they believe that the student-athletes in their classroom have the same writing abilities as non-athletes, and that being labeled as a student-athlete does not give way to either positive or negative perception of their writing. This exploratory study is beneficial to both student-athletes and English language arts teachers, as it may have the ability to affect change in the way that teachers approach and teach their student-athletes.

DEDICATION

To my family, thank you for always supporting me in everything I do. You have always encouraged me to follow my dream of becoming a teacher, and I am so grateful. Whenever I doubted my abilities or others questioned my goals, you all kept me moving forward. There is no way I would be the person I am today without the love and support you have given me throughout my lifetime. Thank you for all that you do for me, I love you!

To all of my teachers, thank you for the education that you have provided me. I am so humbled by all of the hard work that teachers put into their students every year. You have all been an inspiration in my life, and I hope to make you proud as I enter into the world of education.

To all of my coaches, thank you for helping me to fall in love with sports and teaching me what it really means to be a student-athlete. I would not be the person I am today without the encouragement, motivation, and toughness that you fostered within me.

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To Dr. Jeffrey Kaplan, thank you for all of the support you have provided these last few years. Through your teaching I have learned what it looks like when a professor truly cares for their students. I cannot wait to implement the strategies and life lessons I have learned through your teaching!

To Dr. Sherron Roberts, thank you for all of your help formatting and editing my thesis. I know that it is not an easy job! Thank you for always being so upbeat and answering all of the questions I may have had. You were always so encouraging and I truly appreciate all that you do!

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Personal Rationale

Growing up, I was always an athletic kid. From a young age I was on athletic teams; in elementary school I was a part of the cross-country team, while I also went to dance and gymnastics lessons. As I got older and became a middle school student I stopped attending dance and gymnastics classes and began participating in sports such as tennis, track, and volleyball. Finally, as a high school student I really came to love and find my place as a member of the varsity volleyball team. From the time I was a small child I identified myself as an athletic girl and a team player. However, I also identified myself as an academically motivated student.

While some students needed their parents to push them to do well in school, I was self-motivated. I liked to do well and receive high marks on my schoolwork, and it was a source of pride when my teachers or other students would refer to me as one of the smartest kids in the classroom. While schoolwork did not always come easy for me, especially when I got to AP and Honors classes in high school, I went out of my way to learn the material and not just pass but receive high grades in all of my classes. I graduated from high school as both an honors student and a summa cum laude earning a 4.0 GPA; I managed to do this while working as a full-time student-athlete.

As a high school athlete, I would often hear teachers make remarks about their student-athletes and how very little was expected from them, especially if they were in Standard level classes; I thought very little of this because I was not one of those students.

However, after I graduated from high school I was hired to become a freshmen volleyball coach and I began to notice a stigma that surrounded the high school athletes. Student-athletes, including my volleyball players, were either regarded in high esteem with their teachers or had very little expected of their academic performance. Becoming a coach and viewing this stigma from a coach's point of view made me interested in finding out what teachers really thought of their student-athletes.

I am a future secondary English language arts education teacher and will one day have a classroom of my own. I know that my classroom will be filled with students from all walks of life, student-athletes included. Therefore I decided that insight into my fellow secondary English education teachers' relationships and perceptions of student-athletes would be beneficial to my future career. I hope that the insight that I gain from completing this study will allow me to be an open-minded, aware, and encouraging secondary English language arts teacher.

Broader Rationale

In a culture where sporting events are held in the same high esteem as national holidays, and professional athletes are revered for their physical prowess as well as their high paying salaries, it is only natural that impressionable high school students would look up to these athletes as role models. According to a survey completed by the National Federation of State High School Associations, in the 2012-2013 school year, over seven million high school students participated in extracurricular sports across the United States (NFSHSA, 2013). While these student-athletes are not gaining international fame or million

dollar salaries, they are gaining valuable experience in balancing a social and academic lifestyle.

Each of the over-seven million high school athletes currently participating in high school athletics are required to take four years of core classes, as well as elective classes (NFSHSA, 2013). Core classes for high school students fall into the subject areas of math, science, social sciences, and English language arts. Of these four subject areas, there has been a recent push for, and emphasis put on, English language arts, by both national and state education departments (Florida Department of Education, 2014). Reading, writing, and comprehension skills learned in English language arts classes carry over to all subject areas; therefore, it is pivotal that students perform well in their English language arts classes, so that they may be successful in other academic areas as well.

Throughout their time in school, student-athletes face the same academic struggles, and triumphs, as many other students face. Student-athletes often have slightly better academic profiles than their non-athletic peers, and with such similar academic records it is reasonable to assume that writing performance, poor or not, applies to all students and not just student-athletes (Wagner, 2011). Additionally, Wagner states that many students would benefit from additional writing support, even though student-athletes are a very vulnerable population because of their time constraints (2011).

This thesis aims to explore a small number of secondary English language arts teachers' relationships with high school athletes and determine if it is possible that these teachers have certain perceptions or expectations of student-athletes regarding their performance in the English language arts classroom because of their status as an athlete.

Emphasis for this study will be on teacher perceptions of student-athletes writing abilities in concern to their knowledge and use of the standard conventions of English in writing, such as, spelling, punctuation, syntax, and grammar. While knowledge of the conventions of English does not ensure total success in English language arts, there is such an emphasis placed on it throughout the state of Florida's curriculum guide that I am curious about teacher's viewpoints on this specific area of English language arts.

As a future secondary English language arts teacher, I will one day be teaching my students about the conventions of English. While it is not my favorite topic to teach within English language arts, it is a vital skill that all students should possess proper knowledge of as they leave high school and pursue careers (Wagner, 2011). Furthermore, studies that I have found have focused on the reading comprehension of student-athletes, rather than their writing abilities (Ganim, 2014). This study, while small, is focused around writing and the minute, but important, elements that make a piece of writing whole.

The following chapter will review literature and additional research conducted by other professionals both inside and outside of the teaching profession. Chapter Three will detail the methodology of the research conducted for this study. Later chapters will provide research conclusions, study limitations, and the impact that this study could have on future research within the field of English language arts.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND BACKGROUND

Although relatively little research exists concerning high school athletes as compared to college athletes, inferences are able to be drawn from prior studies which are focused around the perception and biases of college professors towards collegiate athletes academic performance.

Research in the area of student-athlete performance is somewhat ambiguous, and there has yet to be any research that supports researchers feelings one way or the other about student-athletes performance in the classroom as compared to non-athletes. For instance, research done at the University of Texas San Antonio states that, "Several authors have contended that sport participation facilitates children's academic achievement, largely due to the behavioral characteristics developed within that participation" (Ryska & Vestal, 2004). Ryska and Vestal state that student-athletes often have higher grades and set higher academic goals for themselves as compared to their peers. However, Ryska and Vestal's (2004) research also goes onto say, "Student-athletes possess significantly under-developed academic skills and demonstrate less mature levels of education and career planning as compared to non-athletes" (Ryska & Vestal, 2004). Furthermore, various studies have found that student-athletes tend to have higher percentages of students with learning disabilities (N4A Committee on Learning Disabilities, 1998; Wagner, 2011). Research concerning student-athlete's academic performance can be considered equivocal at best.

Although student-athlete academic performance is abstruse, there is evidence of teacher stereotyping. "They [student-athletes] are seen as academically unqualified

illegitimate students whose only interest is athletics” (Bosworth, Fujita, Jensen, & Simons, 2007). This stereotype can affect both student-athletes and teachers; such stereotyping can impact student-teacher relationships, causing stress and frustration. If a student-athlete feels that a teacher does not believe that they are capable or motivated to do their work, than that student is likely to resent that teacher and underperform (Hansen & Wanke, 2009). Further research reveals that, “The perception is that in order to remain eligible and participate in sports they [student-athletes] put in minimum effort, do little academic work, take easy classes, and have others do their work for them” (Bosworth, Fujita, Jensen, & Simons, 2007). Suggesting that the only reason student-athletes do any work in their academic classes is to remain athletically eligible and that student-athletes have no inclination towards academics. While this may be true for some student-athletes, it is unlikely that the subculture of student-athletes as a whole fall within the previous categorization.

