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How Can I Use Technology in My Classroom to Improve Students' Writing?

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Technology in Elementary writing

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Research Question

- How can I use technology in my classroom to improve students' writing?

Literature Review

- Because technology is so commonly used outside of the classroom, it is important for schools to keep up to date with the world around them (Sweeny, 2010).
- With the addition of technology students will compose more quality and additional pieces (Peterson, 2012).
- The use of digital tools can increase students motivation and engagement in their writing (Saulsburry, Kilpatrick, Wolvers and Dostal, 2015).
- The use of technology or apps has shown improvement in students ability to sequence events, create a coherent story and improved their plot pacing (Womack, 2016).
- Nair, Tay and Koh (2013) argue the results of implementation of technology into the classroom. While some can be beneficial, an overuse or misuse can be more of a distraction.

Student work

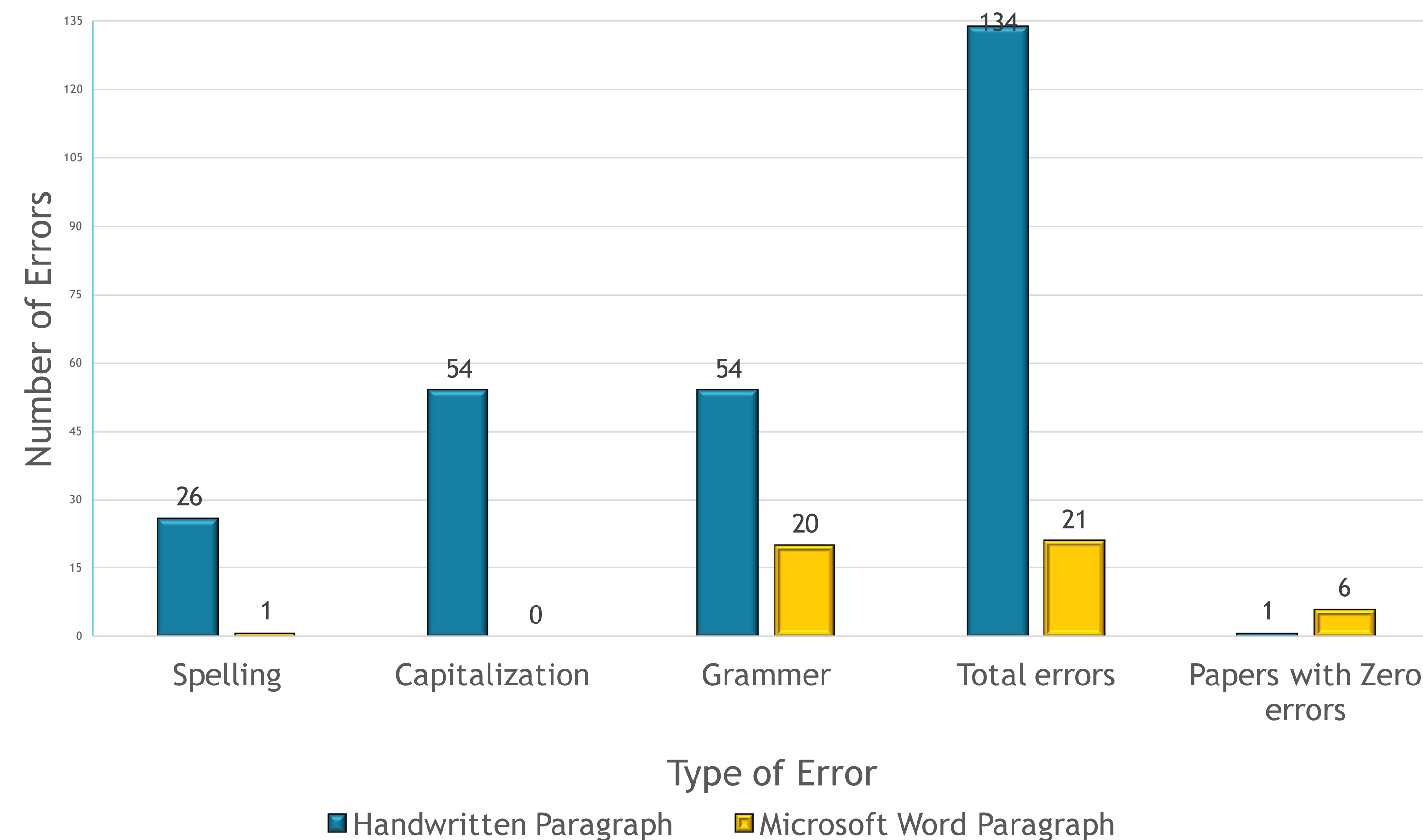


Figure 1. Shows the number of errors which were found in students handwritten writing pieces and *Microsoft Word* processed writing pieces

Methodology

- Participants were seventeen fourth grade students in an urban elementary school.
- Students used both the traditional method of paper and pencil and their mobile devices to write paragraphs.
- The ideas of Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge Theory (TPACK) was used to teach students about the uses of technology and how it can be used in writing.
- The data that was analyzed included student work, grades, daily notes, and lesson plans.

Results and Data Analysis

- Students grades reflected very similarly with/without the use of technology with 10 receiving a A/B on their handwritten paragraphs and 8 receiving the same score on their Word Processed paragraphs.
- As shown in Figure 1, common errors drastically decreased with the addition of technology. This supports Peterson and McClay (2012) who argue that tech. can help increase writing quality and the amount of writing.
- The overall process took roughly a month to teach students how to work with *Microsoft Word*.
- Student motivation increased greatly at the opportunity to use computers like shown in Tackvic's (2012) classroom.

Conclusion

- Technology greatly benefited students abilities to produce work with fewer errors.
- The time requirement to teach student how to use technology outweighed its benefits in the early education classroom.
- While grammatical and spelling benefits of technology are very clear, its usefulness in improving students long term writing is unclear.