

# CREATING SPACES FOR STUDENTS TO POSITION THEMSELVES AS WRITERS THROUGH EXPERIENCES WITH DIGITAL WRITING

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## ABSTRACT

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*The authors present the experiences of Wyatt, a nine-year-old whose mother described him as a struggling writer, in a summer digital writing camp. The authors consider how Wyatt was positioned as a writer at camp and how this may have differed from his experiences at school. They found that for Wyatt, being able to compose with digital tools along with the freedom to collaborate with peers and the autonomy to have choice over his writing helped him see himself as a writer and have positive experiences with writing.*

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*Keywords:* digital writing, technology, identity

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*Wyatt sits among a group of six of his peers; all are working diligently on their laptops. There is a rhythmic hum of typing interspersed with students sharing their ideas with each other. Wyatt is focused on planning his writing using an online mind-map. He uses this tool to brainstorm ideas for a multimodal project he will share in a few days with his parents and peers.*

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Wyatt is a nine-year-old who participated in a summer digital writing camp that we, a faculty member and two graduate students, helped coordinate at a university in the southeastern United States. We observed that Wyatt was highly engaged, excited about writing, and enthusiastic to share ideas with teachers and peers. We were surprised that Wyatt's mother was concerned about his writing at school, and she referred to him as "struggling with writing." This prompted us to question how students might be differentially positioned depending on the context, such as a formal school environment versus a summer writing camp. The writing camp included elements that Calkins (1994) and Graves (2003) deem to be important for writing instruction—self-selected topics, peer feedback, authentic audiences, access to a wide variety of tools, building on students' strengths. Since each student was provided with access to technology,

computers were used to compose writing. Benefits of digital composition include increased motivation, productivity, and quality of student writing (Goldberg, Russell, & Cook, 2003; Warschauer, Arada, & Zheng, 2010). In addition, students tend to engage in a more collaborative writing process that is iterative and social (Suhr, Hernandez, Grimes, & Warschauer, 2010). Unfortunately, most of the writing that happens in schools occurs by hand and is completed independently without opportunities to collaborate or provide peer feedback (Lapp, Moss, & Rowsell, 2012). For students like Wyatt, restricting writing to pencil and paper may explain why some construct a writing identity more easily than others.

In this article, we present Wyatt's experiences with technology and writing in the camp. Wyatt's story provides us with a glimpse into the multidimensionality of young writers' identities as they navigate spaces beyond classroom writing and offers implications for teachers in designing writing instruction to promote engagement in writing and writing achievement among elementary students. The question that guided our inquiry was: What are the experiences of an elementary student who is identified as struggling with writing at school when composing multimodal texts in a digital writing camp?

This article has implications for teachers as they consider how their students view themselves in relation to writing. Wyatt held views about himself as a "technology and math kind of guy," and these constructions of himself were used to take up a writer identity. By having the opportunity to compose with digital tools, Wyatt was able to use his areas of interest as ways to identify as a writer.

## POSITIONING THEORY AND WRITING IDENTITY

In order to explore Wyatt's experiences at camp, we consider his writing identity, how he was positioned, and how he positioned himself. Identity in and of itself is varied, multiple, and shifts in relation to the context. Identity is "a key means through which people care about and care for what is going on around them" (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998, p. 5). Understanding identity in this way helps to explain how students interact with different learning contexts.

Positioning theory posits that people's identities are shaped and constructed by particular contexts with regard to how they situate themselves and how they are positioned by others ([Davies & Harré, 1991](#)). These positionings can be interactive, in which one person positions another; or reflexive, in which individuals position themselves along discursive lines. These particular positions are based on narratives that relate to past experiences (Holland, et al., 1998). In school contexts, students are positioned by others, such as teachers, their classmates, administrators, and parents through the use of language, interactions, and expectations (Lewis, 2001). At the same time, students also position themselves in relation to others and their own histories that include experiences at school as well as home. The ways in which students position themselves and are positioned by others are connected to their identities, and their identities can be understood through examining these different positionings.

