ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study chronicles the effects of completing a multigenre research project on 18 seventh grade language arts students’ motivation to write. This study was conducted at a suburban middle school of approximately 150 students in northwestern New Jersey. To encourage students’ desire to write, as well as to promote increased student achievement and confidence when faced with completing a research paper, students were immersed in a multigenre research project writing unit. Students were instructed in multigenre project creation through mini-lessons and collaborated with their classmates in research support groups.

Data were collected frequently through student surveys, examples of student work, conferences, as well as observations. Through analyzing the data, it became evident that when students were allowed to work closely with peers through collaboration and discussion while researching a self-selected topic they were more likely to be productive, excited, and engaged in their writing. Additionally, when given the ability to research a topic of their own choosing and express the findings in meaningful and creative ways, students were highly motivated to write. The supported independence afforded over the course of the project created satisfied, independent thinkers.