Starting in the mid-1980s Florida lawmakers proposed academic eligibility requirements for student-athletes. This idea was based off of a bill passed in the state of Texas named *No Pass, No Play* which was designed to keep student-athletes focused and grounded in their schoolwork rather than just going to school for the athletics. Florida lawmakers created their own version of eligibility requirements for Florida student-athletes, which are still in place today through the Florida High School Athletic Association. However, Texas and Florida are not the only states with this kind of focus put on student-athletes. A 2010 study of high school student-athletes found, “48 state athletic associations recommended some form of academic eligibility requirements for student

participation in high school sports, with requirements ranging from being enrolled in a minimum number of courses, to a combination of minimum number of courses, passing all courses, a minimum grade point average, and an attendance policy” (Favor & Lumpkin, 2012). With eligibility rules that student-athletes must fulfill, student-athletes remain engaged in their academic experience.

Eligibility standards can also act as external motivation. According to Favor and Lumpkin, “These standards have resulted in some students having higher grades, higher attendance rates, fewer disciplinary problems, and lower dropout rates” (2012). However, the research pertaining to high school student-athletes’ elder counterparts in collegiate athletics does not always reflect the same external motivation that high school student-athletes have (Covington, Simons, & Van Rhee, 1999).

In 2014 an article written by CNN reporter Sara Ganim found that student athletes at the collegiate level, especially basketball and football players, were reading between a fourth-grade and eighth-grade level. “As far back as the 1980s, faculty and staff have spoken up about illiterate athletes who are pushed through with passing grades to keep eligibility to play, while their reading was little addressed” (Ganim, 2014). This thesis is interested to explore whether English language arts teachers, as well as other core subject area teachers, are allowing some illiterate or poor performing student-athletes to pass through their classrooms without an appropriate knowledge base.

Expectations and Self-fulfilling Prophecies

Could the reported problem of illiterate collegiate athletes very well stem from a source of secondary English language arts teachers who have personal perceptions and biases towards student-athletes? Although some research suggests that student-athletes believe that professional athletics would be their ideal profession (Lee, 1983) the reality is that most student-athletes do not have the abilities needed to pursue such a career. Leaving these student-athletes to fall back on their academic abilities, especially if they have no interest in attempting to bring their athletic abilities to the professional stage (Covington, Simmons, & Van Rhee, 1999). There has been ample research done on teacher expectations and the effect that they have on student's self-fulfilling prophecies- a behavior or idea influenced by expectations which in turn causes the expectations to become true. Although the strength of the effect that teacher expectations can have on a student vary, the fact remains the same that teacher expectations do make a difference to student's academic performances. It has been found that such self-fulfilling prophecies occur in the classroom, the effect on students is rather minimal (Kent & Lee, 2005). The fact remains though, that self-fulfilling prophecies are affected by teacher perceptions. Furthermore, research shows that, "activating a stereotype can influence behavior in a stereotype-consistent way," (Hansen & Wanke, 2009); therefore, if a student is exposed to a "dumb-jock" stereotype, than they are more likely to perform in that manner. However, if a certain stereotype is not widely believed, rather it is held by only one or two people, than will it have any effect on the receiver of the stereotype?

The effect that teacher's perceptions and biases have on students may be small, but any affect makes a difference. "Positive expectations promote positive attitudes and motivation to achieve; negative expectations lead to alienation, discouragement, and lack of effort" (Arnold, 1997). This very simple process of expectation and fulfillment should be a positive one; however, many teachers' negative perceptions and stereotypes come through to affect students. Arnold writes, "The importance of positive expectations is magnified with regard to young adolescents because of the negative stereotypes which abound them in our society" (1997). This is true for student-athletes as well.

Self-fulfilling prophecies are ideas or prophecies held by others that can cause a person to act in a way to make the prophecy come true. Whereas self-efficacy is the personal strength or belief in oneself to complete tasks, accomplish goals, or perform in a certain way. Bandura (1982) completed a study on the self-efficacy mechanism in human agency that confirms that people's self-worth and performance has a direct correlation between their thoughts of themselves and their environment. In this case, student's self-efficacy is directly correlated with their learning environment, i.e. their teacher's perceptions, expectations, and biases that may be formed in response to a student's extracurricular activities. Within Bandura's research a figure compares personal self-efficacy judgment and outcome judgment; this figure states that a person can have four outcomes when utilizing this scale. If a person has low self-efficacy and low outcome judgment then they will become resigned and apathetic, whereas if they have low self-efficacy and high outcome judgment then they may self-devalue and become despondent. Whereas, if a person has high self-efficacy judgment and low outcome judgment then they

may protest, become a social activist, and a milieu for change. However, if a person has high self-efficacy judgment and high outcome judgment, then they are more inclined to be active and be assured in their decisions (Bandura, 1982). Bandura's theory and self-efficacy chart can be applied to this research because a student's self-efficacy judgment coupled with the outcome judgment of the teacher and learning environment can produce results that can be detrimental or encouraging for a student's academic abilities, especially student-athletes. The chart published with Bandura's research can be found in Appendix B titled, *Bandura's Self-Efficacy Chart*.

Professional Conduct, Florida Standards, and Writing

As a future secondary English language arts teacher, I plan to encourage and support my students, whether they are student-athletes or not. It is my personal belief that every person no matter his or her age, gender, ethnicity, or beliefs has the right to an unbiased education. Thankfully, the state of Florida holds similar beliefs and has written a code of conduct that outlines the expected behavior and conduct that every educator in the state of Florida must practice.

The Florida Code of Ethics and Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida section 6A-10.080 part 1 states that, "The educator values the worth and dignity of every person, the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, acquisition of knowledge, and the nurture of democratic citizenship. Essential to the achievement of these standards are the freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal opportunity for all." This professional code of conduct is relevant to this study, for it will be

examined as to whether or not ELA teacher's perceptions of student-athletes unknowingly limit the student's equal opportunity to learn.

Furthermore, this study will focus around English language arts teacher's perceptions of student-athletes' writing abilities concerning the use of the standard conventions of English in their writing, such as spelling, punctuation, syntax, and grammar. In order to determine the ability level of student-athletes as compared to their peers concerning writing conventions, I will be using the recently updated Language Arts Florida Standards. In the state of Florida these language standards are utilized by teachers to assist in creating lesson or unit plans and guide teachers as to where students should be on both a knowledge level and performance level, according to grade level.

The language standards for grades nine/ten, in cluster 1: Conventions of Standard English, code LAFS.910.L.1.1 state that students should be able to, "Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking." This includes using parallel structure, and using various types of phrases and clauses to convey specific meanings while writing. Additionally, code LAFS.910.L.1.2 states that students should be able to, "Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing." This also includes the use of semicolons and colons in writing.

Similarly, the language standards for grades eleven/twelve, in cluster 1: Conventions of Standard English, code LAFS.1112.L.1.1 state that students should be able to, "Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking." The conventions of English according to this code also include

the understanding that the conventions of English can change and that in order to combat contested issues of the conventions of language they should refer to professional references such as the *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of English Usage*. Furthermore, code LAFS.1112.L.1.2 of cluster 1 states that students should be able to, "Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing." This standard also includes the additional understanding of the conventions of hyphenation. Florida has recently adopted and revised the above standards in order to enhance not only the writing skills of Florida public school students, but also their overall literacy skills.

There has been previous research conducted that states that being a student-athlete does not necessarily lead to better or worse academic outcomes (Wagner, 2011). While some student-athletes academic performance is strong, others are weak, however, this is no different than non-athletes performance in the classroom; some students are more academically inclined than others. As it happens, what matters more in the relationship between teachers and student-athletes are the expectations set for each student by both the teacher and the student. Positive expectations for students lead to positive outcomes, while negative expectations for students usually lead to negative outcomes (Arnold, 1997).