Discursive practices are central to understanding the varied story lines and metaphors people take up and how they negotiate meanings about themselves and others (Davies & Harré, 1991). For example, Wyatt entered camp with a history of struggling with writing, but we noticed that he was able to take up different positions through his dialogue and actions during camp. We can see how the interaction of multiple positionings in a camp setting worked to create an altered kind of space for Wyatt as a writer.

## THE STUDY

This case study was part of a larger study that focused on how writers construct and enact their writer identities when composing multimodal texts. In case study research, the researcher “choose[s] something small and observe[s] it intentionally and closely over time” (Dyson & Genishi, 2005, p. 42). We chose to focus on Wyatt as a case because we were interested in the different identities he brought to the writing camp and how these seemed to inform who he was as a writer. We were also interested in Wyatt because of how his mother described him at school versus what we observed during the camp. Understanding that the context and the opportunities provided can shape students’ identities, we were interested in how Wyatt constructed a writer identity at camp.

Wyatt was a rising fourth grader who identified as White and attended a local public school. He lived with his mother, father, and teenaged brother. He enjoyed playing video games and playing on his soccer team. When asked about his experiences with technology at school, Wyatt expressed frustration with the lack of access he had to technology. He said there were three computers in his classroom, but they were “big giant computers.” He also complained that his class only visited the computer lab “once every few weeks” and that time was mostly spent on improving typing skills. At home, Wyatt described having access to a personal iPod and gaming technologies such as a Wii, but when discussing technologies that could be used for composing, he described them as “my brother’s laptop” and “my dad’s computer,” which showed he lacked ownership of them, and thus access to using them.

## THE CAMP

The writing camp occurred for three hours a day over two weeks. The focus of the camp was writing using digital tools, and it was designed for students in third through twelfth grades. As mentioned earlier, the three authors helped coordinate the camp along with other faculty members and graduate students. We hired local teachers to be the camp instructors.

Campers were divided into three groups: elementary, middle, and high school. Two instructors were assigned to each group. Daily activities included whole group lessons, presentations from local authors, individual writing time, and working in small groups with graduate students who were taking a literacy course at the same time. All students were provided with their own computers: desktops for the middle and high school groups and laptops for the elementary group. They were given choice about what to write about, with the expectation that everyone would complete at least one finished piece at the end of the two weeks to be shared. On the last day of camp, we invited the families to view the final pieces and listen to campers read them aloud. We

also displayed their work at a local sporting event, published them to a camp website, and shared final products with an outreach school in Kenya. This entailed making printed copies of the campers' writing so they could be sent to the Kenyan school that lacked Internet access. This aspect of sharing the campers' writing evolved from a previous relationship that one faculty member had with the Kenyan school. At the beginning of camp, the campers were informed of the various ways their work was to be shared.

Instructional activities included strategies for planning and revising, but also included digital writing practices such as studying author's craft in digital writing ([Hicks, 2013](#)) and how to design text with the reader's navigation in mind. Campers were instructed to use a variety of digital tools during the writing process, such as [Popplet](#) and [VoiceThread](#). Appendix A provides a complete listing of the digital tools along with a description and tips for teachers.

### DATA SOURCES AND ANALYSIS

The primary sources of data included interviews, field notes, and video/audio recordings. We conducted one-on-one, informal, and semi-structured interviews ([Weiss, 1994](#)) with campers on a daily basis. Our questions were mainly focused on students' writing habits, use of technology, and the kind of writing they did at school and at home. We hand wrote notes during the interviews and also collected audio recordings that we later transcribed. We wrote observational field notes and video/audio recorded small and large group interactions throughout the two weeks of camp. Later, we selectively transcribed the recordings by choosing those that included Wyatt. A final form of data included the campers' artifacts: their notebooks, their writing, and daily exit slips, which included reflective prompts such as "Writing is important because..."

We did not specifically collect data on Wyatt's school or home, and we did not formally interview his mother, therefore we are limited in what we can say about Wyatt in these contexts. We only know what Wyatt shared in interviews and what Wyatt's mother conveyed to us about his progress at school through informal conversations. She made it a point to talk with the camp director and Wyatt's instructor because she was concerned about his writing at school.

