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ELEMENTARY TEACHERS OF WRITING: PERSONAL WRITING BELIEFS AND
THEIR IMPACT ON TEACHING WRITING

by

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DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of
The University of Houston–Clear Lake
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

in Educational Leadership

THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON–CLEAR LAKE

AUGUST, 2017

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DEDICATION

Several years ago, I had the pleasure of meeting one of the most passionate people I have ever met. Her enthusiasm for learning, specifically reading, was contagious. I was mesmerized by her knowledge. Her ability to make me feel as though everything I said or believed were important helped me see myself in a whole new way. She truly cared about her students.

Once during my doctoral journey, I was questioning my abilities and I stopped by her office to visit. She always knew what to say, and her smiles were comforting. She told me that this would be a lonely journey, but not a journey that was too much for me to handle. She said, “A dissertation is truly an individual process.” Speaking with her gave me a new focus, and I left that day with a sense of peace about the process.

Unfortunately for me, that would be the last time I spoke with her. If I could speak with her again, I would let her know that I appreciate all she did for me in the short time I knew her. I would express my gratitude to her for her participation and guidance in the initial stages of dissertation writing. It was a bittersweet moment to replace her as a committee member, but she is still a huge part of this study in spirit.

Dr. Linda Charlene Carter, this is for you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dr. Carter was right. This has been a lonely journey. Some days I could have given it all up, and other days I would hang on to this dream with everything I have. However, my journey has been filled with interactions that have made this process bearable. There is a traditional African proverb that states it takes a village to raise a child, but I have learned in this journey that it takes a village to write a dissertation. This dissertation owes its existence to the help, support, and dedication of many people. Though it will not be enough to express my gratitude in words to everyone who has been a part of this journey, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all of them.

Above all, I owe my deepest gratitude to the almighty God for granting me the wisdom, health, strength, and perseverance to undertake this research task and see it through to completion. I know how much he loves me because I am blessed to have so many awesome, encouraging people in my life.

My sincerest thanks go to the seven participants in this study. Without your selfless participation, none of this would be possible. You have given me an insight into your classrooms and teaching lives that has changed my way of thinking about this subject. You are all awesome educators, and your students are lucky to have you in their lives.

I would like to give special thanks to my dissertation committee. I owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Kathryn Matthew for her time and careful attention to detail. If I had not taken that first class, I would have never applied for the program. Your belief in my abilities has given me the courage to attempt something that I did not think was possible. To Dr. Lilian McEnery, your untiring support and guidance throughout my journey has also made this process easier. I truly appreciate you for challenging me. I am also thankful to Dr. Lisa Jones and Dr. Roberta Raymond for stimulating my thinking and helping me to expand the scope of my project.

At some point in all of our lives, we make choices and engage in activities that become larger than we could have ever imagined. We all have a support group to help make those things seem doable. My group includes several close friends, my school family, and other colleagues who have reminded me along the way that even when the struggle is real, I am an overcomer. For the times you asked about me about my classes or my writing, I appreciate you. For the times you acted interested in my topics, I appreciate you. For the times you listened to one more of my excuses and called my bluff, I appreciate you. You will never know how you have kept this process going, even when I wanted to give up. You truly are my extended family, and I will forever be indebted to you.

Last, but definitely not least, I could not have done this without my family. So much of my success is possible because of the endless love and support of my family. My mother and father have always taught me that it takes hard work to make dreams a reality. They have been encouraging at every step of the way and always encouraged me

to pursue my dreams. Since my childhood, my parents have instilled a strong sense of self-awareness and pride in me, and expected me to be my best. I owe so much to my parents for all of their sacrifice, support, encouragement, and love.

I am ever grateful for the children I have been blessed to help parent. Marisa, Ethan, Macy, and Carson, you have all inspired me to be more and to do more. Your presence in my life has blessed me more than anything I will ever deserve.

I will never be able to say thank you enough to my husband, Billy Hamblen. You have been the glue that holds everything in place. You believe things about my abilities that I do not believe myself. From the moment this started eight years ago, you have done everything to make it possible. You have been in the thick of it without fail, and I love you for keeping me focused and moving forward. Thank you for giving me the freedom to pursue this dream. You are my everything.

ABSTRACT

ELEMENTARY TEACHERS OF WRITING: PERSONAL WRITING BELIEFS AND THEIR IMPACT ON TEACHING WRITING

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The purpose of this study was to determine teachers' beliefs of themselves as writers and the impact of these beliefs on their teaching of writing. Case studies of seven teachers of writing on two elementary campuses in a suburban school district were the sample. A combination of interviews, journals, personal teaching metaphors, observations, and field notes were collected using qualitative case study methodology. The constant comparative method was used to analyze the data. As conceptual categories emerged from the analysis, the evidence was sorted in to themes. The results showed a discrepancy between teacher beliefs and practice. The data also revealed a lack of confidence among teachers regarding their ability to teach writing effectively while preparing students for high-stakes, standardized tests.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Teachers have a professional obligation to ensure students have the opportunity to become the writers they need to be as they graduate from high school and pursue various career paths. Extended periods of writing are necessary to develop detailed arguments while preparing students for the demands they will face in postsecondary education (Applebee & Langer, 2009) and in their careers. The National Commission on Writing (2004) stated that businesses reported two-thirds of salaried employees had some writing responsibility within their field including the production of technical reports, formal reports, memos, emails, PowerPoint presentations, and other forms of correspondence. However, businesses in the United States also reported spending \$3.1 billion annually for writing remediation (The National Commission on Writing, 2004). Due to the increased need for drastic improvement in the area of writing, The National Commission on Writing (2003) labeled writing as the neglected “R” in education.

Despite the fundamental importance of acquiring writing skills, the majority of students in the United States continue to struggle with writing. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), only one in four high school seniors is capable of using proper spelling, grammar, or the higher-level writing skills needed to craft a clear, well-organized essay (National Center for Education Statistics (NCES),

2012). NAEP is a congressionally mandated project and measures student progress throughout the United States. National report cards are issued for nine subjects based on periodic testing. The subjects with the most frequent assessments are mathematics, reading, writing, and science. Since 2003, NAEP has assessed students in mathematics and reading at least every two years in grades 4 and 8 and every four years in grade 12. Writing and science assessments have not been as consistent. Writing was assessed for grades 4, 8, and 12 in 2002 and 2007. However, in 2011, only grades 8 and 12 were assessed. Even though results indicate a continued deficiency in writing skills, the next assessment for grades 4, 8, and 12, are not scheduled until 2017. In 2002, only 28% of students in grade 4, 31% of students in grade 8, and 24% of students in grade 12 wrote at a skill level considered proficient, above proficient, or advanced. In 2007, the results revealed a lack of significant progress. Thirty-three percent of students in grade 8 and 24% of students in grade 12 were performing at a skill level considered proficient, above proficient, or advanced. In the 2011 NAEP report, results from a computer based writing assessment indicated the students in grade 12 had improved with 27% of the students at a writing level considered proficient or above (NCES, 2012). Students in grade 8 went from 33% performing at a skill level considered proficient to only 27%. Even though the SAT, formerly known as the Scholastic Aptitude Test, is not designed as an indicator of achievement but a predictor how well students will do in college, there has also been a decline in SAT writing scores. The average writing score in 2011–12, 488, was nine points lower than in 2005–06, the year in which the SAT writing section was introduced

(NCES, 2015). Even with the importance of writing, many students continue to struggle with writing skills.

Successful participation in school, the workplace, and society is contingent on the ability to communicate through writing, but for some children, learning to write is neither fun nor affirming (Norman & Spencer, 2005). Unfortunately, due to the format of formal testing, there is an increased emphasis on teaching the surface features of writing rather than the expression of ideas. Teachers must continuously assess and plan for children at every level. However, high stakes testing creates a daily challenge for teachers of all academic areas including writing (McCartney, 2008), and makes it difficult for teachers to meet the needs of all students. The content of a writing piece cannot be fully developed when the writer is more concerned with the structure and the mechanics of a composition (Fletcher, 2000). The outcomes of these formal standardized assessments have perpetuated a common view among society that children are lacking the skills or abilities they need to be better writers. There is more to assessing successful writing than a high stakes test can provide.

Teaching writing requires a deep understanding of the writing process, and teachers need this in order to successfully teach students to write. However, most teachers do not have formal training in writing instruction (Murray, 2009), or they have indicated that their coursework was not adequate preparation for teaching writing (Cutler & Graham, 2008; Gilbert & Graham, 2010; Kiuahara, Graham, & Hawken, 2009). Tracy, Scales, and Luke (2014) report teachers' personal beliefs about their own writing can lead to reluctance about teaching certain concepts. For example, Hall and Grisham-Brown

(2011) found that pre-service teachers who struggled with conventions were hesitant to teach about them. Hillocks and Smith (2003) state the research on teaching writing is clear: grammar instruction does not result in students writing more correctly. Traditional instruction, where there are examinations of written models, specific writing assignments, and teacher feedback on that writing, has only small effects (Hillocks, 1995). Moreover, if teachers think that writing is a talent rather than a learned skill, it influences the value they place on writing instruction (Norman & Spencer, 2005). According to Fletcher (1993), teachers of writing need to utilize three areas of expertise to be masterful teachers of writing: (a) know their individual students, (b) know how to teach effectively, and (c) have some understanding of the process of writing. Unfortunately, many teachers of writing are more comfortable teaching writing conventions than the writing process (Fletcher & Portalupi, 1998). Therefore, the problem exists that teachers must become more knowledgeable about how to teach the writing process in effective ways.

Despite the importance of writing and the development of the National Writing Project (NWP) to aid in the professional development of writing teachers, many teachers today are not well prepared to teach writing (Cutler & Graham, 2008; Kiuvara et al., 2009). In a survey conducted by Gilbert and Graham (2010), 65% of the teachers surveyed reported receiving inadequate preservice and inservice instruction regarding effective instructional practices in writing. McQuitty (2012) supports the idea that teacher perceptions based on many experiences demonstrates the complexity of how teachers learn to teach writing. Contextual factors including teachers' own dispositions, their beliefs about writing and writing instruction, and the perceptions of themselves as

writers also affect their beliefs (Bowie, 1996). While studies have addressed teachers' beliefs about teaching writing (Benton, 1999; McLeod, 1995; Moore, 2000; Lavelle, 2006), few have considered teachers' beliefs about their own writing skill (Lavelle, 2006; Tracy, Scales, & Luke, 2014), especially in relation to their teaching practices. The study of teacher beliefs is part of the process of understanding how teachers conceptualize their work.

The instructional decisions classroom teachers make on a day-to-day basis are driven by past experiences as well as by the context of their work environment. Pajares (1992) states that beliefs are developed from experiences and social interactions. The findings of Brindley and Schneider (2002) support the idea that teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge of best practices influence the success of programs designed to promote literacy skills. However, the choice of programs and instructional materials is not always the responsibility of the teacher. Smith (1988) and Freeman and Freeman (2001) agree the prevalence of instructional programs is more political than pedagogical. According to Bingimlas and Hanrahan (2010), personal and professional factors may also impact the relationship between teacher beliefs and instructional practices. Additionally, Freeman and Freeman (2001) identified the following as factors that influence teacher beliefs and instructional practices: (a) past experiences, (b) educational experiences, (c) colleagues/administrators, (d) changes in teaching situation, (e) materials, (f) politics, and (g) students.

There is limited research concerning writing instruction in elementary classrooms, but the research that does exist focuses more on students' writing ability and

development rather than the instruction that is occurring within these classrooms (Richards, Sturm, & Cali, 2012). Existing research provides limited data related to the instructional practices for teaching writing indicating there is still a need to improve writing instruction (Cutler & Graham, 2008; Gilbert & Graham, 2010). Teachers need to provide students with opportunities to participate in a wide variety of writing experiences (Calkins, 2003; Freeman & Freeman, 2004). Rather than attempting to constrain students to ensure they produce correct writing products, a teacher should act as a facilitator, organizing various classroom activities that enable students to develop effective composing strategies (Rao, 2007).

Teachers' beliefs in their ability to teach writing are shaped, in part, by their perception of themselves as writers, and both positive and negative experiences effect this belief (Daisey, 2009). Experiences both inside and outside the classroom setting, differences between current theory and practices in teaching, and the students served affect teachers' beliefs of their ability to influence academic outcomes particularly in the teaching of writing. Prior experiences with language provide the writer the necessary material to construct text. These experiences with writing and the understanding of writing have influenced the ability of teachers to demonstrate writing during class instruction in order to show children the process in action.

Writing is a complex process that forces individuals to access personal linguistic capital and is used throughout life. It is important that teachers pay close attention to the beliefs and expectations students bring to the writing process because those factors shape how and whether or not the students will choose to embrace the instruction given by the

teacher (Applebee, 2000). Applebee and Langer (2009) suggest the process needs to provide encouragement and support for the students in order to develop the writing skills they need to make them successful in the future.

Statement of the Problem

Graves (2004) notes the importance of the teacher in the writing classroom, but the research pertaining to the factors that influence teacher beliefs and instructional practices is limited (Aguirre & Speer, 2000; Smith, 2005). In addition, Bingimlas and Hanrahan (2010) have reported that teacher beliefs play a substantial role in the implementation of new activities in the classroom and may be complicated by emotions and feelings. The problem is the need to understand teachers' personal beliefs of themselves as writers and the impact of these beliefs on their teaching of writing.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore teachers' personal beliefs of themselves as writers and the impact these beliefs have on their writing lives and teaching of writing. Information was drawn from a sample of seven currently practicing elementary teachers. This study was conducted using case study methodology in an effort to contribute to the existing body of knowledge supporting the idea that personal beliefs are an important element in understanding how teachers think about their own writing and how they impact their teaching of writing.

Research Questions

This qualitative study is guided by the following questions.

Research question 1. What are teachers' beliefs of themselves as writers?

Research question 2. What impact do their stated beliefs have on their personal writing practices and teaching of writing?

Definitions

Authorial identity. "Authorial identity is the sense a writer has of themselves as an author and the textual identity they construct in their writing" (Pittam, Elander, Lusher, Fox & Payne, 2009, p.154).

Attitude. "An attitude is a relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner" (Rokeach, 1968, p. 112).

Belief. "...a belief is a proposition which may be consciously or unconsciously held, is evaluative in that it is accepted as true by the individual, and is therefore imbued with emotive commitment; further, it serves as a guide to thought and behaviour" (Borg, 2001, p.186).

Composing. Writers manipulate words and information until it matches their intended meaning. Graves (1983) refers to composing as "everything a writer does from the time the first words are put on the paper until all drafts are complete" (p. 223). Within the context of interactive writing, composing begins with the planning of the text and continues as the writers in the group determine how they want to put the ideas together to reveal their message (craft of writing). Composing includes establishing a purpose, deciding on a format and negotiating a precise text, which the group will write.

Conventions. Conventions are “a combination of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, grammar, and usage (and sometimes layout or presentation) working together to make text easy for the reader to process” (Spandel, 2004, p. 17).

Experiential Factors. Influences on individuals thinking as “gained knowledge through direct observation or participation...practical knowledge, skill, or practice derived from things personally encountered, undergone, or lived through as they generally occur over the course of time (experience. Merriam-Webster Online, 2010).

Ideas. “Clarity, focus, and detail all working to make the writer’s message clear” (Spandel, 2005, p. 16).

Instructional Framework. An instructional framework is “the conceptual structure used to design and analyze teaching” (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 118).

Mini-lessons. Mini-lessons occur at the beginning of the writers’ workshop. These are five to ten minute whole class lessons when the teacher explains and demonstrates techniques needed by students to improve their writing and to successfully use the writing process (Calkins, 1986).

Organization. Organization is “the structure of the piece including a captivating and purposeful lead, strong transitions linking ideas, and a thoughtful conclusion” (Steineger, 1996, p.7).

Presentation. “Presentation refers to the nature of formatting used in presenting a piece of writing and includes guidelines about handwriting, spacing of text, as well as the way in which text and graphics should be integrated to make a seamless whole” (Smith, 2003, p. 5).

Sentence Fluency. Sentence fluency is “the rhythm and flow of word patterns” (Steiniger, 1996, p.7). It is further defined as “...variety in sentences, natural sound, and degree to which text can be read with expression and interpretation” (Spandel, 2004, p. 17).