As educators we need to realize that students need to know that they are believed in and that teachers have positive expectations for them to succeed or else we are setting them up for failure. Additionally, we need to be aware of our professional conduct in the classroom. The state of Florida Professional Code of Conduct requires each teacher to not only respect their students, but also their profession and the community in which they

teach. The code of conduct by which Florida teachers must abide is in place for the good of both teachers and students, establishing good will and positive influence between all teachers and students.

The Florida language standards are in place for the same reason. Teachers are expected to hold their students to high standards, which are outlined in the recently updated Florida language standards. These standards not only act as a guide for teachers to set their own classroom expectations and standards, but also provide a guide as to where each student should be performing at a certain grade level. These standards are important as they keep all students held to high but maintainable standards, in hopes of having high achievement outcomes for all students.

With new and updated Florida standards and a new push for improved literacy among students, I wanted to find out how or if student-athletes would be affected. By conducting a semi-structured interview as the basis for this small exploratory study, I plan to examine the relationship between secondary English language arts teachers and student-athletes. Additionally, I hope to determine if secondary English language arts teachers have any preconceived perceptions or expectations for their student-athletes' writing ability. Following this chapter is the explanation for the methodology behind this small, exploratory study, as well as the outcome of the study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Teachers' perceptions of students are important to student success, but also may be a hindrance to student performance in the classroom. This is especially true for groups of students that are already at-risk of becoming stereotyped, such as student-athletes. English teachers' perceptions of the writing abilities of student-athletes can determine the outcome of the student writing, if the students are aware of the teachers' perceptions (Hansen & Wanke, 2009). If a student-athlete is aware of a teacher's perception, bias, or stereotype towards student-athletes then that stereotype could directly affect the student's behavior (Hansen & Wanke, 2009). With this in mind, the following research in this thesis has been conducted in order to better understand if secondary English language arts teachers have any established perceptions, expectations, or stereotypes concerning student-athletes and their writing abilities.

Participants

Four participants were asked to be a part of this small, exploratory study. All four participants work at the same Seminole County Public High School and are secondary English language arts teachers. Additionally, all four of the participants were white females. Each participant is registered as a teacher in the state of Florida. Participant 1 has been a teacher for 6 years and teaches 11th grade Honors English language arts and Debate I through IV, Participant 2 has been a teacher for 25 years and teaches 12th grade AP Literature, Participant 3 has been a teacher for 8 years and teaches 12th grade Honors English language arts as well as 9th grade Honors English language arts, and Participant 4

has been a teacher for 15 years and teaches 12th grade Standard English language arts as well as 11th grade Standard English language arts. Additionally, Participant 1, Participant 3, and Participant 4 were high school student-athletes. However, only Participant 3 and Participant 4 work as after school athletic coaches.

A limited number of participants were asked to partake in this study because there were time constraints placed on the study that did not allow for ample time to interview a multitude of participants.

Setting

Each of the semi-structured interviews that occurred with the four participants took place within the same Seminole County Public High School. This high school opened in 2005 and is considered to be a relatively newer school within Seminole County; there is total enrollment of approximately 2500-3000 students. This particular high school is rated as an “A” school in the state of Florida for the 2013-2014 school year; to be rated an “A” school is the best grade that a public school can receive in the state of Florida (http://www.scps.k12.fl.us/Portals/0/assets/pdf/newsStories/2014/07/2014_SCPS_School_Grade_SummaryV2.pdf). Public high school grades are determined based off of 50% assessment-based performance and learning gains and 50% of other components (<http://schoolgrades.fldoe.org/pdf/1112/Guidesheet2012SchoolGrades.pdf>). Assessment-based performance depends upon the standardized tests that all students are required to take. While the category of other components refers to the amount of students enrolled in accelerated curricula, students’ performance in accelerated curricula, the school’s

graduation rate, the school's at-risk graduation rate, and college readiness level (<http://schoolgrades.fldoe.org/pdf/1112/Guidesheet2012SchoolGrades.pdf>). The grading charts for Seminole County that were used for the above references can be found in Appendix C titled *Seminole County Public School Grade Chart* and Appendix D titled *Seminole County Public School Grading System*.

It has been my personal observation that this particular Seminole County Public School is both academically and athletically oriented. There are 28 different Advanced Placement courses offered to students, along with a myriad of academic clubs, and other opportunities, such as volunteering, that allow students the opportunity to pursue learning outside of the classroom. Additionally, there are many different athletic teams that students may choose to become a part of. However, it has also been my observation that there is very little diversity within the student population at this school. By my estimation the majority of this Seminole County Public High School is made up of White non-Hispanic students.

This particular high school was chosen for the setting of the study because it is the place of work for each of the four study participants. Additionally, this school was the designated placement for my first teaching internship, coordinated through the University of Central Florida. Through my internship, I have witnessed the amount of enthusiasm that the teachers, students, and administrations have for both academics and athletics within this school. Both academic honors and athletic honors are highly regarded by all and are recognized equally.

Data Collection Tools and Materials

For this study, I created an interview protocol with the guidance and approval of the thesis chair and the University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board. This semi-structured interview consists of a total of six original questions, available for review in Appendix A titled *Interview Protocol Questions*, which were created in the hope that they would provide insight as to whether or not secondary English education teachers have any kind of relationship or perceptions about student-athletes' writing abilities.

When performing the semi-structured interview with each participant I brought along the interview protocol, as well as my personal mobile phone so that I could record the interview. It was important to have each interview recorded so that I could refer to it throughout the many stages of the study. By recording the interview I was able to hold much more candid conversations with each participant, and know that I had the ability to reference each interview at my discretion.

Timeline of Interviews

As previously stated, each of the four participants work at the same Seminole County Public High School. I have also been assigned to this same Seminole County Public High School for my first teaching internship, coordinated through the University of Central Florida. Over the last few months I have developed professional relationships with the four participants of this study through my work as a teaching intern. It was through these professional relationships that I was able to ask and secure their voluntary participation within this small, exploratory study.

Once each participant agreed to be a part of this exploratory study, we worked together to choose a convenient time to hold the interview. Each of the participants are full-time secondary English language arts teachers, therefore the interview had to be scheduled around their teaching schedules. Each interview was scheduled during the participants' planning period; this is the class period that every teacher has once a day that allows them time without students to plan lessons, grade papers, and organize their classrooms.

I would go to each of the participants' classrooms during their planning period so that the interview would be conducted in a private, comfortable, and professional setting. Prior to each interview I provided each participant with an Informed Consent document that was created through the University of Central Florida's Institutional Review Board. The Informed Consent document, available for review in Appendix D titled, *Informed Consent Document*, explained to the participants the general idea of the study, any risks or benefits involved, the confidentiality agreement for the study, and that interview would be recorded so that I may refer back to it at my discretion. This study did not require that participants sign the Informed Consent document because there were no expected risks or benefits from participating in this study.

After providing each participant with the Informed Consent document, I set up my mobile phone to record the interview. The recording of each interview was a voice memo only; no video was taken during this process to help ensure confidentiality. Once the recording had begun I interviewed each participant, beginning at question 1 and ending at question 6. These questions can be reviewed in Appendix A titled, *Interview Protocol*

Questions. The interview process took approximately ten minutes for Participant 1, Participant 2, and Participant 4. The interview process took approximately fifteen minutes for Participant 3.

Summarizing Statements

In order to gather data, I have chosen to create an interview protocol, which will assist in determining whether or not these particular secondary English language arts teachers have an opinion about or interesting perceptions of student-athletes and their writing abilities concerning their knowledge and use of the standard conventions of English within their writing. Within this exploratory pilot study, four participants were surveyed; the participants within this study are secondary English language arts teachers working within the Seminole County Public School system in Orlando, Florida. The participants teach varied levels of students, ranging from Standard English language arts to Honors and Advanced Placement English language arts courses. However, four teachers who are not necessarily representative of secondary English language arts teachers as a whole cannot be generalized.