Data analysis occurred in three phases. During phase one, all researchers individually engaged in open coding of the data ([Lincoln & Guba, 1985](#)). After we each created a list of initial codes, we met to compare, discuss, and reach consensus about the codes generated. We also looked for patterns amongst the codes. In phase two, we refined the codes further into common categories found across data sources. In phase three, we focused on our research question: What are the experiences of an elementary student who is identified as struggling with writing at school when composing multimodal texts in a digital writing camp?

### FINDINGS

As we examined Wyatt's experiences in the writing camp, we saw that he used digital tools in the camp to position himself as a successful writer. In doing so, he used his comfort with technology and preference for math to inform his identity as a writer. Wyatt loved having his own laptop

during camp. He was excited to learn new tools and seemed to thrive on collaborating with his peers. He stood out as being a leader and often showed the instructors how to navigate the online tools and helped classmates with their laptops. There were several instances where Wyatt used his personal knowledge and experiences with technology to enhance his work at camp. This can be seen in the following interview with Wyatt on the second day of camp:

*Researcher: Tell me about what you just did.*

*Wyatt: I took pictures off my USB and I'm uploading them to Popplet.com.*

*Researcher: Did you know how to do that before hand?*

*Wyatt: No.*

*Researcher: What gave you the idea to do that?*

*Wyatt: Cause some of the pictures [I wanted to use], they didn't have on [Popplet.com], but I do.*

From this interaction, it seems like Wyatt is comfortable with technology. He did not have to ask for help with uploading pictures; he figured it out on his own. He was not taught how to take digital pictures, transfer them to a USB drive, or upload them to Popplet at camp. He had an idea for how to enhance his digital writing and used his previous knowledge of technology to make his vision a reality. His effort to obtain pictures that he wanted instead of the ones available on the Popplet site seems to indicate that he had a genuine interest in this project. Campers sitting close to Wyatt saw what he was doing and asked him to show them how they could also add their personal pictures to their writing. He shared his knowledge with them excitedly, and the next day several other students brought in USB drives with pictures of their own.

During another interview, Wyatt further described his experiences with technology:

*Researcher: Tell me about your experiences with technology outside of camp, at home, and at school.*

*Wyatt: Uh good. Excellent. I'm the only person who knows how to operate the projector [at school].*

*Researcher: How do you feel about writing using paper/pencil vs. digital writing?*

*Wyatt: I'm more of a technology kind of guy cause I'm more experienced with technology. I like writing using the computer because it makes me feel more creative.*

*Researcher: What kind of writing do you feel most excited about?*

*Wyatt: This kind of writing. Fun writing.*

The interaction described above shows that Wyatt was confident using technology and that he enjoyed writing, at least in this context. Additionally, during one of the guest author sessions at camp, the editor of an online magazine was discussing his digital writing experiences. The author mentioned an article he had written that was published on the magazine's website. On this

particular day of camp Wyatt brought his iPod with him. While the author was presenting, several of the adults in the room noticed that Wyatt was using his iPod. Just as one of the instructors began to walk over to Wyatt to tell him to put the device away, Wyatt raised his hand and asked the guest author, “What does the chicken on the front page of your website represent?” Wyatt was not playing on his iPod after all. He was using the technology to enhance his understanding of the topic being discussed and then used what he had learned to ask a question of the author.

Wyatt’s writing was enhanced by his ability to incorporate the technologies he was learning about at camp into his VoiceThread. These tools allowed him to embrace writing in a way that drew upon his identity as a “technology kind of guy” and thereby positioned him as the kind of writer who uses technology to compose. He used Popplet to brainstorm ideas for his VoiceThread by creating a mind map to organize his thoughts with pictures, videos, and words. These digital tools allowed him to produce a new kind of text through a process where knowledge of technology was essential.