Sharing. “Sharing writing is a social activity that helps children develop sensitivity to audiences and confidence in themselves as authors” (Tompkins, 2010). Sharing is the final component of the writers’ workshop and occurs during the last 10 to 15 minutes. At this time, the class gathers together to share their writing pieces (Calkins, 2003; Jasmine & Weiner, 2007).

Six Trait Writing Method. This method is defined as an “analytic scoring system for writing” (Higgins, Miller, and Wegmann, 2006, p. 312). Researchers at the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory (NWREL) created a reliable scoring guide for six writing traits (Smith, 2003). The original traits were: Ideas, Organization, Voice, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Conventions (Spandel, 1997). More recently, Presentation has been added to make the 6+1 Traits of Writing (Smith, 2003).

Sociocultural Factors. “The view that knowledge is constructed symbolically by the mind through social interaction with others and is heavily dependent on culture, context, custom, and historical specificity” (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 236).

Teacher Writer. Gleeson and Prain (1996) define teacher writers as teachers who write for themselves or others outside of class time.

Voice. The voice of a paper refers to the “personal tone and flavor of the piece; the writer’s way of connecting to the audience; the sound of a real person talking”

(Steineger, 1996, p.7). It is “the writer’s way of expressing ideas...” and “...the fingerprints of the writer on paper” (Spandel, 2004, p. 16).

Writing. Writers continuously shape their ideas - rereading, reflecting upon, re-visioning, reshaping, and refocusing what has already been created. Writers repeat the process until the text is satisfying to them. Dahl and Farnan (1998) define craft as "the skill, expertise and many strategies required to produce a clear, coherent and effective composition" (p. 51).

Writing Conferences. “Writing conferences are conversations between learner and coach. These conversations are intimate and infinitely varied...Writing conferences assume that writers are first engaged in their own work as writers” (Calkins, 2003, p. 64).

Writing Lives. “A writing life springs from the one creative source that is within each of us” (Tiberghien, 2007, p. xix). Tiberghien also states “...writing is a way of life: a trust nourished by practice. It is a habit. The word habit refers to routine” (p. xix).

Writing Process Classrooms. Classrooms in which writing is a recursive process involving prewriting, drafting, revision, conferencing, editing, and publication (Ray & Laminack, 2001).

Writers’ Notebook. “A writer’s notebook gives you a place to live like a writer, not just during writing time, but wherever you are at any time of day” (Fletcher, 1996, p.4).

Writers’ Workshop. This is a method for teaching the process approach to writing in which students are provided with a daily block of time to engage in the composing process while the teacher guides their learning. The writers’ workshop structure consists

of a mini-lesson, independent writing and conferencing, and sharing (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1986; Graves 1983).

Word Choice. Word choice is “rich, colorful, precise language that communicates in a way that moves and enlightens the reader and creates a picture in the reader’s mind” (Steineger, 1996, p.7). Simply stated, it is “the words and phrases the writer selects to get the message across” (Spandel, 2004, p. 16).

Zone of Proximal Development. The zone of proximal development (ZPD) is the difference between what a learner can do without help and what he or she can do with help (Vygotsky, 1986).

Theoretical Framework

In Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory of Learning, cognitive development such as thought, language, and reasoning processes are developed through social relationships and interactions. Vygotsky (1986) linked language acquisition to cognitive development; asserting that what begins in the social context as actively constructed verbal and nonverbal interactions between a child and others is internalized by the child as the raw material of thought. The process of using language to communicate with others may be the re-externalization of these processes, whether in speaking or in writing.

Writing requires deliberate analytical action. Written language demands conscious work because its relationship to inner speech is different from that of oral speech. Oral speech precedes inner speech in the course of development, and written speech follows inner speech. Inner speech is condensed, abbreviated speech. Written speech is deployed to its fullest extent and is more complete than oral speech. Inner

speech is almost entirely predicative because the situation and the subject of thought, is always known to the thinker. Written speech, on the contrary, must explain the situation fully in order to be intelligible. The change from maximally compact inner speech to maximally detailed written speech requires what might be called deliberate semantics – deliberate structuring of the web of meaning.

All these traits of written speech explain why students' development falls far behind oral speech. Vygotsky (1986) states the discrepancy is caused by the childrens' proficiency in spontaneous, unconscious activity and their lack of skill in abstract, deliberate activity. The psychological functions, on which written speech is based, have not even begun to develop in the proper sense when instruction in writing begins. Even though Vygotsky was more interested in thought processes, most of the findings in his research pertaining to language development speak directly to some facet of writing instruction (Everson, 1991).

Vygotsky's (1986) theory also posited that children's intellectual development can be maximized when instruction is targeted at their zone of proximal development (ZPD). According to Vygotsky, the ZPD represents the gap or difference, between a child's actual developmental level with existing abilities, and what he or she can learn with the guidance of a more skilled person. The basic idea suggests that teachers should teach at a level that is slightly more difficult than the student can work independently but easy enough for them to be able to accomplish the task with the help of a more skilled person. The amount of growth that could be obtained when the child is working in the ZPD depends upon full social interaction. In a classroom, the teacher needs to identify

what the student can do without help in order to guide the student through the ZPD and maximize student learning potential.

Inevitably, a teacher's outlook on achievement and acquisition of knowledge is based, to a great degree, on the identity the teacher brings to the classroom and the degree of relevance the teacher's identity has on school affiliation and achievement.

Opportunities, values, motivations, and resources available for communication in each community are influenced by that group's social history as well as by current environmental conditions. Social interaction is an essential part of developing written speech (Everson, 1991; Vygotsky, 1986). Vygotsky's theory states that for writers to learn, they need to be engaged in social interactions focused on writing tasks the writer cannot do alone, but can accomplish with some guidance. This theory focused research on teacher-student and student-student conferencing in writing instruction and an attempt to determine what that conversation should look like and the complications that differing ethnic or cultural beliefs may have on the conversation. This points out the complexity of writing in that students are trying to compose a writing piece incorporating many voices, sometimes contradictory ones, for the purpose of multiple audiences.

Limitations

Lichtman (2010) states that researchers have to be extremely careful to remain "sensitive to the power that they hold over participants" (p.56), while creating a trustworthy environment. As an assistant principal working in the school chosen for the study, the researcher will have established rapport with potential participants. The researcher recognizes the possibility that this could influence the data collection in both

positive and negative ways. Even though the researcher and the participants have been colleagues for several years, participants may feel uncomfortable sharing personal information with the researcher due to the fact that the researcher has a supervisory role this year.

A second limitation of this study is created by the purposive selection of participants. While the participants come from diverse backgrounds, they are all elementary teachers from one campus. This limits the study to the views and beliefs that are norms on this campus within one district.

A third limitation is limited generalizability. The unique features of the setting make it difficult to generalize to other elementary teachers. Moreover, Merriam (2009) argues that generalizability is an inappropriate standard by which to judge qualitative research.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 comprises an introduction, short literature review, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, the research questions, significance of the study, terms and definitions, the theoretical framework, assumptions and limitations, and organization of the study. Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive review of the literature that lays the foundation for, and provides the rationale for, the study. This chapter includes several theories that support beliefs, as well as teachers' beliefs of themselves as writers and the impact these beliefs have on their teaching of writing. Chapter 3 describes the methods to be used in the research study, including qualitative research, the tradition of inquiry, the research site

and selection of participants, introduction of the participants and sites, procedures for data collection and analysis, verification procedures, ethical considerations, and the role of the researcher. Chapter 4 details the results of the study and the emergent themes. Chapter 5 provides a summary of findings, implications for educators, recommendations for further research, and the conclusion of the study.

Summary

Written communication is a tool that is undeniably important to ensure success in an increasingly competitive world. Due to the increased need for improvement in the area of writing, The National Commission on Writing (2003) labeled writing as the neglected "R" in education. While the body of information about writing instruction and teacher practices continues to increase, researchers still question how this knowledge manifests in classroom writing pedagogy (Brindley & Schneider, 2002). Many teachers today are not well prepared to teach writing and feel more comfortable teaching writing conventions than the writing process. Teachers neglect opportunities to relate writing to ongoing activities in the classroom, which could serve as a source of ideas to stimulate writing (Bridge & Hiebert, 1985).

Sociocultural theories highlight the role of social, cultural, and historical factors in the human experience. Teaching writing requires a personal understanding of the writing process, and teachers need this in order to successfully teach students to write. Teachers must be able to collect and organize information, discover its significance, and make it available to others (Murray, 1996). Experiences with writing and the understanding of writing influence the ability of teachers to demonstrate writing during

class instruction in order to show children the process in action. Learning is viewed as a social process in which thoughts and behaviors are shaped by the context (Everson, 1991).

Bowie (1996) also stated that contextual factors affect teacher beliefs. Therefore, beliefs must be recognized, questioned, and challenged in the light of new information, research, and experiences, or virtually nothing happens (Routman, 2005). Beliefs influence teaching practices in the classroom, even if they are never articulated. The findings of this study will provide information regarding teachers' personal beliefs of themselves as writers and the impact these beliefs have on their teaching of writing.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This research study is focused on the need to understand teachers' personal beliefs of themselves as writers and the impact of these beliefs on their teaching of writing. The purpose of this chapter is to report on the research that guides this study. The review of literature begins with a brief history of writing and research, including research on the writing process. This chapter will also include a description of the writing workshop a description of the five stages of the writing process (Tompkins, 2010), and a description of the six traits of good writing (Spandel, 2004). Research based practices for each stage of the writing process will also be included. Teachers' beliefs about writing, teachers' self-efficacy towards teaching writing, and the influence of beliefs on self-efficacy about teaching writing will also be included in this chapter.

History of Writing and Writing Research

In Colonial America, writing instruction placed an emphasis on handwriting and transcribing text, and writing was only considered necessary if planning to go to college or work outside of the home (Farnan & Dahl, 2003). Monaghan and Saul (1987) suggested that control is one of the reasons writing did not receive the same emphasis, respect, or support given to reading. Historically, society was more concerned with people receiving information through reading and listening. The National Council of

Teachers of English (NCTE) state that citizens may have been able to implement control utilizing writing because written communication was the means society used to transmit specific values (Monaghan & Saul, 1987; Yancey, 2009).

In the nineteenth century, reading continued to be a more common skill than writing. Additionally, learning to read was an activity that children were excited about, while writing was an activity with many negative connotations. Reading was essential to family and church life and produced positive feelings such as warmth and intimacy; however, writing was linked with feelings of unpleasantness and despondency (Brandt, 2001). Furthermore, the physical aspect of writing was also a challenge. Murphy (2001) reminded us how much labor was needed for writing. Using a quill pen and ink was sloppy. Ink drops would splatter and smudge. In or out of school, writing was difficult specifically for children.

During the 20th century, writing instruction went through several transitions. Hawkins and Razali (2012) have provided an account of how the focus of writing instruction within the elementary grades has shifted over the past one hundred years from handwriting to product to process. At the beginning of the 20th century, pencils were more readily available, and handwriting became the focus of writing instruction (Hillocks, 2005). Even in the 1940s, writing was only viewed as the act of transcribing words onto the page. Around the 1950s, the instructional emphasis moved to the written product as the teaching of basic skills, such as grammar and conventions, became important (Hawkins & Razali, 2012). Until the 1970s, research on writing rarely focused on young children and the research that was conducted focused primarily on the

complexity of sentences in children's writing rather than on their composing processes (King & Rentel, 1979). In other words, the researchers looked at what the students wrote rather than how they wrote.

From the 1960s to the 1980s, the concept of process writing began to emerge (Yancey, 2009). Emig (1971) and Graves (1975) conducted research that examined student behaviors during the composing process. Even though Emig (1971) observed twelfth graders and Graves (1975) observed seven-year-olds, both studies identified the writing process as having multiple components and determined that students' engagement in these components varied based on context. Students' use of these components depended on the audience for their writing and whether the task was perceived as interesting.

Writing in the school setting has not been a focal point of researchers for as long as reading has been a focal point (Farnan & Dahl, 2003). Whiteman (1980) claimed that research focusing on reading was 50-100 years ahead of writing research because at that point in the history of American schools, textbooks did not emphasize writing and standardized testing of writing was difficult to administer and score. Another contributing factor was that many teacher training institutions provided few courses on the teaching of writing (Calkins, 1986).

Hillocks (1986) reported an increase in the number of case studies focusing on writing; the trend being to look closely and carefully at a few cases rather than to look broadly at a large number of cases. These studies provided insight into what writers actually do when they write and this knowledge influenced instruction.

The Writing Process

Writing instruction has evolved since the twentieth century and includes a strong emphasis on writing as a process (Hawkins & Razali, 2012). Murray (2004) states that writing is an individual process. Each writer has their own unique way of creating a piece of writing. Writing cannot be taught effectively if all students and all writing are treated as the same. By utilizing a process approach, students cycle through the writing process as they are engaged in writing tasks. Graves (2004) reports that the process is not linear, but recursive. The writer may make one pass or many as they navigate through the process. The use of the process approach for teaching writing can be beneficial in improving writing because students are involved in using the cognitive processes of writing, their individual needs can be addressed, and they are motivated through the collaborative, positive tone that is set for the learning environment (Graham & Sandmel, 2011). Providing students with choice and the responsibility of pacing during the process will also increase the effectiveness of the process.

Cognitive Process

The task of writing is very challenging because writers must utilize multiple cognitive resources as they navigate through the writing process. Writing is a very complex task, especially for young, inexperienced writers, and involves a variety of cognitive and linguistic processes as well as motivational aspects like interest and efficacy (Fletcher, 2000; Murray, 2009). Understanding how writers engage in this process is based on cognitive models that have emerged from the research examining the composing process of adult writers (Dyson & Freedman, 1991). Hayes and Flower

(1980) examined adult writers by asking them to “think aloud” while they were writing in order to understand the cognitive processes as they performed the task. From this research, they constructed a model that explains the writing process as consisting of three major processes. Planning consists of the subprocesses of generating, organizing, and goal-setting and involves drawing on information from the context of the task and from long-term memory in order to set goals and make a plan to achieve those goals in writing a text. Translating is the process that involves producing written language to enact the plan. Reviewing consists of the subprocesses of reading and editing and functions to evaluate and improve the text resulting from the translating process. Contrary to previous thinking about the writing process, the research of Hayes and Flower (1980) provided evidence that writing is goal-directed, goals are organized hierarchically, and the processes are recursive, not linear.

Multiple demands are placed on writers simultaneously during writing and the processes are at risk of becoming constrained if not adequately managed (Torrance & Galbraith, 2006). During the writing process, writers draw on cognitive resources that may compete with each other. The competition for cognitive resources can potentially present challenges, influencing the writers’ ability to spell, transcribe, and access memory (McCutchen, 2006; McCutchen, 2000). The complexity involved in writing entails learning a large repertoire of tools and strategies that are used throughout the writing process (Calkins, 2003; Fletcher & Portalupi, 2005). In order to develop as writers, students and teachers must understand and be able to use the cognitive strategies inherent to the writing process.

Social Process

Writing is also a social process. Working with others helps increase knowledge and promotes growth. Student writers use social interactions for support in becoming more competent as their development moves forward through the ZPD (Vygotsky, 1986). This support allows students to accomplish on their own what they once could only accomplish with another (Dyson & Freedman, 1991). Schultz (1997) described how students in a third and fourth grade classroom learned about writing within a community of writers who collaborated with each other in several ways. Students in this study collaborated by sharing their work with others and working together to write one text. Miller (2011) states that collaborations with a more knowledgeable peer will help students become more competent writers. The necessity of considering the reader, another person, establishes writing as a social process.

Stages of the Writing Process

The writing process has evolved since the 1980s, when pioneers such as Graves (1983) and Calkins (1983) began promoting this method for teaching writing (Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2006). The focus of the writing process is on how writers, students and teachers, think and what they do as they write. Research has demonstrated that the process approach is effective in improving students' writing (Graham, McKeown, Kihara, & Harris, 2012; Graham & Perin, 2007; Graham & Sandmel, 2011). Graham, et al. (2012) conducted a meta-analysis as a means to identify effective instructional practices for students in the elementary grades and reported that the utilization of a process approach had positive effects on students in elementary classrooms. Graham and

Sandmel (2011) had previously conducted a meta-analysis of studies examining the use of the process approach in grades one through twelve and found that there was a positive effect when the studies involved average writers as opposed to struggling writers. Allowing students to experiment with their personal writing process increases their ability to be successful writers.