Appendix A, titled *Interview Protocol Questions*, consists of the six questions that were used to interview the participants. These six questions were created with the help of the thesis chair and were considered essential in determining whether or not the teachers that will be interviewed might reveal perceptions, expectations, or biases in concern with student-athletes and their writing abilities.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overall Writing Abilities

Writing ability is essential in the transfer of ideas, knowledge, and understanding. Each and every secondary student has been taught and trained in, not only English language arts classes, but other core subject areas, how to convey their thoughts with the utilization of writing. In order to determine if a small set of secondary English language arts teachers have a preconceived perception of student-athlete writing abilities, the four participants within the study were asked to compare the writing abilities of their student-athletes with the writing abilities of their non-athletes. Question 1: "According to your professional experience, what would you say about the overall writing abilities of student-athletes compared to the writing abilities of their peers?" This very generalized question asked teachers to recall using professional experience and hindsight if they believe the writing ability of student-athletes differed from that of other students.

The purpose of this question is to gain better understanding in reference to teachers' perceptions about student-athletes writing abilities, as well as their perceptions about their non-athletes writing abilities. In regard to question 1, each participant's answer is as follows:

Participant 1: "Overall I would say, well I teach honors classes, I think their writing actually is better, than the other students because they're more disciplined and usually high achieving. So I can't really think in specific terms, but on the whole I would say that

because they have that focus, they have that drive, they have that discipline, inherently they do better on the things that require those skills too.”

Participant 2: “It’s stronger sometimes, it’s average if not higher, and it’s because they make them do study guides and so basically your athlete is going to be the last kid to not turn in an assignment, they’re going to turn in their assignment if they want to stay on the team. They do the work, they do the practice and so it’s okay. They’re not the brilliant, brilliant ones, unless they just happen to be. Like our student, who is president of the national English honor society and a football player, but generally, it’s not low level.”

Participant 3: “I’ve never really thought about that, about the writing abilities compared to student athletes, so I’m just going to try to recall from the ones that I had, because I had some of the ones that I had in tenth grade that are athletes that I now have in twelfth grade. Honestly, I really don’t see much of a difference in the writing, what I notice is in the reading, like they don’t read. And I know writing and reading go hand in hand, but I think for them they are weak in the skills of reading. They don’t get the allusions if it’s from a book, or they just haven’t read the book. Their vocabulary is not quite as big, and I know usually that comes across in writing as well. But specifically for athletes as opposed to someone else that is not an athlete I don’t see a big difference.”

Participant 4: “That’s a good question. Unfortunately all of my kids writing is atrocious because they’re so low level and I have a lot of athletes. It kind of depends on who it is. I have lazy athletes that are in Standard classes but really don’t belong there. But then I have other kids that are student-athletes that really belong, it depends on the kid but

I don't think there's any difference, especially in my classroom because I have Standard kids, so there really isn't a big difference."

Although each participant's responses varied, a general conclusion for these four participants was met. Participants responded that their student-athletes' overall writing abilities, as compared to their non-athlete peers, was no different. Participants stated that although it depends on each individual student, they believe that generally there is no difference in writing ability, and that by "specifically comparing athletes, as opposed to other kids, there isn't a difference." This response directly coincides with research findings that all students, athletes or not, share similar academic characteristics, and that all students could find benefit in supplemental writing instruction, not just student-athletes (Wagner, 2011).

The Conventions of Writing

Within the conducted research for this study, the conventions of writing were an area of focus. According to the Language Arts Florida Standards, secondary level students should have proper knowledge of the conventions of writing. Within the section on the conventions of Standard English, the Language Arts Florida Standards state that students should be able to, "Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking," and "Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing." (*Florida Department of Education*, 2014) The participants in this study were asked for their perceptions about student-athletes abilities to utilize the standard conventions of English

with the following question. Question 2: “Do you feel that the student-athletes in your classroom have an appropriate understanding of the conventions of writing (i.e. spelling, capitalization, syntax, grammar, word choice)? This question was designed with the intention to gain better understanding of these four teachers’ perceptions of student-athletes and their ability to use the Standard conventions of English correctly. In regards to question 2, each participant’s answer is as follows:

Participant 1: “No. I don’t think anyone does, which is sad to say. I’ve noticed that across the board it’s not just athlete or non-athlete, it’s a problem for everybody.”

Participant 2: “Yeah, yeah I would say so. And I’m also thinking about my standard kids, the thing with the athletes is that if they didn’t get it then they would ask questions to try and get it because they knew they had to get it. So they have a second motivation.”

Participant 3: “I would say so. I just think they’re weak, in general, everybody in general. And I have a decent amount, so I can kind of like really think about it so I had them in tenth grade, like I said, and now I have them in twelfth and they’ve been athletes. I really don’t see anything huge though.”

Participant 4: “No different than any of my other kids.”

Two of the four participants stated that they believed that the utilization of the standard conventions of English within student writing was a weak point for all students, not just student-athletes. Stating that, “Across the board, its not just athlete non-athlete, it is a problem for everybody.” The perceptions of the following participants is similar to the findings of Wagner (2011), as her research states that large numbers of students, ranging from one-third to three-fourths of all students who have graduated from high school do not

have the proper writing knowledge and abilities that are needed to participate in writing tasks at the postsecondary level (2011). The conclusions of two participants were that student-athletes were not able to utilize the standard conventions of English well within their writing, however, it seems to be a struggle for all students, not just student-athletes. The other two participants stated that they believed that all of their students had a firm understanding of the conventions of English and that very few issues concerning this standard were exhibited within their students, including student-athletes, writing.

The general conclusion of the four participants was that either all of their students struggled utilizing the standard conventions of English within their writing, or that their students had a firm understanding of the usage of the standard conventions of English within their writing; being a student-athlete made no difference to these participants and their perceptions of the understanding and usage of the standard conventions of English. This conclusion lends itself to data found in research studies that state that poor writing performance is a struggle for all students, not just student athletes (Wagner, 2011).

Teacher Expectations

Although the focus of this study is centered on student-athletes' and their writing abilities, I believe that teacher expectations may play a part in those students' abilities. Teacher expectations can change the way that students views themselves and their work, as well as the way that teachers teach their students; it is has been documented that expectations relative to students behavior align with self-fulfilling prophecies (Arnold, 1997). Therefore, teacher expectations for student-athletes could be one of many

determining factors of students writing abilities, especially if the teacher's expectations for non-athletes writing differs from the expectations they hold for student-athletes writing. This statement is also supported by Bandura's research, stating that a person's self-efficacy judgment and outcome judgment are directly correlated to actions; therefore, student-athletes self-efficacy judgment coupled with English language arts teachers outcome judgments can have a direct effect on their writing abilities (Bandura, 1982).

Question 3 was developed to determine if these four secondary English language arts teachers hold different expectations for their student-athletes writing. Question 3 is as follows: "Are your expectations of student athletes' overall writing abilities different than your expectations of their peers?" The participants' answers to the question 3 are as follows:

Participant 1: "Um, the right answer is no. But I think, me, yes I do hold them to a higher standard. And I do that because I was an athlete too. And I don't know, I feel that they're just statistically more high achieving so I expect high achievement level from them too. I guess that's not to say though that I don't expect high achievement from everyone, it's just a different level of expectation."

Participant 2: "No."

Participant 3: "No."

Participant 4: "No."

Participant 2, Participant 3, and Participant 4 stated that they do not have different expectations for the writing of their student-athletes than for their non-athletic peers. Additionally, the same three participants stated that they hold all of their students to the

same high standards whether they are a student-athlete, involved in clubs, or not involved in anything.

However, the Participant 1 shared that he/she does hold their student-athletes to a higher standard than their non-athletic peers. Stating that they believe that student-athletes are statistically more high achieving; therefore, the student-athletes in this participant's classroom are held to a higher level; "although it's not to say that I don't have high expectations for everyone," but student-athletes are definitely held to a higher standard.