Additionally, Wyatt used Microsoft Word to plan and draft his VoiceThread at the recommendation of the camp instructors. Using a two-column table in Word, he placed an image in the column on the left and his ideas for what he would say about it on the right. He engaged in the revision process by reviewing the order of his images and texts, considering the text that was paired with each image, and adding more text when he saw the need to. Wyatt engaged in peer revision as well by asking other campers to read through his VoiceThread draft. He then made adjustments based on comments made by his peers. Before finalizing the draft, he had an instructor read over his plan for editing. His use of Word was more traditional in this instance, but supported his creation of a digital text.

As we can see from these glimpses into Wyatt’s writing process, he was quite comfortable with technology and enjoyed writing for meaningful purposes. He took on the identity of a technology expert, which was also supported when he told us about school where he was “the only one who knows how to work the projector.” This sense of expertise was further developed in camp when he was able to share his knowledge of uploading photos to Popplet. His constant use of technology in camp likely affirmed his identity as a “technology kind of guy,” as he was able to position himself as being skilled with technology. When other campers sought his help with uploading their own pictures, they also positioned him as a technology expert.

Wyatt was confident in himself and his ability to operate different technologies. He was able to use his background knowledge to enhance his understanding of digital writing concepts and to problem solve and make his digital writing more interesting, as he did when he added a personal picture to his Popplet and when he used his iPod to look up the guest author's website.

In the following interview excerpt, we see how Wyatt acknowledged that he liked to write, but then juxtaposed this with saying "but I'm a math kind of guy."

*Researcher: Why did you want to come to writing camp?*

*Wyatt: To improve my writing,...I went to Apple camp...I like to write.*

*Researcher: What do you like to write about?*

*Wyatt: Whatever pops in my head...but I'm a math kind of guy.*

*Researcher: Did you consider yourself a writer before you came to camp?*

*Wyatt: Not really.*

*Researcher: What changed?*

*Wyatt: I've made improvements.*

Coming into camp, Wyatt thought he needed to become a better writer and, at least initially, did not identify himself as a writer despite admitting he likes to write. His description of himself as a "math kind of guy" seems to indicate that this is an important aspect of this identity and illustrates his preference for math over writing in general. He made a point to say that he wanted to come to camp to "improve" his writing. His view of himself as a writer began to shift as camp went on and he had more experiences with digital writing.

Based on his affinity for math, it was not surprising that Wyatt chose to focus on math when creating his VoiceThread. Figure 1 provides excerpts from his VoiceThread that shows Wyatt's confidence, knowledge, and enjoyment of math concepts.

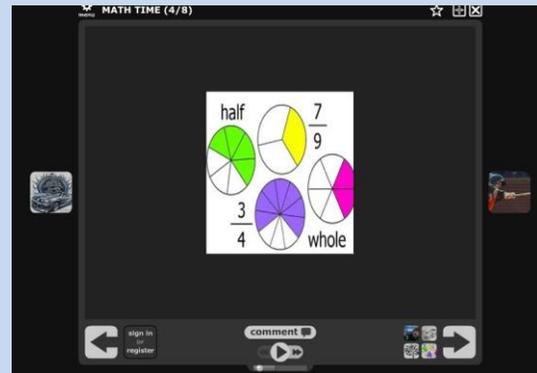
Slide 1/8: For confidentiality purposes the image in the first slide has not been included here, however, excerpts from a transcript of the contents from his slides can be found below. Slide 1 contains a picture that Wyatt took of himself. In the picture his shaggy brown hair sweeps across his forehead, and he looks at the camera with his head slanted at an angle, his mouth agape, tongue sticking out, and his energetic personality perfectly captured with the click of a button.

*My name is Wyatt. I am 9 years old. I am going into fourth grade. I really like math because I am really good at math. My VoiceThread is about math.*

Slide 3/8:



Slide 4/8



*How do you know if you should add, subtract, multiply, or divide? You can look at the sign in the problem. An addition sign means that you add. A subtraction sign means that you subtract, which means take away. A multiplication sign means that you multiply. A division sign means that you divide.*

*A fraction is a whole or part of a shape. A fraction is also called a partition.*

Slide 7/8



*I love math!*

Figure 1. Wyatt's voicethread.

