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“Now, at least I know I can write”: The Influence of Process Writing on Primary Students’ Self-Perception as Foreign Language Writers.

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Master’s Degree Program in Early Language Education for Intercultural Communication
Master’s Thesis in Education
May 2020
Current research is only just beginning to recognise the complex role played by students’ beliefs about themselves and their abilities in second language (SL) and foreign language (FL) acquisition. These self-beliefs, or self-perceptions, are posited to exert a profound influence on students’ language learning progress and experiences, particularly in the domain of SL/FL writing. Despite this, a deficit exists in research exploring ways in which SL/FL writing instruction may be optimised to enhance the development of positive student FL self-perceptions. This study attempts to address this gap, through exploring the effects of process writing, an approach to writing instruction employed relatively widely in first/dominant language (L1) learning contexts, on students’ SL/FL writing self-perceptions. While this process approach has been previously hypothesised as an instructional approach which takes cognisance of these self-perceptions in L1 instruction, the potential impact of this approach to self-perceptions in SL/FL learning has received little empirical attention.

This study, undertaken in two Fourth Grade primary school classes in the Republic of Ireland, investigated the effects of a process writing intervention on students’ feelings about themselves as FL writers. This study employed a mixed methods approach, embedding qualitative student interviews in a quantitative quasi-experimental pretest-posttest research design in an attempt to identify whether the introduction of a five-month FL writing workshop intervention would affect students’ FL writing self-perceptions, as measured using the Writer Self-Perception Scale (Bottomley, Henk & Melnik, 1997). The research findings revealed statistically significant increases in students’ self-perception scores on several scale factors following their participation in a FL writing workshop intervention. In particular, participation in the writing workshop was linked to significantly larger increases in positive affective experiences of and attitudes towards FL writing when compared to students participating in a more traditional writing programme. Qualitative interviews with intervention participants confirmed that most children held positive beliefs about themselves as writers following the workshops, and indicated that these students generally regarded writing in the workshops to be conducive to writing progress and writing enjoyment. Additionally, effective and less effective components of the workshops, according to students themselves, were identified, in terms of their impact on students’ FL writing self-concept. Based on these students’ perspectives, a number of pedagogical recommendations are provided regarding how educators can implement process-oriented FL writing instruction with a view to optimising improvements in students’ feelings about themselves and their writing.

Avainsanat – Keywords
process writing, foreign language learning, writing workshop, self-perception, self-concept beliefs, writer self-perception, foreign language writing instruction, second language writing instruction
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .............................................................................................................................ii
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES ............................................................................................v
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS ........................................................................................................vi
1 INTRODUCTION .....................................................................................................................1
2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .................................................................................................5
  2.1 Self-Perception and Writing ...............................................................................................5
    2.1.1 Defining Self-Perception ..............................................................................................6
    2.1.2 Self-Perception Formation .........................................................................................8
    2.1.3 FL Writer Self-Perception ..........................................................................................11
  2.2 The Process Approach to Writing .....................................................................................13
    2.2.1 Key Principles of the Process Approach .......................................................................14
    2.2.2 The Writing Workshop ..............................................................................................18
    2.2.3 The Influence of the Process Approach on Writing Attainment .................................19
    2.2.4 Attitudinal Effects of the Process Approach ..............................................................22
    2.2.5 The Writing Workshop and Writer Self-Perception ....................................................23
  2.3 Process Approaches to FL Writing Instruction ...................................................................24
    2.3.1 Applicability of Writing Workshop Model to FL Contexts ........................................25
3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS .........................................................................................................28
4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .................................................................................................29
  4.1 Research Design Overview ...............................................................................................29
  4.2 Context of Research .........................................................................................................31
    4.2.1 Research Participants ................................................................................................31
    4.2.2 Educational Context ..................................................................................................32
  4.3 Nature of Process Writing Intervention ............................................................................32
  4.4 Data Collection ................................................................................................................33
    4.4.1 Quantitative Data Collection .....................................................................................33
    4.4.2 Qualitative Data Collection .......................................................................................34
  4.5 Data Analysis ....................................................................................................................36
    4.5.1 Quantitative Data Analysis .......................................................................................36
    4.5.2 Qualitative Data Analysis ........................................................................................37
    4.5.3 Mixed Methods Data Analysis ................................................................................39
  4.6 Ethical Considerations .......................................................................................................40
  4.7 Validity and Reliability Considerations ............................................................................43
5 QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS ....................................................................................................46
  5.1 Descriptive Analysis: Students’ Mean WSPS Scores .......................................................46
  5.2 Inferential Analysis: Changes in Mean WSPS Scores ......................................................46
  5.3 Further Analysis: General Progress and Physiological States Scores ............................49
    5.3.1 Changes in General Progress Scores .........................................................................50
    5.3.2 Changes in Physiological States Scores ....................................................................52
6 QUALITATIVE FINDINGS .......................................................................................................55
6.1 Students’ Perceptions of Themselves as FL Writers ......................................................... 55
  6.1.1 General Writing Self-Perceptions .................................................................................. 56
  6.1.2 General Progress ......................................................................................................... 59
  6.1.3 Specific Progress ......................................................................................................... 60
  6.1.4 Physiological States .................................................................................................... 64
6.2 Features of the Workshop linked to Self-Perception Development ..................................... 70
7 MIXED METHODS FINDINGS ......................................................................................... 81
  7.1 Students’ Perceived Writing Progress .............................................................................. 81
    7.1.1 General Progress ....................................................................................................... 82
    7.1.2 Specific Progress ...................................................................................................... 84
  7.2 Student’s Reported Physiological States while Writing ................................................... 87
    7.2.1 Feelings .................................................................................................................... 88
    7.2.2 Enjoyment ............................................................................................................... 91
  7.3 General Writing Self-Perceptions ................................................................................... 93
8 ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS .................................................................. 97
  8.1 Findings related to Research Question 1 ......................................................................... 97
    8.1.1 Did WSPS scores of the intervention group change significantly? ............................. 97
    8.1.2 Did changes in WSPS scores differ significantly between groups? ............................. 98
  8.2 Findings related to Research Question 2 ......................................................................... 99
    8.2.1 How do children perceive their FL writing progress? .................................................. 99
    8.2.2 How do children perceive the emotional experience of FL writing? ........................... 100
    8.2.3 How do children perceive themselves as FL writers, overall? .................................. 100
  8.3 Findings related to Research Question 3 ......................................................................... 101
    8.3.1 Which workshop features improved writer self-perception? .................................... 101
    8.3.2 Which workshop features challenged writer self-perception? ................................... 102
  8.4 Findings related to Research Question 4 ......................................................................... 102
    8.4.1 Which aspects of self-perception remained consistent across quantitative and qualitative measures? ......................................................................................... 102
    8.4.2 Which aspects of self-perception differed across quantitative and qualitative measures? ...... 103
9 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION .................................................................................. 105
  9.1 Final Conclusions and Contributions of the Present Study ............................................. 105
  9.2 Limitations of the Present Study ..................................................................................... 106
  9.3 Directions for Future Research ....................................................................................... 107
  9.4 Pedagogical Recommendations ...................................................................................... 108
REFERENCES ..................................................................................................................... 110
APPENDICES ...................................................................................................................... 126
  Appendix A ......................................................................................................................... 126
  Appendix B ......................................................................................................................... 127
  Appendix C ......................................................................................................................... 129
  Appendix D ......................................................................................................................... 130
  Appendix E ......................................................................................................................... 131
  Appendix F ......................................................................................................................... 132
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Structure of the Writing Workshop................................................................. 19
Figure 2. Research Design............................................................................................ 30
Figure 3. Differences in Mean WSPS Scores over Intervention Period......................... 49
Figure 4. Estimated Distribution of General Progress Scores across Treatment Groups.... 51
Figure 5. Main Findings from Quantitative Analysis relating to Research Question 1........ 54
Figure 6. Main Findings from Qualitative Analysis relating to Research Questions 2 and 3... 80
Figure 7. Main Findings from Mixed Analysis relating to Research Question 4............ 96

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Pre- and Post-test WSPS scores for Control and Experimental Groups .............. 47
Table 2. Students’ General Writing Self-Perceptions by Category and Frequency............. 57
Table 3. Students’ Perceived General Writing Progress by Category and Frequency........ 59
Table 4. Students’ Perceived Specific Writing Progress by Category and Frequency....... 60
Table 5. Students’ Feelings (Physiological States) while Writing by Category and Frequency.... 64
Table 6. Students’ Enjoyment (Physiological States) while Writing by Category and Frequency... 66
Table 7. Changes in Students' Physiological States while Writing by Category and Frequency.... 68
Table 8. Opportunities for and Challenges to Self-Perception of the Workshop Approach.... 70
Table 9. Integrating Data: General Progress................................................................. 83
Table 10. Integrating Data: Specific Progress.............................................................. 85
Table 11. Thematic Comparison of Specific Progress across the WSPS and Interview Data... 86
Table 12. Integrating Data: Physiological States—Feelings while Writing...................... 89
Table 13. Experiences of Stress while Writing: Differences across Groups...................... 90
Table 14. Integrating Data: Physiological States—Enjoyment of Writing....................... 92
Table 15. Integrating Data: General Writing Self-Perceptions....................................... 94
Table 16. Pedagogical Recommendations for Implementing FL Process Writing............. 109
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL: English as a Foreign Language
ESL: English as a Second Language
FL: Foreign language
I/E model: Internal/External Frame of Reference model
Int.: Interviewer, abbreviated in excerpts from student interviews
L1: First/dominant language
SL: Second language
TL: Target language
WSPS: Writer Self-Perception Scale
1 INTRODUCTION

Perceptions of oneself and one’s capabilities can exert a profound influence on behaviour and affect, the effects of which both educators and educational researchers alike are acutely aware. As John’s account of his experience clearly demonstrates, the impact of poor self-perceptions of oneself and one’s ability is far-reaching, and potentially debilitating. John’s narrative tells an all too familiar story, an account of the potential for negative self-perceptions to give rise to an array of issues, ranging from uncomfortable emotions, diminished motivation, reduced task orientation, poor academic attitudes, and experiences of stress, anxiety and perceived failure. Experiences such as these have received widespread empirical attention, with studies identifying significant links between self-perceptions and achievement (Huang, 2011, p. 523; Marsh, Trautwein, Lüdtke, Köller, & Baumert, 2005, p. 405; Pajares & Schunk, 2005, p. 111; Valentine, DuBois, & Cooper, 2004, pp. 126-127), interest (Lohbeck, Nitkowsi, & Petermann, 2016, p. 897; Marsh et al., 2005, p. 407), anxiety (Lohbeck et al., 2016, p. 897), attitudes (Green et al., 2012, p. 1119), task values (Jacobs, Lanza, Osgood, Eccles & Wigfield, 2002, p. 522), motivation (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2005, p. 296) and feelings (Götz, Cronjäger, Frenzel, Lüdtke, & Hall, 2010, p. 54; Götz, Preckel, Zeidner, & Schleyer, 2008, p. 194), among other factors. Given these effects, as well as the consistent decline in students’ self-concept beliefs during formal schooling observed in previous research (Jacobs et al., 2002, p. 522; Preckel, Niepel, Schneider, & Brunner, 2013, p. 1169), the promotion and maintenance of students’ positive self-perceptions represents a veritable endeavour for educational researchers and practitioners. In a nutshell, poor self-perceptions pose a very real threat to student well-being.

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1 A student participant in the present study. Name has been changed.
Researchers have previously characterised foreign language (FL) and second language (SL) learning as domains in which self-perceptions may be particularly salient (Csizér & Kormos, 2009, pp. 109-110; Mercer, 2011, p. 6). Given the significance of the self in the process of communicating in a FL, the extent to which learners’ self-beliefs impact upon the SL/FL learning process, in terms of SL/FL achievement, anxiety and attitudes, is hardly surprising (e.g. Fryer, 2015, pp. 110–111; Mills, Pajares & Herron, 2007, p. 431; You & Dörnyei, 2016, pp. 512–513). An area of SL/FL learning in which learners’ self-perceptions appear to play a particularly pronounced role is the development of students’ writing skills in the target language. FL/SL writing has been acknowledged as a difficulty for students at all levels, with cognitive obstacles, such as writer’s block, or affective challenges, such as writing anxiety, presenting for many writers (Lee, 2005, p. 336). Casanave (2017) paints a convincing picture of these kinds of cognitive and emotional obstacles which students may encounter while writing in a FL:

“I worry so much about getting every word and phrase right that I lose the forest for the trees and so become stuck, and can’t move on (a problem of fluency and accuracy); I fear being judged (critiqued, assessed, graded) (a problem of assessment); I don’t know what is expected of me in terms of content or rhetorical structure in a particular piece of writing (a problem of genre, topic knowledge, and explicitness of instruction)…” (pp. 11-12)

John's narrative exemplifies the experience of being overcome by these obstacles, often resulting in a lack of confidence in one’s capabilities as a FL writer, which, in turn, can engender strong feelings of distress, despondency and apprehension towards the act of writing, or indeed, the language as a whole. Recent studies have echoed John's story, demonstrating that students with negative perceptions of their SL/FL writing abilities face numerous associated challenges, including greater reluctance to communicate and higher levels of writing anxiety, leading to poor writing achievement (e.g. Bursali & Öz, 2017, p. 236; Liu & Jackson, 2008, p. 79; Neugebauer & Howard, 2015, p. 329). Therefore, the pursuit of student self-perception enhancement should constitute a key concern for all SL/FL educators.

FL writing has been linked to a range of social and cognitive benefits for language learners (Reichert, Lefkowitz, Rinnert & Shultz, 2012, p. 30). Some of these benefits pertain to the use of FL writing as a medium for furthering FL learning, a dimension of FL writing which Manchón (2011) identifies as ‘writing to learn’ (p. 3). FL writing is posited to facilitate deep language learning, involving the creation and consolidation of new knowledge of the target language (Williams, 2012, p. 322). Additionally, FL writing engages the learner in a unique kind of linguistic processing with strong potential FL learning effects (Manchón, 2011, p. 70). However, FL writing may be viewed as a benefit in its own right, aside from its capacity to enhance overall FL learning. Writing in a FL
invokes both personal and interactional processes (Hyland, 2011, p. 31), offering a communicative form of self-expression and affording the learner greater access to knowledge and opportunities than through oral proficiency alone (Burke & Holbrook, 2018, p. 44). Given these benefits of FL writing development, the importance of fostering FL writing skills cannot be understated.

However, despite its centrality to FL language learning, FL writing is a competence that has generally been underrepresented in the SL/FL literature base (Manchón, 2009, p. 1), with the majority of the limited existing research dealing with theoretical considerations, and with few researchers directly studying writing instruction in FL classrooms (Way, Joiner & Seaman, 2000, p. 171). Research, especially recent research, focusing on writing proficiency in primary FL classrooms is severely lacking, which is likely to lead to the proliferation of outdated or ineffective instructional practices (Lefkowitz, 2011, p. 227). In contemporary FL classrooms, the primacy of spoken language over other language competences is implicit in a majority of twenty-first century teaching methods (Cook, 2005, pp. 424-425; White & Caminero, 1995, p. 323). The precedence of oral communication in FL learning, a viewpoint prevalent among proponents of current communicative language teaching approaches (Thompson, 1996, pp. 11-12), can also be seen in many FL textbooks, with the limited writing exercises provided in many beginner FL course books often comprising adjunct activities, peripheral to the main focus on the language lesson, with few opportunities for extended writing (Swaffar, 1991, p. 257). These factors contribute to a situation that has already been highlighted over 30 years ago: writing is becoming a neglected skill in SL/FL classrooms (Magnan, 1985, p. 109).

The consequences of this neglect can be clearly observed in John’s home country, the Republic of Ireland. The most recent report exploring Irish language writing ability among primary school students in Ireland raised a number of concerns: nation-wide school evaluations revealed that less than half of all observed classes (46%) exhibited satisfactory practice in the development of functional writing skills in Irish, with very high standards of writing instruction observed in only 1% of cases (Ó Conluain, 2007, pp. 62-63). A poor standard of creative written work in Irish was identified in almost half (49%) of all classes (Ó Conluain, 2007, p. 64), the extent of which raises immediate cause for concern:

“Pupils did not manage to write short simple stories in Irish or to describe their thoughts and opinions in writing. Some pupils had great difficulty forming even one sentence that was not already available in some book they had alongside them.” (Ó Conluain, 2007, p. 65)

Since these studies conducted more than a decade ago, there has been little research that has attempted to evaluate primary students’ attainment in Irish language writing. However, given the consistent decline in overall quality of Irish language teaching from earlier to more recent
Inspectorate evaluations (Hislop, 2016, p. 51), it is unlikely that the situation of Irish language writing has improved to a significant extent.

In the face of this host of issues presented, a clear need arises: a need for research exploring an approach to FL writing instruction, which focuses on affective dimensions of the writing process and alleviates the kinds of cognitive and affective obstacles with which FL writers are met. In order to improve the experiences of FL writing for learners like John, an approach to writing pedagogy which takes greater account of students’ self-perceptions is essential. Thus, the aim of the present study is to contribute to this field of FL writing research through the implementation of a classroom-based study in a primary FL learning context. This research explores the effects of the implementation of a writing intervention, comprising process-oriented writing workshops, on students’ perspectives of themselves as FL writers, in an attempt to identify an approach to FL writing pedagogy which promotes the positive development of students’ self-perceptions.

The remainder of this paper is divided into eight chapters. Chapter 2 provides a review of the current literature upon which the present study is based and which informed the development of the research questions outlined in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 details the specific methodological procedure adopted in this mixed methods quasi-experimental study. Chapters 5 and 6 present the quantitative and qualitative findings following the research intervention, while Chapter 7 provides an integrative analysis of these combined datasets. Chapter 8 summarises the main research findings in line with its central research questions, before final discussion, conclusions and pedagogical recommendations are offered in Chapter 9.
2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the potential for a process-oriented approach to FL writing instruction to influence the development of students’ perceptions of themselves as FL writers. In this chapter, the existing literature that has framed the development of the specific research questions undertaken in this study will be detailed according to three central themes.

The first section focuses on student self-perception in the writing process. First, the way in which self-perception is conceptualised in the present study is detailed in accordance with current literature. Secondly, parallels are traced between the way in which self-perception is operationalised in the context of this study and the formation of student self-perceptions, as presented in dominant theories. Finally, the specific domain of self-perception under exploration in this study, namely, FL writing self-perception, is considered.

The second section is dedicated to an exposition of process-oriented writing pedagogy, in order to provide a comprehensive profile of the pedagogical principles which underpinned the development of the writing intervention employed in this study. Firstly, the central characteristics of the process approach to writing are explicated, before these principles are then distilled into an account of the specific application of process writing used in this study, the Writing Workshop. Afterwards, a rationale for the use of this approach in this study is provided through examining the academic and attitudinal benefits associated with its implementation, concluding with those benefits specifically related to writer self-perception.

The final section of this chapter explores process writing in the field of FL teaching. While research in this specific area is currently limited, by drawing on preliminary findings from research in various FL/SL learning contexts, a picture can be constructed of the potential of the process approach in the domain of FL writing instruction.

2.1 Self-Perception and Writing

Over the past decades, researchers in the field of education have increasingly begun to realise the extent to which a learner’s sense of self influences their learning process. In prior research, academic self-perceptions have been found to have positive relationships with a broad range of academic outcomes, like academic interests (Marsh, et al., 2005, p. 407), academic emotions (Götz et al., 2010, p. 54; Götz et al., 2008, p.194), and academic achievement (Marsh, et al., 2005, p. 405; Pajares & Schunk, 2005, p. 111). This section begins with a definition of the construct of self-perception as it is interpreted in this study. Afterwards, the theoretical basis for the self-perception measure used in this study, the Writer Self-Perception Scale (WSPS) is provided.
through an examination of the various factors which influence self-perception formation, according to current theory. Finally, though existing literature on the particular emphasis of this study, FL writing self-perception, is sadly lacking, an examination of recent research in the more general domains of self-perceptions in FL learning and first/dominant language (L1) writing is provided in order to highlight the potential significance of these self-beliefs to FL writing instruction, and thus to provide further rationale for the focus of the present research.

2.1.1 Defining Self-Perception

Complete and consistent definitions of self-constructs are largely absent in the research base on self-perceptions (Rayner, 2001, p. 36), a situation which is further complicated by the myriad diverse ways in which self-beliefs are defined and operationalised in the research base. To illustrate, an earlier study by Shavelson, Hubner and Stanton (1976) reported 17 different self-related constructs, terms for which were used interchangeably by researchers (pp. 408–409), while Hansford and Hattie (1982) identified 15 different self-terms which were also defined and operationalised inconsistently (p. 132). As a consequence, definitions of self-terms are often confused and overlapping, representing diverse theoretical understandings (Mercer, 2011, p. 2), and resulting in “a confusing field with mixed results that are often difficult to compare” (Rubio, 2014, p. 50). However, it is critical to elucidate the way in which self-perception is presented in this study.

Self-perception, often otherwise termed self-concept (Riding, 2001, p. 79), is conceptualised in this study as a self-construct comprising both cognitive evaluations of competence and affective judgements of self-worth (Mercer & Williams, 2014, p. 11; Pajares & Schunk, 2002. p. 21; Pajares & Schunk, 2005, p. 105; Rubio, 2014, p. 43). Specifically, self-perception, as conceived in the present study, relates “not only to what one believes about oneself and one’s abilities in a certain domain in cognitive terms but also to how one evaluates these beliefs and consequently how one feels about oneself in evaluative, affective terms in the domain” (Mercer, 2011, p. 2). It should be noted at this point that the term ‘self-perception’ has been selected as the self-term central to this study to ensure congruence between language used in the measurement instruments employed and the theory that informs its usage. However, much of the research discussed below refers to this construct using the term ‘self-concept,’ which is used more commonly in the literature base. For the purposes of this study, self-perception and self-concept are considered identical constructs.

A more nuanced definition of self-perception is perhaps most clearly articulated in tandem with the related, but distinct construct of self-efficacy. Though seemingly analogous concepts, self-perceptions differ from self-efficacy beliefs in several critical ways. Though it is beyond the scope of this study to discuss the intricacies of these numerous distinctions here, the most salient differences relevant to the present study will be presented — specifically, differences in both the
quality and specificity of these judgements about the self (for a more comprehensive discussion of these differences, see Bong & Skaalvik, 2003; Marsh et al., 2019).

**Quality of judgements.** Firstly, these self-terms differ in respect to their evaluative quality. Self-efficacy beliefs have been described as purely descriptive judgements of one’s capability to accomplish specifically-defined tasks (Marsh et al., 2019, p. 335). In contrast, self-perception is considered as a more “inclusive” construct (Bong & Clark, 1999, p. 142), entailing an affective component (Mercer, 2011, p. 15) which refers to “questions of ‘being’ and ‘feeling’” within a specific domain (Pajares & Schunk, 2005, p. 105). In other words, while both self-perception and self-efficacy include cognitive perceptions of competence, self-perception beliefs also incorporate affective and evaluative responses to these competence assessments (Bong & Clark, 1999, pp. 140–141; Bong & Skaalvik, 2003, p. 5). To further distinguish these differences between self-efficacy beliefs and self-perceptions (here, referred to as self-concepts), Pajares and Valiante (1999; see also Bong & Skaalvik, 2003, p. 20) offer scale items as an illustrative example:

“A writing self-concept item such as, ‘Writing makes me feel inadequate,’ differs in tone and substance from a self-efficacy item that may ask ‘How sure are you that you can correctly spell all words in a one page story or composition?’” (p. 392)

Critically, students’ self-efficacy beliefs and self-perceptions may not be related, as students may have high confidence in their ability to complete a written task, yet may not enjoy the corresponding feelings of self-worth, due to a view of writing accomplishments as being of little value, for example (Pajares & Valiante, 1999, p. 392).

**Measurement specificity.** Secondly, self-efficacy and self-perceptions differ in terms of the relative specificity at which they are typically measured. Self-efficacy, as it was initially conceptualised, is generally measured at a particular task-level of specificity (Bandura, 1997, p. 42), referring precisely to an individuals’ confidence in their ability to execute given actions in a given setting. While initially conceived of as a more “global” construct than self-efficacy, the theoretical organisation of self-perception was transformed by the landmark Shavelson et al. (1976) model and its subsequent revisions (Marsh, Byrne & Shavelson, 1988; Marsh and Shavelson, 1985). This model represents self-perception as a multidimensional, hierarchical construct, distinguishing broadly between academic and non-academic self-percepts, before further subdividing into verbal and mathematical concepts, and further again into discrete subject areas. Students’ self-perceptions and their relationships to outcomes other self-beliefs have been found to differ substantially across domains (Craven & Marsh, 2008, p. 107), therefore the significance of domain-specific operationalisation of self-perception has become widely acknowledged in recent literature (Mercer, 2011, p. 22). Importantly, a domain-level of specificity when measuring self-perceptions should not
be equated to subject specificity (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003, p. 17), as recent research has indicated distinctive self-perceptions located at the skill-level within a given subject (see Arens & Jansen, 2016; Lau, Yeung, Jin & Low, 1999; Yeung et al., 2000 who found evidence to suggest the existence of skill-specific self-perceptions in various languages). However, it is important to note that self-perception, unlike self-efficacy, is not regularly measured at the task-level of specificity (Mercer & Williams, 2014, p. 11).

Importantly, while both self-terms are considered as distinct constructs (Pajares, 2007, p. 245), self-efficacy and self-perception possess several commonalities: both constructs are hypothesised as possessing a hierarchical, multidimensional structure; as pertaining to self-judgements of perceived competences; and as functioning as effective predictors for future learning behaviours and attitudes (Marsh et al., 2019, p. 334). Indeed, due to the numerous common factors which underlie these terms (Pajares, 2007, p. 245), some authors have posited that self-concept likely includes self-efficacy, acknowledging that self-efficacy beliefs may form one of the central constituents of one’s self-perception related to a specific domain (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003, pp. 10–11).

In sum, self-perceptions, as they are conceptualised in this study, pertain to beliefs about oneself and one’s capabilities, as well as how one feels about oneself in response to these self-evaluations. They are regarded as being domain-specific, in that they pertain to a specific academic area (e.g. FL writing, FL speaking, etc.), and may differ substantially across domains. They incorporate both cognitive evaluations of the self and one’s abilities, as well as affective or emotional responses to these evaluations.

2.1.2 Self-Perception Formation

In the process of developing the Writer Self-Perception Scale (WSPS), Bottomley, Henk and Melnik (1997) drew upon the seminal work of Bandura (1997) when identifying the sources from which learners may draw when forming their self-beliefs. According to Bandura’s theory, self-percepts emerge as the product of the dynamic, interactive process through which learners construct beliefs about themselves according to four fundamental factors: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasions, and physiological and affective states (Bandura, 1997, p. 79).

**Progress.** Mastery experiences, conceptualised as progress factors on the WSPS, refer to an individuals' perceived experiences of success and failure. Arguably the most prolific model of self-perception formation, the Internal/External Frame of Reference (I/E) model (Marsh, 1986), places substantial emphasis on the role of internal comparisons (comparisons between one’s own perceived achievements) in the development of self-perception. Originally, the I/E model detailed the role of
internal comparisons of achievement across different domains (i.e. subjects, or subject-specific skills) in perception formation, however, recent empirical evidence suggests that these cross-domain comparisons may not be particularly influential for younger students’ self-perception formation (Weidinger, Steinmayr & Spinath, 2019, p. 1015). Contemporary revisions of the model (e.g. The 2I/E model, Wolff et al., 2019; Wolff, Helm & Möller, 2019) now also emphasise the significance of temporal comparisons, that is, students evaluating their progress through comparing their prior and current achievements within a domain. Recent research has tested this theory, finding that previous achievement in a domain has been shown to exert significant effects on students’ self-perceptions in corresponding domains (Müller-Kalthoff, Helm & Möller, 2017, p. 864; Wolff, Helm, Zimmermann, Nagy, & Möller, 2018, p. 1019), often with reciprocal effects on subsequent achievement (Sewasew & Schroeders, 2019, p. 210). In the framework of this study, these internal comparisons will be predominantly addressed through the two progress scales of the WSPS, General Progress and Specific Progress, distinct categories which emerged following initial validation studies (Henk, Bottomley & Melnick, 1996, pp. 194–196) of the WSPS (Bottomley et al., 1997, p. 287).

**Observational Comparison.** The second factor underlying self-perception development, vicarious experiences, are represented in the WSPS as Observational Comparisons. Both the original I/E model and its more recent extensions highlight the role of social comparisons in self-perception formation, with many studies specifying social comparisons as one of the most influential factors influencing the development of self-perceptions (Müller-Kalthoff et al., 2017, p. 864). In brief, these models posit that, in addition to the internal frame of reference provided by previous achievements described above, individuals employ information from external comparisons when forming perceptions of the self. These external comparisons enable students to establish a normative frame of reference against which they may compare his or her own performance with the perceived performance of others (Möller, Pohlmann, Köller & Marsh, 2009, p. 1135; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2002, p. 234), including group level comparisons (i.e. one’s perceived ‘rank’ in a class or school) and individual comparisons (i.e. comparisons with selected individuals, including peers, friends, family, etc.). Empirical support for this model also exists: comparisons between students’ perceived performance in a given domain with the respective perceived performance of peers have been shown to exert profound influences on students’ self-perceptions in the corresponding domain (Wolff, Helm & Möller, 2019, p. 72), a phenomenon which has also been observed Irish primary school settings (Kavanagh, 2019, p. 14).

**Social Feedback.** The third component of Bandura’s (1995) theory concerns verbal persuasions, represented in the WSPS as Social Feedback. While, as outlined above, social
comparisons of significant others’ perceived achievements is considered a central process in self-perception formation, direct observations of others’ achievements are not always easily acquired. In these cases, social feedback may play a more salient role. Social feedback may take many forms, including both verbal and nonverbal responses from teachers, peers, and significant others, including grades or test scores (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2002, p. 237). This feedback facilitates a process of “reflected appraisal” (Denzin, 1992, p. 4), through which an individual’s perception of others’ views of themselves influences the development of that individual’s self-perception (i.e. Person A’s perception of Person B’s appraisal of Person A influences Person A’s own self-perception). Many factors can influence the sources and types of feedback individuals use when forming self-perceptions, including the perceived credibility of the feedback giver, as well as the purpose of the comparison, such as self-enhancement or self-verification (Mercer, 2011, pp. 130–133).