The conclusions drawn from the four participants answer to question 3 are clear; the participants hold all of their students to a high standard. Although the final participant stated that he/she holds their student-athletes to a higher standard, in regards to writing, it does not mean that these students necessarily perform better. Each of the four participants state that they hold their students to high standards, whether they are student-athletes or not, but the effect on their writing is undetermined because, as Bandura's research supports, the results of a person's actions are directly affected by both outcome judgments and self-efficacy judgments. (Bandura, 1982) Because this study focused solely on teacher expectations and perceptions, I am unable to determine the direct effect on student-athlete writing. However, it was determined that a student's status as an athlete or not does not diminish or enhance the expectations of English language arts teachers on students writing abilities.

Teaching Writing

Teacher expectations can be influential both towards the outcome of students work and the way that teachers teach their students. A teacher that holds high expectations for their students will teach at a high level, whereas a teacher with lower expectations of their students will teach at a lower level. With this in mind, question four was designed to examine if the presence of student-athletes in the classroom affects the participants teach. Question 4 states: "Do you change your approach to teaching writing because you have student athletes in your classroom?" The participants' answers to question four are as follows:

Participant 1: "No."

Participant 2: "No, with the exception of scheduling. If I know that there's something coming up that's big, I may move something around. For instance pep rallies, I am not going to have a writing assignment when a pep rally is happening because the cheer leaders have to go and the football players have to go and this has to happen, so I move things around based on athletic events."

Participant 3: "No."

Participant 4: "No."

Overwhelmingly, the participants answered that the presence of student-athletes in their classrooms does not change the way that they design lesson plans or teach writing. Additionally, all four participants stated that they do not believe that their student-athletes need to be taught differently than non-athlete students in regard to writing. The

conclusion of question 3 supports the research of Wagner, stating that student-athletes share many of the same academic struggles (or triumphs) as all students face (2011).

Knowing Yourself and Your Students

In order to avoid bias and ill-conceived perceptions, it is important for teachers to be able to recognize how their perceptions of students may form. The final two questions of the interview were included in an effort to determine if the answers provided by the participants of this study could have been influenced in any way by their past or current experience working with student-athletes. Question 5 asked: “As a teacher, are you or have you ever been, involved as a coach for any extracurricular athletic activities?” Each four of the participants’ answers are as follows:

Participant 1: “Not athletic ones, no.”

Participant 2: “Well that’s interesting because many people think that debate should be an athletic event because it has the same parameters, uh so um, technically yes, but realistically, no.”

Participant 3: “Yes, I’ve always been a cheerleading coach for the past two years since I started teaching, and I also coach track.”

Participant 4: “Yes. I’ve coached water polo and swimming.”

All four participants were then asked about their relationship with and knowledge about their student-athletes. Question 6 states: “In your classroom, do you make it a point to get to know who your student-athletes are?” The answers from each participant are as follows:

Participant 1: "I do, uh but I probably don't use, or I probably don't make a point to get to know them more than I would any other student. So to me it doesn't raise my level of personability. It's just, is what it is. I guess there's more, I feel more of a bond with them internally, I never express that to them because to me that would show favoritism. So it's kind of a mutual understanding on my part, that okay, this kids an athlete, they get it, that they have to manage their time and be organized and be diligent because they have one more thing on their plate than the normal student."

Participant 2: "Yes. Yes, because well I try to find out everything about the kids. On the first day the yellow form has 'what clubs and stuff are you involved in' right off the bat I want to know that and I write it down on a roll sheet so that I can connect with the kids right away and remember which kids are in chorus and which kids are in this and which kids are in that. I also, it makes me pay attention with AP lit as to the kids that are not involved in anything. Why aren't they involved in anything, why are they doing nothing? Because that's a little unnerving if they're not doing anything. It's not just athletes it's all the clubs, I want to know who my presidents are in all my clubs, because I have a lot of them."

Participant 3: "Oh yeah, but that's all my kids though. I know you're specially talking about athletes but um, all my students, my thespian kids or my kids that just don't really do anything. You know, maybe like manga or something on their own. I'm one to just get to know my kids anyways, I'm like that."

Participant 4: "I guess. Yeah... yeah."

Participants were asked if they were currently, or ever had been, a coach for extracurricular athletic activities within the school system. Two of the four participants currently work as a afterschool coaches, one with the cheerleading and track teams, and the other with the swimming and water polo teams, respectively. These same two participants were also student-athletes throughout their time in school. The other two participants have never worked as coaches for any athletic team or activity within the school system. However, one of these participants was a student-athlete in secondary school.

Additionally, the four participants were asked if they made it a point to know who their student-athletes are in their classrooms. All four participants answered yes, with the stipulation that they make it a point to get to know all of their students, whether or not they are athletes. "Yes, I try to find out everything about the kids. Right off the bat I want to know that, and I write it on a roll sheet so that I can connect with the kids and I can remember what kids do what. But it's not just athletes, I want to know about all of the kids." All four participants state that knowing which students are student-athletes is important, but no more important than knowing about other students that are non-athletes.

Having these four participants answer question 5 and question 6 was important in determining their relationship with student-athletes, and if that relationship could possibly lead to certain perceptions or expectations of student-athletes writing abilities. While two of the four participants work as after school athletic coaches, their answers did not appear to be unduly influenced by their extracurricular involvement with student-athletes.

Summarizing Statements

The purpose of this small case study was to interview secondary English language arts teachers to determine if secondary English language arts teachers had any sort of relationship or possible predetermined perception of student-athletes' writing abilities. In order to gain insight into this question, four participants from a Seminole County Public School were asked to participate in a semi-structured interview; each of the four participants are secondary English language arts teachers.

The four participants that took part in this study were asked a series of six questions; all six questions were developed with the help of the thesis chair. The questions were delivered in the form of a semi-structured interview and all four of the participants' responses were recorded using a mobile phone.

The six questions that were asked during the semi-structured interview are as follows:

- 1) According to your professional experience, what would you say about the overall writing abilities of student-athletes compared to the writing abilities of their peers?
- 2) Do you feel that the student-athletes in your classroom have an appropriate understanding of the conventions of writing? (I.e. spelling, capitalization, syntax, grammar, word choice)
- 3) Are your expectations of student-athletes' overall writing abilities different than your expectations of their peers?

- 4) Do you change your approach to teaching writing because you have student athletes in your classroom?
- 5) As a teacher, are you or have you ever been, involved as a coach for any extracurricular athletic activities?
- 6) In your classroom, do you make it a point to get to know who your student athletes are?

The responses from each of the four participants were similar, however, with such a limited number of responses to draw from, broad generalizations cannot be made. In concern to this particular case study, the conclusion appears to be that the four study participants do not have any kind of strong relationship or perceptions about student-athletes or their writing abilities. The presence of student-athletes in the classroom does not affect the way that these participants teach writing to their students.

In the following chapters the conclusions of this study will be stated, along with the study limitations and further questions. This particular case study was limited because of the small number of participants, and therefore many questions have yet to be answered. Additionally, educational implications of this study as well as the opportunity for further research pertained to this study will be discussed.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to determine if secondary English language arts teachers might possess preconceived expectations or perceptions of student-athletes' writing abilities. Special attention on student-athletes' abilities to utilize the conventions of Standard English within their writing was also a focus within this study. In order to explore this topic, I interviewed four participants that work as secondary English language arts teachers in Seminole County Public Schools in Orlando, Florida. Each of the four participants were asked a series of six questions, which can be found in Appendix A titled *Interview Protocol Questions*. The answers provided to these questions were utilized to draw a general conclusion in response to my question: How might secondary English language arts teachers hold a different perception or expectation towards student-athletes and their writing abilities as compared to students that are non-athletes?