Wyatt took on the role of authority when it came to explaining mathematical concepts. He covered a range of topics from addition and subtraction to fractions. His knowledge on the topic is fairly developed as can be seen in his use of technical vocabulary. For example, he uses the term “partition” as another word for a “fraction.” Wyatt’s choice in topic was his way of positioning himself as a “math kind of guy” and he expressed this aspect of his identity when he made statements such as “I am really good at math” and “I love math!”

Wyatt’s preference for using the computer to write as opposed to writing by hand can be seen in the following interview during the second week of camp:

*Researcher: If you were going to write a book would you create a digital or a hard copy?*

*Wyatt: Digital because it’s a lot easier and you have self-correct. It has auto correct and it’s a lot more fun. Then with writing you have to sharpen your pencil and if your eraser falls off you have to get another one and sharpen it again. If your battery gets low it’s called a charger, you don’t have a charger for a pencil.*

*Researcher: What counts as writing? Drawing? Using the computer?*

*Wyatt: Drawing counts as writing because you need a drawing in order to write. There’s no point in writing unless you have a picture because the person who is reading the story doesn’t understand and they can’t get a picture to understand what is happening unless they have a really good imagination.*

*Researcher: What about the computer?*

*Wyatt: Yeah, I mean you’re typing. Well, not really ‘cause writing is supposed to be...I really don’t know, but the computer is a lot more fun. My hand gets all tired and sore when writing with pencil.*

*Researcher: Do you feel more like a writer when using paper and pencil or the computer?*

*Wyatt: I like using the computer because it makes me feel more creative and it’s easier.*

Wyatt reveals how laborious pencil and paper writing is for him, stating several times that his hand gets tired. Worrying about sharpening his pencil and having an adequate eraser seem to be a distraction and makes writing less enjoyable for him. In contrast, the use of technology made writing a much less arduous task, and therefore, far more enjoyable.

Here he also seems to be conflicted as to what counts as writing. Drawing is an acceptable form of writing, in his opinion, as long as it is coupled with text and helps the reader develop a deeper understanding. He seems less confident that writing on the computer is actual writing. His understanding of writing as being multimodal and communicating to the reader is a sophisticated understanding of writing that extends beyond traditional pencil and paper writing. Being unsure as to whether or not writing on the computer counts may reflect the traditional paper and pencil forms of writing he encounters at school, which he may perceive of as being actual writing. In another portion of this same interview, Wyatt also confirms that he does not do much writing outside of school. His only description of writing done at home involved writing a Christmas list.

This is another reminder of the importance of expanding students' understanding of not only what is considered writing, but also the multiple purposes writing can serve in different situations. We believe Wyatt and other students would benefit from having many opportunities to write in ways that invite them to express and try on different writing identities, such as Wyatt's ability to be a math expert in his VoiceThread.

## DISCUSSION

Writing is used to participate in the social world. As children begin to participate in school writing practices, they do not learn a generic set of technical literacy skills. Rather, they learn which textual intentions, procedures, and processes are valued by their teachers (Dyson, 2006). Writing is also an act of self-definition that involves taking on new cultural identities that include values, attitudes, feelings, and social relationships (Rowe, 2008). We can see how Wyatt navigated the camp setting to position himself as a writer by highlighting two aspects of his identity—being a “technology and math kind of guy.” We need to pay attention to how children use writing to participate in the social world and what it is they learn beyond technical skills. Contexts such as the writing camp can provide a place for students to be writers and can support the other identities they bring with them.