Graham and Perin (2007) conducted a meta-analysis of writing intervention research for students in grades four through twelve. The findings revealed that using the writing process approach had positive effects on student writing. In addition, classrooms with teachers who received professional development in the process approach had an even greater impact on student writing. Since writers go through several stages before a composition reaches the final product, teachers need to provide instruction within five stages of the writing process that have emerged from the cognitive models of writing. For the purposes of this study, the five stages of the writing process are defined as prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing (Atwell, 1987; Tompkins, 2010; Unger & Fleischman, 2004). By helping students develop an effective process, teachers are more likely to get exemplary writing from their students. The following sections provide a description of what occurs in each stage of the writing process.

Prewriting. The prewriting stage is a critical time in the writing process, and begins long before the writers convert thoughts into writing (Fletcher, 2001). Moreover, Tompkins (2010) suggests that the prewriting stage has been the most crucial and most neglected stage of the writing process. The main purpose of prewriting is to generate an abundance of raw material and ideas that are utilized to help identify the focus of the

paper as well as provide some strategies for writing the first draft. If the focus is too broad, the paper may seem vague, superficial, and likely disorganized. Starting a draft too soon, without the results of the prewriting phase, leads to poorly constructed writing often with weak generalities. Research has revealed that skilled writers place an emphasis on prewriting, view prewriting as rehearsal (Sasaki, 2000), and spend a longer time planning during the prewriting stage (Murray, 2004). Tracy, Graham, and Reid (2009) demonstrated that students' use of cognitive strategies for engaging in the processes of writing, such as planning, had a positive effect on their writing performance. Good writers use the prewriting stage to discover and explore new ideas.

During this stage, the writers consider four main factors: (a) topic, (b) purpose, (c) audience, and (d) form (Tompkins, 2010). The first consideration all writers face as they prepare to write involves choosing a topic. Students may have to deal with two different types of topics: (a) assigned topics or (b) chosen topics. If the topic is assigned, the directions for the assignment will limit and determine the approach to take. Instructions must be read carefully and directions must be followed exactly. If students are given the opportunity to select a topic, it is important to reflect on the value and meaning of the finished product. Writers should select a topic of personal interest, and one they are knowledgeable about. Writers should also anticipate the effect that needs to be achieved in order to gain the desired reaction from the reader. Allowing students to also determine the topic of their writing is one of the most highly endorsed instructional strategies due to the fact most writing strategies can be used with any topic (Buckner, 2005; Fletcher & Portalupi, 2001; Hillocks, 1995; Murray, 2009).

Writing should be for a real purpose and audience. Students need to know why they are writing and should be engaged in writing across the curriculum and throughout the school day. Class time spent on writing original pieces by establishing real purposes for writing and student involvement in the task should be increased (Pollington, Wilcox, & Morrison, 2001). Nagin (2006) states that students mature as writers by understanding how to write for different audiences, contexts, and purposes. Knowing the audience helps writers make decisions about the information that will be included, how the information will be arranged, and what supporting details should be used to help the audience understand what is being presented (Dorn & Soffos, 2001). Hillocks (1995) states recognizing the audience's knowledge, interests, and dispositions clearly have an effect on writing. Writers who fail to understand who their readers are risk failing to reach the goals they have intended. Through text, writers communicate with a reader and writers must take on the perspective of this audience (Tompkins, 2010). To develop and present an effective argument, writers must appeal to their intended audience.

Choosing the form the writing will take is one of the most essential decisions the writer makes in the prewriting stage. Both audience and purpose influence the form. For example, if the purpose is to entertain, an appropriate form might be a story or a poem. There are a wide variety of writing forms, or genres, students learn to use as their writing matures (Tompkins, 2010). Unfortunately, it is likely that students will write in a limited number of genres for short periods of time (Applebee & Langer, 2009).

By using literature during writing instruction, teachers build reading/writing relationships (Atwell, 1991; Calkins, 2003). Using authentic literature in the classroom is

another way to enhance the writing experience for students. Fletcher and Portalupi (1998) write, “The writing you get out of your students can only be as good as the classroom literature that surrounds and sustain it” (p.10). Murray (2009) and Fletcher (2000) agree that the most effective and efficient way to teach writing is to provide authentic experiences for writing as often as possible. Engaging students in a discourse about literature helps build understanding and provides good examples of writing. Fletcher (2000) suggests using children’s literature to illustrate examples of writing skills even if the children are not able to use the skills themselves.

Drafting. The process of drafting begins with an analysis of the prewriting documents and decisions. This stage involves organizing ideas into a coherent structure. The goal is to organize information without regard for conventions. During this stage, writers focus on getting their ideas down on paper (Fletcher, 2000). They may start several attempts in an effort to construct an idea because drafting is not limited to the first copy of an entire piece. During drafting, students may also need to revisit and adjust the purpose, the audience, and the form their writing will take. There is little concern about spelling, punctuation, and other grammatical errors during drafting (Dorn & Soffos, 2001). Many writers skip lines in order to leave space for revisions. Writing on one side of the paper is also a common practice among writers. This makes it easier to rearrange as writers refine their compositions through a series of drafts.

Revising. No one writes perfectly the first time. Murray (1985) states, “Revision is based on re-seeing the entire piece of writing” (p. xiv). During the revising stage, writers begin to refine their compositions. However, revision is not just about polishing a

paper. This is the stage when writers use effective strategies to add, substitute, delete, and rearrange material. Tompkins (2010) has identified three activities that should be utilized by teachers during the revision stage: (a) rereading the rough draft, (b) sharing the rough draft, and (c) revising on the basis of feedback. New meanings are constructed and restructured as writers transact with the created text (Rosenblatt, 2005). These activities will help writers create a final product that is satisfying to the writers' purpose and intended audience. In order for students to be more competent writers, the positive effects of revision in the writing process must be internalized (Borgese, Heyler, & Romano, 2012). Student need to anticipate what has yet to be written as they reread the composition.

According to Fletcher (2000), best practice includes the belief that students need to hear response to their texts while they are in the process of writing. In order to accomplish this, teacher-to-student and student-to-student conferences are used as an effective instructional tool. Teacher-to-student conferences allow an opportunity for the teacher to model for the students how to evaluate their own work and the work of others. Murray (2009) also suggests teachers use conferences regularly to listen to the processes students are using, to hear about their purpose, topic, and place in the draft, and to ask questions about their work.

Editing. When students begin to polish their composition and the focus changes to correcting spelling mistakes and mechanics, the writer has entered the editing stage. The study of grammar and mechanics should be taught in context, at the editing stage, and as items are needed (Buckner, 2005). During editing, students may self-edit, have a

peer edit, or work with the teacher to edit. If they choose to self-edit, students must first look over their own paper to ensure that it makes sense. Spelling, punctuation, and other errors are also looked at and fixed. While some errors may be corrected, it is a good practice to have a peer or the teacher edit a writing piece prior to publishing. Painter (2006) explains that when writers read their own writing obvious mistakes could easily be missed because writers' minds know the intent of what is written. When writers reread a piece, their minds are often able to automatically fill in the blanks or correct errors without identifying that mistakes have been made.

Peer review is an important activity which allows students to receive feedback and as well as practice with a range of skills needed in the development writing ability. Min (2006) states that peer review can be effective if used correctly and if students are trained on how to give and to use feedback. Issues relating to peer review including student training and forming groups must be done based on the unique needs of the students (Hansen & Liu, 2005). Learning to effectively review others' written works may lead to the creation of better self-reviewers, or students who are able to look at their own writing pieces and assess how to successfully revise them (Rollinson, 2005). Min (2005) conducted a study of 18 English Language Learners (ELL) at a large university in Taiwan. These students were all English majors who had been introduced to the practice of peer review. In a peer review session prior to the study, it was noted that "most peer comments were perfunctory, made only to answer the teacher's questions on the guidance sheet" (Min, 2005, p. 297). Participants attended a four-hour in-class training and 18 hours of teacher-student conferences in order to become more skilled at peer review. The

study found that the majority of the students commented that training on how to review their peers' papers helped them improve their own writing (Min, 2005).

Teacher editing is also an important part of the editing process. Students may take part in a conference with the teacher to discuss grammar and spelling errors. The teacher does not change what is written by the student, but uses this time as an opportunity to clarify questions students may have. Teachers may also demonstrate editing for the students by displaying a piece of writing and modeling correct editing procedures (Tompkins, 2010). As teachers work with students on the editing phase of the process, they must be sensitive to the levels of maturity and ability of the students. How a teacher approaches editing can be either a positive growth experience, or can stifle future attempts at writing. The goal should be for students to become proficient editors and not have to rely on the teacher to make corrections.

Publishing. Publishing is the final preparation of a piece of writing for the intended audience and is an integral part of the writing process for students. Publishing is a strong contributor to student writing development by providing personal reasons to revise and edit (Jasmine & Weiner, 2007). If a writer chooses to publish a writing piece, it must be organized for a public audience. Tompkins (2010) suggests that when students have the opportunity to share their writing with real audiences they will begin to think of themselves as authors. However, not all writing must be published. By requiring students to publish every piece, students may consider all writing to be of similar importance and skill (Jasmine & Weiner, 2007). It is the responsibility of the author to

know the audience, choose the correct form, and determine which pieces will be published.

It is best when students choose the work they would like to have published. One of the most common forms of publishing in elementary school is by making books (Tompkins, 2010). Publishing may involve preparing a neatly handwritten or word-processed copy of the final draft with the addition of illustrations or other graphic elements. Publishing may also extend to a multimedia presentation or lead to a public performance such as a speech or a debate. Dorn and Soffos (2001) state all published work has an obligation to the reader, and writers must develop an understanding of acceptable conventions when preparing writing for an audience. A good way to celebrate students' success is to publish what the student assesses to be their best work.

Teacher Variability in a Process Approach

While the body of information about writing instruction and teacher practices continues to increase, there are still questions about how this knowledge manifests in classroom writing pedagogy (Brindley & Schneider, 2002). McCartney (2008) states the data on writing instruction and attitudes toward writing indicate the amount and nature of writing instruction varies across teachers. Teacher variability occurs as writing teachers implement the process approach. Even though, the instructional practices employed in the classroom may implement central components of the process approach (Graham & Sandmel, 2011; Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2006), there is variability from teacher to teacher (Troia, Lin, Cohen, & Monroe, 2011). The variability that occurs indicates that teachers need a better understanding of the essential components of the process approach, as well

as a better understanding of how to incorporate these components in daily instruction. Troia, Lin, Monroe, and Cohen (2009) suggest the variability of teaching the process approach has an influence on the quality and effectiveness of instructional choices. In order to improve students' writing performance, effective, research-based strategies need to be employed in the classroom.

The Writers' Workshop

The writers' workshop is a framework commonly utilized for implementing the writing process approach in elementary schools. Atwell (1987) originated the writers' workshop as a practical application of the writing process for teachers and middle school students. The work of Calkins (1986) and Graves (1983) was influential in the adoption of the writers' workshop by elementary teachers. During the writing workshop, students learn how to use the writing process to become fluent, independent writers.

Students should be writing daily in order to become good writers (Murray, 2004). Research indicates that when children anticipate daily writing, they begin to develop the habits of writers (Atwell, 1987). Students begin to think of creating when they are not in class, and writing becomes a habit, leading students to become more proficient creators (Newkirk & Atwell, 1986). In order for students to become proficient at writing, teachers cannot simply add time for students to write. Teachers also need to provide students with opportunities to participate in a wide variety of writing experiences (Calkins, 2003; Freeman & Freeman, 2004). Teachers who implement the writing workshop provide an environment where students are engaged in reading and writing regularly.

The workshop is where communities of writers work together to develop their skills and craft. Elliott (2008) suggests that it is important for the teacher to model trust and support in order to build a community focused on becoming stronger writers. The following italicized words are the seven underlying principles Atwell (1987) identified that educators consistently utilized to inform teaching and student learning:

1. *Writers need regular chunks of time* – time to think, write, confer, read, change their minds, and write some more.
2. *Writers need their own topics.*
3. *Writers need response.* Helpful response comes during – not after – the composing.
4. *Writers learn mechanics in context,* from teachers who address errors as they occur within the individual pieces of writing, where these rules and forms will have meaning.
5. *Children need to know adults who write.*
6. *Writers need to read.*
7. *Writing teachers need to take responsibility for their knowledge and teaching* (pp.17-18).

Supporters of writers' workshop have reported that it is an effective instructional method because it provides students with frequent opportunities to write, students have control and ownership over their writing, and the teacher acts like a guide who supports students in their development (Pollington, Wilcox, & Morrison, 2001). Jasmine and Weiner

(2007) found that writers' workshop created a positive atmosphere for student learning, students became more confident and positive about writing, and their writing improved.

Components of the Writers' Workshop

It is important that the writers' workshop be structured in predictable, consistent ways in order for the infrastructure to remain the same everyday throughout the school year (Calkins, 1986; Calkins, 2003). A predictable structure will also keep the children focused, and time on task will be maximized. For the purposes of this study, the following three components will be utilized to explain the writers' workshop framework: a) mini-lessons, b) writing and conferencing, and c) sharing (Calkins, 2003; Jasmine & Weiner, 2007).

Mini-lessons. Mini-lessons occur at the beginning of the writers' workshop and are short, succinct lessons that focus on teaching children a needed procedure, behavior, or strategy. Calkins (1986) defines mini-lessons as five to ten minute whole class lessons when the teacher explains and demonstrates techniques needed by students to improve their writing and to successfully use the writing process. Pritchard and Honeycutt (2007) agree that the mini-lesson is a useful time to teach strategies for the writing process which can be reinforced through the other components of the writers' workshop. During the mini-lesson, the teacher uses clear demonstration and explicit teaching to lead the children in understanding the lesson objective by utilizing multilevel strategies that pertain to the needs of all writers (Calkins, 2003). While some students will be able to take what is presented in a mini-lesson and use it immediately, students who are

struggling will need more support during the lesson and in future lessons to develop independence (Jasmine & Weiner, 2007).

Writing and conferencing. In the second component of the writers' workshop, the students work independently, in small groups or with the teacher (Calkins, 2003; Elliott, 2008). This component requires the most time during writers' workshop. Students should spend 30 to 45 minutes working on writing projects they have chosen (Tompkins, 2010). During this time, students work at their own pace and are at varying stages of the writing process. Some students may be drafting a new piece, and others may be in the editing stage for publication. Graves (1994) states that when teachers make the writing process accessible and respond intelligently to what students know, the students will write successfully. Students will understand the need to revise because their work is unfinished.

Conferencing is a tool teachers use to interact with students as they develop their own writing process. When the students are engaged in the writing process, the teacher observes writing behavior and conferences with students (Jasmine & Weiner, 2007). Individual conferences enable teachers to personalize their support of students' writing. The goal of a conference should be to dialogue with students and make suggestions to enhance the piece. During individual conferences, the teacher is able to make decisions and guide students based on their personal needs (Dorn & Soffos, 2001). However, some teachers may be nervous about the process, and other teachers may overwhelm the students because they have too much to say. In order to help teachers learn the skill of conferencing, Fletcher and Portalupi (2001) identified the following basic conference

fundamentals for conferencing with individual students: (a) listening, (b) being present as a reader, (c) understanding the writer, (d) following the student's energy, (e) building on the student's strengths, and (f) teaching one thing.

Sharing. Sharing is the final component of the writers' workshop and occurs during the last 10 to 15 minutes (Tompkins, 2010). At this time, the class gathers together to share their writing pieces (Calkins, 2003; Jasmine & Weiner, 2007; Tompkins, 2010), and it gives the teacher the opportunity to follow up on the daily mini-lesson (Anderson, 2000; Calkins, 2003; Elliott, 2008). During the share session, students are able to talk about the work they did during writing and conferencing (Anderson, 2000). Share sessions are a powerful way to promote better relationships and trust in the classroom (Elliott, 2008). By sharing, students communicate with candid audiences who respond to their writing in meaningful ways.