After completing the research and interviewing the four participants, I have learned more about how secondary English language arts teachers do not hold different perceptions of their student-athletes writing abilities as compared to their non-athlete peers. All four participants revealed that they believe that the student-athletes in their classroom have the same writing abilities as non-athletes, and that being labeled as a student-athlete does not give way to either positive or negative perception of their writing. This includes student-athletes' use of the Standard conventions of English within their writing. Each of the four participants stated that they did not believe that their student-athletes use of the Standard conventions of English differed from their non student-athletes. Rather, all four participants stated that it does not matter if the student is an

athlete or not, but the writing ability is determined by the individual student and not their status as an athlete.

However, because of the small and limited nature of this study, no broad generalizations can be made. Although the four participants' statements were similar and very limited generalizations for these four participants could be drawn, a broader determination could not be made with the interview of only four teachers.

CHAPTER SIX: STUDY LIMITATIONS

This study was conducted with one interviewer and four participants who work at the same high school in Seminole County in Orlando, Florida. Therefore, the feedback utilized to draw conclusions is severely limited. If this study could be conducted within a larger field, I would have reached out to many more secondary English language arts teachers across the country. I believe surveying more secondary English language arts teachers would result in a better understanding in reference to the possible feelings and perceptions that they may have towards student-athletes and their writing abilities.

Questions that Persist

This was a small, exploratory study conducted within one public school in Seminole County, Florida. Because of the limited nature of this study, there are many questions that persist. For instance, would the outcome of this study have been different if I interviewed a sample of secondary English language arts teachers from across Seminole County? From across all of Florida? Or across the United States?

Additionally, the school at which the four participants work and were interviewed in is a middle-class community. What would the results have been if the participants worked within a community that was impoverished? Or an extremely affluent community?

It was my observation that the school environment that the four participants work within celebrates both academic and athletic achievement equally. Would the results have been different if I had interviewed teachers from schools where athletics are more

prominent than academics? Or a school environment where no emphasis is placed on athletics at all?

Finally, this study was designed as a semi-structured interview. The four participants that were interviewed all work at the same school in Seminole County, which is also the school where I am completing my first teaching internship. I have developed professional relationships with each of the four participants interviewed from working with them on a weekly basis. Does my professional relationship with each of the participants affect their answers? Would the study have been different if the participants and I had no previous background? Additionally, would the outcome of the study have been different if the participants filed an anonymous survey online?

Should this exploratory study be replicated, or used as a starting point for a new study, I believe that all of the above questions hold relevance to potential outcomes.

CHAPTER SEVEN: EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Future Research

In the future, I would really like to further the research conducted within this study. Although this was a small, exploratory study, I believe that it would be a strong starting point for further research. My passion for education and athletics is unwavering, and I believe that the more we know about the way that these topics coincide, the better prepared we will be as educators and coaches to work with student-athletes.

In the future, I would like to expand this research and interview a multitude of secondary English language arts teachers. Additionally, I would like to explore not only secondary English language arts teachers possible perceptions of student-athletes' writing abilities, but their overall literacy abilities: reading, writing, and speaking in the English language arts classroom.

Lessons Learned

The process of creating a study and conducting research was a new experience for me. Throughout the year that this thesis took to research and write, I learned that one of the most important aspects of research is to be thorough; developing a plan of action, conducting research, and writing a report is hard work but you must be thorough.

Additionally, I have learned that the more questions you ask, the better off you will be as a researcher. This was my first experience completing research and writing a thesis, and I needed guidance along the way. No question is too simple or complicated to be asked; I also learned that no question is a bad question. Although the answer might seem

obvious in hindsight, it is important that you know all of the facts upfront and do not assume you know the answer.

Conducting research and writing a thesis is a very humbling experience, accept all of the help that is available to you and the advice of those that came before you.

Implications for Pre-Service Teachers

I believe that it is important for teachers to be aware of their personal and professional perceptions or biases of students within their classroom. As a current pre-service teacher I think that all pre-service teachers should be cognizant of their personal perceptions and biases that they may hold towards different types of students. In order to help pre-service teachers, such as myself, I think that there should be more emphasis placed on it in our pre-service education. Having honest and open conversations about different perceptions and biases that teachers may hold could be uncomfortable but it will be beneficial in the long run. The more aware that teachers are of their personal and professional perceptions and biases that they may have towards students, the more prepared they will be to teach those students.

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL QUESTIONS

Honors in the Major:
Secondary English Teachers' Perceptions and Expectations of High School
Athletes

Interview Questions

1. According to your professional experience, what would you say about the overall writing abilities of student-athletes compared to the writing abilities of their peers?
2. Do you feel that the student-athletes in your classroom have an appropriate understanding of the conventions of writing (i.e. spelling, capitalization, syntax, grammar, word choice)?
3. Are your expectations of student-athletes' overall writing abilities different than your expectations of their peers?
4. Do you change your approach to teaching writing because you have student athletes in your classroom?
5. As a teacher, are you or have you ever been, involved as a coach for any extracurricular athletic activities?
6. In your classroom, do you make it a point to get to know who your student athletes are?

APPENDIX B: BANDURA’S SELF-EFFICACY CHART

epinephrine, which is rapidly discharged, having a more pronounced effect on cardiac activity than on arterial pressure. Understanding of the physiological mechanisms by which self-percepts of efficacy give rise to stress reactions can be carried one step further by linking strength of perceived self-efficacy to hormonal releases.

Perceived self-efficacy and emotional arousal undoubtedly involve interactive (though asymmetrical) effects, with coping efficacy exercising the much greater sway. That is, perceived inefficaciousness in coping with potential threats leads people to approach such situations anxiously, and experiencing disruptive arousal may further lower their sense of efficacy that they will be able to perform skillfully. However, self-percepts of efficacy predict avoidance behavior, whereas autonomic arousal bears no uniform relationship to it (Bandura, 1978a; Bolles, 1972; Herrnstein, 1969; Leitenberg, Agrad, Butz, & Winez, 1971). People are thus much more likely to act on their self-percepts of efficacy than on visceral cues. This should come as no surprise, since information derived from past accomplishments and comparative appraisals is considerably more indicative of capabilities than are the indefinite stirrings of the viscera. For example, accomplished actors interpret their brief nervousness before a play as a normative situational reaction, rather than as an indicant of personal incapability, and are in no way dissuaded by their viscera from going on stage and performing well what they assuredly know they can do once they get started.

Perceived Self-Inefficacy, Futility, and Despondency

Inability to influence events and social conditions that significantly affect one's life can give rise to feelings of futility and despondency as well as to anxiety. Self-efficacy theory distinguishes between two judgmental sources of futility. People can give up trying because they seriously doubt that they can do what is required. Or they may be assured of their capabilities but give up trying because they expect their efforts to produce no results due to the unresponsiveness, negative bias, or punitiveness of the environment. These two separate sources of futility have quite different causes and remedial implications. To change efficacy-based futility requires development of constituent competencies and strong percepts of self-efficacy. In contrast, to change outcome-based futility necessitates changing the social environment so that people can gain

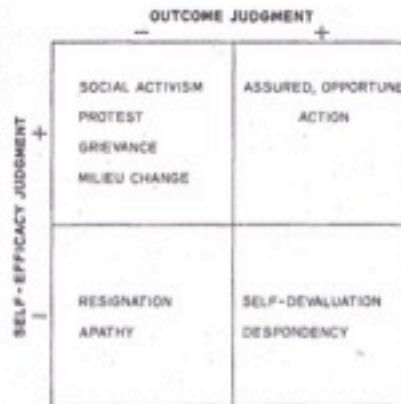


Figure 13. Interactive effects of self-percepts of efficacy and response outcome expectations on behavior and affective reactions.

the benefits of the competencies they already possess.