**Physiological States.** Finally, physiological states are also theorised as influencing self-perception formation, albeit to a lesser extent in prominent literature. Previous research in the field of social cognition has indicated that affective states, including mood, stress, tiredness and anxiety, can exert profound effects on individuals’ self-perceptions: various studies have found evidence indicating the existence of a mood-congruency principle (Sedikides & Green, 2001, p. 146), such that evaluations of the self reflect the positivity or negativity of the current mood (i.e. self-evaluations whilst one is in a happy mood may be more positive). Similarly, mood, especially negative mood, has been shown to diminish self-concept clarity, i.e. the extent to which self-perceptions are confidently defined and consistent (Nezlek & Plesko, 2001, p. 208), while high anxiety (Ahmed, Minnaert, Kuyper & van Der Werf, 2012, p. 387; Cole, Martin, Peeke, Seroczynski & Fier, 1999, p. 470), depressed mood (Berg & Klinger, 2009, p. 504) and stress (Garton & Pratt, 1995, pp. 634–635) have also been linked to lowered self-concepts in young people. However, research exploring the effects of affective fluctuations on domain-specific academic self-concepts is currently scarce.

Importantly, Bandura’s theory was originally developed with the intention of modelling the development of self-efficacy, not the related construct of self-perception which the WSPS seeks to measure, as evidenced in the nature of the scale’s items. While self-efficacy and self-perception do indeed share common features (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003, pp. 10–11), the development of these constructs has been theorised in distinct ways. For example, while both self-perception and self-efficacy are conceived of as being influenced by past experiences and social comparison, the relative importance of these sources to the development of these respective constructs have been theorised as differing markedly (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003, p.16; Marsh et al., 2019, p. 336). Thus, it
is important to also consider other potential sources of self-perception information which has been highlighted in recent research. For example, Mercer (2011) highlighted both language learners’ beliefs, relating to learning (as well as specifically to language learning) and to the target language, and attribution beliefs as contributing to the development of self-percepts, and as mediating the effects of social feedback and perceived experiences of success or failure on subsequent self-perception (pp. 106–107). Additionally, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2002) extend the internal factors contained within the I/E model to include comparisons between perceived achievement with both personal goals and perceived effort as influencing self-perception formation (pp. 239–240). Other authors have posited that learner’s imagined projections about their future selves, “the ideal self”, a representation of the attributes one wishes to possess, and “the ought self”, a representation of the attributes one believes one should possess, may also form a constituent part of learners’ self-perceptions (Dörnyei, 2014, pp. 7–8). Importantly, research has uncovered substantial variation in the degree to which individuals draw upon each of these informational sources when forming their self-perceptions, thus the above review should not be considered a complete inventory of the myriad factors which may influence the self-perception development of individuals, as such an endeavour is likely impossible given the highly subjective, varied and complex nature of the process.

2.1.3 FL Writer Self-Perception

As outlined above, the current model of individual self-perceptions posits a domain-level of hierarchical organisation; in the context of this study, FL writing is the domain in question. As Bazerman (2001) eloquently surmised, the act of writing is “drenched with security issues, anxieties, and self-concept” (p. 185): accordingly, students’ writing self-perception plays a pivotal role in students’ literacy development, both in L1 and FL learning contexts. While few studies address FL writing self-perceptions specifically, an overview of current research exploring both more general FL self-perceptions and L1 writing self-perceptions should serve to illuminate the significance of these self-beliefs to the domain of FL writing.

Research in more general FL self-perceptions have underlined the centrality of positive self-percepts to FL learning, with Csizér and Kormos (2009) concluding that “self-regulated behaviour is hardly possible unless students have a positive image of themselves as users of another language” (pp. 109–110). Research has indicated that self-perceptions may play a particularly important role in FL learning, given the centrality of identity and self-expression to the domain (Mercer, 2011, p. 3). Indeed, the limited research currently available on these more general FL self-perceptions does offer empirical support for the substantial influence that these positive self-beliefs may exert on the FL learning process. Firstly, many studies have linked high FL self-perceptions of competence to
higher FL achievement scores in a reciprocal relationship (Fryer, 2015, pp. 110–111; Xu et al., 2013, p. 495). Additionally, future-oriented FL self-perceptions (“ideal” and “ought” selves) have been empirically linked to motivated FL learning behaviours, such as intended effort (Csizér & Lukács, 2010, p. 9; Dörnyei & Chan, 2013, pp. 451–453; Ryan, 2009, pp. 132–133; Taguchi, Magid & Papi, 2009, pp. 77–78; You & Dörnyei, 2016, pp. 512–513). Self-perception beliefs have also been shown to strongly influence both one’s willingness to communicate in a FL (Munezane, 2013, p. 176; Öz, 2016, pp. 174–175; Yoshida, 2013, pp. 942–945), and the value a learner attributes to the FL and its associated culture (Mills et al., 2007, p. 431). Since Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) linked FL self-perceptions to FL anxiety, claiming that “any performance in the [second language] is likely to challenge an individual’s self-concept as a competent communicator and lead to reticence, self-consciousness, fear, or even panic” (p. 128), studies exploring this relationship have identified high FL self-perceptions as a very strong protective factor against FL anxiety (Mills et al., 2007, p. 431; Tóth, 2007, p. 134).

Similarly, a reciprocal relationship between self-perceptions and achievement has been observed in relation to writing self-perceptions and writing achievement in the L1 (Pajares & Valiante, 2001, pp. 372–374). Writing self-perception has also been correlated with positive attitudes towards writing, such as perceived usefulness and value of writing, lower writing apprehension, task goal orientation (Pajares, Britner & Valiante, 2000, pp. 410–412; Pajares & Cheong, 2003, pp. 443-444; Pajares, Miller & Johnson, 1999, p. 54; Pajares & Valiante, 1999, p. 397; Pajares & Valiante, 2001, pp. 373–374), these findings pertaining, again, to L1, rather than FL learning contexts. Additionally, writing self-perceptions exert a substantial influence on writing anxiety, with negative writing self-perceptions contributing to a much greater extent to writing anxiety than actual writing achievement (Cheng, 2002, p. 652). Some authors have even argued that the development of a positive and realistic writer self-concept can be as critical to the process of writing instruction as the fostering of writing skills (Cheng, 2002, p. 652). Additionally, others have advocated for the assessment of writing self-concepts alongside more traditional evaluations of writing competence, recognising the value of these beliefs as predictors of other affective variables, as well as academic performance (Pajares & Johnson, 1995, p. 21; Pajares & Valiante, 1996, p. 401). It is for these reasons that authors have identified these self-concept beliefs as areas of research with great potential to enhance and inform writing instruction (Beach, 1989, p. 129).

In spite of these promising indications, little research has been conducted to date with a specific focus on students’ FL writing self-perceptions (Pajares & Valiante, 1999, p. 392). However, findings which can be gleaned from the limited research available have consistently highlighted the valuable role these self-perceptions play in the development of FL writing skills: poor self-perceptions of FL writing ability have been identified as a substantial communicative barrier
(Bursali & Öz, 2017, p. 236), and have been shown to predict higher levels of FL writing anxiety (Liu & Jackson, 2008, p. 79), and lower FL writing performance (Neugebauer & Howard, 2015, p. 329). Critically, current research in FL writing self-perceptions has predominantly involved the experiences of second- and third-level students, with young learners’ experiences largely being neglected, despite the centrality of this period to self-perception development (Pajares & Valiante, 1996, p. 6). Additionally, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning contexts, predominantly involving adult learners, dominate the limited available studies exploring FL self-perceptions, leading to a relative absence of studies of self-related beliefs in FL learning of languages other than English (Sugita McEown, Sawaki & Harada, 2017, p. 533). Given that self-percepts are strongly influenced by situational and contextual factors (Bandura, 1982, p. 124), varying to a large extent across domains (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003, pp. 21–22), there is a clear need for further studies which specifically address young writers’ self-perceptions in languages other than English.

2.2 The Process Approach to Writing

The process approach to writing instruction is presented as a pedagogical approach which takes account of the complex, recursive and highly individualised nature of the writing process (Emig, 1982, p. 203), following pioneering work by Nancie Atwell (1998), Lucy Calkins (1986), Janet Emig (1971, 1982), and Donald Graves (1983, 1994), among others. Process writing emerged in response to mounting critiques regarding the more product-oriented instruction of writing composition that predominated up until the late 1970s (e.g. Mills, 1953). In contrast to the instructional emphasis on the teaching of discrete skills at the sentence and paragraph level through contrived writing assignments, and on perfecting the finished end-product of writing, which characterised the product-oriented approach (Lipson, Mosenthal, Daniels & Woodside-Jiron, 2000, p. 210; Murray, 1972/2009, p. 2; Troia, Lin, Cohen & Monroe, 2011, p. 155), the process approach materialised from a wealth of ongoing research on students’ intricate composing processes (e.g. Elbow, 1998b; Emig, 1971; Graves, 1983), and attempted to address the neglected questions of how, why and for whom students write (Zamel, 1982, pp. 195–196). At its core, process writing recognises the act of writing as a creative and communicative process, through a pedagogical approach that explicitly fosters the cognitive and affective skills that underscore writing, with an emphasis on enhancing the process, rather than solely the product, of writing.

The following subsections provide a comprehensive account of the way in which the process

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2 Please note that this subsection contains many written sources from several decades ago. The reason for this lies in the fact that the majority of the seminal publications written by the most prominent authors on process writing were published around the 1980s. These original works are referenced so as to ensure the fidelity of the intervention employed in this study to the approach outlined in this research movement. Where possible, more recent process writing reference materials were used, however, the most detailed sources of information on this approach were deemed by the researcher to be associated with these older, original works, and are thus included throughout this subsection.
writing approach is conceptualised in the context of this study. First, the central tenets of the approach are outlined according to seven essential characteristics. Afterwards, the structure of the specific approach implemented in the FL writing intervention documented in this research, the Writing Workshop, is described. In order to provide an empirical basis for the use of this approach in primary writing pedagogy, research centred on the influence of the use of this approach on writing attainment is discussed. Next, affective student outcomes associated with process writing, of greater relevance in the context of this research, are explored, and a case is made for the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches in exploring these relationships. Finally, focus is placed specifically on the relationship between process writing pedagogy and writer self-perception development: an account of the relatively limited existing research is provided in order to more precisely situate the present study in the current literature base.

### 2.2.1 Key Principles of the Process Approach

Though there is no universal consensus regarding the way in which the process approach to writing instruction is defined (Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2006, p. 279), a number of widely agreed-upon characteristics can be articulated. In their meta-analysis of writing intervention literature, Graham and Perin (2007) offered what is arguably one of the most robust descriptions of the constituent instructional practices of the writing process approach:

“This approach to teaching writing involves extended opportunities for writing; writing for real audiences; engaging in cycles of planning, translating, and reviewing; personal responsibility and ownership of writing projects; high levels of student interactions and creation of a supportive writing environment; self-reflection and evaluation; personalized individual assistance and instruction; and in some instances more systematic instruction.” (p. 449)

In order to provide a clear description of the instructional approach adopted in the present study, these eight characteristics are hence explored in greater depth.

**Extended opportunities for writing.** The first of these features, the provision of extensive writing time, is highlighted by prominent authors in the field as a fundamental quality of the process approach. The nature of this approach, Coe (1988) posits, necessarily entails that students spend more time writing (p. 298), in order to enable students to engage with all stages involved in the recursive, multifaceted process of writing. Additionally, the implementation of process-oriented writing instruction presupposes a pronounced change of pace from that required in more product-driven approaches, due to the larger number of drafts and revisions which students produce in process writing before completing a ‘finished’ product (Calkins, 1986, p. 23). This more moderate writing pace generated by the process approach affords students not only greater time for writing,
but for thinking about their writing (Zamel, 1982, pp. 200–201), by enabling students to gradually refine their tentative ideas through overlapping writing and rewriting phases. Specific recommended time allocations for process writing vary considerably among authors: however, many advocate for daily writing sessions, lasting for up to an hour or more, depending on students’ age and level of schooling (Calkins, 1986, p. 25; Graves, 1994, p. 104).

**Writing for real audiences.** The centrality of audience in the writing process further distinguishes process writing from more product-oriented approaches to writing instruction. Elbow (1998a) problematises the role of the teacher as the primary audience for students’ writing associated with product-oriented instructional models, arguing that teachers do not constitute a ‘real’ audience for writing, as the writer-reader relationship becomes predominantly evaluative, rather than communicative (pp. 219–220). Process writing instruction expands students’ audience through two main channels: sharing and publishing. Sharing occurs at the end of most process writing sessions (Calkins, 1986, p. 27), often through the forum of the “Author’s Chair” (Graves & Hansen, 1983, p. 176). In these share sessions, students present their works-in-progress to the peer writing community to receive comments, questions and advice regarding their emergent text (Calkins, 1986, p. 27; Graves & Hansen, 1983, p. 176). ‘Publishing’ student writing is also prioritised in process writing classrooms (Calkins, 1986, p. 228), and entails students’ completed pieces being made available for reading to their peers, other students, readers of a school magazine, parents, and the wider school community. By extending the intended readership of students’ work, through connecting with external audiences and enabling students to function as audiences for their peers, process writing provides opportunities for deep authentic and experiential learning both through and about writing (Magnifico, 2010, p. 180) and enables students to recognise themselves as genuine authors (Calkins, 1986, p. 228; Graves & Hansen, 1983, p. 179).

**Engaging in cycles of planning, translating, and reviewing.** Conceptualisations of the process writing approach as being operationalised according to distinct phases have transformed over the past decades. Earlier pedagogical applications of the writing process typically proposed sequential stages in the development of a piece of writing, such as Rohman’s (1965) pre-writing, writing and re-writing (p. 106), Murray’s (1980) rehearsing, drafting and revising (pp. 4–5), or, less commonly, conception, incubation and production (Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod, & Rosen, 1975, p. 26), evidence of which persists in prominent process writing literature. However, following the emergence of cognitive process theories of writing (e.g. Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Flower & Hayes, 1981), the concept of a predictable, linear sequence of composition associated with such stage models of the writing process has since been called into question, with most contemporary educators conceptualising the production of a piece of writing as a complex, individual and
recursive process (Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2006, p. 227). As Emig (1982) famously stated, “there is no monolithic process of writing” (p. 2032): the processes that shape an individual piece of writing are moulded by varied aims, genres, and audiences, some of which are shared, while others are individual and idiosyncratic. Accordingly, more contemporary applications of process writing instruction reflect the view of phases of the writing process as being complex, overlapping, and often happening simultaneously through continued writing and rewriting (Zamel, 1982, p. 197): the writing process may be regarded as a dialogue between the writer and the emergent piece, entailing continual shifting between rehearsal, editing, drafting and revising (Calkins, 1986, pp. 18–19).

**Personal responsibility and ownership of writing projects.** Ownership of writing is also emphasised by prominent writers as an essential precursor of the process-oriented approach to teaching writing, recognised as vital to enabling authentic student authorship (Lipson et al., 2000, p. 211). Promoting student autonomy and active engagement are essential to process writing pedagogy, which aims to provide students with increased control over their writing activities (Graves, 1983, p. 6). In a practical sense, this translates to an approach which provides students with the agency to determine the topics, purposes, forms and potential audiences for their writing (Lensmire, 1994, p. 7). Students are afforded greater control throughout the writing process, and are encouraged to make their own decisions about the trajectory of their writing (Calkins, 1986, pp. 155–156; Murray, 1972/2009, p. 4), including when and how to revise, redraft, publish or begin a new piece.

**High levels of student interactions and creation of a supportive writing environment.** The concept of process writing evolved from the basic premise that writing is a fundamentally social, communicative craft that is honed through interactions in a writing community (Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2007, p. 34). Process writing approaches blur the boundaries imposed by more traditional conceptualisations of roles of students and teachers in the writing classroom: in a process writing community, everyone in the classroom functions as both a teacher and a learner, a writer and an audience member (Calkins, 1986, p. 10). The potential benefits of peer interactions for students engaged in the writing process are numerous: the provision of a non-threatening audience, opportunities to receive comprehensible feedback on writing, the chance to rehearse language and expression that may later be used in writing, as well as affective advantages such as decreased writing anxiety and enhanced writing motivation (Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2007, p. 35; Styslinger, 2008, p. 211). Peer conferencing, a central feature of many process writing approaches (Calkins, 1986, p. 129), consists of small group, student-led meetings in which students assume an advisory role in order to listen and respond to each others’ writing, and aid each other in overcoming their current difficulties in the writing process (Routman, 2005, p. 219) — what Murray (2004) describes
as “the working talk of fellow writers sharing their experience with the writing process” (p. 148). In addition to peer conferencing, high levels of student interactions are manifested in the process writing classroom in a variety of ways, for example, through providing multiple channels for peer feedback, such as peer response to initial ideas or peer editing of final drafts (Keh, 1990, p. 295) and regular sharing of work to the writing community (e.g. the Author’s Chair, Graves & Hansen, 1983).

**Self-reflection and evaluation.** In more product-oriented writing instruction, assessment of writing is seen primarily as the domain of the teacher (White & Arndt, 1991, p. 116), typically pertaining to textual features of completed pieces. In contrast, in process-oriented writing classrooms, the focus of evaluation is directed largely towards the writer and the writing strategies which they engage in the writing process, rather than the products of the writing (Calkins, 1986, p. 120), with the locus of responsibility for assessment moving gradually towards the student themselves. Teacher-student writing conferences are an essential means for implementing this kind of self-evaluation in many process writing classrooms, and involve bringing the teacher-reader and student-writer together to discuss the writing, with the aim of “clarifying the writer’s intentions, purpose and meanings” (White & Arndt, 1991, p. 131). Importantly, these conferences serve a dual function: while they provide teachers with immediate and ongoing assessment information about students’ writing progress, the foundational purpose of conferencing is to guide students to become critical and reflective readers of their own writing (Calkins, 1986, p. 120). As Calkins (1986) aptly summarizes: “[The teachers’] job in a writing conference is to put ourselves out of a job, to interact with students in such a way that they learn how to interact with their own developing texts” (p. 120). This “non-directive” approach to conferencing (Keh, 1990, p. 299), in which students, rather than teachers, determine the kind of writing support they require, can be seen in the conference techniques recommended by leading authors in the field of process writing: for example, Graves (1983) provides suggestions for questions to ask students, at various stages of the composing process, which place the focus of conferences on the strategies the writer has already used, what their goals for the writing are, and how current writing challenges may be overcome (p.110); similarly, others have recommended that students annotate their drafts prior to conferences (White & Arndt, 1991, p. 133), indicating specific elements or areas within the text on which they wish the teacher’s feedback to focus (see Charles, 1990; Chandrasegaran, 1986; Coe as cited in White & Arndt, 1991; Cresswell, 2000; Nicolaidou, 2012, for examples of self-evaluation coding strategies).

**Personalized individual assistance and, at times, more systematic instruction.** Perspectives on the desired level and nature of writing instruction required in the implementation of process writing approaches have undergone substantial revision since process-oriented writing instruction
began to emerge over 30 years ago. Following his seminal meta-analysis of research in written composition, Hillocks (1986) described process writing instruction, termed “natural process mode”, as “nondirectional” and “reactive”, characterising the teacher’s role as that of a facilitator who provides suggestions and questions to promote developments in students’ writing, rather than more structured instructional activities designed to foster specific writing skills and strategies (pp. 119–120). Calkins (1986) similarly reflects on these early conceptualisations, characterising such applications of process writing pedagogy as ‘high student input, low teacher input,’ recalling that forerunning process writing teachers often rejected the inclusion of formal instruction out of fear of reducing students’ ownership of the writing process (pp. 164–165). More recent applications of process writing pedagogy reflect Graves’ (1994) call for the extension of the teacher’s role in the process approach to include more explicit teaching of writing strategies (see e.g. Corden, 2007; Hagemann, 2003; Harris, Graham & Mason, 2003; Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2006; Puente & Wilson, 2019; Troia et al., 2011). Accordingly, current best practices in process writing instruction advise that teachers should “intentionally model all the parts of the composing process” (Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2007, p. 29), through both individualised, needs-based instruction provided through conferences, and more systematic group instruction, often in the form of “mini-lessons” (Calkins, 1986, pp. 168–171).

2.2.2 The Writing Workshop

Arguably the most prolific application of the process approach to writing instruction that has been produced to date is the ‘Writing Workshop’ model, a writing intervention informed chiefly by the works of Graves (1983), Calkins (1986), and Atwell (1998). The nature of the process writing intervention employed in the context of this study is closely aligned with Lucy Calkin’s Units of Study, a programme used extensively for L1 instruction throughout many states in the United States, and (albeit to a lesser extent) numerous other countries around the world. Calkins (1986) recommends that writing workshops follow a simple, predictable structure with a consistent schedule, with extensive time provided for writing (p. 25). The basic format of the workshop involves an introductory mini-lesson, student independent writing time, teacher-student conferencing, and a concluding share session (p. 26). Mini-lessons consist of a short, introductory modelling or demonstration by the teacher, devised and tailored according to perceived student needs (pp. 168–169). Mini-lessons generally involve the explicit teaching of a particular writing strategy, and may include the use of mentor texts as examples of effective writing models, as well as opportunities for guided practice, during which students practice the strategy with teacher and/or peer support (p. 175). Independent writing time usually follows directly from this active engagement, and should comprise the majority of the time set aside for the workshop. During this
time, students may begin a new writing piece, work on drafts of a current piece, or revise and edit a completed piece into a finalised draft. Writing conferences generally occur during the independent writing time, and involve teachers meeting with individual or small groups of students, to ‘check in’ with their writing: to inquire about their process; to provide advice with relation to content, design, process or editing issues; to offer feedback, and to encourage to self-evaluate their own emerging texts (p. 121). Share sessions take place at the conclusion of the workshop, and usually involve students gathering together to provide feedback to two or three sharing students’ works-in-progress, offering writers the opportunity to request advice from their peers (p. 27). The typical structure of the writing workshop employed during the intervention described in the present study is shown in Figure 1. For an overview of the exact themes of each workshop employed in the intervention, see Appendix A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRUCTURE OF WRITING WORKSHOP</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mini Lesson</td>
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<td>5-10 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guided Practice &amp; Independent Writing Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>35-45 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual / Small Group Conferences</td>
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<tr>
<td>15-20 minutes (during independent writing)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Share Session</td>
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<td>5-10 minutes</td>
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Note. Adapted from Calkins et al. (n.d.) Comprehensive overview: Units, tools and methods for teaching reading & writing.

Figure 1. Structure of the Writing Workshop.

2.2.3 The Influence of the Process Approach on Writing Attainment

While academic writing improvements are not of central concern in the present research, it is imperative to consider the potential consequences of an instructional intervention on students’ subsequent achievements before its implementation. Thus, a brief review of the most recent findings pertaining to the process approach and writing attainment is thus provided in order to supply further rationale for the use of this approach in the intervention adopted in this study.
The positive academic effects of process writing instruction have, to date, received far more empirical attention than the affective and attitudinal consequences of this approach. Data from the U.S. National Assessment of Educational Progress, which involved administration of a writing assessment to a representative sample of approximately 30,000 students from 4th to 12th grade, indicated that students whose teachers utilised and encouraged process-oriented strategies, such as pre-writing, drafting and revising, averaged higher proficiency on writing assessments (Goldstein & Carr, 1996, p. 1). A large-scale meta-analysis of experimental and quasi-experimental literature on writing intervention and instructional practice for 4th-12th graders, encapsulating over 120 studies, similarly found that the process writing approach had a significant positive effect on the quality of students’ writing (Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 461), with strong positive effect sizes also noted for various features of the process approach, such as teaching for independent use of planning, revising and editing strategies, and peer collaboration (Graham & Perin, 2007, pp. 462–463). Subsequent meta-analyses of experimental literature on process-oriented instruction including primary grade children revealed significant improvements in writing quality (Graham, McKeown, Kiuhara & Harris, 2012, p. 890; Graham & Sandmel, 2011, pp. 403–404), noting positive effects for process approaches in 83% of comparative studies. A more recent review of writing interventions for primary students with learning difficulties yielded comparable findings in terms of improvements in students’ writing quality following the provision of process writing instruction (Gillespie & Graham, 2014, p. 469). While one recent meta-analysis (Koster, Tribushinina, De Jong & Van den Bergh, 2015) identified a negative correlation between process writing instruction and quality of student writing, this analysis included only three studies in the process writing intervention category, and confirmed a positive association between constituent components of the process approach, such as peer assistance, structured pre-writing, feedback and revision, and writing performance (p. 263).

Many additional studies, though not specifically investigating process-oriented writing instruction, have linked features of the process approach to improvements in the quality of students’ writing. As the result of a comprehensive meta-analysis of evidence-based best practices for writing instruction spanning almost 30 years of prior reviews, Graham, Harris and Chambers (2016) highlighted the provision of frequent, extended opportunities for student writing, a central feature of the process writing approach, as being associated with enhanced writing quality (p. 220), extending similar findings from earlier research reviews (Graham et al., 2012, p. 888). Explicit teaching of writing and revision strategies designed to increase elementary writers’ audience awareness, another key focus of the process approach, has been shown to increase students’ ability to adapt their
writing to enhance the comprehensibility and suitability of their compositions to their intended readers, and thus, the overall quality of their writing across various genres (e.g. Carvalho, 2002, p. 271; Midgette, Haria & MacArthur, 2007, p. 142; Purcell-Gates, Duke & Martineau, 2007, p. 41). A recent meta-analysis on elementary writing instruction indicated that both the incorporation of instruction on planning, drafting and revising strategies and peer assistance in writing exert substantial positive effects on the quality of student writing (Graham et al., 2012, pp. 886–887), providing further empirical support for the relationship between the process approach and writing attainment. The contribution of peer assistance to increased writing achievement has been similarly documented in further meta-studies (e.g. Andrews, Torgerson, Low & McGuinn, 2009, p. 301; Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 464), with peer interactions in writing being shown to aid writers in the generation of ideas for writing (Kos & Maslowski, 2001, p. 582), development of writing comprehensibility and a sense of audience (Boscolo & Ascrofti, 2004, p. 169; Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1999, p. 606), quality of revision (Brakel Olson, 1990, p. 28; Rouiller, 2004, p. 176; Stoddard & MacArthur, 1993, pp. 96–98; Zammuner, 1995, p. 121), among other benefits. Finally, in a meta-analysis of empirical studies focusing on formative assessment in writing, the kind of self-reflective approach to evaluation which characterises process writing instruction was also linked to stark improvements in writing quality (Graham, Hebert & Harris, 2015, pp. 536–538).

As noted by various researchers, few high-quality empirical studies exist, to date, which specifically explore the effects of the implementation of the writing workshop approach on primary students’ writing performance (Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 468; Graham & Sandmel, 2011, 404–405; Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2006, p. 285). However, a small number of studies have attempted to address this gap. Jones’ (2015) year-long experimental study explored the growth of early writing skills in kindergarten students according to three instructional groups: writing workshop group, interactive writing group, or traditional writing control group. Findings revealed a significant difference in the development of compositional writing skills among the student groups, with students receiving writing workshop and interactive writing instruction showing markedly greater progress (Jones, 2015, p. 40). In a smaller-scale mixed methods study, Honeycutt and Pritchard (2007), engaged eleven fifth grade learners, for whom writing posed a significant challenge, in a 16-week Writing Academy following the writing workshop model. The authors concluded, on the basis of students’ increased performance on national writing achievement tests, higher WSPS scores, and observed increases in students’ metacognitive awareness relating to composing strategies, that these struggling students benefitted substantially from the writing workshop intervention (pp. 148–150). Similarly, Au and Carroll’s (1997) longitudinal study explored primary students’ writing
achievement through student portfolio assessments, following participation in a two-year literacy project incorporating writing workshop instruction. Assessment scores for both writing ownership and writing process skills obtained both before and after the first and second years of the project revealed a pronounced growth in the number of students achieving results at or above their grade level following their receipt of writing workshop instruction (p. 215). However, a comparable control group was not included in this research design, which limits the extent to which students’ progress may be attributed to writing workshop instruction.

It is important to note, however, that not all studies investigating the impact of writing workshop approaches have produced such promising results. In contrast, a study investigating the impact of writing workshop instruction on the quality of writing produced by identified ‘good’ and ‘poor’ writers concluded that writers in both groups “did not benefit appreciably from writing workshop instruction in terms of their writing performance” (Troia, Lin, Monroe & Cohen, 2009, pp. 96–97). However, as above, the non-experimental nature of this research restricts the degree to which the writing workshop model can be causally linked to students’ lack of progress.

### 2.2.4 Attitudinal Effects of the Process Approach

Though not researched as extensively as the academic advantages of the process writing approach, a range of affective advantages have been associated with the process approach to writing instruction. Given that attitudinal and motivational factors, such as negative self-efficacy beliefs, high writing apprehension, and low self-regulatory confidence are linked to diminished writing performance (Pajares, 2003, pp. 146–148), the potential attitudinal benefits promoted through the process approach are significant and cannot be ignored.

Numerous studies have linked the implementation of a process approach to writing instruction to reductions in students’ negative affect towards writing. Previous investigations into the sources of anxiety have pointed to students’ perceived lack of agency (Pekrun, 2006, p. 317), and, with specific regard to writing instruction, to preoccupations with grammatical accuracy and fear of writing evaluations (Zamel, 1983, p. 184), as dominant contributory factors; each of these factors are minimised as part of the process approach, which emphasises student choice and self-assessment, and presents proofreading of mistakes as a normal and acceptable part of the writing process. Thus, unsurprisingly, process writing pedagogy has been associated with reductions in students’ writing anxiety and apprehension (Bayat, 2014, p. 1139; Schweiker-Marra & Marra, 2000, p. 108), including in SL writing contexts (Challob, Bakar & Latif, 2016, p. 235; Sugita, 2003, p. 148).

Additionally, students in receipt of process-oriented instruction have been shown to possess
more positive attitudes towards writing, including higher perceived value of writing (Schweiker-Marra & Marra, 2000, pp. 105–106), decreased writing avoidance goals (Troia et al., 2009, p. 97), a heightened sense of both authorship (Kennedy, 2010, p. 8) and personal success (Schweiker-Marra & Marra, 2000, p. 106), as well as, increased writing enjoyment, confidence and independence in young writers (Jasmine & Weiner, 2007, p. 138). This approach has also been shown to benefit more reluctant writers, with parents, teachers and students alike reporting increased pupil engagement in and motivation towards writing following participation in consistent writing workshops (Kennedy, 2010, p. 8). The cognitive and affective benefits of this approach intersect in Honeycutt and Pritchard’s study (2007), which found that the quality of students’ writing improved when students employed the writing and self-regulation strategies explicitly taught through a process approach, as well as strategies used for dealing with negative emotions that arise during the composing process (p. 147).