One way to facilitate the share session is by utilizing an author's chair (Dorn & Soffos, 2001; Tompkins, 2010). Author's chair is a classroom writing strategy that provides an opportunity for students to actively share their personal writing with peers as the audience. Graves (1994) suggests that the experience is valuable for authors when they have some control over choosing specific people to respond to their writing pieces. This special opportunity allows students to learn their classmates' likes and dislikes. This feedback also gives the students ideas for revision and is a way to identify more ideas to incorporate in writing (Elliott, 2008). The author's chair gives students the opportunity to learn to view themselves as writers, and it will help them be more considerate of their audience when they write (Tompkins, 2010).

6+1 Trait Writing Model

The 6+1 Trait Writing Model is defined as an “analytic scoring system for writing” (Higgins et al., 2006, p. 312). Researchers at the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory (NWREL) created a reliable scoring guide for six writing traits (Smith, 2003). The developmental work for the 6+1 Trait Writing Model is primarily based on the work of Diederich (Borgese et al., 2012) and Purves (Kozlow & Bellamy, 2004). Diederich (1974) recognized the limitations of holistic scoring and created an analytical component framework for assessing the individual qualities of good writing. These qualities were known as factors (Diederich, 1974). Purves (1988) also used an analytical scoring framework in a 10-year, cross cultural study. Even though the findings identified some variation among the scoring patterns of raters from different countries, there was a consistent and strong independence among trait scores (Purves, 1988).

Another area of research that influenced the 6+1 Trait Writing Model is the writing process. Emig (1971) was one of the earliest researchers to examine the composing process of students. In a case study of twelfth-grade writers, the writing process was viewed as having multiple components. The components identified were: (a) prewriting, (b) planning, (c) starting, (d) reformulation, and (e) stopping (Emig, 1971). Even though the students’ engagement in these processes varied based on context, the results of this study suggest that the traditional grammar- or outline-based models were product-centered, and confined student writing. These findings lead to the development of a process model that was quickly emulated and followed by other studies that emphasized (1) writing processes that are recursive rather than linear (Graves, 2004),

including planning, organization, drafting, and editing; and (2) writing processes that vary according to task and instructional context.

The 6+1 Trait Writing model is not an alternative writing curriculum designed to replace existing writing programs in schools, but rather an additional, complementary set of tools to aid in conceptualizing, assessing, and describing the qualities of writing. The model had given teachers a common vocabulary for instructional and assessment purposes (Borgese et al., 2012). It is used in conjunction with existing writing curricula to provide a framework for classroom writing instruction, feedback, and dialogue that is designed to improve the ability of K–12 teachers and students to plan, evaluate, discuss, and revise their writing (Culham, 2003). The original traits were: Ideas, Organization, Voice, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Conventions (Spandel, 1997). More recently, Presentation has been added to make the 6+1 Traits of Writing (Smith, 2003). It is essential to teach, model, and practice these traits in order to help students develop effective writing skills and techniques.

Ideas

Ideas are the first trait and can be defined as “Clarity, focus, and detail all working to make the writer’s message clear” (Spandel, 2005, p. 16). Steineger (1996) refers to ideas as the “heart of the message.” To maintain the reader’s attention, writers should include original ideas that are insightful and bold. Writers have to move from general ideas to specific details that convey the idea of the text well. The quality of the message is dependent upon the writers’ ability to build toward the announced objective creating themes that stand out from the surrounding text (Smith, 2003).

Organization

The second trait is organization and refers to the logical order of ideas throughout the piece. Organization is defined as “the structure of the piece including a captivating and purposeful lead, strong transitions linking ideas, and a thoughtful conclusion” (Steineger, 1996, p.7). The readers’ ability to understand the writing and make conclusions is based upon the flow of information given. The writing should start with an introduction that alerts readers about what they are going to read, as well as the information they will need to understand the writing. The writing should have clear transitions, and show how one idea follows another. Finally, writers should have a conclusion of the paper that explains and closes the main points of the writing (Smith, 2003).

Voice

The third identified trait is voice. The voice of a paper refers to the “personal tone and flavor of the piece; the writer’s way of connecting to the audience; the sound of a real person talking” (Steineger, 1996, p.7). It is “the writer’s way of expressing ideas...” and “...the fingerprints of the writer on paper” (Spandel, 2004, p. 16). Writers must identify the intended audience and make the text relevant to them. Writers must anticipate possible questions from the intended audience and provide enough information to increase understanding of the text. The purpose of writing also effects the voice of the piece. For example, Smith (2003) explains:

If a text is a narrative, the voice should be honest and should tastefully portray the students’ ideas in a manner suited for the audience. Exposition and persuasion

should be a testimony to each writer's commitment to a given topic (p. 4).

Word Choice

The fourth trait is word choice. Word choice is “rich, colorful, precise language that communicates in a way that moves and enlightens the reader and creates a picture in the reader's mind” (Steiniger, 1996, p.7). Simply stated, it is “the words and phrases the writer selects to get the message across” (Spandel, 2004, p. 16). It is important that writers choose words that help support the intended meaning. Words should not confuse the reader, but guide them in understanding. Incorrect usage can take away from writers' intended meaning. It is also important that writers avoid repetition because the reader may become uninterested if ideas are repeated (Smith, 2003).

Sentence Fluency

Sentence fluency is the fifth trait. Sentence fluency is defined as “the rhythm and flow of word patterns” (Steiniger, 1996, p.7). It is further defined as “...variety in sentences, natural sound, and degree to which text can be read with expression and interpretation” (Spandel, 2004, p. 17). Sentences should easily flow together and connect the ideas, building on the main point. Each sentence should also vary in length and complexity in order to keep the reader interested. Smith (2003) states that sentence fragments can be used sparingly to add style.

Conventions

The final trait of the original six is conventions. Conventions are “a combination of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, grammar, and usage (and sometimes layout or presentation) working together to make text easy for the reader to

process” (Spandel, 2004, p. 17). Poor conventions slow down reading, causing the audience to have to overthink to understand the purpose. This also causes the meaning to get lost in translation (Smith, 2003). Used correctly, conventions enhance the readability of a text.

Presentation

Presentation is the last trait and was recently added to the model. “Presentation refers to the nature of formatting used in presenting a piece of writing and includes guidelines about handwriting, spacing of text, as well as the way in which text and graphics should be integrated to make a seamless whole” (Smith, 2003, p. 5).

Presentation refers to the look of the writing on the page, but not all teachers are concerned with this trait as part of the writing process. However, it is important to make sure students pay attention to their handwriting and spacing of text. It is also important that the audience is able to read the writing for understanding. This trait is critical in the writing process and cannot be overlooked completely (Smith, 2003).

Writing Teachers Need to Write

Any teachers of writing must understand their own philosophy of writing (Ehmann & Gayer, 2009). Calkins (1994) states that we use writing as a means of communication as well as a tool to catalogue our experiences. In order to assist students in their understanding of how the writing process works, they need to see adults grappling with writing issues while in the act of composing. Teachers need to model writing as a fellow author and as a demonstrator of processes (Johnston, 2004). Freeman and Freeman (2004) stated the importance of teacher modeling is one of the most

supportive instructional approaches for teaching every aspect of the process of writing. When teachers write in front of children in this way, it provides children a chance to see nothing magical happens when experienced writers draft (Fletcher (2000); words do not just appear without effort or revision. Graves and Kittle (2005) identified five reasons for teachers to bring writing into their classrooms:

1. Writing with students builds relationships and nurtures respect among all writers in the room.
2. Writing with students teaches them how to see things from a new point of view.
3. Writing together creates energy.
4. Modeling your decision-making process helps them see that the process is ongoing.
5. Writing with your students saves time (pp. 48-49).

The most important preparation for any teacher of writing is to write, and teachers who write raise the expectations for their students (Graves & Kittle, 2005). Ray (1999) explains the importance of learning to write from writers. Teachers who write will be better able to anticipate the needs of their students as they develop their personal processes. Writing is hard work, and teachers who write will understand how individual writing processes are nurtured. Fletcher (2000) believes that writers find their processes through trial and error. Since the goal is not to teach one process but a range of processes, the writing strategies utilized will also vary according to their purposes and audiences.

However, teachers who do not write themselves may have difficulty appreciating the struggles of their students. They may be more likely to require all students to use the same process. Moreover, teachers who do not write regularly may place an emphasis on students to complete every piece of writing they begin. These teachers may be impatient with students who are struggling writers because they do not understand that being able to identify significance in a writing piece is a skill acquired over time (Calkins, 1994).

Teachers' Beliefs about Writing

Teacher's beliefs have a huge impact on the school environment, influencing the choice of activities, level of effort, and motivation of teachers in the classroom (Pollington, Wilcox, & Morrison, 2001). Pajares (1992) stated all teachers have a variety of beliefs about their professional lives and the students they teach. All of these beliefs have a way of changing the outcomes for all participants. Research in teacher beliefs helps build an understanding of problems and challenges teachers encounter with regard to writing instruction. While much of the research in the field (Bandura 1997; Graham & Weiner, 1996; Pajares, 2003; Pajares & Johnson, 1996; Pintrich & Schunk, 1995) focuses on the influence beliefs have on the performance of students, there is some research (Berry, 2006) that examines the effect of those beliefs on the writing teaching practices of educators. It is important to note that even though research on teachers' beliefs as they pertain to writing instruction is slim, researchers (Aguirre & Speer, 2000; Bingimlas & Hanrahan, 2010; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992) have consistently found that teachers generalize their beliefs across the subject areas and use their general beliefs about

learning to guide their selection of instructional processes, materials, and even the conversations that they have with their students.

According to Squires and Bliss (2004), teacher's beliefs influence daily decisions in the classroom. The importance of teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning in relation to their practice is documented in the literature and is thought to be of primary importance when teachers consider the implementation of new instructional practices within their classroom (Tobin & LaMaster, 1995; Yerrick, Parke, & Nugent, 1997). Teachers' beliefs have been reported to influence the choice of activities, level of effort, and motivation of teachers in the classroom (Pollington, Wilcox, & Morrison, 2001). Studies have also stated that teachers generalize their beliefs across the subject areas and use their general beliefs about learning to guide their selection of instructional processes, materials, and conversations that they have with their students (Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992).

Developing meaningful experiences for all learners will result in better attitudes across the school community. Using a sample population of 145 sixth-grade students, Kearns (1988) investigated the impact of systematic praise on student self-esteem in order to explore the link between self-esteem and academic achievement. In this experimental study, 85 students were in the experimental group, and 60 were in the control group. Kearns (1988) reported that failure to change the willingness of all teachers to make a positive impact on all students and failure of teachers to believe in their own abilities is a failure to deal with a critical issue in education. The attachment to self-conforming beliefs and practices may be counter-productive for students. Gleeson

and Prain (1996) also argue that teachers who are highly attached to their identity as writers might have a negative effect on students. Teachers need to be able to reflect on their practice openly and identify personal beliefs to guide practice.

Research suggests a degree of congruency between teacher beliefs about reading and writing and the instructional practices utilized in the classroom (Clark & Peterson, 1986; DeFord, 1985; Graham, Harris, & Larsen, 2001; Poulson, Avramidis, Fox, Medwell, & Wray, 2001). Unfortunately, some teachers have the attitude things do not change. Their instructional choices are safe, and they utilize lessons they have created in the past. Even though, research suggests personal beliefs about how students learn directly affects their teaching practices (Fang, 1996; Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Pajares, 1992), researchers have reported discrepancies between what teachers believe and what they actually do in their classrooms (Bawden, Buike, & Duffy, 1979; Lenski, Wham, & Griffey, 1998; Schraw & Olafson, 2002). In a study related to teachers' epistemological views and educational practices, Schraw and Olafson (2002) noted discrepancies between the view of teaching adopted by most teachers in their classrooms and the one that they supported in theory. The researchers attributed this discrepancy to factors such as inexperience, restricted time for instruction, administrative constraints, and lack of support. Similarly, in a study related to teachers' conceptions of reading and their instructional practices, Bawden, Buike, and Duffy (1979) pointed out that even though teachers' beliefs are reflected in classroom practices, there are other external factors that influence teachers' decisions. While past experience contributes to decision-making in the classroom, established practice, teachers' personality factors, educational principles,

and research-based evidence, are also factors that influence teachers' choice (Richards & Lockhart, 1994).

The influence of these factors results in conflicting practices in relation to teachers' stated beliefs. Lenski et al. (1998) also noticed that teachers' beliefs and practices are not always aligned. An example of incongruent beliefs and practices might occur when teachers are in the process of changing beliefs. The researchers explain that changing practices and changing beliefs may be occurring simultaneously (Lenski et al., 1998). Moreover, teachers may learn and agree with certain theory regarding literacy but ignore how to put its principles in practice. In this case, teachers' beliefs and their practices may be inconsistent as well.

Research in the beliefs teachers bring to the classroom builds an understanding of the problems and challenges teachers encounter with regard to writing instruction. Pajares (1992) believes that the area of teachers' beliefs is lacking in the literature because mental constructs are challenging to study. This current study of how teachers' beliefs are assessed and developed involves much more than simply identifying what teachers believe. It involves a consideration of the sources of evidence on which beliefs are established and the factors that serve as the foundation for individual beliefs as well as the connections that exist between beliefs. While there are many beliefs which teachers hold, this study focuses on accessing and assessing the knowledge and beliefs of elementary teachers of writing and how they manifest in classroom instructional practices.

Teacher Self-Efficacy about Teaching Writing

Teacher self-efficacy has been identified as an important factor in effective classroom instruction and has consistently been related positively with student academic achievement (Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Swackhamer, Koellner, Basile, & Kimbrough, 2009; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998; Tucker et al., 2005). For the purposes of this study, self-efficacy refers to "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute a course of action required to produce a given attainment" (Bandura, 1997, p.3). The concept of self-efficacy is derived from social cognitive theory, a theory which states that behavior, cognitions, and the environment all dynamically influence one another. Specifically, self-efficacy, as opposed to general self-efficacy, is the belief in one's ability to successfully complete a particular task. Thus, one's level of self-efficacy depends on behavior, cognitions, and the environmental factors present when completing that task. Research also indicates that self-efficacy from experience is a good predictor of task performance (Pajares, 1992).

Bandura (1986) linked self-efficacy to what people feel comfortable and confident doing in their day-to-day lives. For example, if people have high self-efficacy as teachers, then they are more likely to feel successful in the classroom. All teachers hold beliefs about their work, their students, their roles, and their subject matter. Loucks-Horsley, Hewson, Love, and Stiles (1998) argued that while beliefs may not be ideal truths, they are more than opinions and receive a certain degree of commitment. Their positive feelings can be reinforced by watching the successes of the students or by comparison with peers (Pajares, 2003). An explanation for the positive effect of teacher

self-efficacy on student achievement may include the differences in teacher beliefs and behaviors. Teachers who have high self-efficacy provide a greater academic focus in the classroom, persist longer in working with students, and provide a variety of forms of feedback to students which lead to increased academic performance for students (Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Swackhamer et al., 2009; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998; Tucker et al., 2005). Teachers with strong self-efficacy measures believe that their efforts can have a positive impact on student achievement in their classrooms despite negative influences, such as low SES, that they cannot control (Tucker et al., 2005). According to Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, and Hoy (1998), this leads to a cycle of success: “Greater efficacy leads to greater effort and persistence, which leads to better performance, which leads to greater efficacy” (p. 234). While many studies (Graham & Weiner, 1996; Pajares, 2003; Pajares & Johnson, 1996; Pintrich & Schunk, 1995) have focused on the influence teacher self-efficacy has on the performance of students, several studies focusing on teachers' beliefs of their ability to teach writing or some aspects of teaching writing have been conducted (Applebee & Langer, 2009; Berry, 2006; Brindley & Schneider, 2002; Gleeson & Prain, 1996).

Summary

Historically, writing instruction has focused on handwriting and grammar. As the twentieth century began, handwriting was still the major focus. However, a strong emphasis on writing as a process emerged in the latter half of the twentieth century (Hawkins & Razali, 2012). Researchers stated that writing is an individual process (Emig, 1971; Graves, 1975; & Murray, 2004); that writing is recursive (Graves, 2004);

and the cycle of the process is unique to each person (Tompkins, 2010). Writing cannot be taught effectively if all students are expected to work at the same skill level. By utilizing a process approach, students cycle through the writing process as they are engaged in writing tasks. The writer determines the route through the process and understands that the process will change for other writing pieces. The process approach teaches students to take responsibility and make choices. As the student learns to define their personal process, the effectiveness of the process will increase.