In any given instance behavior would be best predicted by considering both self-efficacy and outcome beliefs.⁴ As can be seen in Figure 13, different patterns of outcome and efficacy beliefs are likely to produce different psychological effects. A high sense of personal efficacy and a responsive environment that rewards performance attainments fosters assured, active responsiveness. Consider next the pattern combining high self-efficacy

⁴ The types of outcomes people expect depend largely on their judgments of how well they will be able to perform in given situations. For example, drivers who judge themselves inefficient in navigating winding mountain roads will conjure up outcomes of wreckage and bodily injury, whereas those who are fully confident of their driving capabilities will anticipate sweeping vistas rather than tangled wreckage. Similarly the social reactions people anticipate for asserting themselves depend on their judgments of how adroitly they can do it. In social, intellectual, and athletic pursuits, those who judge themselves highly efficacious will anticipate successful outcomes and self-doubters will expect mediocre performances of themselves and, thus, less favorable outcomes. For activities in which outcomes are either inherent to the actions or are tightly linked by social codes, expected outcomes cannot be disembodied from the very performance judgments on which they are conditional. Outcome expectations are dissociable from self-efficacy judgments when extrinsic outcomes are loosely linked to level or quality of performance. Such structural arrangements permit social biases to come into play, so the same performance attainments may produce variable, and often inequitable, outcomes. Expected outcomes are also partially separable from self-efficacy judgments when extrinsic outcomes are fixed to a minimal level of performance, as when a designated level of work productivity produces a fixed pay but higher performance brings no additional monetary benefits.

APPENDIX C: SEMINOLE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL GRADE CHART

**Seminole County Public Schools
Summary of School Grades (2010-2014)**

Elementary	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Altamonte	A	A	A	B	C
Bear Lake	A	A	A	B	A
Bentley	B	A	A	B	B
Carillon	A	A	A	A	A
Casselberry	B	C	B	A	B
Crystal Lake	A	A	A	A	A
Eastbrook	A	A	A	B	A
English Estates	B	C	B	C	B
Evans	A	A	A	A	A
Forest City	B	A	B	C	D
Geneva	A	A	A	A	B
Goldsboro	A	A	A	B	A
Hamilton	C	C	C	D	F
Heathrow	A	A	A	A	A
Highlands	A	A	A	A	A
Idylwild	B	A	B	C	D
Keeth	A	A	A	A	A
Lake Mary	B	A	B	B	B
Lake Orienta	A	A	A	A	B
Lawton	A	A	A	B	A
Lay	B	B	A	A	B
Midway	B	C	C	D	D
Partin	A	A	A	A	B
Pine Crest	B	B	C	D	D
Rainbow	A	A	A	B	A
Red Bug	A	A	A	B	A
Sabal Point	A	A	A	A	A
Spring Lake	A	A	B	C	C
Stenstrom	A	A	A	B	A
Sterling Park	A	A	A	B	A
Walker	A	A	A	A	A
Wekiva	A	A	A	A	A
Wicklow	A	B	C	D	C
Wilson	A	A	A	A	A
Winter Springs	A	A	B	A	A
Woodlands	A	A	A	A	B

Middle	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Chiles	A	A	A	A	A
Greenwood Lakes	A	A	A	B	A
Indian Trails	A	A	A	A	A
Jackson Heights	A	A	A	A	A
Markham Woods	A	A	A	A	A
Millennium	A	A	A	A	B
Milwee	A	B	B	B	B
Rock Lake	A	A	A	A	A
Sanford	A	A	A	A	A
South Seminole	A	A	A	B	B
Teague	A	A	A	A	A
Tuskawilla	A	A	A	A	A

High	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Crooms	B	A	A	A	P
Hagerty	B	A	A	A	P
Lake Brantley	A	B	B	A	P
Lake Howell	A	B	A	A	P
Lake Mary	A	B	B	A	P
Lyman	B	B	B	A	P
Oviedo	A	A	A	A	P
Seminole	B	B	A	B	P
Winter Springs	A	A	B	B	P

Seminole County	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
District Grade	A	A	A	A	A

Charter	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Choices in Learning	A	A	A	A	A
Galileo Gifted	NA	NA	NA	A	A

*P=Grade Pending: awaiting the rest of the high school grading criteria

Summary Data

Elementary Schools											
	Number					Percent					
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
A	27	30	25	17	19	73	81	69	47	53	
B	9	3	7	11	9	24	8	19	31	25	
C	1	4	4	4	3	3	11	11	11	8	
D	0	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	11	11	
F	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	

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Middle Schools											
	Number					Percent					
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
A	12	11	11	9	P	100	92	92	75	P	
B	0	1	1	3	P	0	8	8	25	P	
C	0	0	0	0	P	0	0	0	0	P	
D	0	0	0	0	P	0	0	0	0	P	
F	0	0	0	0	P	0	0	0	0	P	

High Schools											
	Number					Percent					
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
A	5	4	5	7	P	56	44	56	78	P	
B	4	5	4	2	P	44	56	44	22	P	
C	0	0	0	0	P	0	0	0	0	P	
D	0	0	0	0	P	0	0	0	0	P	
F	0	0	0	0	P	0	0	0	0	P	

Seminole County											
	Number					Percent					
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
A	44	45	41	33	P	76	78	72	58	P	
B	13	9	12	16	P	22	16	21	28	P	
C	1	4	4	4	P	2	7	7	7	P	
D	0	0	0	4	P	0	0	0	7	P	
F	0	0	0	0	P	0	0	0	0	P	

Charter school data are not included in district summary

NOTE: Percents may not equal 100 because of rounding.

**APPENDIX D: SEMINOLE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL GRADING
SYSTEM**

Grading Florida's Public Schools 2012

Assessment-Based Performance and Learning Gains Measures Included in All School Grades (800 Points)

School Grades Basic Model (800 points):

Reading	Math	Writing	Science		
Performance (Percent Scoring Satisfactory or Higher on State Assessments) Performance = 50% of points in model					
(100 points) FCAT 2.0, FAA*	(100 points) FCAT 2.0, FAA, EOCs*	(100 points) FCAT, FAA*	(100 points) FCAT 2.0, FAA*		
Learning Gains, All Students (Weighted Percent of Students Making Gains)					
(100 points) FCAT 2.0, FAA*	(100 points) FCAT 2.0, FAA, EOCs*				
Learning Gains for Students in the Lowest Performing 25%					
(100 points) FCAT 2.0*	(100 points) FCAT 2.0, EOCs*				
(300 points)	(300 points)	(100 points)	(100 points)		

Gains = 50% of points

Eight Assessment-Based Measures (50% Performance, 50% Learning Gains): The chart on the left shows the four performance-based measures and four learning gains measures used in school grades for all school types.

Middle School Component for Accelerated Participation and Performance (Additional 100 points): An additional component for middle schools includes participation of middle school students in taking high-school level EOC assessments (50 points) and the performance of these students on those exams (50 points). Students are credited with successful performance if they score at level 3 or higher on an EOC assessment. For 2011-12, only Algebra 1 scores are applicable.

Learning Gains Criteria: Students can demonstrate learning gains by maintaining a score at level 3 or higher on the FCAT 2.0 and EOCs, or at level 4 or higher on the FAA; by increasing their score by one or more achievement levels; or, for students who maintain an FCAT 2.0 score at level 1 or 2, by demonstrating more than a year's growth on the FCAT 2.0 vertical scale. Students remaining at level 1, 2, or 3 on the FAA can demonstrate gains by scoring 5 points higher than in the previous year. Students remaining at level 1 or 2 after taking an EOC can demonstrate gains by increasing their common scale score (used for comparing performance on different assessments in math). Students receive extra weighting if they move up to level 4 or 5 on the FCAT 2.0 or EOC from a lower level. Extra weighting also applies to prior-year low performers who make greater-than-expected gains.

Which Students Are Included?: All full-year enrolled students, including students with disabilities (SWDs) and English language learners (ELLs), have state assessment scores* applied in all school grading measures, with one exception. ELLs who have less than one year of school in the U.S. are not included in the performance components for reading, math, writing, and science.

* State assessment scores include FCAT, FCAT 2.0, end-of-course assessments (EOCs), and Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA**) scores, as applicable.

**The FAA is administered to students with cognitive disabilities for whom the FCAT or FCAT 2.0 would not be appropriate assessments.