While there is significant empirical support for the positive attitudinal effects of process-oriented instruction, other studies have produced contradictory results, contesting the positive motivational impact of this approach (e.g. Graham & Sandmel, 2011, p. 403). However, it should be noted that most of these studies, as well as a few other studies mentioned in this section, utilised purely quantitative means to measure such affective constructs. Given the complexity of emotions and the associated difficulty in assessing them, some authors argue that accessing students’ perspectives through more qualitative means can contribute to the development of a more nuanced, in-depth understanding of students’ lived experiences of affect in learning (Linnenbrink, 2006, p. 312) — an important consideration to bear in mind when interpreting the findings of these studies. For example, in Schweiker-Marra and Marra’s (2000) study discussed above, qualitative data from journal entries and recorded conferences indicated a pronounced change in self-perceptions of writing abilities in students participating in process writing instruction, a change which was not immediately evident in the quantitative measures employed to measure changes in writing apprehension (pp. 105–108).

### 2.2.5 The Writing Workshop and Writer Self-Perception

In addition to the above attitudinal advantages, process writing, and in particular, the writing workshop, has been identified as an approach to written instruction that takes cognisance of students’ self-concept beliefs and their impact on the writing process (Pajares & Schunk, 2001, p. 257; Pajares & Valiante, 1996, p. 401). To date, only a small collection of studies have investigated the extent to which such process approaches to writing instruction can impact students’ writing self-perception, with findings from these empirical studies yielding mixed results. A small scale study measuring students’ writing attitudes (including questionnaire items similar to those present on the
WSPS) following daily writing workshops implemented over 6 weeks with a class of 27 students found a marked increase in students’ ratings of their abilities as writers (Strech, 1994, p. 11). Students reported an increase in positive attitudes towards writing and exhibited increased confidence and self-reliance during writing workshops (Strech, 1994, p. 6). A similar small-scale investigation of the writing self-perceptions and attitudes of young students participating in a two-week process writing camp reported positive changes in their perceived writing competence, and enjoyment and value of writing, following their participation (Brown, Morrell & Rowlands, 2011, p. 17). Qualitative data obtained during a six-month process writing intervention with elementary students indicated that the greater audience awareness afforded through this approach prompted students to revise and reformulate their self-perceptions (Schweiker-Marra & Marra, 2000, p. 106). Though these results present promising findings in support of the writing workshop, both the study sample size and, in some cases, general research quality is too low to permit accurate generalisations from the conclusions.

Other studies have reported little evidence to support that a writing workshop approach can positively impact students’ writing self-perception (Pollington, Wilcox & Morrison, 2001, p. 259). An examination of the effects of another form of process writing intervention, authoring cycles, on students’ writing self-perception and writing apprehension, revealed no significant differences both between and within groups’ WSPS scores (Seban, 2012, p. 154). Though not specifically focused on the relationship between writer self-perception and the writing workshop, a study by the developers of the WSPS found no overall significant differences in writing self-perceptions among participants taught according to three literacy approaches, including whole language, a philosophy of teaching to which process writing is very similar (Bottomley, Truscott, Marinak, Henk, & Melnick, 1999, p. 115). It is important to note that the aforementioned studies employed purely quantitative means in order to assess students’ developing self-perceptions. This is a key consideration when interpreting these research findings, as some authors have suggested that more holistic, qualitative investigations may produce richer data when evaluating students’ beliefs and attitudes (Barcelos, 2007, p. 15-16).

Given the centrality of writer self-perception to the writing process outlined previously, it is crucial that a clearer picture of the potential effects of writing workshop instruction on students’ self-perceptions is elucidated through further research utilising a variety of methods; this study endeavours to address this current research deficit.

2.3 Process Approaches to FL Writing Instruction

Process approaches to writing pedagogy, including Calkin’s (1986) writing workshop model, were originally developed for use in English literacy instruction in an English-speaking context,
however many authors have highlighted its potential as a pedagogical approach for FL/SL writing instruction. As seen in the above sections, empirical support for the effectiveness of the process writing approach pertains predominantly to improvements relating to students’ dominant language or L1, and though the potential benefits of the process approach to FL writers have been recognised (Burke & Holbrook, 2018, p. 53; Reichelt, 2001, p. 587; White & Caminero, 1995, p. 323), the process approach to writing has not yet been widely explored in the field of FL/SL writing instruction (Reichelt et al., 2012, p. 22).

This concluding section of the chapter, while the most pertinent to the present study, is regrettably the most sparse. Due to a relative absence of relevant literature, a case is made for the use of process writing in the FL classroom through an overview of studies conducted in related FL/SL learning contexts. The section culminates in some concluding remarks about both the quality of the current literature base and its generalisability to the domain of non-English, primary FL instruction, and frames the present study in terms of the prevailing gaps in contemporary scholarship.

### 2.3.1 Applicability of Writing Workshop Model to FL Contexts

The use of the writing workshop model in primary FL instruction has not yet received the empirical attention it warrants (Al-Hroub, Shami & Evans, 2019, p. 164). Some preliminary studies point to improvements in the quality of students’ FL writing (Al-Hroub et al., 2019, p. 159) and students’ levels of FL writing apprehension (Challob et al., 2016, p. 235) following the introduction of the writing workshop model. Indeed, following observations and interviews conducted in English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms utilising the writing workshop approach, Leer and Runck (2016) concluded that “with a few modifications to provide additional support for [English language learners], all students in the classroom can benefit from this tried-and-true approach, growing as writers and language users” (p. 109). However, further research on the nature of such “modifications” as well as on the use of writing workshops in FL contexts more generally, including those beyond English learning contexts, is necessary.

In spite of this research deficit, however, several components of the process approach have been empirically linked to positive outcomes for students. The incorporation of peer response and collaboration into writing instruction, central features of the writing workshop, has been linked to advantages for learners in ESL settings. A study on ESL learners in a fourth-grade bilingual classroom in California emphasised the way in which the supportive social environment provided by the writing workshop model supports students’ literacy development, especially with regard to students with limited proficiency in the target language (Serna, 2009, p. 92). This peer support mechanism has been identified as a valuable resource for ESL writers, who can use the writing
community established by the workshop model to clarify misunderstandings in relation to task requirements, genre conventions, as well as language and vocabulary problems (Hyland, 2000, p. 43). These collaborative discussions have also been recognised as essential to the process through which ESL writers internalise and apply new writing strategies during the composition process (Ranker, 2009, p. 426).

The predominance of self-assessment in the writing workshop model is similarly linked to benefits for FL writers. In a review of recent research on process-oriented SL/FL writing assessment, Burner (2014) concluded that the use of students’ self-assessments of writing portfolios “makes learning and writing progress more visible both for the student and the teacher” (p. 142), with such process-oriented assessment being related to reduced FL writing anxiety (Nosratinia & Abdi, 2017, p. 831), enhanced metacognition and self-regulation of learning in FL writing (Nunes, 2004, p. 334), and development of FL writing skills (Romova & Andrew, 2011, p. 118-119).

An action research study on primary ESL writers in Hong Kong highlighted the greater autonomy afforded to students by the writing workshop in terms of the organisation and subject of their writing, leading to enhanced opportunities for self-expression, and increased student motivation and engagement (Lo & Hyland, 2007, p. 232). Findings from this study also stressed the essential importance of the scaffolded support provided to students through mini-lessons, guided practice, and teacher and peer feedback to the organisation and accuracy of students’ writing (Lo & Hyland, 2007, p. 232). These findings were echoed in more recent studies of ESL learners, which have linked the process approach to enhanced writing autonomy (Yeung, 2019, p. 47–49) and to gains in writing confidence and writing attitudes, particularly for older or more proficient language learners (Ho, 2006, pp. 29–30).

Further insight regarding the writing workshop’s potential as a FL instructional approach may be tentatively gleaned from research on the use of this method with English language learners in English-speaking classes. For example, Marsh’s (2019) in-depth qualitative study on a “struggling” English language learner’s experiences of the writing workshop highlights the importance of needs-based mini-lessons and response from real audiences, as components of the approach which enabled him as a multilingual writer (pp. 17–18). Similarly, data obtained from 16 teachers of English language learners in another small-scale case study in the U.S. reported significant positive changes in their students’ attitudes towards writing in English, such as less frequent experiences of writer’s block, and greater confidence in their ability to both write, and to comment on others’ writing (Peyton, Jones, Vincent & Greenblatt, 1994, p. 482).

Before concluding this overview of the existing literature related to FL process writing, attention must be drawn to the fact that the majority of the studies mentioned in this section have been undertaken in SL learning settings, in other words, in contexts in which the target language is
the language of the host community (see Ringbom, 1987, p. 27). Critically, while insights gained in SL writing studies may be at least partially applicable to FL contexts, these contexts, and thus the optimisation of instructional approaches, differ in significant ways (Manchón, 2009, p. 2). Further limiting current FL writing scholarship is a relative paucity of high-quality studies focusing on younger learners (Lee & Wong, 2014, p. 159), thus, the generalisability of the following findings to settings beyond ESL/EFL, university-level learning contexts (which are the predominant foci of the following studies) is as yet unclear. This study aims to contribute to this growing research base as an investigation of a non-English FL writing intervention with elementary-aged learners, encapsulating both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

This chapter has attempted to detail the wide-ranging literature base within which the present research is situated. A case has been made for the significance of students’ self-perceptions to the learning process in general, and, more specifically, to the acquisition of FL writing skills. Additionally, the process-oriented approach to writing instruction has been presented as a pedagogy wherein students' self-perceptions are acknowledged and accommodated. Taken together, a review of current research investigating the effects of the application of process writing in both L1 and FL/SL pedagogy on students’ self-beliefs was undertaken. This research base and its aforementioned gaps formed the basis of the central research questions which guided the progression of this study, and which are outlined in full in the following chapter.
The objective of this study is to explore students’ perceptions of themselves as FL writers, following their participation in a FL process writing intervention, in an endeavour to ascertain whether components of this approach to FL writing instruction may positively affect students’ developing self-perceptions. Given the complexity of the construct of self-perception and its measurement, a two-pronged, mixed methods approach has been adopted in order to more reliably assess changes in students’ FL writing self-perceptions. Changes in students' FL writing self-perceptions are measured quantitatively, employing the Writer Self-Perception Scale (WSPS), as well as qualitatively, through group interviews, in an attempt to acquire a more holistic account of students’ experiences and perceptions in relation to the FL process writing workshops. Afterwards, students’ self-perceptions measured through both approaches are compared in an attempt to strengthen and deepen the insights obtained. This approach is clearly evident in the following questions, of which one maintains a more quantitative orientation (Question 1), some a more qualitative orientation (Questions 2 and 3), and one a more mixed methods focus (Question 4). Data obtained in response to the following research questions are used to explore students’ perceptions about themselves as writers and potential changes in these self-beliefs, and provide preliminary recommendations for the ways in which FL writing workshops may be optimised, according to the children themselves, so as to enable students to develop an image of themselves as competent FL writers.

In order to achieve these aims, the present study is guided by four central research questions:

1. a. Have students’ foreign language writing self-perceptions, as measured by the Writer Self-Perception Scale (WSPS), changed significantly following a foreign language process writing intervention?
   b. Does this change, if any, differ significantly from corresponding changes amongst a control group?

2. How do students describe their perceptions of themselves as foreign language writers following their participation in a foreign language process writing intervention?

3. Which aspects, if any, of the process writing intervention, as described by the students, influenced their writer self-perception?

4. To what extent do students’ qualitative accounts of their foreign language writing self-perceptions confirm or contradict quantitative measures of these self-perceptions (as measured by the WSPS)?
4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study is to explore the influence of a FL process writing intervention on students’ perceptions of themselves as FL writers, in line with the aforementioned research questions. In this chapter, a detailed overview of the research design employed in the present study will be provided, outlining a rationale for the mixed methods approach employed, the context of the research, details of the experimental intervention implemented, data collection and analysis procedures, as well as additional considerations regarding ethical treatment and research validity.

4.1 Research Design Overview

In order to answer the aforementioned research questions, a mixed methods quasi-experimental nonequivalent control group pretest-posttest research design was constructed (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2017, pp. 105–107), illustrated in Figure 2. According to this model, qualitative data collection and analysis are embedded in a quantitative quasi-experimental design, in this case, both during and after the implementation of a FL process writing intervention.

Quantitative data, in the form of students’ self-reported perceptions of themselves as FL writers, measured using a modified version of the Writer Self-Perception Scale (WSPS), were obtained both before and after the implementation of a FL process writing intervention, and were compared against pre-test and post-test data gathered from a control group of students participating in a more product-oriented writing programme in the same grade. Qualitative data collected in this study comprise three central components: (a) field notes obtained from observations of the intervention group during the intervention period, (b) student work samples obtained from the intervention group during the intervention period, (c) interview transcripts from semi-structured small group interviews held with students in the intervention group. Analysis of these data was undertaken following a sequential mixed analysis approach, involving four dominant phases (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2017, p. 222). The first phase, quantitative analysis of quantitative data, preceded the second phase, qualitative analysis of qualitative data, with preliminary findings of the former being used to inform the progression of the latter. The third phase, representing the first phase of mixed analysis entailed a stage of data transformation, namely, the ‘quantitising’ of qualitative data to facilitate comparisons across datasets. The final phase, integration of data sets in a mixed analysis, entailed an analysis of findings from the previous phases, identifying points of convergence and divergence within the data, and interpreting the results of this integration.
Figure 2. Research Design.
4.2 Context of Research

This study was undertaken in collaboration with two state primary schools in the northeast of the Republic of Ireland. Both schools are located in rural areas, approximately 10 kilometres apart, with total enrolment of less than 250 students in each. Research participants were selected from classes at the same grade level in both schools, with one class functioning as a control group, and the other, a comparison group. The following section details sampling procedures employed in participant selection, and a brief profile of the research participants. In order to further situate the site of this research, a brief overview of the educational context of the study is also provided.

4.2.1 Research Participants

The schools selected for participation in this research were chosen using non-probability convenience sampling. The schools and their staff members were familiar to the researcher, and thus were selected on the basis of their accessibility. Despite this, care was taken to select schools in which the student demographic is quite similar in order to minimise baseline intergroup differences. Participants were selected from classes at the same grade level in both schools, Fourth Class, aged between 9 and 11, and allocation of participants to control and comparison groups were implemented according to their existing class groupings, and thus is nonrandom. Though care was taken prior to the beginning of the research to ensure that both class groups comprised approximately the same number of students, the number of participating students in both the control group ($N=18$) and intervention group ($N=27$) differed slightly. Students participated in this study on the condition that they (a) did not have a current exemption from Irish language classes, (b) returned completed, signed parental consent forms within the allocated timeframe, (c) were present at school when data were collected, and (d) provided verbal assent during data collection periods, which account for the variation in group sizes. The control and intervention groups comprised 8 (42.1%) and 16 (59.3%) male students, and 10 (57.9%) and 11 (40.7%) female students respectively. Additionally, students in the intervention group had had some experience of the writing workshop format prior to beginning this intervention, as it had been used briefly by a previous class teacher as part of their English language (L1) instruction.

The participating teacher, the intervention group’s class teacher with over 10 years’ teaching experience, had received some brief professional training in process-oriented writing instruction prior to the implementation of the intervention: while this training related to the implementation of the process approach in L1 rather than FL learning contexts, her participation in this professional development is noteworthy, given that previous research has indicated that relevant teacher training may mediate the effects of process interventions on students’ writing quality (Graham & Perin,
However, prior to her participation in this study, the teacher had yet to incorporate this approach into her teaching of either English (L1) or Irish (FL).

4.2.2 Educational Context

The student participants involved in this study were in Fourth Class, their sixth year of formal primary education. Students in public schools in the Republic of Ireland study Irish language as a compulsory subject, the only compulsory language other than English at the primary level, from the first year of primary school. Therefore, participants had received formal instruction of Irish language for five years by the beginning of the present study. Importantly, according to the most recent Primary Language Curriculum (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 2019), students at this class level are likely to have received formal Irish language writing instruction for only three of these years, as the first two years of primary schooling generally place a stronger emphasis on the development of oral language and reading skills in Irish, than that of independent writing skills (pp. 32-33).

Crucially, this research correlates primary students’ Irish language writing ability as their ability to write in a FL. Though constitutionally recognised as the national and first official language of the Republic of Ireland, Irish arguably can be more accurately characterised as FL, rather than a first or second language, for most language learners in Ireland. SL learning has been defined as occurring in an environment in which the target language is spoken in the immediate environment of the learner, who has regular opportunities to use the language in authentic interaction, while FL learning involves the learning of a language which is not spoken in the immediate environment of the learner, who has little to no opportunity to use the language in natural communication settings (Ringbom, 1987, p. 27). Given that just over 1% of the total population of the Irish Republic speaks Irish on a daily basis outside of the educational system, a large proportion of which living in remote, Irish-speaking ‘pockets’ of the country known as Gaeltacht areas (Central Statistics Office, 2017, pp. 66-69), the likelihood that Irish language learners will encounter opportunities for regular natural interaction in Irish in Ireland is low. Considering the political or legal status of a language can lead to the development of a generalised perspective of the status of a language within a country, which may be far removed from the perspective of individual learners (Ringbom, 1980, p. 37). For this reason, Irish language learning is considered as more closely aligned to a FL learning environment for the purposes of this study.

4.3 Nature of Process Writing Intervention

Participants in the comparison group took part in an 18-week process writing intervention as
part of their Irish language instruction. This intervention comprised weekly, hour-long writing workshops, following Calkins’ (1986) typical workshop structure (see Figure 1). Workshops were preplanned with the class teacher, allowing sufficient flexibility for changes according to identified student needs arising over the course of the intervention. An overview of mini-lesson topics covered during the intervention is provided in Appendix A. Aside from the weekly workshops, students in the comparison group received their regular Irish language instruction, which, according to teachers’ own descriptions, were similar between intervention and control groups.

4.4 Data Collection

For the purposes of this study, a mixed methods approach was adopted to enable the collection of both quantitative measures of students’ self-percepts and students’ qualitative accounts of their perceptions, in order to expand the range of potential insights which may be obtained from these data sources. This decision was made in response to requests by prominent authors in the field for the inclusion of more qualitative methods in contemporary research into students’ self-beliefs: to explore these complex internal constructs in greater depth, elements of which can be easily overlooked when imposing predetermined measurement categories on learners’ experiences, many authors have advocated for a more balanced research approach (Mercer, 2011, p. 4; Ryan & Irie, 2014, pp. 119-120; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2002, p. 242). The kinds of single-point, quantitative measures which dominate the research designs in this field have come under increasing scrutiny due, in part, to recent findings indicating the prevalence of short-term fluctuations in self-reported self-concept data caused by, for example, temporary negative affective states (Mercer, 2011, p. 75). This research design thus involves both qualitative and quantitative, and both concurrent and sequential, data collection, entailing multiple points of integration in the research design.

4.4.1 Quantitative Data Collection

The quantitative data sources used in this study consist of measures of participant FL writing self-perception implemented both before and after the process writing intervention with the experimental group, and two measures administered at similar time points with the control group. Participants’ writing self-perception was measured using a modified version of the Writer Self-Perception Scale, (WSPS) a self-report tool measuring five dimensions of writing self-perception — namely, General Progress, Specific Progress, Observational Comparison, Social Feedback, and Physiological States — against a 5-point Likert scale (Bottomley et al., 1997, pp. 287-288). This scale was normed with students from 4th-6th grade in the United States, making it particularly appropriate for this study, as the participants are of a similar age and stage of their educational
A number of modifications were made to the original WSPS to enhance its suitability to the present study. Firstly, items in this scale were modified such that statements reflected participants’ perceptions about FL writing, specifically writing in Irish, as the measure was originally designed to be used in relation to writing in the participants’ L1. During the revision process, care was taken to preserve the original meaning of individual survey items so as not to compromise scale reliability. Secondly, prior to administering this modified version of the WSPS to students, two students of a similar age and level of schooling, not included in the study sample, were asked to examine scale items and identify areas of potential confusion or ambiguity, aiding in rewording items if necessary. Following this consultation, the decision was made to reduce the number of items, as the students found the items repetitive and overwhelming. Based on this recommendation, 9 scale items were eliminated from the original scale, reducing the number from 38 to 29. Factor loadings from WSPS validation studies (Henk et al., 1996, pp. 194-195) were used to inform these reductions, with scale items yielding the weakest factor loading scores in each of the four scale categories, according to subcategories where relevant, were removed. Thirdly, Likert scale response categories were converted to a numerical format for greater clarity, as recommended by these student ‘pilots’. Importantly, though the focus of the survey relates to students’ perceptions of their FL writing, the scale was administered in English to ensure comprehensibility of survey items to all students. The modified scale used has been included in Appendix B. Pre- and post-test scores from this modified WSPS from both student groups thus comprise the quantitative data sources utilised in this study.

4.4.2 Qualitative Data Collection

Collection and analysis of multiple qualitative data sources are embedded in this research design both during and after the FL process writing intervention.

**Observational field notes and work samples.** Observational field notes and samples of students’ writing constitute the qualitative data obtained during the implementation of the intervention. Classroom observations were undertaken periodically during the 18-week intervention period, primarily during the first and final months. Additionally, samples of students’ work were gathered throughout the duration of the workshops. These data were primarily obtained and examined for the purposes of assuring intervention fidelity, i.e. that the FL writing workshop structure was adhered to throughout the intervention period.

**Semi-structured small group interviews.** The primary qualitative data collection method utilised after the intervention period was interviews with participating students in the intervention group. These interviews explored students’ experiences of the intervention, their perceptions of
themselves as FL writers, and aspects of the intervention which they consider to have influenced changes in these perceptions. Student interviews were considered an essential aspect of the present research, in recognition of the importance of children themselves as vital sources of information about their experiences and their perceptions.

A semi-structured interview design was selected for its ability to specifically address topics of interest identified through prior data collection (i.e. observations, work samples, WSPS scores), while offering sufficient flexibility for participants to offer new or unanticipated insights and meanings (Galletta, 2013, p. 24). An interview guide was prepared in advance (see Appendix C), an approach that was selected as it enabled the pre-planning of both prompts and probes (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p. 420), which could facilitate the novice interviewer. Questions on the interview guide were roughly structured along a gradient from more open-ended questions towards more theoretically-situated questions, in line with the recommendations of Galletta (2013), thus enabling the use of the lived experiences offered by the participants as a context for more responsive, specific, theoretically-driven lines of questioning (p. 24). Similarly, some questions included in the interview guide were designed in line with factors included in the WSPS, as a means of both validating students’ scores on this quantitative measure, as well as enquiring deeper into the similarities and differences in these responses, the main aim of Research Question 4. These qualitative interviews were thus employed as a means of data triangulation, and of extension: addressing the limitations of the questionnaire, including relative lack of both depth of responses and opportunities for clarification or explanation. Questions included on the interview guide were shared, explained, and in some cases, co-developed, with participants prior to the interviews in order to clarify the purpose, nature and contents of the interview (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 426), to both ensure comprehensibility of the language used in questioning, and allow sufficient time to think and reflect, both of which are essential considerations when interviewing children (Arksey & Knight, 1999, pp. 116–118). Interviews were conducted with all participants on school grounds, within school hours, following the end of the process writing intervention.

A small-group interview format was adopted in favour of one-to-one interviews for the purpose of creating a less intimidating environment in which children can share their opinions (Greig, Taylor & MacKay, 2013, p. 238), to minimise the control and power distance between researcher and respondents (Eder & Fingerson, 2001, p. 182) and in recognition of its potential to provide opportunities for children to extend and challenge each others’ responses (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 435). Additionally, care was taken to reduce the artificiality of the interview setting by replicating familiar classroom situations (Eder & Fingerson, 2001, p. 183), and to employ active, rather than passive interview activities (Parkinson, 2001, p. 142): interview turn-taking was structured to mirror a ‘circle time’ format, and interviews also incorporated a ‘share session’
element in which the children discussed a piece of their work with the group, as they had done throughout the writing workshop intervention by means of the ‘Author’s Chair’.

While, for the sake of enhancing depth and breadth of the research, the decision was made to interview all students in the intervention group, a purposive sampling strategy was employed in order to group students for interviews (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 156-157): results from preliminary quantitative analysis of WSPS data were used to inform interview group selection, with homogeneous groupings of students being selected on the basis of post-test WSPS scores. In collaboration with the class teacher, friend groups were also considered in interview grouping in an endeavour to lessen potential uncomfortable feelings associated with discussing emotions, self-beliefs and personal experiences (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 434). Students were interviewed in groups of three, over an average duration of 20 minutes 46 seconds (range: 12:54-26:01).

4.5 Data Analysis

As outlined previously, a sequential mixed analysis approach was adopted in this study, wherein analysis proceeded on an iterative basis, with earlier stages of quantitative analysis informing the progression of subsequent qualitative collection and analysis phases (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2017, p. 222). The four main phases of analysis undertaken, and which are outlined further in greater detail, included quantitative analysis of quantitative data, qualitative analysis of qualitative data, and mixed analysis, involving a phase of data transformation and a phase of data integration.

4.5.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative analysis was undertaken with the primary aim of answering my first research question, through exploring changes in students’ WSPS scores both within and between groups. The first phase of data analysis entailed the quantitative analysis of quantitative data. This analysis was undertaken in three distinct phases: firstly, descriptive analysis and inferential analysis were undertaken, the findings of which being used to inform the subsequent collection and analysis of qualitative interview data, with a final stage of further analysis, once qualitative data collection was complete. SPSS was used to conduct the analysis during each phase, with Stata being additionally employed for some aspects of the further analysis.

As the first phase of preliminary quantitative analysis, descriptive statistics were employed to compute mean WSPS scores of students in both control and experimental groups, both before and after the intervention period. Mean global WSPS scores and mean WSPS scores for each of the five factors of the scale were calculated for pre- and post-test measures for each student in both groups.
Additionally, mean differences in scores for every student were calculated: mean difference was calculated by deducting pre-test from post-test scores for all factors and for global WSPS score. This initial analysis provided an overview of the students’ WSPS scores, upon which subsequent statistical analysis was based.

The second phase of analysis built on this descriptive analysis, and involved the use of inferential statistics for within-group and between-group comparison of mean scores. Paired samples T-tests were conducted for within-group comparison: mean overall WSPS scores and mean scores for each of the five scale factors measured at pre- and post-test were compared for each group in order to identify whether scores differed significantly following the intervention period, addressing Research Question 1a. Afterwards, independent samples T-tests were performed to provide between-group comparison: comparing mean overall WSPS scores and mean scores for each of the five scale factors between groups, and before and after the intervention period, addressing Research Question 1b. However, as groups were found to differ significantly at pre-test, an additional independent samples T-test was conducted using mean difference in scores for each student in order to identify whether changes in students’ scores from pre- to post-test differed significantly between groups, offering a form of combined within- and between-group comparison, in order to investigate Research Question 1b more robustly. Preliminary findings from this analysis were used both to inform purposive sampling procedures used to select and group students in the comparison group for small group qualitative interviews, and to inform interview questions.

Following this phase of analysis, a final stage of further analysis was conducted. Scale factors which produced significant findings at the inferential stage were further explored during this phase. This analysis was undertaken in order to investigate whether factors such as treatment group (i.e., experimental vs control), gender, or initial pre-test scores could predict significant differences in students’ scores for these scale factors. Thus, multiple linear regression analysis was performed on two scale factors: mean difference between pre- and post-test scores for each factor functioned as the dependent variables, with treatment group, gender, the interaction between group and gender, and pre-test scores being included as independent variables. These further analyses were employed in order to strengthen findings from initial means comparison testing, and thus more clearly understand the nature of these changes in scores investigated under Research Question 1, through controlling for these additional confounding variables.

4.5.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

The first phase of data analysis occurred while the intervention was ongoing, constituting analysis of student work samples and observational field notes for the purposes of ensuring intervention fidelity, i.e. that the FL writing workshops were implemented consistently throughout
the intervention period. Brief analysis of these data indicated that the workshops had been implemented in a regular and effective manner, and that the process writing approach had been adhered to sufficiently to be able to proceed with subsequent data collection and analysis.

The main phase of qualitative data analysis was conducted following the completion of the interview phase, and entailed the use content analysis to analyse the transcribed interview data. This analysis was chiefly informed by two broad inquiries, my second and third research questions: (a) how these students perceived themselves as FL writers following their participation in the workshops, and (b) which aspects of the workshop approach were seen as contributing to the development of students’ FL writing self-perceptions, according to the students themselves. While the overall trajectories of these two branches of analysis differed, they both began with extensive reading and re-reading of transcriptions, and an initial analysis phase, involving a process of open coding during which descriptive codes were assigned to interview data (Cohen et al., 2013, p. 561). This process was facilitated by the use of ATLAS.ti, a specialised qualitative data analysis software. Afterwards, further analysis was undertaken, first in relation to the second research question, and then in relation to the third.

Exploration of the second research question involved examining interview data for students’ own descriptions of their writing self-perceptions. The self-perception framework provided by the factors assessed through the WSPS served as a guide in this branch of analysis. As outlined above, many interview guide questions were designed in line with the WSPS, to serve as a means of triangulating and exploring findings obtained from quantitative data, in line with the explanatory sequential analysis approach being used (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2017, p. 234). Due to the limited scope of this thesis, the decision was made to focus, through use of select interview questions, primarily on aspects of self-perception in which significant changes in WSPS scores were previously observed in preliminary quantitative analysis, as these aspects of self-perception seemed to have been influenced by the workshop intervention to the largest extent. First, data were coded for ‘broad statements’ of students’ writing self-perception (i.e. sweeping or blanket statements indicating their overall opinion of themselves as FL writers, e.g. ‘I think I’m a good writer in Irish’). Codes within this category were then defined and sorted into subgroups according to the apparent positivity of these broad self-descriptions. Next, codes relating to the two WSPS scale factors being investigated (those in which significant changes in scores were observed in quantitative analysis) were identified. This involved the construction of a categorisation matrix for both scale factors (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, pp. 111-112). Interview data were then coded for correspondence with or exemplification of the pre-identified factors in the matrix and groups of similar coded responses were compiled into subcategories. Hence, while the broad lens through which the data were examined was predefined by the factors present in the WSPS, the matrix was unconstrained, as categories and subcategories
were generated inductively and continuously refined through examination of emergent themes in the data (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, p. 111). In this way, this branch of content analysis can be considered to be abductive in nature as, while much of the initial analysis was structured by existing theory associated with the WSPS, emergent categories and concepts can be said to be “grounded” in the data from which they materialised (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 275). These categorisation matrices were later used to explore the frequency of certain categories and subcategories of responses among students, during the mixed analysis phase.

The second branch of qualitative analysis involved examining interview data for references to aspects of the workshop approach which were seen as influencing the development of students’ self-perceptions, either positively or negatively, as specified in Research Question 3. In contrast to the previous analysis, the decision was made not to employ previous theories regarding the workshop approach and its potential benefits for students as an analytical guide, but rather to explore the students’ own narratives and identify findings through more fully inductive means. However, once coding had been completed, and categories and subcategories had been developed and refined, it was noted that broad coding categories aligned closely with the characteristics of the process writing approach laid out by Graham and Perin (2007, p. 449), as explicated in Section 2.2.1. In this way, these key principles were used as a framework through which to present and discuss the findings to provide continuity between existing research and findings of the present study.