### CREATING SPACES FOR STUDENTS TO POSITION THEMSELVES AS WRITERS

One way to understand the differences in Wyatt's experiences is to examine how he was positioned at camp. For example, on the first day when we asked him if he considered himself a writer, Wyatt replied, “It depends. It depends on the subject I'm writing about. If I'm writing on animals it's probably going to be good, if I'm not, it's probably going to be *okay*.” This suggests that Wyatt thought the subject matter of his writing was important in determining how successful his writing would be. When composing his VoiceThread, Wyatt also chose a topic with which he felt comfortable. When students are given the opportunity to choose what they write about, it is easier to write with an authoritative voice and they can be positioned as experts, something that may not always be possible when they are told what to write about. The traditional “write about...” prompt may limit students' ability to compose as an authority on the subject. For Wyatt, writing about math provided him a way to write as an expert, thus positioning himself as a successful writer. We think it is important for students to be positioned as successful writers, and providing them with opportunities to write on topics they enjoy and understand can help with this (Graves, 2003).

In another interview, we found out that Wyatt did not consider himself a writer before camp, but by the end he saw himself as a writer. When we asked him to explain, he said, “I'm able to use really good technology and come up with good ideas.” Again we see the importance that technology played in shaping Wyatt's writing and his views about writing. The technology was not only motivating for Wyatt, but also provided him a space where he could worry less about the physical act of writing, and focus instead on the product he was creating. Seeing himself as using “good technology” and coming up with “good ideas” allowed Wyatt to position himself as a writer. For students who struggle with writing, it is important to find what it is that helps them to feel successful with writing. For Wyatt, being able to compose digitally made all the difference in

allowing him to develop a different relationship with writing and made it possible for him to see himself as a writer.

Another example of how the writing camp helped to position Wyatt as a writer related to the opportunity students have to work with peers. In an interview we asked Wyatt about his experiences with working with others. He said, "I'd prefer to work with a partner because the partner helps me come up with good ideas and drawings." Collaboration not only allows students to learn from and with each other, but also allows students to see themselves as writers who fit into a group (Gilbert & Graham, 2010; Suhr, 2010). Helping students see themselves as writers is an important part of creating a writing community in the classroom, and we think this is a beneficial experience that supports writing development.

### DIGITAL TOOLS AS SUPPORT FOR WRITING

Wyatt was able to use digital tools to embrace the writing process and see himself as a writer. In many ways these digital tools removed the aspects of writing that caused Wyatt to struggle and develop a negative attitude toward writing in the first place. Instead of restricting Wyatt and his creativity, they supported his interests and built his confidence. Traditional writing methods with handwritten compositions completed independently may privilege some groups of students over others, and limit students' abilities to construct positive writing identities (Goldberg, Russell, & Cook, 2003). We believe Wyatt's story supports the idea that classroom practice needs to allow for multimodal, collaborative, and interactive learning opportunities (Edwards-Groves, 2010). If students have more opportunities to use digital tools, they may be more motivated to write, identify as writers, and improve their writing.

### WRITING WITH A SENSE OF AUTONOMY

Providing Wyatt with a sense of autonomy over his writing seemed to be highly motivating and allowed him to embrace the process of writing using digital tools. Wyatt shared his writing with an authentic audience and took charge of his ideas and represented them in ways that made sense to him. He also had open access to a laptop at all times, which was different from his home and school experiences. This allowed him to be creative, channel his confidence with technology, and maintain a sense of ownership over his writing. This supports the findings of other studies that have shown how access via laptops enhances writing motivation and achievement (e.g., Suhr et al., 2010).

Additionally, Wyatt had the freedom to work with peers as he saw fit. Our camp classroom was always abuzz with conversation as campers talked to each other about their work and assisted one another. Being able to collaborate with other campers, share ideas with them, and engage in focused talk surrounding the project at hand provided a sense of autonomy because Wyatt was free to engage with others, rather than have to work entirely alone or be restricted to conversing with others only at specific times. We were able to see the benefit of an environment that encouraged collaboration and productive talk. In their survey of fourth through sixth grade writing teachers, Gilbert and Graham (2010) found that peer collaboration was not commonly used. Moreover, Edward-Groves (2010) found that students identified teamwork as a critical aspect of the multimodal writing process. In conjunction with previous research, our study suggests the

importance of the use of digital tools for writing and opportunities for peer collaboration. The ability to freely collaborate and work with others during the writing process can develop students' sense of autonomy, as they are able to make decisions about when to engage with others.