The use of the process approach for teaching writing can be beneficial in improving writing because students are involved in using the cognitive processes of writing, their individual needs, social and cognitive, can be addressed, and they are motivated through the collaborative, positive tone that is set for the learning environment (Graham & Sandmel, 2011). Students need the opportunity to collaborate with the teacher as well. Teachers need to model writing as a fellow author and as a demonstrator of the writing process (Johnston, 2004). Graves and Kittle (2005) state the most important preparation for any teacher of writing is to write because teachers who write raise the expectations for their students

Even if teacher beliefs are never communicated, they impact what teaching practices are utilized in the classroom. Therefore, Routman (2005) asserts that the identification, evaluation, and confrontation of beliefs is necessary for teachers to understand how their held beliefs impact their instructional practices. While there are many beliefs which teachers' hold, this study focuses on accessing and assessing the knowledge and beliefs of elementary teachers of writing and how they manifest in

classroom instructional practices. The findings of this study will provide information regarding teachers' personal beliefs of themselves as writers and the impact these beliefs have on their teaching of writing.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

In this study, the researcher explored how the instructional practices of elementary teachers of writing were influenced by their beliefs of themselves as writers. The study sought to identify factors that may have impacted the development of these beliefs. This qualitative study was guided by the following questions.

Research question 1. What are teachers' beliefs of themselves as writers?

Research question 2. What impact do their stated beliefs have on their personal writing practices and teaching of writing?

This section includes a description of the methodology used in the study, as well as a description of the participants and selected institutional settings. Additional sections describe the data collection and data analysis processes, as well as the procedures for increasing validity. Ethical considerations were also addressed.

Institutional Setting and Participants

This was a case study of seven elementary school teachers. The study took place in a school district located in the southern part of the United States. The district was set in a suburban community and served approximately 23,000 students at 25 campuses. Within the student population, 5% were White, 76% were Hispanic, 17% were African

American, and 2% were classified as other. The district identified 80% of the students as economically disadvantaged (Texas Education Agency, 2014).

Two sites were selected, primarily as a matter of convenience. The researcher is currently employed at Site A and has established rapport and the trust of classroom teachers within its location. Site A was a neighborhood school and served approximately 530 students. Within the student population, 4% are White, 73% are Hispanic, 22% are African American, and 1% are classified as other. The campus has identified 88% of the students as economically disadvantaged (Texas Education Agency, 2014).

Site B was chosen because a teacher who had previously worked at Site A with the researcher volunteered to be a participant. Site B was also a neighborhood school and served approximately 430 students. Within the student population, 4% are White, 91% are Hispanic, 3% are African American, and 2% are classified as other. The campus has identified 81% of the students as economically disadvantaged (Texas Education Agency, 2014).

This study called for a research site with participants that exhibit previously defined criteria. Therefore, purposive sampling (Merriam, 2009), based on specific criteria, was employed when selecting participants for this study. The criteria for selecting participants were as follows: (a) teach writing in kindergarten through fifth grade, and (b) volunteer to participate after being informed about participation requirements and the purpose of the study. Merriam (2009) states that sampling requires that one establish the criteria, basis, or standards necessary for units to be included in the investigation; one then finds a sample that matches these criteria. The participants in this

study were selected purposefully; the goal being to obtain thorough descriptions of their lived experiences as elementary writing teachers. During the week prior to data collection, the researcher met with a group of four teachers to inform these potential participants about what would be expected if they choose to participate. Three other teachers could not attend the meeting, and the researcher met with them individually to provide information about participating. Informed consent (APPENDIX A) and a demographic variable form (APPENDIX B) were given to each potential participant at these meetings. Both forms were completed prior to data collection.

Data Collection

Data was collected in the fall of 2015 over a nine-week period. Multiple data sources were used to increase validity (Yin, 2003). Data collection included three interviews, four classroom observations, and field notes kept by the researcher. Participants were given materials to create a writer's notebook (Buckner, 2005). This notebook was intended to include three sets of structured journal prompts and daily journals for the duration of the study. Each participant also created a personal teaching metaphor during week two of data collection and one during week six of data collection. Participants compared the teaching metaphor they created in week two to the one they created in week six of data collection.

Data Sources

Qualitative data was gathered using a variety of sources. Data collected from participants included a combination of interviews, observations, field notes, journals, and

personal teaching metaphors. The researcher also kept a journal throughout the data collection process.

Qualitative Data. In qualitative research, data is collected from those immersed in everyday life of the setting in which the study is framed (Merriam, 2009). Qualitative research is “an inquiry process of understanding” where the researcher develops a “complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting” (Creswell, 1998, p. 15). In this approach, the researcher made knowledge claims based on constructivist (Guba & Lincoln, 1985) or participatory (Mertens, 2003) perspectives. Data analysis was based on the values that these participants perceive for their world. Ultimately, an understanding based on data collected from multiple sources was produced (Yin, 2003)

The qualitative method used to conduct this study specifically follows the case study tradition (Creswell, 2007). A case study is a systematic, detailed gathering of rich information about a particular person, social setting, event, or group that allows the researcher to understand how that subject functions (Berg, 2004; Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Merriam, 1988). Since learning to write is a complex task, a case study design allowed the researcher to understand the role of teachers in writing instruction, a dynamic too complex for quantitative research (Merriam, 1988). The researcher sought to explain the relationships between the instruction provided by the teachers and their beliefs about themselves as writers. Berg (2004) and Yin (1989) have described this as an explanatory case study. An explanatory case study presents data that explains how events occurred and interact (Yin, 2003).

The researcher conducted three semi-structured interviews for all participants. Three weekly reflective journals, three observations of the participants' classrooms, completion of two personal teaching metaphors, structured and daily journals were also collected for analysis. Maintaining a research journal enabled the researcher to capture observations and personal reflections throughout the process. Multiple sources of data were analyzed because a single type of data fails to create a holistic view of the phenomenon and increases validity. The case study tradition also required the use of multiple data sources (Yin, 2003). Data collection at the sites was carried out from October to December of 2015.

Interviews. The researcher conducted a previous study of how teachers' beliefs are assessed and developed. As part of the previous study, the researcher piloted 37 questions for a single case study. Seven categories were created. Table 1 lists each topic of the seven categories and an example question for each category.

Table 1

Seven Categories of Interview and Journal Questions

Category	Topic	Example Question
1	Writing experiences/Influence at home K-12	Describe what you remember concerning writing experiences in your home as you were growing up.
2	Writing experiences/Influences at school K-12	What types of writing experiences did you have in school (K-12)?

(continued)

Table 1

Seven Categories of Interview and Journal Questions (continued)

Category	Topic	Example Question
3	Writing experiences/Education in teacher prep program	Describe the writing classes you had in college.
4	Professional Development/Continuing Education	How has the professional development you have taken after college affected your confidence in teaching writing?
5	Federal, State, District, Campus Influences	What state-, district- or building-wide policies or mandates have influenced your writing instruction?
6	Beliefs about writing instructional practices	What struggles do you encounter as you teach writing and how do you address these challenges?
7	Teacher as Writer	What types of personal writing activities do you do on a regular basis? How do you integrate these into your classroom instruction?

Five additional questions were added to the original list prior to data collection

(APPENDIX C). The researcher used 24 of these questions to develop three interview protocols that contained questions from multiple categories (APPENDIX D).

Three interviews were conducted for case study participants during the data collection process. Most interviews were approximately 15 to 20 minutes long. However, the longest interview was approximately 45 minutes. The first interview took place during the first week of data collection. The second interview took place during the fourth week of data collection. The third interview was the last piece of data collected

from each participant in the seventh week of data collection. The individual interviews were scheduled at a time, date, and location that was convenient for the participants. The interviews were all conducted at Site A in the participants' classrooms or in the room utilized for weekly meetings. Moustakas (1994) stated that an informal interview, composed of open-ended questions and carried out with a conversational tone, is the most typical form of data collection. Follow-up questions were asked when clarification of information was needed by the researcher. For example, several questions could have positive or negative influences. If the participants did not state whether the influence was positive or negative, the researcher asked them to elaborate. All individual interviews were recorded and transcribed. The participants were given hard copies of the transcripts as a form of member checking. Three participants gave feedback as a means to clarify the meaning of what they said. Two others stated that they were surprised by what they had revealed but did not indicate any necessary changes. Thus, participants were provided with an opportunity to review the data to ensure their views were properly captured during the research process (Maxwell, 2005; Merriam, 2009). They were also given an opportunity to restate any information from the interview that may have seemed confusing after reviewing the transcripts and to add additional information.

Writers' notebook. Keeping a writers' notebook helps develop the habit of paying attention to the small details of daily life (Fletcher, 1996). Several model notebooks were shared with the participants at the informational meeting and at the first weekly meeting conducted during the first week of data collection. Participants were each given an information sheet with ideas about keeping a writers' notebook (APPENDIX F), and 40

daily journal prompts to help generate writing ideas (APPENDIX G). None of the participants reported having professional development regarding a writers' notebook. However, they all had experience using a district mandated writing binder and writing journal. Participants kept a writers' notebook for structured journal entries as well as daily journal entries. The notebook was intended to be used as a scrapbook of ideas collected by the participants. The researcher encouraged participants to keep activities from the weekly meetings in their notebooks. Each participant also received a plastic tub with the following materials to use with their notebook: one composition notebook, pocket folder, scotch tape, loose-leaf paper, colored paper, pencils, colored pencils, post it notes, colored pens, and glue sticks. The model notebooks were also available for participants to view throughout the data collection period.

Structured journals. The researcher used the remaining questions to develop three reflective journal protocols that contained questions from multiple categories (APPENDIX E). The questions chosen for the journal protocol included questions that the participant may not be comfortable answering in an interview setting. For example, questions regarding the participants' confidence level and their personal view of their writing performance were selected for the structured journal. At the end of weeks two, three, and four, the participants were asked to answer five questions that allowed them to reflect on their own writing experiences, beliefs, and classroom practices. The participants were also asked to identify examples by attaching copies of student work. Examples of student work included but were not limited to: essays, exit tickets, creative

writing pieces, graphic organizers, and foldables. Information from the structured journals was used to help in the data analysis stage of this study.

Daily reflective journals. The reflective process makes learning more explicit by enabling teachers to take time to think about their experiences and their subsequent action based on these experiences (Camburn, 2010). In order to determine how case study participants viewed their writing lives, they were asked to keep a writer's notebook of their writing activities, personal and instructional. Ideas for what to include in the writer's notebook were provided to all participants (APPENDIX F). Even after seeing examples of a writer's notebook, participants expressed concerns about what to include in the journal and what topics to write about. They were given the writer's notebook instructions and ideas which included 40 journal prompts (APPENDIX G) to use in their daily journal on the days they did not have a structured journal prompt to help generate ideas. The researcher also presented a mini-lesson lasting approximately five minutes during the weekly meetings about strategies for making their journal a writer's notebook (Buckner, 2005). Mini-lessons focused on generating ideas for the participants' notebooks and provided topics for conversation at the weekly meetings. Meetings were recorded and transcribed.

Personal teaching metaphor. Personal teaching metaphors are graphic representations of how teachers see themselves as writers. Sfard (1998) identifies metaphors as the compasses of our consciousness, the dynamic divining rods that show us what we need to see, when we need to see it. "Metaphors are not mere poetic embellishments in language; they have the potential to affect their users' perceptions and

actions and to be affected by them” (Patchen & Crawford, 2011, p. 287). Educational research suggests that if teachers reflect upon their work metaphorically they may tap into areas beyond their conscious recognition, shedding light on the inner realities and perceptions that shape their instruction (Bullough, 2010; Bullough & Stokes, 1994; Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Pajares, 1992; Schmidt, 2012). Case study participants created two personal teaching metaphors. In order to familiarize the participants with metaphor creation, they completed a metaphor activity (APPENDIX L) during the week two meeting. The participants’ personal teaching metaphors were created in week two and week six of data collection. A written comparison of the personal teaching metaphors was due to the researcher during week six of data collection. Participants also answered four additional questions in a metaphor discussion at the conclusion of their third interview. The metaphor discussion was also taped and transcribed.

Classroom observations. Observations allow the researcher the benefit of on-site experiences with the participants in the study (Creswell, 2009). Observations allow researchers to gain insights into issues participants may be reluctant to discuss during interviews or of which they are unaware. An observation protocol was adapted (Kotula, Aguilar, & Tivnan, 2014) and utilized to keep the researcher focused while in the classroom (APPENDIX O). The protocol included a series of questions and checklist items that represent relatively objective considerations about the organization of the class, the way teachers explain lessons and interact with students, and the types of interactions and feedback included in lessons. The protocol included five sections.

- Section I—Introduction: This brief section focused on the participants, how they introduce the lessons, and how they activate prior knowledge for the lesson, and how they engage their students.
- Section II—Mini-lessons - Skills/Strategies Instruction/Practice: Section II provides 14 questions about what the participants were doing during this phase of the lesson, how they organized the lesson, and whether activities involved the whole class, small groups, or individual students. This section was also used to document feedback and types of feedback.
- Section III—Composing: Section III consists of eight questions on the portion of the lesson that involved student writing and composing. In this section, the observer noted how students were working as they composed. The researcher also documented what stage (s) of the writing process were observed.
- Section IV—Sharing: Section IV included one question to determine if sharing was observed during the lesson. In this section, there is a checklist of how sharing may have occurred.
- Section V—Miscellaneous: The last section contained miscellaneous questions about whether the teacher provided closure to the lesson and assigned homework that involves writing. This section was also utilized to document the names and titles of adults who were in the room. The protocol provided space at the end of the page for the researcher's comments.

This protocol allowed the researcher to easily record whether the teacher provided instruction in skills or strategies, practice, or both and whether the lesson included

composing or sharing. The protocol also enabled the researcher to determine what the teacher and students are doing during different parts of the lesson. During this study, the researcher conducted four classroom observations for each participant, each lasting approximately 35 minutes long. These observations were deliberately planned to coincide with regularly scheduled writing lessons within the classroom setting. During these observations, the researcher took the stance of observer as participant (Merriam, 2009). Merriam (2009) states that this method allows the researcher access to many people and a wide range of information. Furthermore, the observations of classroom instruction were audio recorded and transcribed for the purpose of verifying field notes taken by the researcher.

Weekly Writing Meetings. In order to build a community of learners within the site, weekly writing meetings were conducted for 30 minutes after school every week with the exception of weeks six and eight. All meetings were held in a classroom at Site A. At the beginning of each meeting, participants would complete a variety of activities on topics chosen by the researcher. The researcher generated topics based on information gathered during the week, questions about required documentation, or questions that had arisen during data collection. For example, in week one, the researcher identified discrepancies in each participants' view of writing. At this time, the researcher created an activity to learn more about each individual participant's definition of writing. The researcher also found it necessary to determine what forms of writing the participants were familiar with and what functions the participants believe writing serves. Another example is from weeks two and six. The participants had multiple questions about

creating their personal teaching metaphors. The researcher attempted to make this task easier by having a fun activity to help the participants understand how to create a personal teaching metaphor. After each activity was completed, the researcher facilitated a short share session. The researcher shared entries and ideas from their field notes and writer's notebook in order to make the participants more comfortable with sharing their ideas. Table 2 includes the date of the meeting, the main topic, and a description of the weekly activity.

Table 2

Weekly Meeting Information

Timeline	Dates	Topic	Description of Activity
Week 1	October 22, 2015	Personal Definitions of Writing	Participants answered three questions about their definitions of writing.
Week 2	October 27, 2016	Metaphors	Participants created a metaphor comparing their classrooms to a restaurant.
Week 3	November 5, 2015	Collecting Dialogue	Participants were given a thought bubble and a speech bubble. Everyone wrote one thing that they thought and one thing that they wished they could have said.