4.5.3 Mixed Methods Data Analysis

According to the classic framework for mixed methods research designs by Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989), the integrative analysis of mixed data in this study serves two basic purposes: triangulation and complementarity (p. 259). In an attempt to achieve a means of triangulation in the present research, and to provide a comprehensive answer to Research Question 4, a mixed analysis was conducted on both qualitative and quantitative data centring on the same construct, namely, students’ self-perceptions at the end of the intervention period. In practical terms, this involved a comparative analysis of students’ interview responses alongside post-test scores on corresponding WSPS scale items. Additionally, this mixed analysis serves an explanatory function: analysis of interview responses alongside quantitative data provided an opportunity to develop a greater understanding of the outcomes of the quantitative experiment, through exploration and tentative explanation of variations in outcome responses according to the participants’ own views, thus providing complementarity in the research (Greene et al., 1989, p. 259). Thus, in order to investigate this study’s final research question, the results provided from one method (qualitative) were used to elaborate or clarify results obtained through another method (quantitative), so as to
broaden and deepen the insights gained from one method alone.

This phase of analysis entailed two broad processes. The first constituted a process of data transformation (Onwuegbuzie & Combs, 2010, p. 423) through which emergent themes from qualitative interview transcriptions were quantitized. Using the aforementioned categorisation matrices, which were originally used for qualitative analysis to develop code categories (see section 4.5.2), in line with recommendations by Onwuegbuzie (2003), an interrespondent matrix was constructed (p. 396). This matrix was produced in a process through which students’ interview responses were dichotomised according to the absence or presence of direct statements regarding a certain theme or code category. This created a participant x theme matrix, which indicated the aspects of their self-perceptions to which students did and did not refer during interviews (Onwuegbuzie, 2003, p. 397). This matrix was used to calculate frequencies of particular responses, as well as to compute manifest effect sizes for each theme (Onwuegbuzie, 2003, p. 397), which are reported in Chapter 6 to facilitate discussion of qualitative findings.

The concluding phase of the mixed analysis, the findings of which are reported separately in Chapter 7, entailed comparison and integration of the full range of data sets and an interpretation of the findings in order to explore the extent to which triangulation and complementarity were obtained amongst the data. This phase primarily addressed the fourth research question and involved integrative analysis of quantitative, qualitative and transformed data, structured according to distinct facets of self-perceptions as they emerged in the data. While the exact procedure of mixed analysis for each facet or ‘theme’ differed (and are explained more explicitly in Chapter 7), the process generally entailed the grouping of students on the basis of findings from either quantitative or qualitative analysis and comparing these findings against corresponding quantitative, qualitative or transformed data to identify points of either convergence (wherein findings from other analyses confirm or support each other) or divergence (wherein findings from other analyses contradict or challenge each other) in the data. Afterwards, congruent results were noted and discussed, providing triangulation, and, in some cases, further analyses of relevant data were conducted in an attempt to offer tentative explanations for discrepancies between datasets, providing complementarity or extension. For all themes or facets explored, joint displays (or integration displays) are used to communicate the findings of this integration (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2017, p. 228).

4.6 Ethical Considerations

Of central importance in the present research, given the centrality of students, their feelings and their perspective to the current study, is both the need to protect participating children from
undue harm whilst also providing these children with a voice in the development of this research. To achieve these aims, a number of ethical considerations have been embedded in the research process, including protocols relating to informed consent and assent, access, minimisation of risk, anonymity and secure data handling. These considerations, alongside the child-centred research approach attempted in this study, are thus described in further detail.

**Informed consent and assent.** Informed consent was obtained from both participants and their guardians prior to the commencement of data collection. The following factors were described in a manner deemed appropriate and comprehensible for the children: the purposes, procedures, reporting and dissemination of the research; foreseeable risks and potential benefits of the research; and confidentiality and data handling procedures, in line with the recommendations of Cohen et al. (2011, p. 80). The right to voluntary non-participation or withdrawal from the study at any time was emphasised. My contact information was provided to guardians to ensure my availability to discuss the research, both throughout and following the study period. Participant information sheets and consent forms were disseminated to guardians through the children themselves, thus eliminating the need to obtain parental contact information. Sample informed consent forms and participant information sheets are attached (see Appendices D and E). In addition to written parental consent, verbal assent was obtained from the student participants throughout the study, with the voluntary nature of their participation being frequently reiterated.

**Access.** Official permission to undertake research in the target school communities were obtained from the school principals. Co-operating class teachers were provided with full, detailed disclosure about the purposes, procedures, reporting and dissemination of the research; foreseeable risks and potential benefits of the research; and confidentiality and data handling procedures. Schemes of work were co-developed with the participating teacher and open channels of communication were maintained with all educators involved throughout the research period.

**Minimisation of risk.** In order to obtain informed consent, the identification of potential risks of participation in this research was first required. The risk to participants of this study was minimised through a variety of procedures. Firstly, privacy of participants was retained through the use of anonymised data and secure data handling procedures (see below). Secondly, informed parental consent and participant assent were obtained such that both participants and guardians were enabled to make an informed decision about their participation with an awareness of the potential risks involved. Thirdly, while data obtained concerns students’ perceptions (for example, about their writing progress, and their physiological state during the writing process), which could be construed as sensitive information for some students, care was taken to ensure that survey items and interview guides were phrased in a positive, non-intrusive manner so as to minimise negative impact to
students’ self-concept. In addition, participants’ right to withdraw from the study should they experience personal distress or discomfort during data collection period was stressed throughout the duration of the study.

**Anonymity, confidentiality and secure data handling procedures.** The collection, storing and disclosure of personal data obtained in the course of this research were treated in accordance with the current legislature in the Republic of Ireland (Data Protection Act 2003, 2018). Anonymity measures undertaken included anonymous data collection procedures where possible, namely, through the use of an anonymous questionnaire. Where anonymity of individuals was not possible as part of the data collection process, i.e. in group interviews and classroom observations, the removal of identifiable information and use of pseudonyms were adopted as part of the data transcription process. In these data collection procedures, only the required personal data were obtained and retained. Data have not been used for purposes beyond those which have been clearly specified in participant information and consent forms, nor has access to research data been provided to those not likewise specified.

Secure data handling procedures were adhered to throughout the research period. Hard copies of questionnaires, observation field notes, and work samples were digitised before being destroyed (or returned to participants, in the case of work samples). All forms of digital data were stored on my personal computer, which is password-protected, with backups stored on two encrypted external storage drives. Personal or identifiable data were not retained. Focus group interviews were audio-recorded for transcription purposes, as specified when obtaining guardians’ written consent. All relevant digital and audio files will be deleted within six months following submission and approval of the final thesis.

**Child protection principles.** Research was conducted in line with the child protection policies implemented in the respective schools, and according to national guidelines published by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2012, pp. 4-5). This included establishing contact with each schools’ Designated Liaison Person for child protection issues and ensuring that passive surveillance by school staff was maintained during student interviews. Additionally, this research was conducted with an awareness of the potential necessity of the suspension of confidentiality conditions and of following appropriate reporting procedures had risk or evidence of harm been uncovered during the research process. Thankfully, however, this situation did not arise.

**Child-centred research approach.** While the aforementioned considerations combine to form an approach to child-safe research, this study aimed to move beyond that, towards the development of a more child-centred research approach. The development of inclusive, participatory pathways for students’ collaboration formed a central foundation for this research...
design. Opportunities for more active, agentic participation of the participants, as research fellows rather than research subjects, were embedded in the research design, including co-constructive re-wording of questionnaire items in child-appropriate language, the inclusion of students’ drawings or self-selected work samples for use in group interviews, and collaborative reporting of research findings through the creation of a child-centred information leaflet for parents, which will be completed following the approval of the final thesis.

4.7 Validity and Reliability Considerations

At all stages of this research, a number of protocols, ranging from the selection of appropriate quantitative analysis testing, to detailing and following a systematic qualitative data coding approach, and beyond, were embedded in the research design with the intention of ensuring research validity and reliability. However, as in all research, threats to validity and reliability persist. While it is impractical (and likely, impossible) to identify and catalogue all such potential threats, for the sake of brevity, the most salient considerations pertaining to these threats and the corresponding minimisation procedures adopted will be outlined.

*Quasi-experimental Design*. The quasi-experimental design approach adopted in this study is subject to a range of threats to both internal and external validity. Firstly, due to the nonprobability sampling techniques employed, control and intervention groups were nonrandom and nonequivalent. Addressing this selection bias, as a threat to internal validity, school demographics were examined and considered in the selection of a control group in an attempt to minimise intergroup differences. Additionally, these differences measured at pre-test were also controlled in quantitative analysis. Due to the limited scope of this research and the nature of educational experiments in general, other such threats to internal validity, including history, maturation and testing effects, could not be similarly mediated. As a consequence, caution must be stressed when inferring causality from the research findings. Additionally, the small-scale, short-term and site-specific nature of this research make it particularly susceptible to threats to external validity, thus greatly inhibiting the parameters of generalisability of findings beyond the participants involved (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 156).

*Quantitative Data Collection*. Inherent in quantitative data collection, especially of data pertaining to abstract and complex constructs, is the issue of construct validity (i.e. whether the way in which a construct is measured and operationalised in the study reflects the actual construct). In an attempt to reduce the likelihood of erroneous quantitative measurement of students’ self-perceptions, the WSPS was employed, due to its solid theoretical foundation and the availability of prior validation studies (see Henk et al., 1996). However, as the WSPS was originally developed for
use regarding students’ writing self-perceptions in their dominant language, the appropriateness of its use as a measure of FL writing self-perception may reasonably be called into question, as doing so assumes that both L1 and FL writing self-perceptions are structurally identical, which may not be the case. In order to address this threat to validity, a number of steps were taken. First, wording of scale items were modified (with careful consideration of findings from previous reliability analysis) to reflect students’ FL perceptions. These modifications were checked through a ‘peer pilot’, as described previously. Additionally, findings from quantitative analysis were combined alongside qualitative data obtained on the same construct, data which were obtained through open-ended questioning which reflected the wide literature base on the relevant construct. Identification of convergence and corroboration between these datasets through such methodological triangulation of data thus reduces the potential of error associated with poor construct validity whilst also addressing the related problem of concurrent validity, associated with multiple measurements.

**Qualitative Data Collection.** The use of interviews as a primary data collection method entailed a number of threats to validity and reliability. For example, the researcher was quite familiar to participants at the time of the interviews, a situation which may lead to the introduction of ‘interviewer effects’ (i.e. wherein characteristics of the interviewer may influence the responses of interviewees, thus introducing bias). However, numerous strategies were adopted to minimise these, and other, effects. Firstly, in an attempt to reduce the likelihood of such ‘interviewer effects’, the researcher capitalised on the ‘pros’ of being known to the research participants in an effort to mitigate the associated ‘cons’. The level of familiarity acquired with students enabled rapport and trust to be established quickly in the interview setting, with the creation of a relaxed, conversational environment being prioritised through providing reassurance that students’ conversations were not going to be discussed with other members of the school community, such as teachers or peers. The use of group interviews was also selected, among other reasons, for its potential to lessen the ‘power distance’ between researcher and participants, a key consideration, especially when researching children (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 207). Additionally, the researcher’s familiarity with the students beforehand enabled the pre-empting of miscommunications, the planning of probes and prompts, and the tailoring of interview questions for comprehensibility to greater extents. Despite these precautions, the risk of reciprocity (i.e. children offering what they believe the researcher wants to hear) and social desirability in children’s responses persists in the interview situation (Greig, Taylor & MacKay, 2013, p. 164), a validity issue which is primarily addressed, in this study, through ‘discounting’ data (i.e. interpreting data in the context in which they were collected) in subsequent analysis (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2015, pp. 179-180), and also through the mixed methods, comparative analysis of both quantitative and qualitative measures of the same constructs.
However, as with many of the above protocols, this strategy does not produce data void of bias or invalidity, and must be borne in mind when interpreting the results of this study.

In addition to the threat of ‘interviewer effects’, ‘interview effects’ (i.e. wherein a risk of bias is introduced by virtue of the interview situation itself), may pose a risk to research validity. In an attempt to reduce the potential influence of these effects, the interview was designed so as to mimic familiar classroom situations and activities (see section 4.4.2) in order to create a more naturalistic setting for data collection. An additional threat to research validity was presented by the lack of interview experience held by the novice researcher. Though careful drafting of interview questions and potential probes and prompts were employed to avoid the use leading questions, the task of effectively managing oneself and the interview situation is challenging, especially for inexperienced interviewers. For example, while efforts were made to respond relatively objectively to students’ responses in an attempt to reinforce that no ‘right’ answer to interview questions existed, this may not have been universally achieved. Again, as above, readers must bear this in mind when interpreting qualitative findings.

Finally, the semi-structured interview format was employed for its ability to provide a balance of reliability and validity to the data collection: the pre-planned structure ensured a similar format and set of questions, to enhance reliability, whilst allowing for sufficient flexibility to explore unanticipated areas of significance to interviewees and thus represent their perspectives more authentically, to enhance validity.

This chapter has provided an overview of the broad research methodology which has been employed in the present study in order to investigate the influence of a FL process writing intervention on students’ FL writing self-perceptions, in accordance with the study’s research questions. In the following chapters, more detailed explications of the specific procedures associated with the aforementioned data collection and analysis phases outlined herein will be provided, alongside description and analysis of subsequent findings, in an endeavour to answer these central research questions. The following chapters 5, 6 and 7 are structured according to quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods findings respectively. Chapter 5 explores results pertaining to Research Questions 1a and 1b, while findings detailed in Chapter 6 address Research Questions 2 and 3. Additionally, Chapter 7 details the findings from the mixed analysis procedure undertaken to investigate Research Question 4. Additionally, Chapter 8 is included in order to explicitly relate the key findings, which emerged through the stages of analysis presented in Chapters 5 to 7, to the present research questions to a succinct, concise manner. These findings are then recapitulated and situated in the present research context in the final chapter.
5 QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

In this chapter, findings from the quantitative analysis of research data are detailed. Results from this analysis were obtained in an attempt to address this study’s first research question:

1. a. Have students’ foreign language writing self-perceptions, as measured by the Writer Self-Perception Scale (WSPS), changed significantly following a foreign language process writing intervention?

   b. Does this change, if any, differ significantly from corresponding changes amongst a control group?

This analysis examined pre- and post-test WSPS scores of students within both the control and the intervention group involved in this study, in order to identify whether changes were evident in students’ writing self-perception scores over the course of the intervention (Research Question 1a), and whether this change differed between control and intervention groups (Research Question 1b). Additionally, findings from this analysis were used both to identify aspects of students’ writing self-perceptions to be further explored through qualitative analysis, and as a source of triangulation of findings about these self-perceptions, used in the mixed analysis undertaken in relation to Research Question 4. The analysis conducted followed a series of three distinct stages: descriptive analysis, inferential analysis, and further analysis. The procedure and findings pertaining to each phase are discussed below.

5.1 Descriptive Analysis: Students’ Mean WSPS Scores

Firstly, descriptive analysis of the data was conducted in order to develop an overall ‘picture’ or overview of the quantitative data. Mean scores for each of the five scale factors (General Progress, Specific Progress, Observational Comparison, Social Feedback, and Physiological States), were calculated, in accordance with guidelines for scoring scale factors individually (Bottomley, et al., 1997, p. 288), for both pre- and post-test WSPS scores for both intervention group and control group conditions. Additionally, a ‘global’ mean score was calculated, representing the mean score for all scale items. The findings are summarised in Table 1.

5.2 Inferential Analysis: Changes in Mean WSPS Scores

The inferential analysis undertaken involved comparing the pre- and post-test WSPS scores of students who participated in the process writing intervention to identify whether significant changes had occurred (as per Research Question 1a). As evident in the summary statistics, comparative analysis of experimental group scores gathered at pre- and post-test revealed a general
upward trend over time in both mean global WSPS scores and mean scores across each individual scale factor. A paired samples T-test was conducted in order to investigate the statistical significance of these increases. Mean score increases in post-test scores of the experimental group in two of five scale factors, General Progress, $t(26)=2.372, p = .025$, and Physiological States, $t(26)=3.330, p = .003$, as well as in overall, or Global scores, $t(26)=3.001, p = .006$, were found to be statistically significant. In order to investigate Research Question 1b, changes in the control groups’ scores were also analysed: A similar analysis of differences in control group mean scores revealed a slight mean increase in overall scores, and across all factors, with the exception of Observational Comparison and Physiological States, in which a mean decrease was observed. A paired samples T-test indicated, however, that these differences in control group mean pre- and post-test scores were not statistically significant.

However, as evident from the above summary statistics, the distribution of scores across both groups was not normal: the distribution of scores across the various scale factors were
generally slightly negatively skewed, with a higher concentration of highly positive self-ratings. These findings were expected, given the tendency for younger school-age children to respond in an extreme manner when providing self-ratings of emotional or psychological states (Chambers & Johnston, 2002, p. 35), as well as the likelihood of young children to bias their responses towards the positive end (Bell, 2007, p. 464). These findings, combined with the relatively small sample size ($N=45$) involved in the study, the unequal sample sizes between both treatment groups and consequent higher relative statistical power associated with the experimental group, call into question the utility of parametric testing in the analysis of this scale data. Accordingly, a Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test was conducted to compare pre- and post-test median WSPS scores of students in both groups as a robustness check. In direct alignment with the above findings, a comparison of pre- and post-test scores in the experimental group indicated statistically significant increases in students’ median scores for General Progress ($Z=2.212$, $p=.027$), Physiological States ($Z=2.814$, $p=.005$) and Global ($Z=2.786$, $p=.005$) scores, following their participation in the intervention. An identical analysis of pre- and post-test WSPS scores of the comparison group revealed no statistically significant differences in median scores by the end of the treatment period. In this way, findings from the non-parametric analysis thus confirm earlier findings from parametric tests.

Importantly, while care was taken to control for between-group differences at the outset, the nonequivalent groups design necessarily entails the issue of sampling effects, namely, the possibility that systematic differences between both treatment groups exist. Notably, group size and gender composition in both experimental (male=16, female=11) and control (male=8, female=10) groups varied to a relatively large extent, while other variables, including school and class demographics, instructional quality, parental educational background, and unknown confounding variables, remain a threat to internal validity. To address this issue, an independent samples T-test was conducted to test whether these systematic between-group differences were statistically significant. Though no statistically significant differences were found between both groups’ mean pre-test scores, a comparison of post-test scores revealed a significant difference in mean scores between both groups across a number of scale factors. When compared to mean post-test scores of the comparison group, the experimental group showed statistically significantly higher mean scores in General Progress, $t(43)=2.018$, $p=.05$; Observational Comparison, $t(43)=2.045$, $p=.047$; Physiological States, $t(43)=2.879$, $p=.006$; as well as global scores, $t(43)=2.207$, $p=.033$. Due to my aforementioned concerns in relation to sample size and distribution of data, and to ensure continuity of my analysis, a nonparametric equivalent test was also performed. A Mann-Whitney U test performed on pre-test median scores of both groups suggested, as expected, that statistically significant differences were indeed present between groups at pre-test: median scores were significantly higher amongst students in the experimental group both overall ($Z=2.029$, $p=.042$), and
across General Progress ($Z=2.316$, $p=.021$), Specific Progress ($Z=2.154$, $p=.031$), and Observational Comparison ($Z=2.021$, $p=.043$) factors.

As these between-group differences were identified in pre-test scores, in order to more closely examine the differential effect of the intervention across both control and experimental groups (as specified in Research Question 1b), a combined within- and between-group comparison is required. This approach takes greater account of the between-group differences observed in pre-test scores, thus lowering potential biases in between-group post-test comparisons which may have resulted from these initial differences. Thus, mean differences between pre- and post-test scores on all factors were calculated for each child in both groups, and the differences between these differences were compared. A comparison of these changes in mean scores across all scale factors for both groups is represented graphically in Figure 3.

While mean scores were not normally distributed, mean differences in scores exhibited normal distribution, therefore, a parametric independent samples T-test was employed. Mean changes in scores were both larger and more positive among students in the experimental group overall and across all scale factors, however, only the difference between mean changes in Physiological States scores $t(43)=2.897$, $p=.006$, was found to be statistically significant.

5.3 Further Analysis: General Progress and Physiological States Scores

As explained at the beginning of this chapter, findings from this analysis were also used to inform qualitative data collection and analysis undertaken to answer Research Question 2. These findings primarily arose during this further analysis, during which aspects of self-perception which

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**Figure 3. Differences in Mean WSPS Scores over Intervention Period.**

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seemed to have been particularly influenced by the process approach would be further explored through qualitative means. During the preliminary analyses outlined above, changes in the mean scores of two scale factors consistently emerged as potentially significant findings, namely, changes in General Progress and Physiological States scores. Though some differential effects were observed across scale factors between experimental and control groups, of the five factors measured, the most marked increases in scores were evident in changes in mean General Progress and Physiological States scores of the intervention group. In order to further investigate these changes and their relationship to the intervention, the decision was made to conduct additional analyses regarding these factors.

5.3.1 Changes in General Progress Scores

Preliminary analysis indicated statistically significant increases in mean General Progress scores of students in the intervention group, but not of the control group, indicating that students who participated in the FL writing workshop intervention generally rated their overall FL writing progress significantly more positively compared to their pre-test ratings, and compared to those who followed their usual writing programme. However, as explained previously, due to the nonequivalent group experimental design and the initial between-group differences measured at pre-test, an examination of differences in students’ mean scores during the intervention period, and a comparison of these differences between groups, may be employed in order to more accurately measure the effect of the writing workshop intervention on students’ self-rated progress. Additionally, given that gender has previously been shown to influence writing self-concept development (e.g. Arens & Jansen, 2016, p. 657, Pajares et al., 1999, p. 56), and as the gender composition of both groups varied significantly, the potential effects of gender differences on these differences in mean progress ratings must also be considered in order to more accurately model the effect of the intervention on students’ perceived progress.

Therefore, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted on the difference in students’ mean pre- and post-test General Progress scores. Treatment group, gender, and the interaction between group and gender were included as independent variables. Analysis revealed that neither gender, nor group, nor their interaction predicted differences in General Progress scores.

These results are relatively unsurprising when taking a closer look at the previous descriptive analysis of General Progress scores. Of each of the scale factors measured, median General Progress scores were highest for both experimental ($Mdn=4.33$) and control groups ($Mdn=4.00$) at pre-test. Due to the nature of the construct measurement used, items on a 5-point

---

3 While differences in ‘global’ WPS mean scores were also found to be significant, it is likely that these differences were driven predominantly by the above sub-factors, and thus will not be discussed separately.
Likert scale, scope for potential increases in scores are restricted by virtue of its limited structure. While this is true for all factors measured on the WSPS, this is especially pertinent to changes in General Progress scores, as most children in both groups already ranked their progress relatively close to the upper limit of the scale, and thus, marked changes between pre- and post-test scores were often not possible. In order to investigate this matter further, subsequent regression analysis was performed on changes in General Progress scores, this time additionally controlling for pre-test scores through the use of an indicator variable: students’ pre-test scores were coded to indicate whether they ranked below or above median General Progress scores for their group. Analysis revealed a significant negative effect of pre-test ranking on difference in General Progress scores of -0.8 ($p=.004$): in brief, children that ranked below median pre-test General Progress scores in their respective groups exhibited an average improvement in scores of 0.8 higher than their peers who initially scored above median. This indicates, as expected, that the largest differences in General Progress scores occurred for students who ranked relatively lower at pre-test. This result is interesting, as it could indicate that larger improvements in scores may have been observed if the measurement format was less restrictive than the Likert scale. This also suggests that the workshop approach may be particularly useful for raising perceptions of their writing progress in students who generally perceive their progress poorly.

An examination of the distribution of differences in General Progress scores for both groups further illustrates this point. Kernel density estimation was used to plot the differences in General Progress scores for both groups against a normal distribution curve, shown in Figure 4. While differences in General Progress scores more closely resembled normal distribution amongst students in the control group, the distribution of differences in scores of the experimental group deviate quite substantially from the normal curve at two key points. Notably, distribution peaks near zero, indicating that changes in General Progress scores for many children in the intervention group

![Figure 4. Estimated Distribution of General Progress Scores across Treatment Groups.](image-url)
were minimal. Closer examination of the cluster students which this peak represents, those whose differences in General Progress scores most closely approximated zero in the experimental group (difference within ±0.5 range), revealed a median pre-test score of 4.67. This indicates that, as argued above, many students in the experimental group who exhibited little change in General Progress scores were already rating their perceived progress at the upper limit of the measurement scale, rendering the possibility of large increases in scores less likely, and in some cases, impossible. A second, smaller peak is located at the upper tail of the distribution, a so-called ‘fat tail’. This indicates that more students in the experimental group exhibited large increases in General Progress scores than would be expected, assuming normal distribution. The statistically significant differences in General Progress scores identified in initial means comparison testing appear to be driven to a large extent by this small cluster of students who appear to have benefited from the workshop intervention to a large extent, in terms of the way in which they perceive their own progress.

In summary, while changes in General Progress scores were found not to differ significantly between treatment groups, despite statistically significant increases in mean General Progress being previously identified only amongst the experimental group, this further analysis has provided a number of potential explanations for this finding. As many of these explanations relate specifically to characteristics of the quantitative measurement employed, and the limitations of the Likert scale format, this further analysis has identified an area of student self-perceptions to be further explored in subsequent qualitative analysis. Essentially, this qualitative analysis can attempt to explore changes in perceived progress which may have been indeed impossible to detect given the restrictions of the Likert scale. Additionally, this analysis has shown that, for most students in the treatment group, a general upward trend can be observed in General Progress scores, irrespective of initial score, which suggests that the workshop model may not only raise children’s low perceptions of their overall writing progress, but also maintain or improve the perceptions of those students who already perceive their progress positively.

5.3.2 Changes in Physiological States Scores

Preliminary analyses indicated that both the greatest between-group and within-group differences in writer self-perception scores pertained to changes in students’ perceived physiological states. While students participating in the workshop intervention reported significant increases in measures of positive emotion and enjoyment of writing, mean Physiological States scores of the control group actually dropped, albeit not significantly, over the duration of the intervention, indicating a decline in writing enjoyment. Unsurprisingly, when these changes in mean scores were compared, they were found to differ significantly between control and experimental groups.
Comparison between groups at the individual level offers further support: mean differences in Physiological States scores were statistically significantly higher and larger for students in the experimental group; the only factor in this study which demonstrated statistically significant differences in mean increases between groups.

For the reasons outlined above, multiple linear regression was performed on the difference in mean pre- and post-test Physiological States scores. As above, treatment group, gender, and the interaction between group and gender were included as independent variables. Analysis revealed that, while neither gender, nor the interaction between group and gender, predicted differences in scores, a relationship between treatment group type and change in scores was found. Results indicated a positive significant coefficient for treatment group of 0.85 ($p=.024$), when controlling for gender and gender by treatment. In practical terms, this means that, on average, Physiological States scores of students in the experimental group increased by 0.85 points more than those in the control group during the intervention period. This difference is considerable, given the limited range of the 5-point Likert scale. Additionally, as previously stated, findings from the regression analysis indicated no significant gender effects, suggesting that positive changes in Physiological States associated with the workshop intervention were generally comparable for both boys and girls.

In line with my analysis above, an additional regression was performed with the inclusion of a dummy variable which indicated whether students’ pre-test Physiological States scores were ranked either above or below median scores for their group. The analysis revealed that the relationship between pre-test scores and changes in scores was not statistically significant, and that a significant positive coefficient for treatment group remained when controlling for initial scores. This signals that, in contrast to previous observations regarding changes in General Progress scores, increases in Physiological States scores were consistent across students in the experimental group, irrespective of pre-test level. Interestingly, this suggests that the FL writing workshop may be an effective approach for enhancing children’s enjoyment and positive emotional experiences of FL writing, irrespective of their current affective states in relation to FL writing. In sum, this further analysis has confirmed previous findings from preliminary means comparison testing, while strengthening claims for the potential benefits of FL writing workshops to student enjoyment and wellbeing, through further controlling for confounding variables such as gender and pre-test scores.

In conclusion, this chapter has detailed both the procedure adopted and main findings resulting from the analysis of quantitative data, which comprises the first round of analysis undertaken in the present research, primarily with the aim of addressing Research Questions 1 and 2. To review, a summary of the most significant findings, and the specific research question to which they relate, is presented below in Figure 5.
Main Findings from Quantitative Analysis relating to Research Question 1

- Mean increases in WSPS scores (both overall, and on each individual scale factor) between pre-test and post-test were observed amongst students who participated in the FL process writing intervention. Mean increases in scores amongst those in the intervention group were found to be statistically significant for overall WSPS scores, and scores on General Progress and Physiological States scales. (Research Question 1a)

- Mean post-test scores were higher amongst the experimental group than the control group on all WSPS factors, with statistically significant between-group differences found for overall WSPS scores and General Progress, Observational Comparison and Physiological States scores. (Research Question 1b)

- Mean changes in scores during the intervention period were larger and more positive for the intervention group versus the control, with the exception of one scale factor, Social Feedback. However, Physiological States was the only scale factor for which statistically significant between-group differences in changes in scores over the intervention period where identified. (Research Question 1b)

- Physiological States scores of children in the experimental group increased by an average of 0.85 points more than those in the control group, who, on average, actually displayed a decrease in scores during the same period. This positive effect of treatment was maintained even when controlling for gender and pre-test scores, indicating that improvements in Physiological States were relatively consistent amongst students participating in the intervention. (Research Question 1a & 1b)

Figure 5. Main Findings from Quantitative Analysis relating to Research Question 1.
6 QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

As outlined in Chapter 4, qualitative analysis was conducted on transcribed data obtained from small group interviews with students in the experimental group following their participation in the FL writing workshop intervention. This analysis was undertaken with the intent of answering the second and third research questions specified in this study, namely:

2. How do students describe their perceptions of themselves as foreign language writers following their participation in a foreign language process writing intervention?

3. Which aspects, if any, of the process writing intervention, as described by the students, influenced their writer self-perception?

This qualitative analysis was undertaken along two distinct branches: the first branch was guided by the second research question, exploring students articulated self-perceptions as FL writers at the completion of the writing workshop, while the second branch, aligned with the third research question, was concerned with the identification of aspects of the workshop approach which students regarded as influential in the development of these self-perceptions. The findings from these two analyses are discussed sequentially below.