### A VISION FOR TEACHING WRITING

Wyatt's story sheds light on important implications for writing teachers. Although we recognize the limitations teachers may experience when it comes to access to digital tools, we strongly encourage teachers to make a conscious effort to use the resources that are available to them. Wyatt's story teaches us that students who struggle with traditional forms of writing may be able to thrive under different circumstances, and it is our job as teachers to figure out ways to allow students to excel despite the limitations we face.

Access to digital tools allowed Wyatt to position himself as a successful writer and could easily be transferred to his school environment to continue to build his confidence and interest in writing. Teachers need not feel pressure to become experts of every digital tool available. Students, when given the freedom to explore, are much more capable than we may realize at problem solving and navigating the digital world. We encourage teachers to attempt to let go of their hesitations and release some control of the digital writing process to their students.

Wyatt flourished in ways that he might not have with traditional writing. When able to compose multimodally, Wyatt's knowledge and skills were valued in ways unlike before. But seeing and appreciating what children already know and can do is just a first step. We need policies that actively support the instructional use of digital tools for composing. We also need classroom environments that encourage children to grow as individual writers rather than labeling them as "good" or "struggling." Being aware of the social positioning that takes place in schools can enable teachers to position their students in ways that affirm their identities. We hope that Wyatt's story can be used to help teachers and researchers gain additional insight into how they might facilitate the growth of writers through the use of digital tools and capitalize on children's strengths.

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## Appendix A

*Digital tools used in the writing camp.*

<b>Digital Tool</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Tips for Teachers</b>
<a href="#">Flipsnack</a>	An online flipbook	Students can create an online flipbook to showcase their writing. Flipsnack works by uploading pdfs that are then arranged into a flipbook. Teachers will need to consider how students will create pdfs, such as using Microsoft Word. Once the pdfs are uploaded onto Flipsnack, they cannot be edited, so students will have to finalize their writing and page layout before uploading to Flipsnack.
iMovie	Video editing software in which the user imports videos to be edited. The user can add sound as well as text to their video.	Of the digital tools used in camp, this is the most complex one. Students will need some way of recording beforehand such as with a video camera or an iPad. Teachers will need to consider how to save the final as well as videos in progress because file sizes can be large.
<a href="#">Linoit</a>	Acts as an online bulletin board where students can create sticky notes, add pictures, or videos.	In the camp we used linoit for students to organize their drafts. They wrote down key ideas from their writing onto individual sticky notes and moved them around. They added more sticky notes as necessary when they identified areas that needed more writing. While we did not do this in the camp, linoit allows users to create groups where members can view each other's bulletin boards. This could be a useful tool for peer feedback.
Microsoft Word	A word processing program in which the users type. Allows the user to embed images.	Since this is software on computers, teachers will need to consider how students will save their work. In our camp, students were not able to save directly onto the laptops so we supplied USB flash drives. If teachers find it more convenient, they could use an online program such as Google Docs for students to save their work online, however, they would first need a Google account or the teacher could create one account for the entire class.

<a href="#">Popplet</a>	An online tool for creating concept maps and brainstorming ideas. Images can be combined with text.	Campers used Popplet to brainstorm ideas for their writing. Teachers can consider using Popplet to create concept maps instead of pencil and paper. The ability to add images can be helpful, but teachers will need to consider how students will obtain images such as from stock images or clip art.
<a href="#">VoiceThread</a>	A website for composing slide shows with voice recording technology.	This was one of the most popular digital tools for our campers to choose. There are options for free or paid access. We chose the free option, which means campers were limited to creating one VoiceThread presentation. Campers can add voice recordings to their slides and in addition, viewers can leave voice recordings for the author on individual slides.
<a href="#">Weebly</a>	A website that allows the user to create a website or blog.	Some campers preferred to create a website for their writing. Weebly offers many templates to create a customized look. There is an option to use it for free, but the URL will contain “weebly.com”.