(continued)

Table 2

Weekly Meeting Information (continued)

Timeline	Dates	Topic	Description of Activity
Week 4	November 10, 2015	Activity Share	Participants brought examples of writing activities that were completed in their classrooms.
Week 5	November 19, 2015	Thoughts about Participation	Participants answered three questions about how their participation in this study is affecting them in the classroom.
Week 6 Holiday	No meeting due to the holiday.		
Week 7	December 1, 2015	Metaphor	Participants created a metaphor comparing their classrooms to a room of a house.
Week 8	No meeting scheduled due to participant conflicts		
Week 9	December 17, 2015	Thank you and final collection of documents	At this meeting, participants received a thank you note. There was a discussion about how participation in the study has effected the participants.

Field notes. Descriptive field notes were gathered during the observations. Notes included descriptions of the setting, people, and activities. Comments made by those

being observed, as well as the researcher, were also recorded. The researcher wrote questions about information that needed further investigation.

Data Collection Timeline

Case study participants were presented a timeline at the initial meeting prior to signing consent forms. Due to the amount of data being collected and the commitment required from participants, the timeline was intended to provide a clear road map of the activities for both the participants and the researcher. The original timeline was revised during the first week of data collection to include the Thanksgiving holiday. Due to other campus conflicts in December, another revision was needed, and an additional week was added to the end of the timeline in order to finish data collection. Table 3 is the final, revised timeline.

Table 3

Weekly Timeline for Case Study Participants

Timeline	Dates	Activity
Week 1	October 19-23	Information Session 1 st Set of Teacher Interviews Daily Journals Weekly Writing Meeting
Week 2	October 26-30	Create a Personal Teaching Metaphor 1 1 st Set of Classroom Observations 1 st Structured Journal Daily Journals Weekly Writing Meeting

(continued)

Table 3

Weekly Timeline for Case Study Participants (continued)

Timeline	Dates	Activity
Week 3	November 2-6	2 nd Set of Classroom Observations 2 nd Structured Journal Daily Journals Weekly Writing Meeting
Week 4	November 9-13	2 nd Set of Teacher Interviews 3 rd Structured Journal Daily Journals Weekly Writing Meeting
Week 5	November 16-20	3 rd Set of Classroom Observations Daily Journals Weekly Writing Meeting
Week 6 Holiday	November 23-27	Create a Personal Teaching Metaphor 2 Written Comparison of Personal Teaching Metaphors
Week 7	November 30 – December 4	4 th Set of Classroom Observations Daily Journals Weekly Writing Meeting
Week 8	December 7 - 11	3 rd Set of Teacher Interviews Discussion of Comparison of Personal Teaching Metaphors
Week 9	December 14 - 18	3 rd Set of Teacher Interviews, continued Discussion of Comparison of Personal Teaching Metaphors, continued Weekly Writing Meeting

Researcher's Role

The researcher was the sole investigator in this study. The researcher has 18 years of experience working in elementary schools. The researcher felt comfortable

working with the faculty involved and did not have difficulty establishing trust and support with the participants. Merriam (1988) states the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and the importance of the researcher cannot be overlooked. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) defines two roles the researcher takes in a qualitative study; researcher as researcher and researcher as learner. Both roles were necessary for this qualitative research. The researcher as researcher role includes data collection and analysis. The researcher as learner role included having a sense of self from the beginning of the research process. Although every effort was made to ensure objectivity, the researcher's personal bias may have shaped the way data is viewed and understood. A sense of self was important for the researcher because human instruments have "shortcomings and biases" that may impact the study; acknowledging the researcher's bias, or "subjectivities," helped the researcher monitor how she was informing data collection and analysis (Merriam, 2009, p.15). The researcher recognized the need to be open to the thoughts and the opinions of others and to set aside personal experiences in order to understand the experiences of the participants in the study.

The researcher in this study believed that strict state and district accountability measures placed on students and teachers are impacting the self-efficacy of writing teachers. The researcher also believed that teachers with a rich writing life are not transferring their experiences and interests when making choices regarding instruction. The researcher monitored these biases by creating and utilizing a researcher's journal. The challenge was not to control bias as an attempt to remove it from the study, but as

Glesne (1999) states, researchers must be aware of how their own bias, beliefs, and attitudes are reflected in the data.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was guided by the approach described by Miles and Huberman (1994) with identification of codes, categories, and themes, leading to within-case analysis and finally cross case analysis. The constant comparative method of qualitative analysis was used to analyze the data. As conceptual categories emerged from the analysis, the evidence was sorted into categories. The process of coding provided the foundation in classic grounded theory methodology (Holton, 2010). Using the constant comparative method to analyze data was one way to organize and create hierarchical categories for the information. Coding is the part where data is divided into units that are labeled and organized (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Coding of data began as soon as data was collected. This iterative process continued until all data was coded, and many codes were generated. Redundant codes were identified, and all codes were organized into several concepts. Lichtman (2010) states even large data sets only reveal a small number of concepts about the topic of interest.

Constant comparison between data made it possible to find patterns and put these patterns into concepts. As concepts were emerging, they were used to construct categories. A category is something that represented a phenomenon relevant to the research. With coding of new data and comparison with the already obtained data, concepts and categories were redefined. As categories developed, a theory from these categories started to emerge (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Hernandez (2009) states that

preconceived ideas about codes and themes hinders the emergence of credible grounded theory. The process was inductive in that the categories developed out of the data collected. These categories were combined to identify general themes. The researcher utilized all the compiled data to describe the participants' beliefs about themselves as writers and about their instructional practices.

Ethical Considerations

Research with human participants demands careful deliberation and respect for individuals contributing to the study. The researcher adhered to the strictest code of ethics in relation to the confidentiality, protection, interviewing, and coding of all data. Even though there were no foreseeable risks or ethical concerns associated with participating, the following guidelines were applied to the present study: (a) the participants were informed of the full intent of the study; (b) voluntary consent was obtained from the participants; (c) an agreement was attained ensuring the participants an opportunity to opt out of the study at any time; (d) participant and site confidentiality was maintained in all facets associated to the study, and (e) to maintain anonymity of the research study participants, aliases were adopted by the participants. The researcher acquired the permission of the participating district and the University of Houston-Clear Lake (UHCL). Permission was obtained from the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS) of UHCL before any data was collected. In addition, the security of all data and files was maintained through storage in a locked and secure filing cabinet. Finally, the researcher was cognizant of the influence this study may have on the participants and educational entities.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research speaks to the validity and reliability of a study (Lather, 1997). One of the many strengths of qualitative research is its capacity to provide rich and evocative stories (Smith & Stewart, 2001). At the same time, these stories contain multiple meanings and are subjected to multiple interpretations (Denzin, 1994). Problems of interpretation can be compounded by the researcher's bias (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This bias, of course, further complicates the question of which interpretation is more credible and dependable. Lincoln and Guba (1985) contend "that criteria defined from one perspective may not be appropriate for judging actions taken from another perspective" (p. 293). Several strategies were identified to improve the validity and reliability of qualitative research (Merriam, 2009). In qualitative studies, trustworthy research should have credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that ensuring credibility is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness. Credibility, or internal validity, seeks to provide the reader with detailed information that illustrates that the findings are "congruent with reality" (Merriam, 1998, p. 201). Since the concept of reality is relative to the person and to the situation, credibility can also be established by determining how well the findings are supported by the data (Merriam, 2009). For the purposes of this study, credibility was assured through triangulation and member checking.

Triangulation is defined as “collecting information from a diverse range of individuals and settings, using a variety of methods” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 112). A combination of interviews, journals kept by participants, personal teaching metaphors, observations, and field notes were sources of data collection. Weekly meetings were also recorded and transcribed. This provided the researcher access to various types of data that create an understanding of the phenomenon.

Merriam (1998) defines member checking as “taking data and tentative interpretations back to the people from whom they were derived and asking them if the results are plausible” (p. 204). The participants in this study received a written copy of the interview transcripts to ensure the accuracy of the data collected, the findings, the interpretations, and the analysis.

Transferability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that the qualitative researcher is concerned with the ability to transfer the results from one context to another, and the burden of transferability lies with the researcher to apply the findings to a new context. To address transferability, it’s advised that the researcher provide enough rich detail, or “thick description” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 206) regarding the situation for someone to make a decision as to whether transfer might be possible. The goal of using multiple sources of data was to obtain rich, descriptive data to be included in analysis and reporting of findings.

Dependability

Dependability is the qualitative counterpart to consistency or reliability and is established when data is reported accurately and interpreted authentically (Seale, 2002). Due to the context-dependent nature of qualitative studies, it is not likely that another researcher would be able to truly replicate this study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, researchers or practitioners in similar situations may wish to utilize and adapt the results to their specific contexts. In order to do so, the study must be viewed as dependable. For the purpose of this study, dependability was established in the following ways: (a) by multiple passes through the data with an objective viewpoint; (b) audio recordings and accurate transcription of the data; (c) ethical practices of the researcher; and (d) creation of an audit trail.

Confirmability

Confirmability is the criteria of objectivity and is recognized when the researcher documents data, methods, and decisions made during the process (Seale, 2002). Guba and Lincoln (1989) have stated that subjectivity will affect how data is analyzed because human beings do not have the ability to stay completely objective. Interviews, observations, and weekly meetings were transcribed for preservation of the data during the study.

Summary

This study was designed to identify how the instructional practices of elementary teachers of writing are influenced by their beliefs of themselves as writers. Qualitative data was gathered using a variety of sources from seven case study participants at two

elementary schools in a suburban district. Participants were chosen using purposive sampling. Data collected from participants included a combination of interviews, observations, researcher field notes, journals, and personal teaching metaphors, over a nine-week period. The researcher kept a journal throughout the data collection process. Data was analyzed using the constant comparative method.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' personal beliefs of themselves as writers and the impact these beliefs have on their writing lives and teaching of writing. This qualitative study was guided by the following questions.

Research question 1. What are teachers' beliefs of themselves as writers?

Research question 2. What impact do their stated beliefs have on their personal writing practices and teaching of writing?

In this chapter, background information for each participant is presented individually. The amount of data collected was included to show the amount of time and information provided by each participant. There is also a section explaining each participant's metaphorical view of themselves as a writing teacher. Common themes that emerged were presented and illustrated by pertinent examples drawn from the data. These were followed by a summary analysis of findings. Ultimately, a cross-case analysis of results for both research questions was shared.

Professional Background Information

This qualitative case study is built around seven participants, all teachers in the same school district for the 2015-2016 school year. Participants' names have been changed, although gender identification has been preserved. Most other details except for

academic majors, years of service, and teacher certifications have been generalized to provide as much anonymity as possible for participants, their families, and their schools. Table 4 is a summarized version of the demographic variables for all participants. More descriptive information about each participant was included in the next section.

Table 4

Demographic Information for Study Participants
(*n*=7)

Characteristic	n	%
Gender		
Male	2	29
Female	5	71
Race		
Black	2	29
Caucasian	2	29
Hispanic or Latino	3	43
Years of Teaching Experience		
0-5 years	2	29
6-10 years	1	14
11-15 years	4	57

(continued)

Table 4

Demographic Information for Study Participants (continued)
(n=7)

Characteristic	n	%
Highest Level of Education		
Bachelors	6	86
Masters	1	14

Participant One

John Crosby is a Caucasian male who is completing his fifteenth year of teaching. He is certified to teach the following: a) elementary self-contained, grades first through sixth, b) elementary English, grades first through eighth, c) English as a Second Language (ESL), grades first through eighth, and d) Gifted and Talented (GT). John is currently in his second year as a campus instructional coach for fourth grade specializing in writing and math. He has previously taught self-contained classes in third grade for six years. He also spent three years teaching in fourth grade and four years teaching in fifth grade. Crosby stated that third grade is his favorite to teach. He stated, "...it's just a cool age for kids...They're just starting to develop their reading, and there's so many new things to learn."

Crosby has a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from a Texas university, but he attended an Alternative Certification Program (ACP) at an area service center in order to become a teacher. His philosophy of writing is:

Writing is essential to all parts of learning. Every lesson you can teach is more effective and more meaningful when they conclude it with writing. Writing is also a way to empower yourself by having your voice heard. Of all the ways to communicate, writing is the one that is permanent.

Participant Two

Lauren Rush is a Hispanic female who is completing her fourth year of teaching. She is certified to teach bilingual Early Childhood (EC) through fourth grade. She currently teaches fourth grade language arts. This is her second year to teach fourth grade, and she previously taught third grade for two years as well. She identified fourth grade as her favorite to teach. She supported this by stating:

My favorite grade to teach has been 4th grade. I know that it feels stressful because we have the weight of the writing and reading test. However, with working on the students with their writing you get to know them in ways that you might not have known them if you didn't have to have conversations with them to fix their writings.

She has a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from a traditional four-year university in Texas. The following is her philosophy of writing:

I believe that writing is many things to many people. Writing is a form of expression, communication, and a way to give information. I believe that when teaching students writing with practice it will get better. You also have to give them ownership and freedom to write about what they care about because, if you don't they will not write well.

Participant Three

Jane Monae is an African American female who is completing her ninth year of teaching. She is certified to teach the following: a) EC through fourth grade and b) ESL, EC through fourth grade. This is Jane's third year to teach third grade, but she previously taught Prekindergarten (PK) for two years and first grade for four years. Her favorite grade to teach is first grade. She stated:

...younger students can be molded and have more time and opportunities to be imaginative and think outside the box. The focus is not so much on testing; therefore, they can engage and learn more through experience, being emerged in the learning process.

She has a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from a traditional four-year college in Texas. She also has a Master of Science in Curriculum and Instruction from a university in Texas. Her philosophy of writing is aligned to the ideas presented by Fletcher (2000). Monae stated:

Writing is a way of expressing thoughts and ideas. Some of us are not able to communicate and show our true emotions, feelings, or ideas verbally. Writing allows us to let our thoughts flow in an uninterrupted fashion. We can be who we want to be and release any of our dreams and thoughts without being judged.

Participant Four

Jay Smith is a Caucasian male who is completing his fourteenth year of teaching. He is certified to teach the following: a) elementary self-contained, grades first through eighth, b) elementary English, grades first through eighth, c) ESL, EC through twelfth

grade, and d) Physical Education (PE). Jay currently teaches fourth grade language arts. Previously, he taught four years of fourth grade language arts. He spent seven years teaching third grade as well as one year as a second grade teacher. He also has one year of experience teaching PE. His favorite grade to teach is second grade. He stated, “I really enjoy teaching second grade because it lets me reinforce the fundamentals that have been taught to them in Kinder and first and it lets me continue to build on those fundamentals.”

He has a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from a traditional four-year college in Minnesota. His philosophy of writing is:

Writing needs to be done on a daily basis. The writing doesn't need to be a massive composition. It can be something as simple as a reflection on something that was just read to them. Also, writing instruction happens when you read a number of different books by a number of different authors to your students. Hearing stories by different authors exposes your students to a number of different writing styles that they can in turn use in future compositions.

Participant Five

Rhianna Jones is a Hispanic female who is completing her eleventh year of teaching. She is certified to teach bilingual EC through fourth grade. She currently teaches second grade language arts and switches classes with a partner teacher. This is her ninth year to teach second grade. Previously, she has taught first grade for two years, and she was self-contained. Jones identified second grade as her favorite to teach. She supported this by saying:

I enjoy everything about it. I enjoy the kids, they are still innocent and want to please the teacher but are beginning to become independent and discover who they are. I like that parents are involved and eager to work with their children because they see the importance of what they learn in second grade.

She has a Bachelor of Arts in Creative Writing from a university in Texas, but she attended an ACP at an area service center in order to become a teacher. Her philosophy of writing is:

...as a teacher, I need to make the kids feel relaxed about writing. I give them a lot of encouragement to write what they feel/think and praise them for all their efforts...big or small. I also stress that in writing there will be mistakes but for them not to worry. They can always go back and fix them.

Participant Six

Taylor Drake is an African American female who is completing her fifteenth year of teaching. She is certified to teach EC through fourth grade. Taylor currently teaches kindergarten. She has six years of experience in kindergarten overall, but she previously taught prekindergarten (PK) for one year. She has one year of experience in first grade as well. Drake spent four years as a second grade teacher before moving to fourth grade where she taught for three years. Her favorite grades to teach are kindergarten and second grade. She stated:

Kindergarten is the foundation level. Students that come in have some background knowledge and others may not have any. When they arrived [*sic*], you are teaching them not only content base skills but life long, skills as well.