6.1 Students’ Perceptions of Themselves as FL Writers

In order to explore Research Question 2, students’ interview responses were analysed in order to identify students emergent perceptions of themselves as FL writers. As outlined in Chapter 4, the framework provided by the WSPS was used as a lens through which students’ accounts of their self-perception could be analysed. Analysis of students’ FL writing self-perceptions thus revealed four distinct categories of statements expressed during students’ interviews, namely, general self-perceptions, general progress, specific progress, and physiological states. The discussion of these findings is thus organised according to these four categories.

Analysis of students’ FL self-perceptions began with an examination of students’ ‘broad statements’ about their perceptions of themselves as FL writers. These statements, henceforward termed general writing self-perceptions, provide an initial overview of students’ beliefs about themselves as writers, and can be likened to a more qualitative representation of a student’s overall mean score on the WSPS.

The next category of statements explored referred to children’s perceptions of their progress in Irish writing following the completion of the intervention. Following findings from preliminary quantitative analysis, children’s perceived General Progress emerged as an aspect of self-perception that seemed to have been influenced by the workshop approach to a relatively large extent, despite
potential limitations associated with the Likert scale measurement employed (see Section 5.3.1). In light of these quantitative findings, and in order to investigate further the changes in students’ perceived progress, a specific question was included in the interview guide (see Appendix C) to address this scale factor: “Have you learned anything about yourself as an Irish writer since we started the workshop?” Though initially, the intention was to focus solely on students’ General Progress, to ensure continuity between quantitative and qualitative analysis, as analysis of students’ responses to this question progressed, it became clear that students’ often articulated their perceptions of progress using specific examples or in relation to specific skills. The decision to restrict analysis to only those descriptions of general progress thus seemed arbitrary, and did not appear to honour students’ narratives in a comprehensive way. Consequently, the second and third categories under which students’ self-perceptions of progress were analysed are discussed as **general progress** and **specific progress**.

The fourth category of statements of self-perception examined pertain to students’ perceived **physiological states**. As in the case of progress outlined above, initial quantitative analysis identified Physiological States as a factor on the WSPS which appeared to be significantly enhanced as a result of the workshop intervention. Thus, in order to extend these findings and explore the nature of these changes, a question addressing this factor was included as part of the interview guide: “What emotions do you feel during the Irish writing workshop?” Students’ retrospective accounts of their feelings during the workshops thus constitute physiological states, this category of self-perceptions.

It is important to note that while Social Feedback and Observational Comparison are present on the WSPS, they are not analysed as part of the qualitative interviews. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, according to prior quantitative analysis, neither of these scale factors appeared to have been significantly influenced by the intervention. Secondly, Social Feedback and Observational Comparison necessarily entail questions about self comparisons within the peer group. Due to the group nature of interviews, discussions surrounding these questions were viewed as potentially uncomfortable for students, and thus were excluded. Finally, due to the limited scope of this thesis, it was decided to prioritise rich, comprehensive analysis of few scale factors, over less in-depth exploration of all scale factors, to both honour students’ voices and further explore areas of interest identified in earlier analyses. Hence, specific questions designed to address students’ perceptions of both progress following the workshops and retrospective physiological states during workshop were included in the interview guide, and thus, these themes were analysed in depth.

### 6.1.1 General Writing Self-Perceptions

The first round of analysis explored statements which reflected students’ overall evaluations of themselves as FL writers. These entailed statements indicating students’ general feelings about
their Irish writing ability and the perceived ease with which they could write in Irish, generally articulated in terms of being a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ writer, or finding writing in Irish ‘easy’ or ‘hard’. In total, 70 such statements were identified in the transcriptions, with every student, with the exception of one child, expressing their general self-perception in some way during the course of the interview. Before continuing, it is important to note that, in some cases, these general self-perceptions seemed to reflect children’s self-beliefs in relation to the overall subject of Irish, rather than specifically relating to writing in Irish. While these self-perceptions are distinct, and are likely to differ from each other to some extent, I believe these general statements still constitute an effective overview or introduction into students’ reported self-perceptions, from which further analysis can be based.

Examination of these general self-perceptions revealed variations in terms of valence, namely, in how positively or negatively students viewed themselves as writers. Additionally, some students’ self-evaluations were expressed alongside conditions: many students expressed these general self-perceptions as contingent on certain conditions, e.g. depending on how well they had slept the night before. In addition, some students relied on their impressions of an ‘average’ writing ability when expressing their own self-perceptions, though, the exact nature of this ‘average’ was unclear. On the basis of these variations, students’ general self-perceptions were classified according to four categories: largely positive, conditional, neutral/‘average’, and largely negative.

In order to provide an overall picture of the students’ general self-perceptions at the group level, the frequencies with which these perceptions emerged, in accordance with the four aforementioned subcategories, were examined. These findings are illustrated in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Category</th>
<th>Example: Students’ Voices</th>
<th>Freq.</th>
<th>ES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Self-Perception</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Largely Positive</td>
<td>“I think I’m very good at it.” — Boy 10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional</td>
<td>“I feel okay with it, it kinda depends on what day it is.” — Girl 9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral/‘Average’</td>
<td>“I couldn’t say I’m amazing and I couldn’t say I’m bad.” — Girl 5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Largely Negative</td>
<td>“I’m bad at writing in Irish.” — Girl 2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Importantly, frequencies presented here indicate not the total number of identified statements relevant to each subcategory, but rather, the number of students who expressed at least one statement relevant to the category (i.e. the 17 largely positive cases presented in Table 2 indicates that 17 children expressed their general self-perception positively at least once during their interview). This approach to examining frequency at the student-level rather than the category-level

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4 It is unclear on whom this average was based — friends, siblings, peers, etc. have all been identified as potential sources from whom students may make these social comparisons when forming self-perceptions (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2002, p. 237).
was selected for its ability to convey a more accurate representation of the groups’ self-perceptions as a whole. The final column, ES, represents a frequency manifest effect size: this indicates the prevalence rate of each category amongst respondents (see Onwuegbuzie, 2003, p. 397).

As is evident from these frequencies, the majority of students expressed their general writer self-perceptions in a positive manner. These students described themselves differentially as being ‘good writers’, as feeling good about themselves as Irish writers, as finding writing in Irish easy, and/or as being able to write well in Irish. Also seen in Table 2, around half of students expressed self-perceptions which were dependent on certain contexts or conditions, including the nature of the writing task, and their general mood and energy levels on that day. A similar number of students ranked themselves as ‘average’ Irish writers, writers who believed they fell somewhere between ‘good’ and ‘bad’, describing themselves as “okay”, “in the middle”, “alright”, or “half” writers. Additionally, a smaller number of students expressed negative evaluations of themselves as writers. These students generally characterised themselves as being ‘bad’ at writing in Irish, as finding writing in Irish very difficult, or being unable to write.

Closer examination of these frequencies indicates that some children characterised their general self-perceptions using a combination of these categories. In many cases, students would describe their self-perceptions generally positively or negatively, and would later qualify this with a statement involving conditions, as evidenced in these excerpts from an interview with Boy 10:

**Int.: How do you feel about yourself as an Irish writer?**

B10: Excellent.

**Int.: Excellent? Why do you feel excellent?**

B10: I think I’m very good at it. (Positive Self-Perception)

(...)

**Int.: Is it easy for you to write in Irish?**

B10: It usually depends if it’s stuff we usually know or if it’s like words we don’t know in Irish… So sometimes it’s hard and sometimes it’s okay. (Conditional Self-Perception)

In a few cases, children offered neutral statements alongside their more positive or negative descriptions of their self-perception, as seen in statements from Girl 2:

**Int.: How do you feel about yourself as an Irish writer? (...)**

G2: I think I’m rubbish at it.

**Int.: Really? Why do you think so?**

G2: Because I’m bad at writing. (Negative Self-Perception)

(...)

**Int.: Do you think you’re a good writer?**

G2: I’m okay at it. (Neutral Self-Perception)
Though some children did offer both positive and negative evaluations of their general writing ability, these occurred relatively infrequently and amongst only one interview group, and appeared to result predominantly as a consequence of either the presence or responses of other children within their group. Aside from these cases, students’ general self-perceptions were quite consistently aligned either positively, negatively, or neutrally.

### 6.1.2 General Progress

The second round of analysis explored students’ accounts of progress in their Irish writing over the course of the workshop intervention. General progress was generally expressed by students through one of two ways: through perceptions of ‘getting better’ at writing, termed overall progress, or through finding writing in Irish gradually easier, termed perceived ease. A total of 51 statements relating to students’ perceived general progress were identified in the interview transcriptions, usually in response to the question, “Have you learned anything about yourself as an Irish writer since we started the workshop?” Additionally, one student reported a lack of overall progress, expressing the belief that his overall writing ability remained the same following the workshop intervention. Data from this student was included as a category termed lack of progress. An analysis of individual student responses and the frequencies with which students expressed their perceptions of progress is provided in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Category</th>
<th>Example: Students’ Voices</th>
<th>Freq.</th>
<th>ES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Progress</td>
<td>“I never knew I was going to be good at Irish, but now I feel like I’m getting better at it, bit by bit.” — Girl 1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Ease</td>
<td>“I feel I’m able to write in Irish better than I did before, and that Irish is getting a bit easier to me…” — Girl 9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Progress</td>
<td>“Uh, the same. The same means nobody can read it.” — Boy 3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These findings indicate that the majority of students felt that their overall Irish writing ability improved following their participation in the workshops. Additionally, approximately half of all students reported that writing in Irish felt easier to them than it did prior to commencing the workshop. One student believed that his overall writing ability had not changed over the intervention period. Importantly, however, these findings do not communicate the entire picture regarding students’ perceived progress: many students articulated their perceptions of progress in more specific terms, according to specific skills or strategies, due to the open-ended nature of the questions used. For this reason, it is imperative to also consider students’ perceived specific progress when examining the impact of the process writing intervention on writing progress.
6.1.3 Specific Progress

In addition to students’ accounts of overall progress and ease explored above, students also expressed perceptions of progress in specific areas of FL writing. They generally expressed these perceptions as changes in both the quality and the process of their writing, as a result of their participation in the workshop. These included expanding their vocabulary (vocabulary), being able to write longer stories (length of writing), understanding written and spoken Irish to a greater extent (comprehension), employing writing strategies with greater awareness and control (strategy use), expanding their grammar knowledge (grammar knowledge), developing story ideas with increasing ease (idea generation), spelling Irish words with increased accuracy (spelling), higher achievement in related writing tests (academic achievement), producing writing that is increasingly clear and understandable (writing clarity), and developing their spoken Irish skills (oral ability). These findings are summarised in Table 4, alongside an indication of the frequency with which these examples of progress were provided by students.

Table 4. Students’ Perceived Specific Writing Progress by Category and Frequency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Category</th>
<th>Example: Students’ Voices</th>
<th>Freq.</th>
<th>ES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specific Progress</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>“I wrote more complicated words in this [lifts up story] than I did in September.” — Boy 10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Writing</td>
<td>“I think I got better because in my other stories I have like a story like, something small, like one line…” Int.: “Right. And now?” “I can write more…” — Boy 2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Use</td>
<td>“Just, you’d think you’d be always good at it, but then when you start writing, you don’t know what to do, so just, you have to think before you write…” — Girl 6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>“Yeah, because it’s easier to understand and all.” — Boy 4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>“I learned where my fadas [acute accent] go.” — Boy 9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement in Writing Assessments</td>
<td>&quot;At the start of the year, my Irish tests were okay. Now, they’re better.” — Boy 14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idea Generation</td>
<td>“And I used to be blank on ideas when I was beginning, now I’ve got way more ideas.” — Boy 5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar Knowledge</td>
<td>“I used to not know the difference between ‘Tá’ [present verb form] and ‘Bhí’ [past verb form] and now I do.” — Girl 9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Clarity</td>
<td>“My Irish writing is more clear.” — Boy 13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Ability</td>
<td>“I know how to pronounce the words better.” — Boy 10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Vocabulary.** By far, the area of progress mentioned most frequently by children concerned vocabulary expansion. By the end of the intervention, there were relatively few children who didn’t
report having learned new words to include in their Irish stories, despite the absence of an interview question specifically addressing this point. Children often attributed this increase in vocabulary to being charged with the responsibility of looking up unknown words in the dictionary while writing, which is discussed further in section 6.2.3.

**Length of Writing.** Additionally, around a third of participants believed that they were able to write longer stories following their participation in the intervention. Often, these students compared the work samples they had brought to discuss at the interview to pieces that they had written earlier in the intervention period, drawing attention to the fact that these more recent stories were longer, and often contained more complex sentence structures, as seen in the following conversation with Boy 10:

*Int.*: …have you changed in any way, in relation to your writing or in relation to how you feel about Irish or what you think about Irish?

*B10*: I’ve got better at Irish.

*Int.:* How do you know?

*B10*: Because I wrote more complicated words in this [lifts up story] than I did in September.

(...)

*B10*: Another reason: I used to do just four very short sentences of like easy things, like ‘Is maith liom’ [‘I like’] and like other stuff, just saying what colours things are.

**Strategy Use.** Some students provided evidence of writing strategies they had developed over the course of the intervention. These conversations are replicated below. Interestingly, only one of these strategies, planning/prewriting, were explicitly taught as part of workshop mini-lessons. Other strategies mentioned, namely, writing drafts in print rather than cursive handwriting, using knowledge of the Gaelic alphabet in invented spelling and when using the dictionary, and mentally drafting sentences first in English, then in Irish, were developed by the children themselves.

*Int.:* So what have you learned about yourself as a writer, since we started the workshop? (...)

*G6*: Just, you’d think you’d be always good at it, but then when you start writing, you don’t know what to do, so just, you have to think before you write because you could just write what you think the word is but it’s completely wrong. (Strategy use: Planning/prewriting)

*Int.:* So if you think back to September, and the way you were as a writer then, have you learned anything about yourself when you write stories, from doing the workshops? (...)

*B12*: I think it’s easier to write print in Irish than it is to write in... uh

*Int.:* In cursive?

*B12*: Yeah. (Strategy use: Modifying handwriting)
A number of students perceived improvements in their comprehension of Irish following the intervention. Though an aspect of progress that is not specifically related to the act of writing itself, it is embedded in the writing process as it is portrayed in the workshop, which necessitates written and spoken communication between writer and their audience or peers. These participants reported feeling that Irish was, in general, easier to understand following the workshop.

Spelling. A perceived improvement in spelling was offered as an example of progress by a small number of students, an interesting finding, given that spelling is generally not prioritised during workshops until the production of final drafts. In particular, the ‘fada’ reappeared frequently during children’s narratives: the fada (or síneadh fada) is an accent used to mark a long vowel in Irish. Feelings of uncertainty regarding when and how to use the fada proved a serious challenge to many students’ self-perceptions, the significance of which can be clearly seen in Girl 11’s account:

G11: I’m a good writer in English, but not Irish.
Int.: Why do you think there’s such a big difference?
G11: Because I give up with fadas and it changes the whole word and the sentence if you don’t put a fada in.

Following the intervention, a number of children reported greater confidence in their ability to accurately spell words, including through correct placement of the fada, an area of progress likely to engender significant improvements in students’ self-perceptions, given the prominence of these concerns in some students’ interviews.

Achievement in Writing Assessments. Although not applying specifically to improvements in the writing process during the workshop, children’s reported increases in related writing achievement tests are included here, as they represent a specific area related to writing in which students perceived noticeable progress. When asked whether they had perceived changes in their writing following the workshop intervention, some children cited increases in Irish writing test scores administered outside of the workshops as an indicator of improvement of writing quality. These four children, interestingly, all male, provided a common narrative of achieving perfect or near-perfect scores in their recent tests, despite not having achieved comparable scores earlier in the year, a growth they attributed directly to their participation in the workshop.
**Idea Generation.** A small number of students also reported an increase in both the number of ideas they developed in relation to their writing, and an increase in the ease with which these ideas could be developed. These ideas related both to broad themes or topics upon which to base a story, and to ideas relating to plot development, such as how to progress the storyline.

**Grammar.** Two students made direct reference to a number of specific grammar rules of which they developed a clearer understanding during the intervention. Word order was highlighted as an area of particular difficulty for some students, as seen in this excerpt from Boy 2:

B2: *I think it's because- it's a bit hard when you have to- if you're saying like “I picked up a book,” and then you write like, in Irish it's “I book up” or something like that.

Irish syntax differs significantly from that of English, the L1 of most children in this class. These differences are evident even in the simple language that children at this level were using in their stories. For example, Irish phrases follow a verb-subject-object word order, adjectives are placed after the nouns to which they refer, and object pronouns or prepositional pronouns (of which there are no English equivalent) are found at the end of a clause. When speaking about the ways in which she had changed as a writer, one student commented on her increasing grasp of these syntactical differences:

G9: *I feel I'm able to write in Irish better than I did before, and that Irish is getting a bit easier to me, so I feel confident that all the words are right and I have them in the right spot.

Additionally, these students reported a developing awareness of when and how to conjugate verbs in the past tense, as well as article-noun agreement. In Irish, conjugating many regular verbs involves lenition, usually the addition of a ‘h’ following the initial consonant. Additionally, many irregular verbs exist, wherein verb stems differ entirely across tenses (e.g. to be: Tá [present verb form], Bhí [past verb form]). Articles in Irish may also present a challenge to students, as definite articles change depending on the case and quantity of the word to which they refer: ‘an’ is used for singular nouns, while ‘na’ is used for plural nouns, and singular nouns in certain cases. Students’ cognisance of their developing awareness of these rules is evident in the following excerpts:

Int.: …has anything changed in you, or in your writing, or whatever?

B2: *Yes, because when I look up the dictionary, I'm searching for like ‘the’, there's like five different things to do, and so I say it like ‘na’ something and I keep on saying all the other ones or whatever, and then I'm like ‘that’s the one.’

Int.: So you know now?

B2: *So I know like which ‘the’ it is, or like words gets the ‘h’ and stuff like that for past tense.

Int.: Why did you bring this [story]?

G9: *Because I felt like this was the story when I kinda figured out that I knew more Irish than I did before, because I used to not know the difference between ‘Tá’ [present verb form]
**Clarity & Oral Ability.** In addition, two students reported achieving greater clarity of meaning in their writing, believing their writing to be more easily understood by their intended audience. A final two students also mentioned improvements in their spoken Irish, making reference to perceived improvements in their pronunciation of Irish words, predominantly with reference to the ‘Author’s Chair’, during which students read their writing aloud to their listening peers.

### 6.1.4 Physiological States

This category of self-perceptions addressed children’s perceived emotions during the FL writing workshops. Usually in response to the question “What emotions do you feel during the Irish writing workshop?”, the children provided rich accounts of the affective experience of participating in the workshops, with over 190 descriptions being analysed in this category of self-perceptions. Children offered retrospective narratives of their emotional experiences during the workshops, articulating their perceived physiological states in two distinct ways: with reference to *feelings* or emotions, and with reference to *enjoyment*. The first of these aspects, *feelings*, is summarised in Table 5, which presents the categories of emotions disclosed by the students, and the frequencies with which students reportedly experienced them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Category</th>
<th>Example: Students’ Voices</th>
<th>Freq.</th>
<th>ES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Satisfaction</td>
<td>“I feel myself as proud.” — Boy 15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>“I felt so confident when I was writing.” — Boy 7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>“I was happy with this. I had a smile on my face when I was writing it.” — Boy 1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>“I feel stressful because like if you get a word wrong you have to rub it all out…” — Boy 1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excitement / Interest</td>
<td>“… in Irish, you’d just be fascinated, I swear.” — Boy 7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Good”</td>
<td>“Good feelings.” — Girl 1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boredom</td>
<td>“When the teacher’s talking, you feel so bored.” — Girl 2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>“I feel comfortable writing in Irish.” — Girl 11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nervousness</td>
<td>“And I’m like scared to put up my hand, because it’s probably going to be like an easy word that I just can’t find.” — Girl 9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confusion</td>
<td>“And then, when you’re actually doing it, then you’re like ‘I don’t know what to do!’” — Girl 2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustration</td>
<td>“Yeah, angry and frustrated only when I can’t think of a word.” — Girl 3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distraction</td>
<td>“I don’t really like writing the story because I always get distracted.” — Boy 6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Feelings.** Perhaps unsurprisingly, *personal satisfaction* emerged as the emotional state most frequently mentioned by students during the course of the interviews, appearing in over half of all students’ responses. The prevalence of this sense of pride is likely largely a result of the nature of the interview questions employed: as part of the interview, children were asked to bring a sample of writing of which they were proud in order to discuss their experiences and process. Consequently, many children expressed a feeling of pride associated with this piece of writing during discussions, however, a number of students also referred specifically to positive feelings of fulfilment experienced during the workshops, aside from these finished pieces of work. Students’ experiences of these feelings of accomplishment were most frequently linked to the completion of a written draft, of multiple drafts, or indeed of a particularly complex sentence! Students additionally associated these feelings of pride to experiences of revising their earlier work, preparing writing for publication, and sharing their writing with friends.

Feelings of *confidence* were expressed by over half of all students interviewed. While most students related this self-confidence to writing in Irish as a whole, some students referred to confidence regarding a specific skill or situation, in particular, reading Irish stories aloud to others. Children’s responses indicated that students most often experienced feelings of self-confidence while in the flow of writing, working on their stories. Importantly, many children expressed a *growth in confidence* following their participation in the workshop intervention, indicating that children perceived a noticeable increase in their self-confidence, and that this increase may be at least partially attributable to the introduction of the process writing workshop format. These changes evident in students’ narratives is further discussed at the end of this subsection.

According to students’ narratives, *happiness* was frequently felt by almost one third of students over the course of the workshops. In particular, happiness was linked to the actual writing process, as well as during pre-writing activities, such as brainstorming and drawing. Importantly, for some students, happiness was related to the freedom afforded to students by the workshop approach in terms of the content and subject of their writing:

G10: *I feel happy because when I’m writing in Irish, I feel sorta like free. And I feel joy!*

*Stress* emerged as the most frequent negatively regarded emotion amongst students interviewed. While one child attributed the experience of stress to the workshop as a whole, the remaining five children connected their experiences of stress to particular instances within the workshop process: stress was linked to experiences of struggling to develop ideas, of searching for unknown words in the dictionary, of editing mistakes, and of writing under time constraints.

*Excitement* emerged as another recurrent emotion during the interviews. Children reported feeling excitement about revisiting their stories after a period of a couple of days, or about hearing
stories written by other children. Additionally, feelings expressed as “good” or comfort, like many other positive emotions identified by students, were generally not related to particular times or occasions during the workshop. Instead, children whose responses fell under this category generally described an overall feeling of ‘goodness’ or ‘pleasantness’ felt when participating in the workshops, particularly while writing.

Other less pleasant emotions constitute the final emotions identified during student interviews. Boredom was experienced most frequently, with around a fifth of participants discussing their feelings of boredom while searching for unknown words in reference material, listening to teacher instructions during mini-lessons, and re-reading one's own work immediately after writing it. Nervousness was most often associated with reading aloud one’s own work during the Author’s Chair, or when asking for help with unfamiliar vocabulary. Making mistakes was also identified as a source of nerves for one student. Confusion arose for three students, as a result of being unable to understand the teacher's explanations in the FL or of attempting to write on topics which required much unfamiliar vocabulary. Limited vocabulary was also a source of frustration for two students, while another student expressed his frustration over having to correct his mistakes. Finally, one student reported struggling with feelings of distraction, in particular while searching for unknown words in the dictionary whilst in the flow of writing.

Enjoyment. The second way in which children predominantly expressed their perceived physiological states over the course of the intervention was primarily through expressing enjoyment or lack thereof. From an analysis of these statements, three distinct categories of responses emerged: children expressed enjoyment, enjoyment with conditions, as well as dislike. These categories and their associated frequencies are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Students’ Enjoyment (Physiological States) while Writing by Category and Frequency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Category</th>
<th>Example: Students’ Voices</th>
<th>Freq.</th>
<th>ES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyment</td>
<td>“… when you actually get to freestyle and do your own writing like that, it is so much fun thinking of a new story.” — Girl 3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional Enjoyment</td>
<td>“Well, it’s not fun when you’re trying to look in the dictionary.” — Girl 1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislike</td>
<td>“I don’t like writing in Irish.” — Boy 3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Almost every student in the sample reported experiences of enjoyment during the intervention. While enjoyment was usually expressed regarding the writing workshop process in general, some specific instances were also highlighted by the children. The Author’s Chair was

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5 Though enjoyment or lack thereof is arguably not a physiological state, enjoyment is included in Physiological States items on the WSPS. To ensure congruity between qualitative and quantitative analysis, analysis of children’s reported enjoyment is included here as an element of Physiological States.
regarded as particularly enjoyable for many, as was working with partners, and preparing pieces for
publishing. For some children, the sense of having total ownership over the subject of their writing
seemed to exert a direct influence on their perceived enjoyment, as shown in the following excerpt:

Int.: Is it fun to write in Irish?
G3: It depends what it is. It's boring when it's work but when you actually get to freestyle and
do your own writing like that, it is so much fun thinking of a new story.

B15: Yeah.
B1: If you like want to write what you want, it's fun, but if teacher tells you to write, no.
Int.: So having a choice makes it more fun?
B1: Yeah, 'cause if you want to write about something, but teacher says you have to write
about something else, it's like quite fun, but—
G3: But boring at the same time. It's boring at the same time because you have to write about
something that you don't get to pick.
B15: And like in your Irish stories, you can have your own imagination, but like, whenever
we're doing [name of textbook], you have to like copy every word.
G3: But I think every— like your choice is like the funnest because it's your decision. Yeah, and
some of the stories are actually quite boring in [textbook].

For some children, enjoyment during the workshop was less consistent. These children generally
classified their enjoyment as conditional: the extent to which they enjoyed writing in the
workshops was largely dependent on their particular mood on that day, as well as the particular
aspect of the workshop in question. In particular, using the dictionaries to search for unknown
vocabulary was identified as an aspect of the workshop which compromised students’ writing
enjoyment.

Additionally, one student reported a marked dislike and lack of enjoyment of the writing
process associated with the writing workshops. This student’s statements stood in relatively stark
contrast to those in his group and the wider sample in general, and his responses on the matter were
particularly evocative. Importantly, this student’s responses made clear that his dislike was not
directly related to the workshop approach, but to Irish writing, and indeed, the subject of Irish, in
general, and had begun to develop long prior to the intervention. However, this student’s
perspectives offer a valuable insight into the potential effects of negative physiological experiences
on overall self-perception, as was already seen in his narratives presented in Chapter 1.

Changes in Physiological States. In the previous quantitative analysis, changes in children’s
WSPS scores, rather than their scores at the end of the intervention, were examined in order to
attempt to ascertain the effect of the intervention on students’ self-perceptions. Similarly, through
examining children’s narratives for descriptions of change, the effect of the workshop intervention
may be identified through qualitative analysis. This has already been examined in relation to
children’s perceived progress (both general and specific), as the nature of progress itself necessarily implies a change. However, in terms of physiological states, it is necessary to examine changes in students’ perceived physiological states in addition to the above analysis: for example, the response ‘I feel confident when I write’ is categorically different from a response such as ‘since we started the workshop, I feel more confident when I write’.

Though no specific interview question was designed to assess change in physiological states, narratives of change still emerged in discussion with students. Changes in Physiological States were articulated by two thirds of all children interviewed, generally, in one of three ways: a growth in confidence, increased self-efficacy or an increase in enjoyment. The number of students who expressed these kinds of affective changes are reported in Table 7.

Table 7. Students’ Changes in Physiological States while Writing by Category and Frequency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Category</th>
<th>Example: Students’ Voices</th>
<th>Freq.</th>
<th>ES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Changes in Physiological States</td>
<td>“...I wasn’t confident to write in Irish, but now that we’ve been doing the writing workshops, I’m a bit more confident in myself.” — Girl 10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth in Confidence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>“When I was starting the workshop, I only thought I could write like, 1 to 3 lines, but now I feel as if I can write like this [points to story]. And all different kinds of stories.” — Boy 5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in Enjoyment</td>
<td>“I used to not like Irish, but now I do.” — Girl 8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 15 children in the study who reported experiencing feelings of confidence, 10 of them specified that they had experienced a growth in confidence since beginning the workshops. These perceived developments in confidence related primarily to the act of writing itself, while three children also reported feeling enhanced confidence while reading aloud. In most cases, the children directly attributed this growth in confidence to their participation in the writing workshops.

While growth in self-confidence discussed above was commonly explained by students as a general feeling of trust in one’s capabilities, a related but separate narrative also emerged during children’s descriptions of change in their self-perceptions. This narrative involved a transition from a stage prior to the workshop, during which students underestimated their writing ability, to their current state, which was characterised by a realisation that they were far more capable than they previously expected. Though this construct may not accurately represent self-efficacy in the strictest sense, it is presented here as an increase in students’ expectations regarding their ability to execute the demands of the workshop. This narrative emerged in almost one third of students’ responses, with almost all of them following a near-identical storyline, as seen in the following excerpts:

Int.: What have you learned about yourself since we started doing the workshop?
B10: I learned that I was good at Irish.
These narratives point to a pronounced upward trend in these students’ own expectations regarding themselves and their writing and an increase in their beliefs regarding their ability to write effectively in the target language.

The final perceptible change in Physiological States which arose during interviews pertained to students’ increased enjoyment of FL writing. Of the 24 students that reportedly enjoyed their participation in the workshops, 9 students noted an increase in their enjoyment of these experiences of the intervention, when compared with prior experiences of writing instruction. Some students recalled their initial feelings of reluctance about the workshop, remarking that they believed that process writing in Irish would be “so boring and rubbish” prior to commencing the intervention (Girl 2). However, by the end of the intervention, an appreciable change in their enjoyment of writing is evident in their accounts, such as this sample from Boy 8:

**Int.:** I want you to think back to September, and think now, and think have you learned anything about yourself as a writer since we started the workshop?

**B8:** Well, at the very start, I was like ‘Irish: don’t know…’ But right now I feel like, I like this, this is okay, sure it’s hard, sure it takes a while, but it’s okay, like. Like, we’re making a book cover now, and at the start I’m like not bothered to. Now, I’m like this is great, like.

This account, along with those of the other students, demonstrates the potential of the workshop approach to engage in the writing process students for whom FL writing is not generally an enjoyable endeavour.