Bonus Points for High Schools: High schools are eligible for an additional 10 points if at least 50% of students retaking assessments required for graduation in reading and math score high enough to meet graduation requirements in both areas.

Additional Requirements: Testing participation. Schools must test at least 90% of eligible students (at least 95% to be eligible for an "A") to be assigned a regular letter grade. Schools testing below 90% are initially assigned an "I" and are reviewed further to determine whether a grade penalty will apply.

Letter-grade drop limit for 2011-12. For 2011-12 only, no school's assigned grade will be more than one letter grade lower than the school grade assigned for 2010-11.

School Grade Scales for Elementary and Middle Schools (including middle/combination schools serving grade 8):

Elementary (800-point scale): A = at least 525 points, B = 495 to 524 points, C = 435 to 494 points, D = 395 to 434 points, F = less than 395 points.

Middle/Combination (800-point scale): A = at least 590 points, B = 560 to 589 points, C = 490 to 559 points, D = 445 to 489 points, F = less than 445 points.

Grading Florida's High Schools 2012

50% of Grade Based on Performance and Learning Gains, 50% Based on Other Components

Under Florida law (s. 1008.34, F.S.), up to 50 percent of the school grade for high schools is based on certain other components in addition to the assessment-based measures shown on the previous page. The 2011-12 school grades model for high schools is shown below, including the other grading components.

High School Grades Model 2011-12						
Assessment Components = 50% of Grade				"Other" Components = 50% of Grade		
Reading	Math (Algebra)	Writing	Science*	Acceleration	Graduation Rate	College Readiness
Performance				Participation (150 points)	Overall (200 points) 4-Year Federal Rate (100) Modified 5-Year Rate (100)	Reading (100 points)
FCAT 2.0, FAA (100 points)	Alg. 1, FAA (100 points)	FCAT, FAA (100 points)	Biology*, FAA (100 points)			
Learning Gains All Students						
FCAT 2.0, FAA (100 points)	Alg. 1, FAA (100 points)			Performance (150 points)	At-Risk (100 points) 4-Year Federal Rate (50) Modified 5-Year Rate (50)	Math (100 points)
Low 25% Learning Gains						
FCAT 2.0 (100 points)	Alg. 1 (100 points)					
(300 points)	(300 points)	(100 points)	* Points adjustment for 2011-12.	(300 points)	(300 points)	(200 points)
* For 2011-12, there is no high school science assessment with achievement levels, so regular high schools will have total points for the remaining seven assessment components scaled up to an 800-point scale equivalent value.						

* For 2011-12, there is no high school science assessment with achievement levels, so regular high schools will have total points for the remaining seven assessment components scaled up to an 800-point scale equivalent value.

Other Components for High School Grades (50% of Grade)

Participation in Accelerated Curricula (150 points):
Percentage of grade 11-12 students taking exams for AP, IB, AICE, and Industry Certifications; and Dual Enrollment courses (also counting grade 9-10 participants).

Performance in Accelerated Curricula (150 points):
Percentage of participants in accelerated curricula eligible to earn college credit.

Graduation Rate (200 points):
Federal four-year graduation rate (100 points) --
Percentage of students graduating within four years with a standard diploma.

Five-year modified federal graduation rate (100 points) --
Percentage of students graduating within five years with a standard or a special diploma.

At-risk Graduation Rate (100 points):
Percentage of at-risk students graduating based on both rates above (50 points each).

College Readiness (200 points):
Reading (100 points), Mathematics (100 points) --
Percentage of on-time graduates scoring college ready (based on ACT, SAT, CPT, or PERT results).

School Grade Scales for High Schools and Combination Schools with Graduating Classes

High Schools (1600-point scale): A = At least 1,050 points, B = 990 to 1,049 points, C = 870 to 989 points, D = 790 to 869 points, F = less than 790 points.

K-12, 6-12 Combination (1700-point scale): A = At least 1,115 pts., B = 1,050 to 1,114 pts., C = 925 to 1,049 pts., D = 840 to 924 pts., F = less than 840 pts.

Grading K-12 and 6-12 Combination Schools (Weighting Factors)

K-12 schools: Total points for state assessment based components = 80% of grade. Total points for other components = 20% of grade.

6-12 schools: Total points for state assessment based components = 70% of grade. Total points for other components = 30% of grade.

**APPENDIX E: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD LETTER OF
APPROVAL**



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: UCF Institutional Review Board #1
FWA00000351, IRB00001138
To: Sherron E. Roberts and Co-PI: Sarah Jarem
Date: October 08, 2014

Dear Researcher:

On 10/08/2014, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review:	Exempt Determination
Project Title:	Secondary English Teachers Perceptions of High School Athletes
Investigator:	Sherron E Roberts
IRB Number:	SBE-14-10646
Funding Agency:	
Grant Title:	
Research ID:	N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in IRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator Manual.

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 10/08/2014 03:13:46 PM EDT

IRB Coordinator

APPENDIX F: INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT



Secondary English Teachers' Perceptions of High School Athletes

Informed Consent

Principal Investigator(s): *Sherron Roberts Ph.D.*

Co Investigator: *Sarah Jarem*

Faculty Supervisor: *Sherron Roberts Ph.D.*

Investigational Site(s): *Seminole County Public Schools*
TBD

Introduction: Researchers at the University of Central Florida (UCF) study many topics. To do this we need the help of people who agree to take part in a research study. You are being invited to take part in a research study which will include about *five to ten* people at Hagerty High School. You have been asked to take part in this research study because you are a secondary English language arts teacher. You must be 18 years of age or older to be included in the research study.

UCF students learning about research are helping to do this study as part of the research team. His/Her name is Sarah Jarem, and he/she will be assisting Sherron Roberts in his/her research.

What you should know about a research study:

- Someone will explain this research study to you.
- A research study is something you volunteer for.
- Whether or not you take part is up to you.
- You should take part in this study only because you want to.
- You can choose not to take part in the research study.
- You can agree to take part now and later change your mind.
- Whatever you decide it will not be held against you.
- Feel free to ask all the questions you want before you decide.

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of this study is to determine if secondary English language arts teachers have different expectations of their student athletes concerning writing. Additionally, this study serves to determine if the perception of high school student athletes writing abilities, that secondary English language arts teacher hold, is different than the perceptions of non-student athletes writing abilities.

What you will be asked to do in the study: Participants will be asked to complete an interview with the co-investigator, Sarah Jarem.

- The interview will be completed in one meeting.
- The participant will interact with the researcher only.
- Research will be conducted during school hours.
- Participants interviews will be recorded by an audio tape.

Participants do not have to answer every question or complete every task. You will not lose any benefits if you skip questions or tasks.

Location: The researcher will meet participants in their place of work.

Time required: We expect that you will be in this research study for thirty minutes.

Audio or video taping:

You will be audio taped during this study. If you do not want to be audio taped, you will still be able to be in the study. Discuss this with the researcher or a research team member. If you are audio taped, the tape will be kept in a locked, safe place. The tape will be erased or destroyed when the researcher has completed their thesis. The timeline for this is between three and eight months.

Risks: There are no reasonably foreseeable risks or discomforts involved in taking part in this study.

Benefits: There are no expected benefits to you for taking part in this study.

Compensation or payment: There is no compensation or other payment to you for taking part in this study.

Confidentiality: There is no guarantee of confidentiality in this study.

Study contact for questions about the study or to report a problem: If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, talk Dr. Sherron Roberts, Ph.D. of the College of Education and Human Performance. She may be reached at Sherron.robets@ucf.edu

IRB contact about your rights in the study or to report a complaint: Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (UCF IRB). This research has been reviewed and approved by the IRB. For information about the rights of people who take part in research, please contact: Institutional Review Board, University of Central Florida, Office of Research & Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901. You may also talk to them for any of the following:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

Results of the research: Participants will be informed of the results of the research at the completion of the study, this time frame ranges from three to eight months.

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