...I also enjoy teaching second grade because you have the advantage to observe what the children have mastered in kindergarten and second grade...The primary grades are very crucial and they should not be taken lightly. What they miss in the primary grades will affect them in the upper grades.

She has a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from a traditional four-year university in Texas. Her philosophy of writing is:

...the earlier students are exposed to it [writing] the better they will be. Students should start writing as soon as they are able to hold a pencil...Writing is just not putting words on paper but it is also allowing children to think about what they wanted to put on paper and how to express it out aloud. Writing for young children gives a child self-confidence and they are proud of their final piece. As they mature so does their writing...The key is to start them out early and then build upon it so that they can become better writers.

Participant Seven

Jess Lowe is a Hispanic female who is completing her first year of teaching. She is certified to teach the following: a) Generalist, grades EC through sixth and b) ESL, grades EC through sixth. She currently teaches fourth grade language arts. As this is her first year, she stated:

I have only taught 4th grade, but I enjoy this grade because the students are a bit older and more independent. Also, they already have a background knowledge on a lot of the things we cover in fourth grade, so I like that I am building on what they already know as well as adding new content.

She has a Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education from a traditional four-year university in Texas. Her philosophy of writing is:

My philosophy of writing is that anyone can be a good writer. However, in order to learn how to be a good writer, students need to be inspired by topics that they enjoy or can relate to...If students are given topics that they are familiar with and interested in, they are more willing to express themselves in their writing.

Data Collection

The experiences of these purposefully selected participants were examined from October to December 2015. The participants' experiences were explored through the collection of multiple sources of data (Yin, 2003). The research findings reported in this chapter are based on the analysis of a combination of interviews, observations, field notes, journals, personal teaching metaphors, and student work shared by the participants. In order to distinguish between the sources for material quoted from the participants, the following system was created to reference the data. Data from interviews were cited as (participant #, interview #, date). Data from structured journals were cited as (participant #, week #, journal #). Data from daily journals were cited as (participant #, daily journal #). Data from observations were cited in this way, (participant #, observation #, date). Data from field notes were cited as (FN, Date). Table 5 indicates the amount of data collected from all the participants.

Table 5

Amount of Data Collected from Participants Over a Nine-Week Period

Participant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totals
Total Number of Interviews	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	21
Total Time of Recorded Interviews	1:00:07	1:25:28	36:03	38:49	36:39	36:50	31:36	5:22:32
Total Number of Structured Journal Entries	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	105
Total Number of Daily Journal Entries	10	23	20	37	20	17	21	148
Total Number of Metaphors	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	14
Total Number of Observations	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	28
Total Time of Recorded Observations	2:20:52	1:37:08	1:55:36	2:10:34	1:47:55	2:15:29	2:09:32	14:17:06

Data collection began on October 20, 2015. After completing five of the first seven interviews, the researcher identified the following three questions that needed to be addressed by each participant in order to better analyze the information provided:

1. What is writing?
2. What forms does writing take?
3. What functions does it serve? (FN, 10/22/2015)

At the first weekly meeting held on October 22, 2015, participants completed an activity (APPENDIX G) in order for the researcher to gain more insight into their personal view of writing. The information from this activity is provided in Table 6.

Table 6

Participant Definitions of Writing

Participant	What is writing?	List as many forms of writing as you can.	What functions does writing serve?
1	Writing is the process of putting words on paper to express ideas, thoughts and feelings.	Creative writing, journaling, timeout papers, pen pal letters to my 5-year-old niece, expository, narrative, and short stories	Writing serves to communicate, to express thoughts, ideas and feelings, to inspire and intrigue, to reflect
2	Writing is a form of communication.	Notes, research papers, emails, text messages, letters, poetry, plays, novels, journals, and song lyrics	Writing serves as a form of communication and a way to express yourself.

(continued)

Table 6

Participant Definitions of Writing (continued)

Participant	What is writing?	List as many forms of writing as you can.	What functions does writing serve?
3	Writing is getting your ideas/thoughts out in written form.	Poetry, journals, novels, research, letters, emails, and text	Communication, engagement, pleasure
4	The process of writing down one's ideas, thoughts, and feelings. A tool to help remember and pass along or down information. A collection of symbols	Poetry, expository, personal narrative, fiction, nonfiction, realistic fiction, biography, and autobiography	To help communicate thoughts, ideas, and/or feelings to another person or group of people.
5	Writing is communication to others, your thoughts and emotions. It is the way for you to give the world a piece of yourself.	Poetry, narratives, persuasive, and research	Writing is for expressions of ideas and emotions.
6	Writing is the process to verbalize information. It is a way to express your thoughts and feelings about a particular subject. Writing can be used as a way of entertaining, informing and persuading others.	Note taking to prepare for an exam, writing lists, letter writing, essay writing, expository, personal narrative, how to research writing for a case study, publishing books, articles in a magazines and newspapers, sending messages via email and text, and labeling	Writing serve all functions because it is present in everything we do.

(continued)

Table 6

Participant Definitions of Writing (continued)

Participant	What is writing?	List as many forms of writing as you can.	What functions does writing serve?
7	Writing is a way to express a thought, an idea, or yourself through the use of a pen and paper.	Essays, journals, research papers, diary entries, and poetry	Writing allows you to explain and communicate something.

Other than writing e-mail messages, letters, notes to parents, memos, and, lesson plans, most teachers do not consider themselves writers (Schreengost, 2001). However, as explained in the literature review, identifying the correct writing form for a specific function is a sign of maturing as a writer (Tompkins, 2010). For this activity, the participants in this study identified two main functions for writing. Six of the seven participants described the function of writing as a form of communication. Participant Six explained her belief that writing serves all functions by stating that writing is a form of self-expression as well as implying that writing is a form of communication as well. For the purposes of this study, the participants believe writing is a form of communicating or expressing thoughts and ideas.

Writing involves more than the documentation of ideas. It is a process that requires the writer to think carefully about the purpose for writing (Graves, 1983). In this activity, the participants also identified several forms that writing could take. The researcher used the information in the table above as a beginning reference for the participants' perceptions of what writing entails and the formats it takes. Form and

function are both important for the outcome of the piece as they are directly aimed at the intended audience (Dorn & Soffos, 2001). While some of these forms were seen during observations, many were not. Examples of activities and the various forms of writing observed were included in the following sections.

Themes

Participants in this study have expressed several different beliefs regarding their own writing competency as well as regarding their teaching of writing. This chapter examines seven major themes which emerged from the data: (1) Prior Experience Shape Beliefs, (2) Participant Beliefs about Current Writing Ability, (3) Beliefs Regarding Personal Writing are Malleable, (4) Teacher Preparedness to Teach Writing, (5) Metaphorical View of Teachers Role in Writing Instruction, (6) Challenges, and (7) Instructional Practices. These themes were utilized to answer the research questions posed by this study and were related back to the literature and theoretical framework. Figure 1 is a graphic representation of the seven themes that emerged from the data.

Figure 1. Seven Themes that Emerged from the Data



Prior Experiences Shape Beliefs

The literature review showed how individual teachers' belief systems and prior experiences directly affect teachers' instruction in their classrooms (Berry, 2006; Pollington, Wilcox, & Morrison, 2001). After a cross-case analysis of the data (Creswell, 2007), data analysis revealed three subthemes: (1) Influences at home, (2) K-12 school experience, and (3) college experiences. In this section, participants shared a combination of positive and negative experiences that influenced their beliefs about themselves as writers, as well as writing itself.

Influences at home

Writing is a social process, and families are the first socializing factor in most students' lives. The stages of literacy begin early on in childhood because children are exposed to language, sounds, facial expressions, and gestures as forms of communication. Children entering kindergarten will most likely be able to communicate orally, whereas they will still be in the very early stages of writing and reading. All participants attributed some of their writing beliefs to influences from home. Tompkins, (2010) suggests that there are many added benefits of getting parents involved in the creative writing process. Three of those benefits include: (1) increased motivation to write, (2) student engagement in authentic writing tasks outside of the school community, and (3) an additional measure of support is added within the teaching/learning community.

Two of the seven participants recalled having positive influences at home from parents. Crosby's memories were specific to writing, and he stated, "...my mom is very good in all English grammar, writing. She taught me how to diagram sentences..." (participant 1, interview 1, 10/21/2015). Jess Lowe had positive expectations from home, but not specifically for writing. She stated, "...whatever you had to do at school, you will do it, and you will do it to the best of your abilities" (participant 7, interview 1, 10/22/2015). Crosby also stated his grandmother influenced his love of writing by communicating with him through letter writing. Crosby noted, "...my grandma was a big influence on writing..." (participant 1, interview 1, 10/21/2015).

Parents and family are children's first educators. Children's family and home environment have a strong impact on literacy development and educational achievement. This impact is stronger during the children's early years but continues throughout their school years.

K-12 school experience

Even though the influence from home continues through the school years, only one participant references the connection again. While some participants provided more detailed descriptions of how they experienced writing within the classroom setting, others only had vague recollections of writing activities in their classrooms. Analysis of the data identified four broad categories: (1) recognition of ability, (2) personal ability, (3) creative, authentic opportunities, and (4) frustration.

Five of the seven participants recalled having their writing pieces published or showcased as a positive experience. Jay Smith stated, "I remember having to do a research paper on bald eagles in like 3rd or 4th grade. My paper was one of about a dozen that was chosen to be read in front of the grade level" (participant 4, week 2, journal 2). Rhianna Jones also shared a memory about writing a persuasive essay in fourth grade. She remembers receiving positive feedback that increased her confidence about her writing ability. She wrote, "When my teacher read it, she called me to her desk and told me how much she liked my writing. I enjoyed writing a lot better after that (participant 5, week 2, journal 2).

Four of the seven participants also identified personal ability. Rhianna Jones stated, "I didn't think writing was hard. I enjoyed it" (participant 5, week 2, journal 2).

While Rhianna Jones remembers writing as a pleasant activity, two other participants remember writing in school with mixed emotions. Jess Lowe writes, “I remember writing being something I enjoyed in my early school years. However, as I got older and the writing got more structured, I didn’t enjoy it as much” (participant 7, week 2, journal 2). Initially, Jay Smith also described remembering his writing favorably. However, he also gives insight into some of the activities he had during school and how, with further evaluation, they may have been detrimental to his view of himself as a writer. Smith wrote, “I thought I was a pretty good writer. To be honest though, looking back I can see I was better at copying out of an encyclopedia than actually writing my own paper” (participant 4, week 2, journal 2).

Two other participants have vague recollections of school experiences, but both remember authentic, creative writing activities outside of the classroom. Jane Monae stated, “I have no real significant memories of writing in school besides research papers and other assignments” (participant 3, week 2, journal 2). However, she also states, “My friends and I wrote letters daily and drew pictures. We had a club, the BFF’s, and writing the letters was a requirement” (participant 3, week 2, journal 2). John Crosby also stated that the early years of writing were “a bit vague.” However, his authentic writing experiences continued on a personal level. He goes on to write, “As I got older, I remember writing letters to my aunt and my grandma” (participant 1, week 2, journal 2).

Two of the seven participants conveyed frustration with their K-12 writing experiences. Lauren Rush does not recall her experiences in a positive way due to the amount of time missed for other required activities. In her structured journal, Rush

shared, “If I’m honest I considered myself a horrible writer. I was a resource student and missed a lot of instruction when I was in small group or speech therapy. When writing papers, I always required a lot of revising” (participant 2, week 2, journal 2).

Taylor Drake believes that she was a capable writer, but she also conveys frustration when she describes her memories of writing. In her structured journal, Drake wrote:

During my K-12 experiences as a writer I would describe myself as proficient. I say this because teachers back then did not stress writing. There *[sic]* resources were very limited and they did not make writing exciting. Most of time if the class misbehaved you were made to write sentences. I would say this is not teaching me at all. The teachers did not incorporate the subjects together. They would teach reading separate and writing separately instead of teaching them together. So I was not happy in my writing classes. I was very frustrated! When the teachers would write daily notes on the board, and then they would say ok go ahead and copy the information off the board. I would say to myself, this is not writing (participant 6, week 2, journal 2).

Vague recollections by participants and the description from Drake suggest that the activities from their K-12 school experiences lack substance. The data also infers that there is a question about the teachers’ ability to integrate writing across disciplines.

College experiences

Ideally, every high school graduate would possess basic writing skills. However, first year college students usually struggle with the transition from high school writing to

the expectations of college writing (Mustenikova, 2006). According to the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (2010), 60 percent of first year students discover they are not ready for post-secondary studies in English. Students lack the skills to enter college or the workforce because the opportunities and experiences in high school were based on a different expectation and evaluation system. NAEP also categorized 70% of secondary school students as low achieving writers (Graham & Perin, 2007). All of the participants in this study stated that they did not believe that high school writing prepared them for the transition to college.

The experiences of the participants in college were described similarly to their earlier experiences. Two of the seven participants describe negative emotions. For one of the participants, the focus was on how critical feedback decreased her confidence. Taylor Drake vividly describes this in her structured journal when she wrote the following:

When I started college, writing slapped me right in the face. Every time I completed an assignment I would get it back and it would be covered with red marks. It looked as if my paper had bled to death. It would get penalize *[sic]* for not adding enough details and for not adding ed to the end of my verbs. My organizational skills were very poor because my ideas would be scattered. In high school, they did not model how to organize your paper. So when I started college I learned that I had a major deficit in writing. So my confidence level was very low (participant 6, week 2, journal 3).

Lauren Rush felt her own level of anxiety as a college student. In her structured journal, Lauren wrote:

I graduated from college in 2010. I had no idea that I would be teaching writing. If I am completely honest I was worried about becoming employed and mastering the craft as I went. I wish the college courses we took would have taught me something useful about writing instead of a bunch of theory of a classroom that is set in a perfect world (participant 2, week 2, journal 3).

Three of the seven participants identified vague writing activities that lacked creative writing opportunities in college. Jane Monae also expressed similar ideas about writing. Her recollection of college writing requirements was vague. She shared:

You know what I don't even remember a lot of undergraduate course like writing in there because the first few years which is like the basics. But once I got to the elementary, like the school teaching, we just did a lot of projects. Oh, I guess we wrote discipline plans and stuff like that. We would write lessons. So all I really did in college was anything relating to teaching (participant 3, interview 1, 10/23/2015).

Jess Lowe remembers writing "... a lot of essays, a lot of research papers. We also did a lot of reflection" (participant 7, interview 1, 10/22/2015). Like Monae, Lowe did not recall any specific activities. Jay Smith supported this idea with his thoughts about writing when he left college. He wrote:

For the most part I was very comfortable with my writing when I came out of college. I wouldn't go as far as to say that I excelled at writing! There were, and

still are, many rules in writing that I mess up or don't totally understand, but on a whole I believe I left college confident in my ability to write.

College for two participants was all about creative writing, and John Crosby remembers his classes to be intense. He stated:

It was a creative writing class and it always was linked to reading novels. A lot of it started out as just responses to it and then our writing a piece that was in the same genre the book was in. This guy, the one I really like, Dr. Hogue. He did a post-modernism class, and so we'd read a book like a Paul Auster book and then we'd write on our own paper in a similar style. Then we did another class, that was probably the best one. It was writing workshop, and you wrote a creative writing piece. And then you had to, I remember this 'cause it scared me to death. You had to make a copy for everyone in the group and then you had to sit there and not say word. And they just dissect and tore your paper apart and just everything that was, critiqued it... (participant 1, interview 1, 10/21/2015).

The participants from this study describe a variety of experiences that could also have been influenced by the expectations of the instructors. Most college professors are content experts or experts in their fields. There are professional demands placed on the professors to publish and to keep up with current research and reading. While college professors may be well versed in how to write, they receive little training in the teaching of writing (Troia, Shankland, & Heintz, 2010). Troia, Shankland, and Heintz, (2010) state "despite their training in language, literature, and related studies, college-level instructors of writing have not been trained in the study of writing research and research

on the teaching of writing” (p. 260). Unlike K-12 teachers, college professors are more likely to be writers.