In summary, this subsection has explored participants’ self-perceptions at the end of the intervention period, in terms of their perceived writing progress, their emotional experiences described, and their reported overall perceptions of themselves as FL writers. These findings, related to this study’s second research question, are summarised in Figure 6 at the end of this chapter. The next section addresses qualitative findings related to the investigation of research question three.
6.2 Features of the Workshop linked to Self-Perception Development

This final branch of qualitative analysis addressed Research Question 3, exploring aspects of the workshop which students identified as influencing their perceptions of themselves as FL writers, either positively or negatively. From examining the children’s accounts of their experiences of the workshop, two broad categories emerged regarding particular workshop features: some aspects of the workshop provided *opportunities* for students to enhance their self-perception, while other features presented *challenges* to students’ self-beliefs. Interestingly, each of the features that presented challenges to some students, were regarded as opportunities for self-perception development by other children. As explained in Section 4.5.2, Graham and Perin’s (2007) key principles of the process writing approach (p. 449) provide the framework through which findings related to specific workshop features are presented. These workshop features and their associated self-perception development challenges and opportunities which emerged from the data are summarised in Table 8.

**Table 8. Opportunities for and Challenges to Self-Perception of the Workshop Approach.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop Feature</th>
<th>Opportunities for Enhancing Self-Perception</th>
<th>Challenges to Self-Perception</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extended opportunities for writing</strong></td>
<td>• Having more writing time cited as a catalyst for writing progress</td>
<td>• Negative physiological states associated with classroom time pressures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Positive affective experiences associated with increased ‘think time’</td>
<td>• Beliefs that slow process equate to slow progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing for real audiences</strong></td>
<td>• Author’s Chair as an arena for confidence development</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Publishing as an enjoyable and motivational event</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cycles of planning, translating, and reviewing</strong></td>
<td>• Feelings of self-assuredness and excitement afforded by planning phase</td>
<td>• Viewing orthographic mistakes as an emblem of ‘bad writing’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pride and personal satisfaction following from self-directed drafting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal responsibility and ownership of writing projects</strong></td>
<td>• Self-efficacy, motivation, enjoyment and pride from ownership of subject matter of writing</td>
<td>• Lack of ideas as a source of stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ownership of the writing process as a catalyst for self-confidence, self-efficacy and progress</td>
<td>• Negative physiological states associated with responsibility of acquiring required vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supportive writing environment</strong></td>
<td>• Peers viewed as a source of enjoyment and support in the writing process</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-reflection and evaluation</strong></td>
<td>• Self-selecting pieces for publishing enabled students to recognise own writing progress</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Extended opportunities for writing.* A stark difference between students’ previous FL writing instruction and the intervention model implemented is a marked changed of pace in the way in which pieces of writing are produced. For some children, this change of rhythm accelerated
perceived growth in relation to their FL writing self-perceptions. Many of the children’s responses indicated an awareness of the time-consuming nature of the endeavour of writing in a language besides one’s L1, and a belief that the more time invested in the process of writing, the higher the returns in terms of their overall writing progress. Some students associated having extended opportunities for writing with their perceived general progress, in terms of both general writing ability and writing ease, as seen in the following statements:

Int.: *Thinking about the workshop, is there something about the workshop that has helped writing to become easier?*

B9: *Yeah, the more you do Irish, the easier it becomes.*

Int.: *Okay, so having more time to do it?*

B9: *Yeah.*

G6: *I think I make less mistakes ‘cause I’ve gotten better.*

G7: *Probably less.*

Int.: *And why do you think so?*

G7: *Because I spent a lot of time writing and it kinda helped.*

Echoing these views, some children spoke of a gradual acclimation process associated with engaging in the extended writing time provided by the workshops, through which they became increasingly more accustomed to the FL writing process and its various phases. Crucially, time spent writing was not the only temporal feature of the workshop highlighted by students: the long-term orientation towards writing within the workshops was also apparent in children’s responses. The manner in which the workshop format encourages work on a particular piece of writing over several days or weeks was shown to provide children with more time to think about their writing. This concept of ‘think time’ was raised by some students as an important feature of the workshop structure: children referred to the ability to maintain a period of distance from their writing as a positive experience, with revisiting their ideas after a day or two being regarded as a source of excitement and enjoyment in the writing process:

B2: *But I think it’s exciting when I write it down because when I write it down, I usually forget what I said and then I read it again and then it’s like fun.*

However, the pace of the workshop, for some children, presented a challenge to their writing self-perception. Despite the workshop providing more prolonged opportunities for writing than the more product-oriented approaches to writing instruction with which the children were more accustomed, for some children, the time constraints of the classroom still felt too stringent. One student compared her experiences of writing in school to her experiences of writing for pleasure at home, an example in which the negative impact of the time constraints of the classroom workshops
on this student’s physiological states while writing can be clearly seen:

G9:  I like that I get to learn new Irish... I’m kind of a writer in English, so sometimes when I’m at home and I’m bored, I write stories about Little Beastie, a character I made up, so I kinda transfer the Irish into those stories.

Int.:  Have you ever written a Beastie story in Irish?

G9:  I’m trying to at home, but like, he goes on adventures so it’s kinda hard to write it in school. Like, at home I feel relaxed, and then in school you’re like ‘I have no time, we have no time!’

In addition, for one student, the markedly slower pace at which he wrote during the workshops seemed to function for him as an indicator of poor writing ability or writing progress. This student, who perceived his general writing self-perception quite negatively, expressed dismay regarding the amount of time he invested in a piece of writing in comparison with the quality of the end-product. As Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2002) previously hypothesised, students’ self-concept beliefs may be highly influenced by comparisons between their perceptions of effort and corresponding achievement (p. 240), thus, expending much time and effort into a piece with which one is not satisfied, as was the case with this student, may give rise to significant negative effects on perceptions of oneself as a writer. Whether this disappointment arose from his own internal beliefs in relation to writing (see belief systems in Mercer, 2011, p. 106–107; “ought” selves in Dörnyei, 2009, p.13), as a product of observational comparison from his peers, or otherwise, is unclear from his narrative, however, this conviction seemed to pose a substantial threat to his general self-perception.

Writing for real audiences. The writing workshops implemented as part of this intervention also differed from students’ traditional writing programme in terms of the audience provided to students as writers. The teacher, in contrast to the more product-oriented approach usually followed, was only part of the target audience of children’s writing during the intervention, with both their peers and a more external audience being provided through the Author’s Chair and the publishing process. The presence of a real audience was generally regarded as exerting a positive influence in students’ developing self-perceptions, and did not seem to pose a challenge to the self-beliefs of any student interviewed. In particular, the Author’s Chair was highlighted as an important feature of the workshop format for many children. The significance of the experience for some children was evident in their dialogues, especially amongst those students who had not yet shared their work but now considered themselves ready to do so. For some children, such as Girl 1, the Author’s Chair provided a space in which children could overcome perceived lack of confidence and associated nerves in their FL reading and writing abilities:

G1:  I used to not like reading in Irish, to like, people. And now I’m getting more confident and reading more to people in Irish.
For other children, sharing work with peers provided a source of pride or personal satisfaction, especially when their audience deemed their work as advanced or complex. Aside from these affective consequences, some students also recognised the value of the Author’s Chair from the perspective of a listener, realising the opportunity to enhance one’s own progress by learning from the work of others, notably in areas such as vocabulary expansion. Publishing to a real audience was an equally significant aspect of the workshop in students’ narratives. As part of this intervention, children’s final publications were to be made available to a younger class in the school, with the students being invited to read their work aloud to their intended audience. This publishing process was highly motivating for many children, with both the act of preparing a final end-product and the idea of sharing their work with others providing a source of enjoyment and a sense of progress:

Cycles of planning, translating, and reviewing. Writing within the workshop format followed a cyclical progression with mini-lessons provided to equip children with strategies for various stages of the writing process. Planning was the phase of writing most frequently cited by
students as supporting them during their writing. This stage of the writing process appeared to serve as a rehearsal, offering students a sense of security and control over their writing progression:

Int.:  *What are the best bits of the workshop — your favourite part of the workshop, or your favourite thing that we do in the workshop?*

G6:  *When we get to draw the pictures.*

Int.:  *Do you think the pictures help you when you’re doing the writing?*

G6:  *Yeah, ‘cause we, ‘cause in our class we do the pictures first in the Irish, so — and if we’re not really sure what we’re going to do the story, it will give us an idea.*

Drawing was used by all children as a planning or prewriting strategy, and was often associated with increased self-confidence and self-efficacy in students’ statements, conveyed almost as a safe ‘trial run’ for the act of writing. For some students, this planning phase was regarded as the most enjoyable or relaxing stage of writing, as a period in which emphasis is placed more on exploration rather than production: some students spoke quite excitedly of the experience of beginning a new story and deciding on which of their ideas to pursue.

Int.:  *And can you tell me, do you remember one time when it felt pretty good?*

G7:  *When we first started writing.*

Int.:  *Like when you started a new story, is it?*

G7:  *Yeah.*

Int.:  *Okay, and why is that part nice for you?*

G7:  *Because I have loads of new ideas.*

B2:  *Like when you have ten ideas and you put it all together! So if you have one idea: I can fly; the second idea, I can like levitate, no, not levitate, like use ‘The Force’; the third one is like, I can punch my fists through walls or something like that…*

Int.:  *And you put them all together?*

B2:  *And then like I’m the man who can punch a wall, that can fly and can use ‘The Force’!*

An additional prewriting strategy used by most children and referenced during the interviews was the use of labels. Taught as a prewriting strategy in one of the first mini-lessons, students would often label significant objects in their drawings in the target language, providing an opportunity to rehearse potentially unfamiliar vocabulary to prevent disrupting the ‘flow’ of writing later. Some students found this strategy to be beneficial, as it provided a sense of security through pre-empting challenges which may arise in later stages of the writing process.

As part of the workshop model, children also decided the nature and number of drafts associated with a piece of writing. Students’ control over the drafting process appeared to offer benefits to self-perception development of some students: for example, Boy 8 speaks of the ways in which the self-directed drafting process allowed him to achieve a high level of personal satisfaction, with an emphasis on progress:
The revision process, however, exerted a less clear-cut influence on students’ self-perceptions. While some students associated revising with an opportunity for progress enhancement (e.g. “you learn from your mistakes” — Girl 11), other students’ self-beliefs were challenged when confronting their own mistakes. Despite the lack of emphasis placed on grammatical accuracy in most phases of the writing process according to the workshop model, many students seemed to be highly cognisant of their orthographical errors, which presented a threat to many students’ writer self-perception. Grammar and spelling were perceived as obstacles in many children’s writing process, and for some children, grammatical mistakes were drawn upon as support for their beliefs about themselves as ‘bad writers’:

B16: I’m good at English, but not Irish.
Int.: And why are you worse in Irish than you are in English?
B16: Because it’s way easier to make mistakes.
B8: True.
Int.: So, do you think a good writer never makes mistakes?
B16: Yeah. And I can’t really pronounce the words…

Evident in this dialogue is evidence of some relatively fixed opinions in relation to the writing process. Commentary from this student, interestingly, the same child discussed earlier in relation to beliefs equating slow process and poor progress, reveals the potential influence that internal beliefs about writing may have on one’s self-perception as a writer.

Personal responsibility and ownership of writing projects. This aspect was arguably the most salient feature of the workshop mentioned by students. Ownership of writing afforded through the workshop was communicated in two distinct ways by students: (a) ownership of subject matter, and (b) ownership of process, with each presenting both opportunities and challenges to self-perceptions for different students. Amongst children’s narratives, ownership of the subject matter of their writing was linked to numerous opportunities for self-perception enhancement, influencing both students’ perceived progress and physiological states. Firstly, in terms of progress, the permission provided to students to write on self-selected topics was associated with feelings of increasing ease and control when writing:

G2: I think it’s easy writing in the workshop.
Int.: And why is that?
Similarly, some children reported that writing on familiar topics, such as things they knew much about or experiences that had happened to them, enabled them to write with feelings of increased self-efficacy, namely, a stronger belief in their ability to write effectively. Secondly, the opportunity to write on personally meaningful topics were associated with various positive affective changes for students, ranging from enhanced motivation and perceived effort, to feelings of freedom and enjoyment, to a heightened sense of personal satisfaction:

G10: *I really like it because you’re learning but you’re having fun at the same time.*

Int.: *And what’s fun about the workshop?*

G10: *Like you make up your own story and it can be like whatever you want about it… It’s practically Golden Time, but in Golden Time everyone wants to write an Irish story.*

Int.: *Why did you choose this one? Why are you happy with this one?*

G3: *I think it’s one of my best pieces of writing and I know it’s a bit short but I love it so much because it’s also about my dog, Dave.*

Int.: *And why is it your best one, do you think?*

G4: *I think it’s because I put more effort in it because it’s kinda about me in a way, so I put more effort in.*

While, as evidenced above, ownership of writing content functioned as a catalyst for the development of many students’ self-perception in varied ways, this authorial freedom also presented a challenge to some students’ beliefs about themselves as writers. With this freedom, children were tasked with the responsibility of generating their own ideas regarding subject matter and storyline, and, for a few children, struggling with a lack of ideas was identified as a cause of negative physiological states, such as stress:

Int.: *Are you ever feeling stress?*

G1: *When you don’t know what you’re gonna write. I just feel like ‘I need a word to write!’*

Additionally, the perceived inability to develop these ideas was identified by some children as a characteristic of less-able writers, and thus mediated their general perceptions of themselves as writers. However, interestingly, these same children who identified difficulties in the idea generation process also expressed enjoyment of the process of self-selecting their own writing topics. This indicates that such challenging features of the workshop identified by students were not perceived wholly negatively, but perhaps as an obstacle to overcome in the pursuit of progress and enjoyment.

Ownership of the writing *process* was similarly identified by students as a means of fostering growth of self-perception. Accompanying the authority the workshop model affords to
students regarding decision-making during the writing process are responsibilities in terms of working autonomously. Many children associated their agentic control of their writing with feelings of independence and self-reliance, which in turn, influenced growth in perceived self-confidence:

G10: *That, in Third Class, that I wasn’t confident to write in Irish, but now that we’ve been doing the writing workshops, I’m a bit more confident in myself."

Int.: *Why do you think it has made that difference?*

G10: *The teachers just not telling us what to do, we can like do it by ourselves. It learns us, sorta. So teachers just not telling us what to write, and stuff."

This student's apparent self-reliance while writing was also linked to a heightened sense of self-efficacy, as she realised that she was capable of much more than she previously believed:

G10: *…when I finished it and read over it, I was surprised that I could write that much in Irish, that I knew that much Irish words."

Int.: *You were surprised? Why were you surprised?*

G10: *Because I didn’t know that I knew that much Irish. I thought that I had to get help from teacher, but I didn’t."

Additionally, as students write on diverse topics of their own choosing, the children realise that the responsibility of acquiring relevant vocabulary falls on their shoulders. An awareness of this responsibility was particularly evident amongst the interviews, with many feeling that actively searching for the required vocabulary amongst provided reference material facilitated their writing progress. In fact, some children cited being required to obtain unfamiliar vocabulary themselves as enjoyable, and as the main driver behind the increase in perceived ease they experienced while writing. This is relatively unsurprising owing to the fact that, as discussed earlier in section 6.1.3, perceived extension of vocabulary was regarded by many children as the most concrete indicator of writing progress. Accordingly, students’ acknowledgement of their ability to expand their own vocabulary, particularly in thematic areas of high personal significance, was likely to yield benefits in terms of perceived progress. However, this responsibility also emerged as the most commonly referenced challenge of the writing process. In many students’ accounts, retrieving unknown words using classroom dictionaries was linked to negative physiological states such as stress, frustration and lack of enjoyment, and was seen as detracting from valuable writing time. It is interesting to note, however, the use of the classroom computer to access an online dictionary was viewed as a less arduous, more enjoyable process. Had the school had sufficient digital resources to supply all students with access to online dictionaries, it would have been interesting to observe children’s responses to vocabulary retrieval in this case. Additionally, some children felt that, when more individual support in this area was required from the teacher, support was often not available, due to the number of students requiring additional assistance. However, despite presenting as a source of
frustration for many children, several students viewed the pursuit of required vocabulary as a both a nuisance, and an opportunity for writing progress, as exemplified in Girl 9’s amusing objection below:

Int.:  *If you could change one thing about the way we do the workshop, what would you change?*

G10: *Maybe instead of asking teacher what the word is and she telling you to look in the dictionary, maybe she can actually tell you the word.*

G9: *That isn’t learning though!*

**Supportive writing environment.** Peers were viewed by some students as both sources of progress and of support in the writing process. For some children, working with writing partners was linked to positive physiological states, such as enjoyment, while others viewed peers’ help as a vehicle through which progress may be achieved, through overcoming writing obstacles such as word retrieval or ‘writer’s block’. As outlined earlier in relation to audience, receiving feedback from peers provided a source of pride and personal satisfaction for some students, while sharing their work with the writing community via the Author’s Chair was linked to improvements in confidence for readers and opportunities for learning for listeners. Interestingly, the influence of the writing community on students’ developing self-perceptions did not emerge as frequently among children’s interviews as may have been reasonably expected, given the strong theoretical foundations linking peer learning with numerous benefits for students (see Chapter 2). However, it is important to consider that the relative lack of student responses regarding the significance of the writing community is not necessarily indicative of its lack of importance to students. Unlike most other workshop features, high levels of student interactions also featured in most of these students’ classroom activities outside of the workshops. Thus, students may have been less likely to highlight their enjoyment of the writing community in their interviews as this feature of the workshop may not have stood out as a particularly salient characteristic of the workshop, given their familiarity with peer collaboration.

**Self-reflection and evaluation.** Assessment as part of the process writing workshop was almost entirely student-directed, with students being tasked with evaluating their own work. Essentially, this process entailed the maintenance of a writing portfolio, a compilation of the numerous drafts, revision and planning sheets on which the students were working, and a process of selecting samples of their best work for publishing. The publishing process thus places focus on the exemplification of a student’s best work, and, through being led by students’ own choices, encourages children to identify the strengths and improvements in their own writing. The extent to which preparing for publishing communicated one’s own progress to the students is clearly evident in many of the students’ narratives: students often relied heavily on comparisons between earlier
drafts and their publishing pieces when providing evidence of their writing progress over the
intervention. Examples of these kinds of comparisons have already been provided and discussed
elsewhere, however, these exchanges with Boy 2 and Girl 4 offer some additional insight:

B2: Well, like, I think I got better because in my other stories I have like a story like, something
small, like one line and then I couldn’t really read it to the class, so I’d just think and I
couldn’t even think of anything else to write.

Int.: Right. And now?

B2: I can write more because I’ve like more ideas.

G4: So in my first story, I couldn’t hardly even think how to say ‘hi’ or anything. So— but this
one is actually one of the good ones that I’m publishing right now, and I don’t have a lot
written because I don’t really know much, but it’s more than I used to, so I’m definitely
improving.

By placing the locus of responsibility for identifying progress and change through evaluation on the
students themselves, students are afforded an invaluable chance to recognise and internalise both
the general and specific progress they have made in their writing, with powerful consequences for
their general writing self-perceptions.

This subsection has identified the features of the FL writing workshop regarded by the
students themselves as exerting an influence, either positively or negatively, on their emergent FL
writing self-perceptions, in order to address the third research question of the present study. A
summary of these key findings, as well as of previous findings related to students’ qualitative
accounts of their writing self-perceptions discussed in section 6.1, are provided in Figure 6.
Main Findings from Qualitative Analysis relating to Research Questions 2 and 3

- Students’ general self-perceptions varied in valence: while two thirds of students provided largely positive accounts of their general self-perceptions (i.e. that they were ‘good’ writers), around a fifth of students reported more negative self-beliefs. Additionally, just under half of students students ranked themselves as ‘average’ Irish writers. In general, these self-perceptions were consistently described as largely positive, negative or ‘average’, though often qualified with certain conditions. (Research Question 2)

- The majority of students reported perceptible writing progress following the workshops, describing their writing as ‘better’ and/or ‘easier’ than that at the beginning of the intervention. Regarding specific areas of writing progress, many students reported noticeable improvements in the vocabulary they incorporated into their writing. Additional developments in several writing skills were also noted by some students, including increased length of writing, enhanced comprehension of written and spoken Irish, and more effective use of writing strategies, among others. (Research Question 2)

- Personal pride or satisfaction was the most frequently reported emotion experienced during the workshops. A range of other positive feelings, including confidence and happiness, were also evident in students’ accounts of their emotional experiences of the workshops. These feelings were most commonly expressed as students’ general feelings while writing and participating in the workshops, or occasionally linked to specific aspects of the workshops, such as sharing, publishing and planning writing. Some students also recounted experiences of more negative feelings whilst participating in the workshops. Stress, the most frequently reported negative emotion, was associated with situations in which students struggled to develop ideas, retrieve vocabulary, correct mistakes or write under classroom time constraints, and, in one case, to the workshop as a whole. Other negative feelings, such as boredom and nervousness, were identified in students’ narratives, generally in relation to retrieving vocabulary, following teacher instructions, and editing mistakes. Additionally, almost every student in the sample reported experiences of enjoyment during the FL writing workshops, which were commonly associated with the workshop in general, as well as with sharing, collaborating and publishing. In line with previous quantitative analysis, affective changes, such as increased self confidence, enhanced self-efficacy and greater writing enjoyment, were also reported by two thirds of students following their involvement in the intervention. (Research Question 2)

- Many features of the FL writing workshop were identified by students as promoting positive changes in their perceptions of themselves as FL writers: the audience provided by the Author’s Chair and publishing was linked to enhancement of confidence and motivation; working with peers promoted writing enjoyment, and the self-evaluation process prompted students to recognise their own writing progress. Other aspects of the workshop were viewed as both opportunities and threats to self-perception by different students. Extended writing time was viewed as both helping and hindering different students’ perceptions of their writing progress. Self-directed writing cycles promoted similarly mixed opinions, with planning and drafting often associated with feelings of pride and self-confidence, while revising and editing caused students’ to focus on their perceived weaknesses as writers. Finally, while ownership of writing process and content was viewed as a source of motivation, self-efficacy and personal satisfaction for many students, this responsibility provoked some undesirable physiological states for others. (Research Question 3)
7 MIXED METHODS FINDINGS

As outlined previously, the use of mixed methods serves two key purposes in this study: **triangulation** and **complementarity** (Greene et al., 1989, p. 259). This section documents the procedure and main findings of the mixed analysis undertaken in order to answer this study’s final research question, which is thus restated:

4. To what extent do quantitative measures of students’ foreign language writing self-perception (measured by the WSPS) confirm or contradict students’ qualitative accounts of these perceptions?

In order to address Research Question 4, both quantitative data gathered to address Research Question 1a, and qualitative data obtained to address Research Question 2 were compared alongside each other. These previous quantitative and qualitative findings are synthesised in an attempt to identify points of triangulation, through convergence in datasets, and of complementarity, through discordance and extension of datasets. Hence, the aim of this section is to assess the extent to which data obtained from both previous analyses both confirm and contradict each other in order to further bolster the research findings. In this way, this phase of analysis associated with Research Question 4 was undertaken in order to strengthen findings obtained in previous analyses.

First, accounts of perceived writing progress, both general and specific, provided during student interviews are compared against corresponding post-test scale measures to identify similarities and differences between data sets. Secondly, students’ post-test scores on the Physiological States measure of the WSPS are analysed in line with the emotions and enjoyment expressed in students' interview narratives in an endeavour to elaborate and clarify previous findings. Lastly, in an attempt to distill previous analyses into a final ‘overall’ picture of students’ writing self-perceptions, interview statements reflecting students’ general self-perceptions are juxtaposed against students’ overall post-test scores on the WSPS to ascertain whether both forms of data communicate a similar impression of students’ writing self-perceptions and to deepen the insights gained from earlier, separate analyses. In line with recommendations from Creswell and Plano-Clark (2017), integrative findings are communicated via a joint display for each of the following analyses (p. 228).

7.1 Students’ Perceived Writing Progress

In previous analyses, progress has been discussed in the two distinct categories of General and Specific Progress. First, children’s accounts of overall perceived progress which emerged during interviews are compared with quantitative findings obtained from the General Progress scale
on the WPS at post-test, with a subsequent discussion of the convergences and divergences between both sets of data. Secondly, specific progress, as it emerged through children’s interview responses, will be juxtaposed against comparable scale items on the WPS, exploring agreements and disagreements in the data, including some speculative discussion around the reasons behind the relatively insignificant increases in mean WPS Specific Progress scores despite its apparent salience in students’ interviews.

7.1.1 General Progress

Children’s interview narratives surrounding perceived progress were compared with post-test scores on General Progress items of the WPS in order to ascertain whether concordance or discordance of data existed between both data sets. In line with recommendations by Onwuegbuzie (2003), students’ interview responses were dichotomised according to the absence or presence of direct statements of perceived progress and of perceived lack of progress (p. 396). This created an interrespondent matrix (participant x theme), indicating which students reported perceived progress or perceived lack thereof (Onwuegbuzie, 2003, p. 397). Examination of the matrix revealed that, in the course of their interviews, 24 students referred to perceived progress, 1 student referred to a perceived lack of progress, and 2 students made no direct reference to progress. Next, the quantitative data provided by these groups of students were examined in order to ascertain whether data from both methods produced convergent or divergent findings. The results of this integration of data sets is summarised in Table 9.

As seen in the table, findings from both analyses largely support each other. Students whose interviews included statements relating to perceived progress and/or increasing ease with regards to writing generally scored highly on corresponding WPS items, while those believing their writing had not progressed scored lowest in the class on this measure. Interestingly, however, as can be seen in the minimum score values in Table 9, not all students who reported perceived progress in their interviews responded as positively to all scale items on the WPS. When mean General Progress scores of individual students in this group were more closely examined, it emerged that four students had a mean General Progress score of less than 4, with one student amongst this cohort scoring less than 3. These scores indicate a less than positive perception of progress, and constitute an important discrepancy that is masked by the mean scores of the entire group.

At present, two potential explanations can be offered to account for this deviation. The first pertains to potential inaccuracies in quantitative measurement: through the process of asking similar questions during interviews, it was discovered that some children misunderstood the meaning of questions regarding ease of writing. When asked whether writing in Irish had become easier for them than it had previously been, many students disagreed, stating that writing in Irish class was
Table 9. Integrating Data: General Progress.

**GENERAL PROGRESS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students who referred to perceived progress in their writing during interviews</th>
<th>Qualitative</th>
<th>Quantitative</th>
<th>Integration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scale Item</strong></td>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td><strong>M</strong></td>
<td><strong>SD</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. My writing in Irish has improved.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My writing in Irish is better than before.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I’m getting better at writing in Irish.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. It’s easier to write well in Irish now than it used to be.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I write in Irish better now than I could before.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Writing in Irish is easier for me than it used to be.</td>
<td>23*</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Likert Scale range 1-5.

* Data for 1 student missing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students who referred to a lack of progress in their writing during interviews</th>
<th>Qualitative</th>
<th>Quantitative</th>
<th>Integration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scale Item</strong></td>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td><strong>Score</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. My writing in Irish has improved.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My writing in Irish is better than before.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I’m getting better at writing in Irish.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. It’s easier to write well in Irish now than it used to be.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I write in Irish better now than I could before.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Writing in Irish is easier for me than it used to be.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Likert Scale range 1-5.

Quantitative data from WSPS augments qualitative interview data: children who reported perceived progress during interviews scored highly, on average, on WSPS items measuring general progress. This indicates reliability of measurement across methods, and provides strong evidence to suggest that most children perceived progress in their writing after the intervention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students who did not refer directly to progress in writing during interviews</th>
<th>Quantitative</th>
<th>Integration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scale Item</strong></td>
<td><strong>Boy 8 Score</strong></td>
<td><strong>Boy 15 Score</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. My writing in Irish has improved.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My writing in Irish is better than before.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I’m getting better at writing in Irish.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. It’s easier to write well in Irish now than it used to be.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I write in Irish better now than I could before.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Writing in Irish is easier for me than it used to be.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Likert Scale range 1-5.

Absence of evidence does not equate to evidence of absence: the lack of direct reference to perceived progress during interviews with Boy 8 and Boy 15 does not necessarily indicate a perceived lack of progress, as corresponding scores on general progress scale WSPS were comparatively high.
easier many years before, when they were in younger classes and their writing and their grasp on the language writing was very basic. These same students would often then report that writing in the workshop environment felt easier for them than writing using textbooks. These insights from interviews have thus helped to highlight potential ambiguities in the quantitative measure, and could help to explain why some students who rated their progress relatively highly, scored lowly on items describing feelings of increasing ease of writing, such as items 4 and 6. The second explanation pertains to potential inaccuracies in qualitative measurement: due to the group interview format, children’s responses may have been influenced by social desirability bias, the desire to give the ‘right’ answer to please the interviewer, or to maintain group consensus (Greig, Taylor & MacKay, 2013, p. 164), which may have led students to refer to their perceptions of progress in a more positive manner. These discrepancies highlight the importance of acquiring a multifaceted view of children’s perceptions to ensure validity of measurements obtained, providing further support for the use of a mixed methods approach to exploring students’ perceptions. However, in spite of these incongruities in the data, the broad consensus apparent across both datasets functions to increase the reliability of the present research findings, indicating that the vast majority of students who participated in the writing workshops perceived discernible progress in their writing ability by the end of the intervention.

7.1.2 Specific Progress

As discussed in Chapter 5, while a positive increase in students’ scores on the Specific Progress scale of the WSPS was observed amongst children in the intervention group, the extent of this positive change (though more a positive increase in scores compared to the control group) was not found to differ significantly from differences in control group scores. Thus, as explained in Chapter 6, the decision was made not to address the area of specific progress directly through planned interview questions. In spite of this, however, children’s narratives contained rich accounts of perceived progress pertaining to specific areas of writing and thus, qualitative analysis of interview data included an examination of students’ perceived specific progress. Therefore, in order to further investigate these changes in students’ perceptions of specific progress in their writing following the intervention, and attempt to explain the abundance of qualitative accounts of specific progress with respect to the relative absence of quantitative evidence of specific progress, a mixed analysis, combining data from both analyses was undertaken. A summary of the findings produced through this integrative analysis is presented in Table 10.

