Abstract
This qualitative teacher action research study investigated the experiences of incorporating Harry Noden’s brush strokes (absolutes, adjectives shifted out of order, appositives, and participial phrases) into a high school Critical Literacy English class. Nineteen tenth grade students participated in the study conducted in an urban high school containing approximately 3100 students in eastern Pennsylvania. Methods of gathering data included participant observation, student surveys, and student work. The students were presented with four of Noden’s brush strokes and then used those constructions to revise sentences, create captions, write descriptive paragraphs, and finally use them in an informative essay.

Findings suggest that students who have scored at basic and below basic levels on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) struggle when presented with these new writing techniques, but when engaged in the writing process, can become more descriptive writers using these constructions.