As seen in Table 10, a general consensus between both data sets emerged. Generally, the 21 students who referred to examples of specific progress during interviews scored highly on Specific Progress items on the WSPS. Secondly, amongst those students who did not directly mention
Table 10. Integrating Data: Specific Progress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualitative</th>
<th>+</th>
<th>Quantitative</th>
<th>Integration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students who referred to specific writing progress during interviews (N=21)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Quantitative data from WSPS augments qualitative interview data: children who reported specific progress during interviews scored highly, on average, on WSPS items measuring specific progress. This indicates reliability of measurement across methods, and provides strong evidence to suggest that most children perceived specific writing progress after the intervention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples: “I wrote more complicated words in this [lifts up story] than I did in September.” — Boy 10 “And I used to be blank on ideas when I was beginning, now I’ve got way more ideas.” — Boy 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students who did not refer directly to specific progress in writing during interviews (N=6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Does absence of evidence equate to evidence of absence? Two groups emerged: the first group (Boy 3, Boy 8 and Girl 8), who scored comparatively low on WSPS measures and failed to mention specific progress during the interviews, indicate convergence of both data sets, emerging as a group of children who did not perceive specific progress following the workshop intervention.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Scale Item**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Item</th>
<th>(N)</th>
<th>(M)</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Mdn</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. When I write in Irish, the sentences and paragraphs fit together better than they used to.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My Irish writing is more clear than it used to be.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The words I use in my Irish writing are better than the ones I used before.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The descriptions in my Irish writing are more interesting than before.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The order of the sentences in my Irish writing makes better sense now.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Likert Scale range 1-5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Item</th>
<th>Boy 3 Score</th>
<th>Boy 8 Score</th>
<th>Girl 8 Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. When I write in Irish, the sentences and paragraphs fit together better than they used to.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My Irish writing is more clear than it used to be.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The words I use in my Irish writing are better than the ones I used before.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The descriptions in my Irish writing are more interesting than before.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The order of the sentences in my Irish writing makes better sense now.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Likert Scale range 1-5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Item</th>
<th>Boy 11 Score</th>
<th>Girl 2 Score</th>
<th>Girl 3 Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. When I write in Irish, the sentences and paragraphs fit together better than they used to.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My Irish writing is more clear than it used to be.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The words I use in my Irish writing are better than the ones I used before.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The descriptions in my Irish writing are more interesting than before.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The order of the sentences in my Irish writing makes better sense now.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Likert Scale range 1-5.

The second group’s (Boy 11, Girl 2 and Girl 3), relatively higher WSPS scores, indicate that these children may in fact have perceived specific progress in their writing, but may not have had the opportunity to discuss it in interviews.
specific writing progress during interviews, three students had low WSPS scores, indicating a group of students who likely did not perceive specific writing progress following the workshop, and three students had comparatively higher WSPS scores, indicating a group of students who may have identified progress, but may not have had the chance to discuss it during interviews. This finding highlights another strength of the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, as insights may still be acquired from students for whom data of one type is ‘missing’, such as in this case. However, though the students who referred to examples of specific progress during interviews largely scored highly on corresponding WSPS items, as was the case in the above mixed analysis exploring general progress, the mean scores of these groups of students often hide a number of illuminating inconsistencies between the datasets. A closer examination of the minimum Specific Progress scores of these students shown in Table 10 indicates that not all students in this group were rating their specific progress highly for all scale items. Amongst the 21 students who reported specific writing progress during their interviews, 8 students had a mean score of less than 4 on the Specific Progress scale, one of which scoring less than 3, indicating that over a third of all students within this group actually rated their specific progress in relatively neutral and, in one case, largely negative, terms. A thematic comparison of specific progress across both data sets may serve to shed some light on the underlying reasons of these discrepancies.

Table 11. Thematic Comparison of Specific Progress across the WPS and Interview Data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPECIFIC PROGRESS</th>
<th>Quantitative Themes</th>
<th>Qualitative Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Organisation</td>
<td>1. Vocabulary* (ES = 70%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Writing clarity</td>
<td>2. Length of writing (ES = 30%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Vocabulary*</td>
<td>3. Strategy use (ES = 15%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Quality of descriptions</td>
<td>4. Comprehension (ES = 15%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Organisation</td>
<td>5. Spelling (ES = 15%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Achievement in Writing Assessments (ES = 15%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*denotes thematic overlap between datasets

In Table 11 above, the thematic areas of specific writing progress addressed by each of the five Specific Progress items on the WPS are compared alongside the most frequently reported aspects of specific writing progress mentioned during interviews. As seen above, thematic overlap of areas of specific progress examined in both datasets was relatively minimal, with the WPS measuring specific aspects of writing which were not explicitly mentioned by students, and students identifying progress in areas which were undetected by the WPS. This may help to explain the
disparity in responses acquired through both methods, as students who reported writing progress in interviews, may indeed have believed that they progressed in specific areas of writing, just not those directly addressed by the WSPS. This disparity highlights the problem of an over-reliance on predefined quantitative instruments when measuring complex constructs such as self-perceptions.

However, as seen above, vocabulary emerged as a common theme across both quantitative and qualitative investigations of specific progress. As improvements in vocabulary emerged as the most significant aspect of specific progress mentioned by children during the interviews, it seemed appropriate to compare findings across both datasets to seek potential convergence. An analysis of students pre- and post-test scores on the single scale item relating to vocabulary on the WSPS, via a paired samples T-test, revealed a significant difference in scores on this item for students in the intervention group, \( t(26) = -2.02 \quad p=0.05 \), with scores increasing by an average of 0.41, the largest mean difference of all items measuring specific progress. In short, this indicated that students generally believed that they were including better or more interesting words in their stories, compared to their writing prior to the intervention, thus confirming findings from students’ qualitative interview accounts. In contrast, mean differences in the same scores for students in the control group was equal to zero, indicating that overall, students’ in the control group generally did not perceive an improvement in the quality of words they incorporated into their writing. In addition to this corroboration provided between both datasets, these findings indicate that the workshop intervention may indeed have produced significant changes in students’ perceived specific progress, and that these changes may have been significantly more positive than those in the control group, had the WSPS measured areas of specific progress which aligned more closely with children’s perceptions. Given that the WSPS was originally designed to measure self-perceptions regarding one’s L1, perhaps these findings serve as an indication that these areas of specific writing progress identified in the scale items of the WSPS do not accurately reflect the most salient areas of writing progress significant to FL writers. While these suggestions are merely speculative, they provide a form of critical lens through which findings in both qualitative and quantitative analyses may be more closely scrutinised.

7.2 Student’s Reported Physiological States while Writing

In this subsection, students’ qualitative accounts of their physiological states while writing following the workshop intervention will be analysed alongside corresponding quantitative data obtained from students’ post-test Physiological States scores on the WSPS, in an endeavour to ascertain whether findings from both datasets are largely confirmatory or contradictory. The procedure and main findings from this mixed analysis will be structured according to the two
predominant accounts of physiological states which emerged from children’s accounts during previous qualitative analysis: feelings and enjoyment.

7.2.1 Feelings

Though in earlier sections, grouping for mixed analysis was predominantly lead by qualitative findings, the decision was made to operationalise the following mixed analysis using a slightly different approach. As detailed in section 6.1.4, numerous descriptions of feelings emerged from analysis of students’ interviews. While students could have been grouped according to the valence of the emotions they expressed (e.g. students who expressed mostly ‘positive’ vs ‘negative’ emotions), to the researcher, these categories seemed arbitrary, and did not accurately reflect the diversity of the students’ reported emotional experiences as well as the extent to which students’ experiences were often ‘mixed’ (i.e. entailing both ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ emotions). Accordingly, the decision was made to group students based on their mean post-test WSPS scores for the Physiological States scale. Students were organised into two groups: those whose mean score on scale items was greater than the mean score of the entire class ($N=17$), and those whose mean score lay below this ($N=10$). Afterwards, the transformed qualitative interview data, which had been quantitised as an interrespondent matrix, were analysed in order to identify the kinds of feelings reported by both the students who scored comparatively higher on this scale, and those who scored relatively lower. The findings from this integrative analysis are summarised in Table 12.

As Table 12 communicates, integration of data sets identified both convergence and discordance amongst the data. For the first group of students, a general consensus emerges from the datasets: amongst students whose mean WSPS scores were high relative to mean scores for the whole group, experiences of ‘positive’ affect (confidence, pride, happiness, ‘good’, comfort and excitement) were mentioned more frequently among students than those associated with negative feelings (stress, boredom, confusion, nervousness). Within this group, more than three quarters of reported emotional experiences were associated with a desirable emotion. Additionally, the range of different kinds of pleasurable feelings described was wider than that of negative emotional experiences. Regarding the second group, discordance within the integrated data was revealed: students in this group, wherein mean WSPS scores were comparatively low, reported positive emotional experiences comparatively often, while negative affect was mentioned by less students. Almost two thirds of reported emotions amongst this group were characterised as positive feelings. While the range of different negative emotions described by this group was larger than the previous group, indicating at least one point of convergence, of the ten students in this group, all but one student detailed experiences of pleasant feelings associated with the workshop, with three of these ten students reporting only positive affective experiences.
Clearly, there is information to be gleaned from this apparent contradiction in the data. A number of potential explanations may be offered to explain this discrepancy. Firstly, as discussed in the analysis of progress, social desirability bias or group effects may have led children to provide more favourable accounts of their emotional experiences during interviews, which may explain the prevalence of positive affect amongst even those students who rated their physiological states more negatively on WSPS items. Secondly, these differences across data sets may reflect the variability of affective states, in view of the fact that, as noted in earlier research, moods and feelings and their subsequent influence on self-beliefs are subject to temporary fluctuations over time (Mercer, 2011, pp. 120-121). Thirdly, though students amongst the ‘low scoring’ group rated their affective

Table 12. Integrating Data: Physiological States — Feelings while Writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHYSIOLOGICAL STATES: Feelings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students whose mean scores for all scale items were greater than mean scores for the entire group. N=17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Mdn</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Writing in Irish makes me feel good.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I am relaxed when I write in Irish.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I like how writing in Irish makes me feel inside.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Likert Scale range 1-5.

| Students whose mean scores for all scale items were less than mean scores for the entire group. N=10 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Mdn</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Writing in Irish makes me feel good.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I am relaxed when I write in Irish.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I like how writing in Irish makes me feel inside.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Likert Scale range 1-5.

The range of reported feelings by the number of students who expressed them

Integration of data indicates discordance: students with comparatively low PS scores reported more experiences of positive affective states than negative feelings. Though a relatively wider range of negative feelings were expressed by this group of students, the feelings most commonly reported by students were positive in nature.
experiences lowly relative to their peers, half of these students rated these experiences more positively relative to their pre-test ratings, according to WSPS data. Thus, though their scores remained comparatively low, these increases in scores suggest that these students likely experienced positive emotions at least occasionally during the workshops, a speculation which is confirmed in the interview data.

Findings from previous qualitative analysis may also help to explain this apparent mismatch in the data. From this mixed analysis, it is clear that, for most students within this cohort, participation in the writing workshops was associated with a variety of emotions, often including combinations of positive and negative emotional experiences. This is an important finding, as, from simply looking at scores on corresponding WSPS scale items, one might expect that those rating their affective perceptions highly do not experience negative emotions during the workshops, which, as our qualitative data reveals, may not be the case. The converse also applies: those who largely disagreed with WSPS scale items seem also to experience positive feelings during the writing workshops. Hence, in the majority of cases, it appears that students’ emotional experiences within the workshop fluctuated. A deeper investigation into the causes of these fluctuations may serve to further explain this apparent discordance in data, as with a more in-depth exploration of students’ emotional accounts, it emerged that not all affective experiences were qualitatively equal, as already identified during qualitative analysis (see section 6.1.4). Using students’ accounts of stress as an example, perceptible differences emerge between the narratives of both higher- and lower-scoring groups of students when analysed side-by-side, as shown in Table 13.

Table 13. Experiences of Stress while Writing: Differences across Groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Above Mean WSPS Scores</th>
<th>Below Mean WSPS Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Int.: Are you ever feeling stress?</td>
<td>Int.: Okay, and do you have any feelings about it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G1: When you don’t know what you’re gonna write. I just feel like ‘I need a word to write!’</td>
<td>Any emotions when you’re writing in Irish?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G5: Sometimes I feel stressed and sometimes I’m like ‘okay, this is all going well’…</td>
<td>B3: Stress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(…)</td>
<td>Int.: Stress, okay. Anything else?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Int.: Depending on the day, I suppose?</td>
<td>B3: Stress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G5: Yeah, remember what I told you, when I lost a word and like [clenches fists].</td>
<td>(…)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Int.: And that’s stressful?</td>
<td>Int.: …you said you feel stressed, do you feel anything else?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G9: Like at home I feel relaxed, and then in school you’re like ‘I have no time, we have no time!’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G4: …But it can be stressful.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G2: Sometimes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Int.: Especially like when? When would it be most stressful?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G4: When you can’t find it in the dictionary.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1: I feel stressful because like if you get a word wrong you have to rub it all out and if you do it in pen you have to Tippex and then it ruins your thing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As seen in the table above, children across both groups describe their experiences of stress in relatively distinct ways. The five students from the ‘high scoring’ group who recounted feelings of stress as part of their workshop experiences generally describe perceived stress alongside certain conditions or circumstances, such as struggling to think of ideas or translate words, running out of class time, or correcting mistakes. In contrast, for the lower-scoring student who reported stress while engaging in the workshop, stress appears to be the dominant emotion associated with writing in the target language. This illustration may serve to explain why students’ responses in both groups incorporated both positive and negative emotional experiences: as can be seen here, some negative affect was reported by students in the ‘high scoring’ group, but these negative emotions appeared to be transient, or related to particular situations, and did not appear to be the most salient emotions experienced during the workshops, with the converse being potentially true for the lower scorers.

While this mixed analysis has served to both confirm and contradict findings across datasets, we are left with a largely encouraging finding that the predominant emotional experiences of the majority of students in both groups are more positively oriented, suggesting that the workshops generally stimulate more positive, rather than negative, affective experiences. Given that both the largest between- and within-group differences in WSPS scores during the intervention period were found in scores on the Physiological States scale, this mixed analysis, which has indicated that students’ emotional accounts of the workshop were relatively more positive in qualitative versus quantitative measures, suggests that changes in students’ affect and wellbeing while writing following the intervention may have been even greater and more positive than the already significant changes observed through purely quantitative means.

### 7.2.2 Enjoyment

Unlike other affective states reported by students, enjoyment was explicitly measured on one item of the Physiological States scale of the WSPS, enabling for comparisons between item scores and students’ descriptions of enjoyment. Students’ interview data were compared alongside post-test scores on this item of the WSPS to identify data convergence or divergence. As in previous analyses, students’ responses were coded for the presence of statements relating to enjoyment or lack of enjoyment and grouped accordingly. This stage of data transformation revealed that, during interviews, 20 students reported enjoyment of writing, 1 student reported a lack of enjoyment, and 4 students characterised their enjoyment as fluctuating or conditional. Further analysis was conducted to explore changes in students’ writing enjoyment observed in earlier qualitative analysis: students were sorted according to whether or not they described a change in their writing enjoyment during their interviews, and juxtaposed against the differences in their pre- and post-test WSPS scores on this scale item. The findings from this integration are summarised in Table 14.
Table 14. Integrating Data: Physiological States — Enjoyment of Writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHYSIOLOGICAL STATES: Enjoyment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students who detailed experiences of consistent enjoyment of the writing workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples: “… whenever I’m writing in Irish, it’s fun.” — Girl 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students who detailed their experiences of enjoyment of the writing workshop as fluctuating or conditional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples: “Well, it’s not fun when you’re trying to look in the dictionary.” — Girl 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students who described a lack of enjoyment of the writing workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples: “I don’t like writing in Irish.” — Boy 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students who described an increase in enjoyment of writing following the workshop intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples: “I used to not like Irish, but now I do.” — Girl 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students who did not directly mention a change in enjoyment of writing following the workshop intervention</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Mdn</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I enjoy writing in Irish.</td>
<td>19*</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale Item</td>
<td>Boy 6 Score</td>
<td>Girl 7 Score</td>
<td>Girl 1 Score</td>
<td>Girl 2 Score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I enjoy writing in Irish.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale Item</td>
<td>Test Time</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Min</td>
<td>Mdn</td>
<td>Max</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I enjoy writing in Irish.</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference:</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data for 2 students missing. Likert Scale range 1-5.
As seen above, quantitative data generally support findings from qualitative data, with students describing perceived enjoyment in their interviews rating their enjoyment of writing relatively highly, and the student who described a dislike for writing rating his enjoyment negatively. Additionally, while some discordance was identified amongst the group of students whose enjoyment was described as conditional, in the case of Girl 1 and 2, a closer examination of their interview data revealed that both girls described their enjoyment of the workshop at numerous points throughout the interview, in addition to offering on one occasion, an example of a situation within the workshop which may be less enjoyable. Therefore, this potentially indicates an error in grouping for analysis, rather than actual disagreement between data, as these girls generally regarded the workshops as enjoyable aside from some isolated experiences, which is confirmed in their WSPS scores. Additionally, students’ reported changes in enjoyment were confirmed through comparison with changes in pre- and post-test WSPS scores. This comparative analysis also revealed that, amongst students who did not report an increase in enjoyment, around half of students exhibited no change or a decline in scores, with the other half showing an increase in scores. This indicates that, for some of these students, absence of evidence may have indeed reflected evidence of absence, while other students simply may not have had the opportunity to discuss this improvement during interviews.

In sum, this integrative analysis confirms earlier findings that writing as part of the FL writing workshops was regarded as pleasurable by the vast majority of students. It also confirms previous findings suggesting that students’ enjoyment of writing increased during the intervention, with evidence of improvement or maintenance of writing enjoyment provided by around 90% of students across both data sets.

7.3 General Writing Self-Perceptions

Finally, in an attempt to synthesise findings from this integrative analysis into a concise, yet comprehensive depiction of students’ writing self-perceptions by the end of the intervention, a comparative analysis was conducted on students’ overall post-test WSPS scores and statements of general self-perceptions that emerged during interviews. For reasons similar to those described in the procedure applied in section 7.2.1, students were organised into groups based on their overall mean post-test WSPS scores: those who scored above and those who scored below the overall mean scores of the entire class. In this way, the variety and complexity in students’ general statements from interview data could still be analysed without the need to group students into arbitrary

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6 Of this group of students reporting enjoyment of workshops, one student provided a score of 1 to the corresponding scale item. However, this, to the researcher, appears to have been a result of misunderstanding the scale item, as this student, though interviewed with two other students who expressed less favourable descriptions of the workshop, was highly emphatic about his enjoyment of the workshops, reiterating his feelings at multiple points throughout the interview.
'positive' vs 'negative' categories, when, as seen in Section 6.1.1, children’s statements of general self-perceptions were often mixed and sometimes contradictory. The findings from this mixed analysis are presented in Table 15.

Table 15. Integrating Data: General Writing Self-Perceptions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENERAL SELF-PERCEPTIONS</th>
<th>Quantitative</th>
<th>+</th>
<th>Qualitative</th>
<th>Integration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students whose mean overall WSPS scores were greater than mean scores for the entire group.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likert scale 1-5.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students whose mean overall WSPS scores were less than mean scores for the entire group.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likert Scale range 1-5.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some interesting points of both convergence and apparent divergence between data sets emerge from this analysis. Findings regarding students with higher overall WSPS scores were largely confirmatory, as integrative analysis revealed that almost all students in this group described their writing self-perceptions positively. These positive perceptions were in some cases modulated by additional conditional or neutral statements, as noted in earlier qualitative analysis (see section 6.1.1). Negative statements regarding writing self-perception were also not particularly common, indicating further confirmation of high quantitative scores. Findings regarding the second group, those students whose overall WSPS scores lay below the group mean, deviated from expected results, however, they may actually serve to confirm quantitative findings to a greater extent: while one might reasonably expect students with comparatively lower overall WSPS scores to have described their writing self-perceptions using negative statements, statements most frequently used by students in this group were predominantly conditional or neutral in nature. This means that most
students in this group described themselves as “average” writers, or described their writing self-perception as fluctuating, or less certain or stable. This is not surprising when closer attention is paid to the mean overall WSPS scores of this group: though comparatively lower, as seen in the median and mean values, this group’s overall scores are generally distributed around the centre of the 5-point Likert scale used in the WSPS, indicating that, in general, students’ overall scores in this group reflect a relatively ‘average' or neutral perception of oneself as a writer. Therefore, this group’s WSPS scores, though they indicate that students’ writing self-perception is more negative than the above mean group, do not, on average, indicate that students hold categorically negative self-perceptions, but rather, neutral or ‘average’ perceptions, a finding which is, in fact, confirmed by the qualitative data.

From this evidence that data from both quantitative and qualitative analyses largely confirm and support each other, a number of important conclusions may be drawn. Firstly, this corroboration suggests that overall WSPS scores provide a relatively accurate picture of students' overall writer self-perception as described by students, a finding which strengthens the validity of the WSPS as a measure of this cohort of students’ self-perceptions, and which may be borne in mind when interpreting the quantitative findings from this study. Secondly, the preponderance of largely positive self-perceptions amongst the group as a whole, and relative paucity of students who describe their writer self-perception negatively, confirms earlier quantitative findings indicating relatively high overall WSPS scores in the intervention group, as both datasets indicate that children’s writing self-perceptions were largely positive by the end of the intervention. Finally, while both datasets indicated that students’ self-perceptions were largely positive, the qualitative data provides a more nuanced picture of these self-perceptions, indicating that, while they may be largely positive, they are often regarded as fluctuating, or conditional, rather than fixed, and are often mixed with feelings of being about ‘average’, a finding that further validates the use of a mixed approach to analysing these self-perceptions in order to acquire a more comprehensive understanding of the students’ complex systems of self-beliefs.

In summary, this chapter has set out the methodology applied and the key findings drawn from the integrative analysis of both qualitative and quantitative research data in the present study. Analyses were outlined, theme by theme, and details of both the triangulation and complementarity that emerged in their respective analyses were discussed. While research data will be merged further in Chapter 8, where integrated findings from quantitative, qualitative and mixed analyses are outlined in relation to the study’s key research questions, the present findings, as outlined in this chapter, are summarised below in Figure 7.
Points of Convergence in Mixed Analysis

- Both WSPS and interview data indicate that almost every student in the intervention group perceived noticeable progress in their writing in general by the end of the FL writing intervention.

- Both WSPS and interview data indicate that a large proportion of students in the intervention group perceived progress in specific areas of writing by the end of the FL writing intervention, particularly regarding perceived developments in vocabulary.

- Both WSPS and interview data indicate that the majority of students in the intervention group associated writing within the workshops with positive emotions, such as pride, confidence and happiness.

- Both WSPS and interview data indicate that most students in the intervention group regarded writing in the workshops as an enjoyable experience, and that a significant proportion of students believed their enjoyment of writing had increased following their participation in the workshops.

- Both WSPS and interview data indicate that the majority of students’ overall writing self-perceptions were largely positively-oriented (i.e. most children believed that they were ‘good’ writers) by the end of the intervention.

Points of Divergence in Mixed Analysis

- Discrepancies between quantitative and qualitative data indicate some occasions of potential measurement error, such as misinterpretation of quantitative scale items or group effects of the qualitative interview setting.

- The limited thematic overlap identified in both qualitative and quantitative assessments of students’ specific progress suggests that, in some cases, students’ perceived progress in specific areas of writing may have actually been greater than WSPS scores suggest.

- Students with both high and low Physiological States scores on the WSPS generally associated writing with predominantly positive emotions, and often characterised their experiences as a combination of various feelings. This variability demonstrates the complexity and mutability of students’ emotions while writing, as well as the variation in the impact of different kinds of emotional experiences on students’ emergent self-perceptions.

- While students’ overall WSPS scores emerged as relatively reliable estimates of these students’ general self-perceptions, these self-perceptions appear to be more variable, nuanced and complex than can be adequately communicated through numerical scores.

Figure 7. Main Findings from Mixed Analysis relating to Research Question 4.
8 ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this chapter, key findings produced from the analyses of research data is discussed in accordance to the key research questions. Firstly, key results obtained from the analysis of quantitative data obtained through pre- and post-test scores of both comparison and control groups on the WSPS are summarised, in an attempt to answer the Research Question 1. Afterwards, findings pertaining to Research Question 2, which addresses children’s reported self-perceptions following their participation in the FL writing intervention, will be recapitulated according to the main findings related to students’ reported writing progress, affect and general perceptions of themselves as FL writers. Research Question 3 is addressed using findings acquired from analysis of interview data, exploring aspects of the intervention which participants regarded as having exerted an influence on the development of their perceptions of themselves as FL writers. Finally, the main findings from the integrative analysis of children’s post-test WSPS scores and qualitative interview data are outlined in response to Research Question 4, which aimed to explore the similarities and disparities between accounts of students’ writing self-perceptions provided by both datasets.

8.1 Findings related to Research Question 1

The purpose of research question one was twofold: it aimed to investigate, firstly, whether there were significant changes in the writer self-perception (measured by the WSPS) of students participating in the FL process writing workshop intervention, and secondly, whether these changes differed significantly from those of students in a control group:

1. a. Have students’ foreign language writing self-perceptions, as measured by the Writer Self-Perception Scale (WSPS), changed significantly following a foreign language process writing intervention?
   b. Does this change, if any, differ significantly from corresponding changes amongst a control group?

8.1.1 Did WSPS scores of the intervention group change significantly?

In short, yes, at least on some scale factors.

A comparison of their pre- and post-test WSPS scores revealed a mean increase in scores on all scale measures for students in the experimental group, indicating that students held more positive perceptions of themselves as writers following their participation in the workshop. The most pronounced increases were observed in General Progress and Physiological States measures, with these changes, as well as changes in total WSPS score, being found to be statistically
significant, despite the relatively small sample size. This demonstrates that students generally reported increased enjoyment of writing and improved perceptions of writing progress following the workshop intervention, a finding that was later supported in qualitative interview data.

More detailed analyses of these changes in General Progress and Physiological states scores revealed an absence of gender differences, suggesting that both male and female students perceived their writing progress and emotional experiences of writing more positively following the intervention. Interesting effects of pre-test scores were also found: students who rated their writing progress comparatively lowly prior to the intervention made the largest improvements in perceived progress, while students who already perceived progress in their writing prior to the workshops generally maintained this perception. In contrast, regarding Physiological States, analysis controlling for pre-test scores revealed that enjoyment and wellbeing increased for students irrespective of initial scores: in other words, students’ wellbeing generally increased regardless of whether or not they already perceived Irish writing as an enjoyable experience.

In summary, the FL writer self-perception of students in the intervention group did increase following their participation in FL process writing workshops. While only overall scores, and General Progress and Physiological States scores, were found to have increased significantly, an average upward trend was also observed on other scale measures.

**8.1.2 Did changes in WSPS scores differ significantly between groups?**

In brief, yes, but not on all scale factors.

In contrast to the mean increases observed amongst students in the intervention group, mean changes in the WSPS scores of students in the control group were less consistent: positive increases in scores were generally smaller and scores on some measures actually decreased over the intervention period. However, none of these changes were found to be statistically significant. Additionally, a between-group comparison of post-test scores revealed that students who participated in the workshops scored higher, on average, than the control group on all scale measures, and statistically significantly higher on mean overall WSPS scores, as well as General Progress, Observational Comparison and Physiological States scales.

Importantly, however, subsequent analysis revealed significant differences between groups’ pre-test scores, indicating the existence of systematic differences between groups. Therefore, due to its potential to more accurately assess the differential effect of the intervention on WSPS scores, a ‘differences in differences’ approach was adopted: namely, pre-test vs post-test differences in mean WSPS scores of students in both groups were examined and compared.

While descriptive analysis revealed comparatively larger and more positive increases in mean scores of students in the experimental group on almost all scale factors, regression analysis of
these changes revealed a statistically significant between-group difference in score changes on only one scale factor: Physiological States. This means that mean increases in scores rating enjoyment and wellbeing of the children who participated in the workshops were significantly higher than those of the control group, whose corresponding scores actually dropped during this period, indicating a decline in writing enjoyment. Critically, though increases in the intervention groups’ mean General Progress scores were not found to differ significantly from corresponding control group gains, findings from further analysis suggested that this may have largely been due to restrictions associated with the Likert-based measurement used.

In summary, several aspects of FL writer self-perception differed significantly between groups following the intervention, with students in the experimental group generally rating their self-perceptions more positively than those in the control group. Though changes in self-perception scores during the intervention period did not differ between groups for all scale factors, differences in scores on the Physiological States scale differed between groups, with students who participated in the workshops boasting significantly larger increases in their writing enjoyment and general contentedness while writing.

8.2 Findings related to Research Question 2

The second research question was designed with the aim of acquiring the perspectives of children in the intervention group through analysis of data acquired during group interview:

2. How do students describe their perceptions of themselves as foreign language writers following their participation in a foreign language process writing intervention?

Findings related to these self-perceptions will be discussed in terms of (a) students’ perceived writing progress, (b) students’ reported emotional experiences while writing, as well as (c) students’ overall FL writing self-perceptions.

8.2.1 How do children perceive their FL writing progress?

Positively, on average, with a few exceptions.

In the course of their interviews, almost every student amongst the intervention group expressed the belief that they perceived notable overall progress in their FL writing, and/or feelings of increasing ease of FL writing, with only one student expressed a perceived lack of progress following the intervention. With regards to progress in specific areas of writing, over 75% of participants interviewed provided specific examples of changes in their writing following the intervention, such as increased length of writing, enhanced clarity of writing, and more purposeful use of effective writing strategies, among others. In particular, improvements related to vocabulary
emerged as particularly salient to children, as the majority of students reported having learned new words to include in their Irish stories. In a nutshell, from this analysis of students’ accounts, it can be concluded that the vast majority of students believed they had achieved considerable writing progress, both generally and more specifically, following their involvement in the FL writing workshops.

8.2.2 How do children perceive the emotional experience of FL writing?

Generally, as positive and enjoyable, but with some mixed feelings.

Regarding students’ emotional experiences of writing, reports of positive affect, including feelings of confidence, pride and happiness while writing, dominated students’ interview narratives. Though not described as frequently, a range of less positive feelings were also identified during qualitative analysis, including stress, boredom and frustration. However, in contrast to the manner in which positive emotions were more often related to the overall process of writing within the workshop during interviews, negative emotions, in the majority of cases, were generally expressed in relation to specific situations within the workshop, such as retrieving unknown vocabulary or correcting mistakes, and with the exception of one student, were expressed alongside more positive affective accounts of the workshop. Additionally, approximately 90% of students in the sample indicated, during interviews, an enjoyment of writing when participating in the FL writing workshops. Affective changes, such as increased self confidence, enhanced self-efficacy and greater writing enjoyment, were also reported by two thirds of students following their involvement in the intervention. In summary, these findings suggest that students’ affective experiences of FL writing in the workshops were largely positive, with the vast majority of students associating writing in the workshops with desirable emotions, enjoyment, and positive affective growth.

8.2.3 How do children perceive themselves as FL writers, overall?

Positively, in general, though these perceptions are complex and mutable.

Reflecting the high post-test overall WSPS scores of students in the intervention group, during interviews, students most commonly communicated their broad feelings about themselves as FL writers in largely positive terms. However, what is not clearly seen in the quantitative data, is the variation with which some children described their self-perceptions, with students often expressing their overall self-perception as a combination of beliefs about oneself, including both positive judgements, as well as more negative perceptions of one's writing, beliefs about one’s ‘averageness’ as a writer, or the fluctuating, conditional nature of these self-beliefs. In brief, while findings from this qualitative analysis propose that children’s perceptions of themselves as FL writers were generally quite positive by the end of the intervention, these perceptions were complex and
multifaceted, and subject to variations and oscillations.

8.3 Findings related to Research Question 3

The aim of the final research question pertained to the identification of features of the FL writing workshops which students regarded as having an influence on the development of their feelings about themselves as writers:

3. Which aspects, if any, of the process writing intervention, as described by the students, influenced their writer self-perception?

Analysis of interview data revealed a number of workshop aspects which students associated with (a) opportunities for enhancement or improvement of self-perceptions, as well as with (b) challenges or threats to self-perception development.

8.3.1 Which workshop features improved writer self-perception?

Many features of the workshops were regarded as offering potential for self-perception improvement by at least some students. These features, which are the principle qualities which distinguish the process approach from more product-oriented writing instruction, were linked by students to more positive beliefs about themselves as writers in the following ways:

- Having extended writing and thinking time during the workshops was described by some students as facilitating both FL writing progress and feelings of excitement and enjoyment towards FL writing.
- Writing for an audience (e.g. through the Author’s Chair, or the publishing process) was highly valued by many students for its ability to enhance self-confidence, motivation, personal pride, and enjoyment and with regards to FL writing.
- Cyclical planning and drafting phases were largely regarded as relaxing and enjoyable stages of writing, and were linked to feelings of both personal pride in one’s writing and enhanced perceived control over one’s own writing process.
- Several students attributed their ability to write with increasing ease, enjoyment and confidence to having ownership of the content of their writing, the most salient workshop feature among student interviews. Additionally, some students associated their ownership of the writing process with heightened self-confidence, self-efficacy and perceived writing progress.
- Collaborating with peers in the writing community was identified as a both source of enjoyment, and a catalyst for personal progress.
- Students maintained that the self-assessment process equipped them to clearly identify examples of both specific and general writing progress in their work.
8.3.2 Which workshop features challenged writer self-perception?

In addition to opportunities for enhancement of students’ writing self-perception, some features of the writing workshop format were linked to threats to students’ developing beliefs about themselves as writers:

- The slower pace at which writing products are generated according to the workshop model led some students to question their writing progress and ability.
- Identifying their own orthographical mistakes during self-directed revision and editing was used by some children as evidence to confirm their negative self-beliefs about their ability as writers.
- Authorial freedom was sometimes connected to feelings of stress and perceived lack of ability when ‘writer's block’ arose. Additionally, the responsibility to overcome writing challenges, such as vocabulary retrieval, necessitated by students’ ownership of the writing process, were often linked to negative physiological states such as stress, frustration and lack of enjoyment.

8.4 Findings related to Research Question 4

As part of the investigation of this research question, both students’ WSPS post-test scores and data acquired through group interviews were integrated in an attempt to construct a more accurate portrayal of these children’s FL writing self-perceptions. The aim of the final research question was to explore findings from previous analyses of these datasets to identify commonalities between the depictions of students’ self-perceptions provided by both of these data sources, as well as to discover points of divergence:

4. To what extent do quantitative measures of students’ foreign language writing self-perception (measured by the WSPS) confirm or contradict students’ qualitative accounts of these perceptions?

Mixed analysis revealed numerous points at which both qualitative and quantitative accounts of students’ writing self-perceptions overlapped, and produced some illuminating insights relating to the few areas wherein findings diverged.

8.4.1 Which aspects of self-perception remained consistent across quantitative and qualitative measures?

On the whole, mixed analysis revealed that both the qualitative and quantitative data generally communicated a similar impression of students’ writing self-perceptions.

Consensus across datasets indicated that almost every student who participated in the writing workshops perceived discernible progress in their FL writing ability by the end of the
intervention: the notably high mean General Progress post-test scores amongst this group were confirmed by students’ rich accounts of examples of writing progress and improvement in their interview narratives. In general, students who alluded to perceptions of progress during their interviews generally scored highly on the corresponding WSPS measures, with the distinct lack of personal writing progress perceived by one student also being confirmed by his comparatively lower WSPS scores on this scale factor. Similarly, findings derived from both datasets indicated that a large proportion of students identified evidence of personal progress in specific aspects of writing, most notably in the area of vocabulary development, which emerged in approximately 70% of students’ interview accounts and which exhibited the most pronounced changes in students’ WSPS scores of any Specific Progress scale item.

The emotional experiences of the writing workshop for the majority of students were most frequently characterised in terms of positive affect across both datasets, while a similar consensus emerged in relation to students’ reported enjoyment of FL writing. Importantly, Physiological States, of all factors on the WSPS, boasted the largest increases between pre- and post-test WSPS scores of students who took part in the writing workshops. The real-world evidence of these changes were clearly evident in students’ interview narratives, wherein two third of students reported perceptible changes in their affective experiences of writing, such as growth in confidence, increased self-efficacy and heightened enjoyment in writing, following their participation in the FL writing workshops.

By the end of the intervention, students’ mean total post-test scores for all WSPS scale items were relatively high, in comparison to both pre-test scores, and scores amongst students in the control group. These scores suggest that students’ overall perceptions of themselves as FL writers were relatively positive, namely, that they regarded themselves as ‘good’ FL writers — this indication was largely confirmed in students’ interview accounts, within which positive statements about oneself as a writer emerged as the most common type of self-beliefs reported by children.

In sum, both quantitative and qualitative data construct a very similar picture of these students’ FL writing self-perceptions by the end of the intervention. Thus, the broad consensus apparent across both datasets functions to increase the reliability of the present research findings, and the validity of the research data obtained.

8.4.2 Which aspects of self-perception differed across quantitative and qualitative measures?

A number of interesting points of divergence emerged within the comparative analysis of both datasets. To begin with, some smaller deviations between datasets may represent instances of
measurement error, including misunderstanding of quantitative scale items and potential interview or interviewer effects, further highlighting the importance of relying on multiple forms of measurement in order to construct a more accurate portrayal of students’ self-perceptions. Accounts of specific writing progress emerged as an example of a more pointed deviation between datasets: features of specific writing progress identified by students during their interviews were largely at odds with the specific aspects of writing progress assessed on the WSPS, which may partially account for the absence of statistically significant differences in students’ pre- and post-test Specific Progress scores, despite the abundance of examples of specific progress supplied during students’ interviews. Moreover, this mixed analysis also revealed that students’ reported affective experiences of writing within the workshops were generally characterised by combinations of diverse emotions, both positive and negative, and which also differed in salience, a fact that was not clearly evident from the quantitative assessments. Similarly, findings from interview data constructed a more complex and nuanced portrayal of the ways in which students articulated their overall perceptions of themselves as foreign language writers, than that provided by numerical self-report scores. In sum, while these apparent contradictions may have served to somewhat challenge some of the findings obtained from both analysis methods, these discrepancies also pointed to a number of significant, and often, surprising findings which may have been potentially obscured through a more mono-method approach, thus providing a more comprehensive account of the students’ FL writing self-perceptions.

This chapter has attempted to reiterate the main findings of the present research according to the central research questions which guided the development of the study. In sum, findings which have addressed these research questions generally indicate that, following the implementation of the FL process writing workshops, positive changes were observed among some aspects of many students’ perceptions of themselves as FL writers, notably, in the areas of perceived writing progress and affective states while writing. Children’s FL writing self-perceptions, particularly regarding these facets of self-perception, were largely positive at the end of the workshops, with students often attributed these changes in self-perceptions to features of the FL writing workshop approach. However, some features of the approach also provided some challenges to students’ emergent self-perceptions, whilst other important areas of students’ self-perception, such as observational comparison and social feedback, were found not to have change significantly over the intervention period.
9 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study has aimed to explore the influence of the implementation of FL writing workshops on participating students’ emergent FL writing self-perceptions. This concluding chapter will explore the contributions this study has made to offering a greater understanding of the potential of this approach to FL writing instruction, linking findings from this study to earlier research, and propose directions for future related research. The limitations of this study will be considered, and a summary of pedagogical recommendations based on the research findings will be provided.

9.1 Final Conclusions and Contributions of the Present Study

In conclusion, did the introduction of a process-oriented approach to FL writing instruction actually influence students’ developing self-perceptions regarding their FL writing? Findings from both qualitative and quantitative sources indicated that, following their participation in the FL writing workshops, students in this study generally perceived themselves as more competent, confident FL writers with more positive perceptions of their writing quality, ability and enjoyment. By the end of the intervention, children largely believed themselves to be significantly better writers than at the beginning, an effect that was not observed amongst children in the control group, following a more traditional FL writing programme. Crucially, this study also attempted to investigate the causal relationship between the intervention and reported changes in self-perceptions through examining children’s accounts of features of the process writing intervention which they viewed as contributing to the development of their self-perception. Many children directly attributed these positive changes in their FL writing self-perceptions to experiences of the process writing format, characterising a number of features of the workshops as influential in their self-perception development. However, some aspects of students’ FL self-perceptions appeared to have been influenced by the workshops to a relatively lesser extent, with the most salient effects being observed in relation to perceptions of progress and perceived physiological states. Additionally, some features of the workshop format were regarded as both helpful and harmful to the development of self-percepts, depending on the student.

These findings mirror earlier results from previous studies exploring the use of process writing instruction in the L1, which found similar improvements in students’ self-confidence and perceived writing competence (Brown et al., 2011, p. 17; Schweiker-Marra & Marra, 2000, pp. 106–107; Strech, 1994, p. 6). It also echoes many findings within the current SL/FL writing research base, which identified comparable effects of process-oriented instruction on perceived progress (Burner, 2014, p. 142), motivation (Lo & Hyland, 2007, p. 232) and writing confidence.
Additionally, many features of the workshop which children considered to be effective drivers of self-perception development were similarly highlighted in earlier EFL/ESL studies as exerting positive influences on students’ affective writing experiences (Challob et al., 2016, pp. 235–238; Yeung, 2019, p. 49–50).

Situated in this broader research context, this study has contributed in many ways to an emergent field which, sadly, is currently lacking. Firstly, it has utilised a mixed methods approach to exploring students’ complex and multifaceted FL writing self-perceptions which, aside from having been researched to a very limited extent, have generally been explored through purely quantitative or qualitative means. Secondly, it has investigated the potential of this approach to writing instruction beyond the L1 context, and additionally, beyond university-level, EFL/ESL learning contexts, which currently dominate the limited existing literature. In addition, it has contributed to the field of Irish language learning, which, as a minority language learning context, has received relatively little empirical attention, particularly regarding classroom-based research. Critically, this study also attempted not just to assess changes in students’ writing self-perceptions arising following the implementation of a process writing intervention, but also endeavoured to identify the instructional supports and features which prompted these changes, from the perspectives of the students themselves. As a result of this inquiry into the influence of various writing workshop features on students’ self-concepts, a number of concrete, operational pedagogical recommendations could be constructed based on the research findings. These recommendations, included in section 9.4, may be used by educators and researchers alike, in order to implement similar FL writing interventions.

9.2 Limitations of the Present Study

Despite these strengths, alluded to above, when interpreting the above findings of this study, a number of important limitations must also be recognised. Importantly, this research is quite severely limited in its scope, by virtue of constituting a postgraduate dissertation. In order to curtail the bounds of this research, the decision was made to focus on only certain aspects of writer self-perception, as characterised in the WSPS, beyond the initial analyses of this study. As a result, further exploration of areas such as observational comparison and social feedback and their relationship to the process writing approach was not undertaken. Additionally, though a potentially invaluable voice regarding the implementation of the workshops and their effects on students, the decision was made not to include data from the participating class teacher in this research, again, in an endeavour to narrow the research focus. These, among many other limitations present in this study, offer fruitful avenues for potential future research.
The next and, arguably, most critical limitation of this study pertains to its quasi-experimental design and subsequent implications regarding extent to which causality may be attributed to the writing workshop intervention. While a major strength of this study in this regard relates to the study’s third research question, which explored aspects of the intervention to which students attributed these changes in their self-perceptions, a relatively strong indicator of causality, readers must still carefully consider the findings of this study within its research context. As is the case in many naturalistic educational experiments, numerous threats to internal validity posed by the nonequivalent research groups, potential testing effects, and the myriad other extraneous and confounding variables which may influence students’ development over the course of an intervention period inhibit the extent to which changes in students’ self-perceptions can be characterised purely as the effect of the intervention.

Regarding external validity, as a result of the small sample size and the single, specific context in which this research is situated, the generalisability of research findings is limited accordingly. However, while findings from this study are, as such, not widely generalisable, this does not indicate that these findings are not applicable to certain contexts and situations. Given the clearly-defined study context and research design, the decision regarding the applicability of these findings to alternative educational contexts lies firmly at the reader’s own discretion, and their assessment of the comparability of these contexts. Indeed, what this research has aimed to provide from the outset is an indication of the potential for this approach to FL writing, serving more as a signpost for future exploration in an under-researched field, not as empirical proof for the large-scale effectiveness of the approach. Consequently, this stance must be borne in mind when interpreting these conclusions.

9.3 Directions for Future Research

At the conclusion of this research, the researcher, and perhaps, the reader, may be left with more answers than questions. Over the course of this research, several lines for further research have been identified.

Within this study, a number of important considerations emerged in relation to the measurement of students’ FL writing self-perceptions. In this study, the WSPS scale, being one of the few valuable measurement items available to measure students’ self-beliefs with regard to writing, was employed, despite this scale not having been specifically tailored to the measurement of writing self-beliefs in a FL/SL context, as, to the researcher’s knowledge, currently, no such quantitative measure exists. As a result, the use of the WSPS in this context likely does not measure facets of students’ self-concepts which may be unique to FL language learning. For example, beliefs
about foreign languages and FL learning are not included on this scale, but arose during student interviews, and have been identified as a contributing factor in FL self-perception development (Mercer, 2011, pp. 106–107). Thus, this field of research has the potential to substantially benefit from the development of a quantitative scale designed specifically for the measurement of students’ FL writing self-perceptions.

Additionally, while this study focused exclusively on students’ FL self-perceptions, further research could potentially explore the effect of FL process writing instruction on other affective areas, such as students’ FL writing apprehension, anxiety, attitudes and self-efficacy. Future research may also focus on the relationship between the use of process-oriented writing instruction and the quality of students’ FL writing, or related achievement. Moreover, further research into the focus of this study, namely, FL process writing and self-perception development, could be conducted in diverse teaching and learning contexts, with differing target languages, and over longer periods of time, to further investigate these effects.

9.4 Pedagogical Recommendations

This research has highlighted a number of significant potential benefits of the use of process-oriented workshops for young FL writers and their self-perceptions. For those wishing to implement this workshop format in their own FL writing instruction, or to simply align their current writing pedagogy with a more process-oriented approach, a number of pedagogical recommendations have been included. These recommendations are based on suggestions by students themselves, and are designed with the intention of optimising the workshop format to promote positive student self-perceptions regarding themselves as FL writers. These recommendations may be utilised both by educators who wish to implement a FL writing workshop similar to that conducted in this study, or for those who wish simply to adopt a more process-oriented approach to their existing FL writing instruction. An abbreviated version of these pedagogical recommendations will also be later disseminated through various channels by means of an appealing infographic, a draft version of which is attached in Appendix F.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementing a FL Process Writing Workshop</th>
<th>Adapting a more Process-Oriented Approach to FL Writing Instruction</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing Time</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Plan to implement at least weekly for at least one full school term in order to maximise benefits to students’ self-perception.</td>
<td>• Provide students with more class time on writing assignments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Set aside approximately one hour for each workshop, designating as much of this as possible as writing time. Less time may be appropriate for beginner / younger learners.</td>
<td>• Encourage working on drafts or revisions of a single piece of work over multiple class periods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience for Writing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Schedule a share session at the end of every workshop. A rota or sign-up sheet may be used to ensure that all children who wish to share have regular (at least monthly) opportunities. This can be organised as a whole class or with a peer / partner.</td>
<td>• Provide regular opportunities for students to share their writing with peers, parents, friends, or students in other classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Plan to publish periodically throughout the term / year.</td>
<td>• Display some of students’ finished pieces of writing in an accessible location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Designate a specific physical / online space wherein children’s published pieces are displayed and available for reading.</td>
<td>• Consider periodically ‘publishing’ students’ work: e.g. students revise and edit a favourite piece, which they then transcribe with a word processor. Finished pieces may be printed and bound, or shared online.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Plan opportunities for children’s work to be shared occasionally with the wider community (e.g. parents, friends, other schools, local community, target language speakers abroad, etc.).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cyclical writing phases</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provide mini-lessons on a range of prewriting strategies (especially for young or weak writers).</td>
<td>• Familiarise students with varied prewriting strategies (e.g. graphic organisers, storyboards, drawings, word clouds, etc.).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Afford students the responsibility of deciding on the number and nature of drafts to produce of a given piece of writing.</td>
<td>• Provide structured peer- and self-directed revision and editing sessions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Avoid an overemphasis on editing in the later stages of writing, especially for beginner writers or those new to the workshops. Emphasise the difference between revising and editing, providing adequate time for both. You may wish to organise revision and editing as separate workshops, incorporating both independent and partner work.</td>
<td>• Emphasise the difference between revision and editing, providing adequate time for both. Assessment practices should also reflect this balance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Permit students to use the L1 to support early stages of writing.</td>
<td>• Permit students to use the L1 as a support in early drafts of writing assignments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ownership of Writing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provide mini-lessons which support students in the idea generation process. You may wish to encourage students to maintain an inspiration list or journal, in which they record ideas for future stories.</td>
<td>• Afford frequent opportunities for students to select subject matter of written work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Consider structuring workshops in genre units (e.g. narrative, recount, informational writing, etc.), affording student choice of writing content within these genres. This prevents choice from inhibiting students’ chances to write in various genres.</td>
<td>• Develop writing deadlines in collaboration with students and provide explicit guidance to support students in planning their own writing process to suit this timeline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide both mini-lessons and reference materials to support students in overcoming writing challenges autonomously.</td>
<td>• Attempt to pre-empt the which difficulties students may encounter while writing with increasing independence by providing support materials and relevant instruction.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Peer work</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provide authentic opportunities for students to provide feedback to each other in the target language (TL).</td>
<td>• Provide authentic opportunities for students to provide feedback to each other in the TL.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Consider introducing collaborative writing time with writing partners.</td>
<td>• Consider introducing collaborative writing time with writing partners.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Assessing</strong></td>
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<td>• Have students compile all of their finished pieces and works-in-progress in one folder to facilitate self-assessment.</td>
<td>• Provide structured, strength-based student self-assessment opportunities (e.g. using rubrics, checklists).</td>
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<td>• Scaffold self-assessment carefully (e.g. using checklists, rubrics) to reflect a focus on writing strengths, rather than grammatical / spelling errors.</td>
<td>• Consider supplementing existing FL assessment practice with writing portfolios.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Limit mini-lessons to approximately ten minutes’ duration.</td>
<td>• Focus instruction not only towards the end products of writing, but on strategies for improving students’ process of FL writing.</td>
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<td>• Explicitly model and encourage sharing of writing strategies, ideally using real teacher- or student-created writing samples.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

Overview of Themes/Mini-Lessons of the FL Writing Workshops comprising the Intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session Number</th>
<th>Workshop Theme</th>
<th>Workshop Objectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Structúr na Ceardlainne (Workshop Structure)</td>
<td>To familiarise students with the concept of the FL writing workshop, the materials and resources available for use in the workshops, and the consistent structure which each workshop follows.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Réamhscríbhneoireacht (Prewriting)</td>
<td>To model and support students’ use of a pre-writing strategy, “Smaoinigh, Tarraing, Cuir Lipéid, Scriobh” (“Think, Draw, Label, Write”) to facilitate the initial stages of students’ FL writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Réamhscríbhneoireacht: Topaicí a Rognú (Prewriting: Choosing Topics)</td>
<td>To provide students with a selection criteria which they may use when deciding upon appropriate writing topics, and to provide and encourage the maintenance of an ‘inspiration list’ wherein potential ideas for writing are recorded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Aiseolas a Thabhairt (Giving Feedback)</td>
<td>To equip students with and practise the use of target language (TL) phrases and sentence frames to facilitate children in providing feedback on peers’ writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Aiseolas a Thabhairt II (Giving Feedback II)</td>
<td>To review and further practise the use of TL phrases and sentence frames to facilitate children in providing feedback on peers’ writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Na Cruinnithe (Conferences)</td>
<td>To familiarise children with the teacher conferencing process and provide and practise the use of TL phrases which may be used when discussing writing and seeking help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Aisghabháil Focail (Word Retrieval)</td>
<td>To clarify for students the range of both material and human resources available during workshops which may be used to retrieve unknown vocabulary and strategies for how to best utilise them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Suirimhanna a Chur Síos (Describing Settings)</td>
<td>To encourage, enable and support children in using sensory information to construct detailed descriptions of settings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Carachtair a Chur Síos (Describing Characters)</td>
<td>To encourage, enable and support children in using diverse personal adjectives and adjectival phrases to construct detailed descriptions of characters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Cabhair a Lorg (Asking for Help)</td>
<td>To review and further practise the use of TL phrases and sentence frames which may be used when discussing writing and seeking help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Athbhreithniú: Briathra Cruinne (Revising: Precise Verbs)</td>
<td>To introduce the process of substitutive revision at the word-level, and develop and discuss interesting synonyms for overused verbs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Athbhreithniú: Sonraí a Thabhairt (Revising: Adding Details)</td>
<td>To introduce the process of additive revision at the sentence-level by enabling students to identify ways in which they may expand their sentences using adjectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Athbhreithniú: Sonraí a Thabhairt II (Revising: Adding Details II)</td>
<td>To continue the process of additive revision at the sentence-level by enabling students to identify ways in which they may expand their sentences using adverbs and prepositions/prepositional phrases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Athbhreithniú: Mo Chuid Scríbhneoireachta (Revising: Describing Feelings)</td>
<td>To introduce the process of additive revision at a paragraph or whole-story level, by exploring illustrative and idiomatic expressions for character feelings and searching for relevant revision opportunities in one’s own stories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Eagarthóireacht: Ag Cabhrú mo Pháirtí (Editing: Peer-Editing)</td>
<td>To introduce and structure the process of editing, using guiding checklists, and providing written feedback for the writing of peers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Eagarthóireacht: Mo Chuid Scríbhneoireachta (Editing: Self-Editing)</td>
<td>To introduce and structure the process of editing, using guiding checklists, one’s own writing and deciding how and whether to incorporate edits suggested by peers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Foilsitheoireacht (Publishing)</td>
<td>To begin the publishing process by analysing the components of an effective book cover and supporting students in the design process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Foilsitheoireacht II (Publishing II)</td>
<td>To discuss the components of an effective blurb and support students in creating an ‘About the Author’ section for their published pieces.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B
Modified Version of WSPS used in this Study

THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE WRITER SELF-PERCEPTION SCALE

Listed below are statements about writing in Irish. Please read each sentence carefully. Then circle the numbers that show how much you agree or disagree with the statement. Use the following scale:

1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Undecided   4=Agree   5=Strongly Agree

Example: I think Batman is the greatest super hero. 1 2 3 4 5

If you are really positive that Batman is not the greatest, circle 1 (Strongly Disagree).
If you think that Batman is not all that great, circle 2 (Disagree).
If you can’t decide whether or not Batman is the greatest, circle 3 (Undecided).
If you think that Batman is good but maybe not great, circle 4 (Agree).
If you are really positive that Batman is the greatest, circle 5 (Strongly Agree).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I write better in Irish than other kids in the class.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I like how writing in Irish makes me feel inside.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Writing in Irish is easier for me than it used to be.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>When I write in Irish, the organisation is better than other kids in my class.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>People in my family think I’m a good writer when I write in Irish.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I’m getting better at writing in Irish.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>My Irish writing is more interesting than my classmates’ writing.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>My teacher thinks my writing in Irish is good.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>People in my family think I write pretty well in Irish.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I write in Irish better now than I could before.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I think I am a good writer when I write in Irish.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When I write in Irish, I put sentences in a better order than the other kids.

My Irish writing has improved.

My writing in Irish is better than before.

It’s easier to write well in Irish now than it used to be.

The sentences I use in my Irish writing stick to the topic more than the ones the other kids use.

The words I use in my Irish writing are better than the ones I used before.

Other kids think I am a good Irish writer.

I am relaxed when I write in Irish.

The descriptions in my Irish writing are more interesting than before.

The words I use in my Irish writing are better than the ones the other kids use.

My teacher thinks I’m a good Irish writer.

My Irish writing seems to be more clear than my classmates’ writing.

When I write in Irish, the sentences and paragraphs fit together better than they used to.

Writing in Irish makes me feel good.

The order of the sentences in my Irish writing makes better sense now.

I enjoy writing in Irish.

My Irish writing is more clear than it used to be.

My classmates would say I write well in Irish.

Thank you! 😊

Student Number: _________________________
Appendix C

Interview Guide

1. How do you feel about yourself as an Irish language writer?
   - Do you think you are a good Irish writer? Is it hard? Is it enjoyable/not fun?
   - Why / How do you know?
   - Has this changed since the beginning of the year?

2. Tell me about the piece you are most proud of.
   - Why have you chosen this piece?
   - Have there been moments during the workshops that make you feel like you are not a good writer?

3. Have you learned anything about yourself as an Irish writer since we started the workshop?
   - Which parts of the workshop have helped the most/least?

4. What emotions do you feel during the Irish writing workshop?

5. What are the best/worst parts of the writing workshop?
   - Why?

6. If you could change one thing about the workshops, what would it be?
Appendix D
Parent Information Sheet

PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION SHEET

Research Title: An Exploration of the Influence of Process Writing on Primary Students’ Self-Perception as Foreign Language Writers: A Mixed Methods Investigation

Outline of Research: I am a M. Ed student of the Early Language Education for Intercultural Communication degree program at the University of Eastern Finland. As part of this course, I am undertaking research in the area of Irish language teaching and learning, primarily in relation to the development of students’ writing skills. Specifically, this study aims to identify whether the use of a writing workshop format in teaching Irish writing skills can improve students’ feelings about themselves as Irish language writers.

Procedures and Activities: If you and your child agree to take part in this study, they will be asked to complete a short questionnaire, assessing their perceptions of themselves as Irish language writers on 12th September 2019, as well as an identical follow-up questionnaire in January 2020 to assess any change in these perceptions. Afterwards, participating students will be asked to take part in audio-recorded group interviews, lasting approximately 20-25 minutes, in which they discuss their experiences and opinions of the Irish writing workshops. Both will take place within the school, during school hours.

Confidentiality: In order to protect your child’s privacy, information obtained during this study will be anonymised and will be made available only to the class teacher, research team and faculty staff. Records will be stored securely and will be destroyed following the final evaluation of the project. Anonymised results from this study will be included in a thesis and may also be discussed at conferences or published in relevant books/journals.

Potential Risks: I foresee no risk for your child resulting from their participation in this study beyond those experienced in everyday school life. However, if you or your child do not wish to take part in this research, they can withdraw from the study at any time.

Potential Benefits: Information obtained as a result of your child’s participation in this study will enhance the class teacher’s understanding of students’ experiences of Irish language learning to aid future planning. Additionally, this information will be used to increase our current understanding of environments which support second/foreign language writing, contributing to the improvement of Irish language teaching in primary schools.

I would like to stress that participation is entirely voluntary, and you or your child may decide to withdraw from the study at any time. I am available to further discuss any aspects of this study throughout the duration of the research, should you wish to ask any questions. Thank you for taking the time to read this document.

Researcher: Danielle Hollywood
danhol@student.uef.fi
+353 83 144 5213

Study Supervisor: Ritva Kantelinen, PhD
ritva.kantelinen@uef.fi
Appendix E
Informed Parental Consent Form

PARENT/GUARDIAN PERMISSION FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

Research Title: An Exploration of the Influence of Process Writing on Primary Students’ Self-Perception as Foreign Language Writers: A Mixed Methods Investigation

Please respond to each statement (tick appropriate box):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have read and understood the subject information sheet.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand what the project is about, and what the results will be used for.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am fully aware of all of the procedures involving my child and of any risks and benefits associated with the study.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know that my child's participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the project at any stage.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I agree to my child's interview being audio-recorded.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am aware that my child's information will be kept anonymous.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I give my child permission to participate in the above study.

__________________________
(Signature of Parent/Guardian)

__________________________
(Name in Block Capitals)

__________________________
(Date)

Thank you for your time.

Danielle Hollywood
Appendix F

Pedagogical Recommendations to be disseminated via Infographic (draft version)

**MAXIMISE WRITING TIME**
- Plan to implement at least weekly for at least one full school term in order to maximise benefits to students’ self-perception.
- Set aside approximately one hour for each workshop, designating as much of this as possible as writing time. Less time may be appropriate for beginner or younger learners.

**PROVIDE AN AUDIENCE**
- Schedule a share session at the end of every workshop. A sign-up sheet may be used to ensure that all children who wish to share have regular (at least monthly) opportunities.
- Plan to publish frequently.
- Designate a specific physical/virtual space wherein children’s published pieces are displayed and available for reading.
- Plan for children’s work to be shared occasionally with the wider community (e.g. parents, friends, locally, target language speakers abroad, etc.).

**WRITE IN CYCLES**
- Provide mini-lessons on a range of prewriting strategies.
- Afford students the responsibility of deciding on the number and nature of drafts of a given piece of writing.
- Avoid an overspecialisation in editing in the later stages of writing. Highlight the difference between revising and editing, providing adequate time for both. Consider organising revision and editing as separate workshops, involving both independent and partner work.
- Permit students to use the L1 to support early stages of writing.

**HELP THEM OWN IT!**
- Provide mini-lessons which support students in the idea generation process. You may wish to encourage students to maintain an ‘inspiration journal’ in which they record ideas for future stories.
- Consider structuring workshops in genre units (e.g. narrative, recount, informational writing, etc.), affording student choice of writing content within those genres. This prevents choice from inhibiting students’ chances to write in various genres.
- Provide both minilesson and reference materials to support students in overcoming writing challenges autonomously.

**BUILD A WRITING COMMUNITY**
- Provide scaffolded, authentic opportunities for students to provide feedback to each other in the target language.
- Consider introducing collaborative writing time with writing partners.

**SELF-ASSESS FOR PROGRESS**
- Have students compile all of their finished pieces and works-in-progress in a writing portfolio to facilitate self-assessment.
- Scaffold self-assessment carefully (e.g. using checklists, rubrics) to reflect a focus on writing strengths, rather than grammatical/spelling errors.

**MAKE INPUT COUNT**
- Limit mini-lessons to approximately 10-15 minutes’ duration.
- Explicitly model and encourage sharing of writing strategies, ideally using real teacher- or student-created writing samples.

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Danielle Hollywood, 2020. ELEC MOP