The participants in this study represented a diverse group of learners with an assortment of writing college experiences. The explanations of the participants’ college experiences identify that writing elicits several emotions. The three most commonly found in the data were: (1) fear, (2) anxiety, and (3) apathy.

Participant Beliefs about Current Writing Ability

Cremin and Myhill (2012) state that both teachers and students can benefit from considering their experiences and identities as writers. Some of the questions asked to determine how the participants viewed themselves as writers included “What types of personal writing activities do you do on a regular basis?” and “In what ways do you feel your personal writing activities or experiences have any impact on the way you approach teaching writing? How do you integrate these into your classroom instruction?” A cross-case analysis of the data provided a mix of positive and negative beliefs about the participants’ views of their current writing ability.

During the initial individual interview, participants answered a question describing how they currently view themselves as writers. Researchers suggest that teachers must be confident, avid readers and writers to be effective teachers of reading and writing (Calkins, 2003; Graves, 2004; Routman, 2005). Only two of the seven participants considered themselves to be good writers at this time. John Crosby stated:

Yes, I feel I’m a good writer. A lot of it comes from reading a lot, and I think a lot of good writers get their ideas through reading. I minored in writing in

college. I enjoyed that. It's a creative writing focus (participant 1, interview 1, 10/21/2015).

Crosby's statement shows an understanding of how the reading/writing connection (Atwell, 1991; Calkins, 2003) has impacted his writing abilities. He also reiterates this sentiment when discussing his philosophy of writing he in his classroom. He stated:

My philosophy with the writing I should go back to that and it should be almost always linked to reading and connected with it and that's why I like to do the, sort of following the bases you know, doing the chapter books and get the kids into it and then doing response journals and you know when, when it's, when it has, when it's connected to something else not in total isolation, they, they, they enjoyed it you know (participant 1, interview 1, 10/21/2015).

Jess Lowe also believes she is proficient in writing. She said, "I do. I've always been interested in writing. I am very...I had a lot of details. So I've always been able to tell a good story, but it's not my favorite. But I do think I'm good at it" (participant 7, interview 1, 10/22/2015).

Four of the seven participants had conflicting views on their writing abilities. Jane Monae believed that topic and how it relates to her experience plays a role in her writing ability. She stated:

It depends on what I'm writing about, if it's something that I'm interested in or passionate about. But if something that someone just wants me to write about, then no, and I guess because I can put more into it, I can write more about it if I care (participant 3, interview 1, 10/23/2015).

Monae's belief about her abilities are contingent on how her experiences relate to the topic. She reiterates this sentiment in a journal entry. She wrote:

It makes more sense to write about feelings or beliefs to me because these are the things we are truly passionate about. Our interests guide our writing. Our personal story guides our writing. If you ask me to write about science fiction, I promise you will get nothing! Ask me to write about music, love, and décor, I'll write you a book (participant 3, daily journal 3).

The other three participants with conflicting views identified a problem or struggle that they believed kept them from being better writers. Too much information, too little information, and not enough writing practice influenced the way the participants view themselves as writers. Jay Smith stated that he has a difficult time staying focused in his writing. He implies that he had too many ideas and struggled to present a cohesive idea. He shared:

I consider myself a fair writer. And the reason I say that is at times I get a bit long-winded in my writing. It seems to meander sometimes. That was actually one of the things that really struggled...I struggled with at college. Writing something for my papers and stuff like that, I would get off topic, or I would ramble a little bit. So no, I don't really consider myself a good writer; a decent writer (participant 4, interview 1, 10/22/2015).

Taylor Drake did not think she was a good writer because she had trouble generating information to support her ideas and arguments. She said, "I consider myself an average writer because there's always more things to learn. The hardest part is getting the ideas.

Sometimes you don't always have the ideas that you want to write down so that takes a longer process” (participant 6, interview 1, 10/21/2015). In a daily journal entry, she created regarding what angers her about writing, she wrote:

Often times I just want to jot some ideas down. However, you cannot do that right away. You have to brainstorm, and you have to make sure your verbs are in the right place. As for me I try to take shortcuts! It does not make me a better writer. It just makes the process longer. I wish my writing could flow like the water in the river. Nevertheless, it is not that way at all. I’m always hitting bumps and running into a brick wall, and that’s what angers me the most (participant 6, daily journal 1).

Rhianna Jones believes that the lack of practice over the years has been detrimental to her writing abilities. She stated:

I used to consider myself a good writer when I was in college and it was easier to write. You know, just academically I had better flow with my words. But now after being in teaching for so long and not writing like I used to, I don't think I'm that good anymore. Like it takes me forever to put down in a sentence what I want to say and make sure that what I'm trying to...The rewriting is very hard. (participant 5, interview 1, 10/21/2015).

Lauren Rush was a contrast to the other participants when asked about her ability. She is the sole participant to identify that she does not believe that she is a good writer. She feels that she needs more information in order to communicate logically. She shared:

Honestly, I don't sometimes because I feel like I could be more expressive, and I could add more detail. I just sometimes jot things down, and then when I go back and re-read it like 'what was I thinking'. It makes absolutely no sense (participant 2, interview 1, 10/20/2015).

Experts in the field of writing agree that to teach writing, teachers must first be writers (Bridge & Hiebert, 1985). Making meaning in writing calls for not only advanced skills but also for knowledge of oneself as a writer (Lavelle, 2006). Similarly, teachers must participate and understand the process and know how to create the kind of conditions that facilitate skillful writing from students (Atwell, 1991). Unfortunately, most K-12 teachers do not keep up with current writing research (Sullivan & Tinberg, 2006). Sullivan and Tinberg (2006) report that teachers do not generally publish books or do peer-reviewed research. Durst (1992) stated that there are limited rewards for being a teacher who writes. Taking the time to reflect on personal writing ability, writing history, and current practices helps build an understanding of oneself as a writer.

Beliefs Regarding Personal Writing are Malleable

The views of all participants have changed over time. Participants demonstrated shifts in their beliefs of themselves as both writers and teachers of writing. For two of the seven participants, this change has made a difference in how they approach their personal writing. Both participants describe analyzing their writing in a more critical way for clarity and correctness. Taylor Drake stated:

I'm more aware of what I write down. I try to make sure that my writing makes sense. I want my thoughts to be organized and for my writing to flow. If my

thoughts are not planned well my writing will not be clear (participant 6, week 4, journal 4).

Like Drake, Jane Monae has also become more aware of her personal writing. She has become more critical of her writing as an adult. She reiterates the idea of checking for correctness while making sure the message is clear and concise. She wrote:

Over time, I have become very cautious and concerned about my style of writing. Formal writing more so than any other form. I read and reread multiple times. I check the wording to make sure its rhythmic and expresses my thoughts accurately. I also check the spelling because even if I know it's right, I always have doubt. Therefore, I am overall just concerned that it is an accurate, well-written representation of the assigned topic (participant 3, week 4, journal 4).

Moreover, she recognizes that writing is about development over time. She states:

We are all a rough draft, waiting and working on becoming a masterpiece. It takes trial and error. Sometimes, we have to start over. In the end the work will be great, but it takes time to make an amazing piece of art (participant 3, daily journal 11).

Two of the seven participants who recalled having positive experiences with writing when they were younger identified how a situation or type of assignment can change how writing is viewed. Rhianna Jones remembers her love of writing developing from her love of reading. She stated:

I always favored reading and writing, and writing just took naturally to me. But it was still hard work. The rewriting process and making sure that I was conveying

what I wanted to convey in my writing was the hardest part (participant 5, interview 1, 10/21/2015).

Even though Jones communicated a fondness for writing, when asked about how her view had changed, she wrote, “I feel that I don’t feel the pressure to write anymore that I use to feel when I was younger. I think what’s changed is now I see it as a process that takes time” (participant 5, week 4, journal 4).

John Crosby also feels differently now than when he was younger. In his structured journal, Crosby writes:

I went from enjoying writing as a kid to dreading writing essays in high school, back to enjoying writing in college, and now back to not enjoying teaching writing to fourth graders who don’t know the difference between a noun and a verb (participant 1, week 4, journal 4).

Unlike Jones and Crosby, Jess Lowe has a new-found fondness for writing.

As I’ve gotten older, I have realized that I actually enjoy writing. During my school years, writing was just another thing that I did only because I had to. Now I really look forward to modeling a writing lesson for my students, and I hope to teach them that writing is a valuable skill (participant 7, week 4, journal 4).

Jay Smith explained that his view of himself as a writer has not changed as much as the way he writes has progressed.

I don’t know if it is my view of myself as a writer that has changed as much as the way I write that has changed. I have always felt like I was a decent writer, like I said before I lack some of the technical understanding of writing, but the way I

write has changed over the years. I believe this is because the reasons why I am writing has changed over the years. For example, in high school we had writing assignments, but they were usually term papers on a subject we picked to research and write about. I could do the research and present the facts, but a lot of my writing was just changing what I had read enough so I wasn't accused of plagiarizing. In college, I wanted to write the way I talked and learned that I had to become a more clinical and technical writer. Now, as a 4th grade teacher I have come back to writing for fun and showing my students that writing isn't as bad or hard as they think it is.

Similarly, to Lowe, Jay Smith knows that writing is a necessary skill and wants to help students become proficient writers.

Teacher Preparedness to Teach Writing

Teachers must be aware that there is much to consider as they embark on their attempt to assist students in becoming competent writers. Zimmerman (1997) recognizes the related frustration of many students, while furthermore acknowledging the need for struggling students to have competent instructors who are adequately prepared to equip them for future learning. Also disconcerting is the lack of opportunities for practicing teachers and pre-service teacher candidates to see themselves as writers (National Commission on Writing Report, 2003). Teacher preparation programs emphasize literature, not writing. Kiuahara, Graham, and Hawken (2009) reported that 71% of teachers felt they received little to no instruction in the teaching of writing and 44% continue to feel this way. In this study, participants were asked about teacher training

programs, preservice teacher programs, and professional development opportunities related to teaching writing. Two subthemes emerged from the data: (1) the limited focus on writing in teacher training programs and (2) limited professional development.

Limited Focus on Writing in Teacher Training Programs

There is a lack of attention to preservice teacher preparation with regards to writing instruction (Hall & Grisham-Brown, 2011). To exacerbate this problem, most language arts courses in general teacher education programs, simply include reading instruction with the writing component found to be of lesser importance (Kiuahara et al., 2009). Cutler and Graham (2008) reported that more than a quarter of surveyed elementary teachers self-reported they were not adequately prepared to teach writing in their teacher education programs. This lack of college preparation is consistent with other studies. For example, Graham and Harris (2003) pointed out that there is a need to understand how to prepare teachers to teach classroom writing. Norman and Spencer (2005) also reported that very few states require specific coursework in writing for teacher certification.

All participants were questioned about their preservice college preparation regarding learning how to teach writing. The five participants who attended college with the intent to become teachers had difficulty recalling any formal education regarding writing instruction in the classroom. While two of the participants did not attend college with the intent to be teachers, they both took extensive writing courses for their degrees. However, none of the participants reported having participated in methods courses specifically for teaching writing. The responses were not surprising considering that the

literature review also found that teacher education programs do not provide preparation in learning how to teach writing (Collier, Scheld, Barnard, & Stallcup, 2015; Cutler & Graham, 2008). Jane Monae supported this in her journal when she wrote, “After college, honestly, teaching writing was not a major concern or thought. I didn’t necessarily worry too much about it (participant 3, week 2, journal 3). None of the participants could recall being adequately prepared, or even prepared at all, in their college teacher education programs to teach writing.

Limited Professional Development

Unfortunately, the lack of attention to teacher preparation impacts K-12 student motivation to write (Myers et al., 2016). This requires teachers to find a variety of ways to motivate and provide instructional techniques to use with good, average, and struggling writers (Graham & Harris, 2003). In this school district, all teachers attend two full days of mandatory professional development sessions specific to their grade level at the beginning of the school year. At this time, specific requirements for all subjects for the new school year were shared with the teachers. Teachers were given an overview of curriculum information for the new school year. For the 2015-2016 school year, the district gave the teachers a plan for daily writing lessons for the first ten days of school. Participants received the plan at their specific grade level academies in early August. The plan could also be found on a district curriculum website with additional resources for implementing the plan. School administrators received information outlining the requirements of the plan. However, no additional professional development

was given to the participants regarding this new initiative. Only one of the seven participants mentioned this new initiative. Rhianna Jones stated:

They gave us the first ten days of writing that we were supposed to go over, but I was so overwhelmed at the beginning of school year, that I was not able to follow through with the first ten days of writing (participant 5, interview 1, 10/21/2015).

The school district also provided support sessions three or four times a year after school began. However, the sessions were not mandatory. All seven participants stated that they had attended some of the support sessions for their grade levels, but only three of the seven participants had attended all the offered sessions. Six of the participants stated that they had attended all the required district trainings. Only one of the participants did not attend the two days of training before school began. Lauren Rush stated, "...the one that I missed because I was out of town." Even though all participants stated that they had received access to curriculum materials and resources, it was noted that they had not received any professional development from the school district on providing differentiated instruction in writing and that they had very little professional development specifically regarding writing instruction.

Two of the seven participants shared that these sessions had negatively influenced their instructional choices in the classroom. Both participants were very specific about the lack of creativity required when implementing the strategies and ideas gathered from the district professional development. John Crosby stated:

They've negatively influenced it, because they're so, everything is so geared towards the... test. Everything is so formulaic that it sucks all the creativity out

of it. Like when I started to try to do this for last year. After several weeks and me asking for ideas and assistance from people, more and more people from administration coming over and saying well this is how you should do it, and none of it seemed right (participant 1, interview 1, 10/21/2015).

Rhianna Jones supported this when she stated:

It becomes tedious and so many things that we have to make sure that the children are doing, instead of just making them develop a love for writing and reading. That's the main goal. I think. Just make sure that they enjoyed it, and if they didn't enjoy, just find something about it that brings out their creativity (participant 5, interview 1, 10/21/2015).

Ironically, both of these participants completed ACPs and completed creative writing coursework in college. These participants were more critical of the quality of the professional development provided by the district. Spandel (2005) explains that teachers generally fall back on their own school writing experiences, which involves “assigning, collecting, and correcting writing [rather than]...thinking out loud, talking about where personal writing topics come from, drafting on an overhead or chalkboard, reading an in-process piece aloud, revising, editing, or even coming up with a title” (p. 78). Data collected from the five traditionally trained teachers supports this statement. The traditionally trained teachers were more focused on the materials provided while the ACP trained participants were focused on student creativity. This implies that there is a difference in how traditionally trained teachers of writing and writers who have become teachers approach the teaching of writing.

According to district procedures, other professional development should take place at the campus level based on the needs of the campus. However, all seven participants reported that no other professional development for writing instruction had been offered at the campus level. Researchers have suggested that professional development programs, when implemented with fidelity, involving vague goals, little teacher collaboration, inadequate trainings, and one shot workshops have no significant impact on teacher knowledge or student achievement (Harris & Sass, 2011). When teachers are engaged in learning, they need time to process new concepts. This will allow them to reflect on how new strategies contribute to their personal and practical knowledge of teaching. Personal experiences and prior knowledge also affect how teachers perceive their need to participate in professional development activities. Their own professional perceptions and concerns may require different types of support to increase success in the classroom.

All seven participants agreed that there has been very little professional development provided for teachers in writing and the main focus for their schools was on test preparation and data analysis. Due to the lack of systemic professional development and guidance offered by the district, the participants were left without clear expectations on the details of the writing standards and end-products that would meet and exceed the district writing goals. Even though the district offered follow up sessions throughout the year, most participants reported not attending these sessions. Two main reasons emerged to explain how the participants felt about the offered professional development: (1) professional development is not based on the needs of the individual teachers, and (2)

there is too much time focused on data analysis and weak concepts defined by the data analysis. In order to develop effective teachers of writing, professional development must be high quality in action, planning, design, and implementation in order to affect teacher knowledge (Harris & Sass, 2011).

Metaphorical View of Teachers Role in Writing Instruction

Eliciting teaching metaphors gave the researcher a different view of how teachers think of themselves and their roles in the classroom. Metaphors can be used to conceptualize beliefs about the multiple roles of teachers. Bullough (1991), in a study of preservice teachers, stated that the process of becoming a teacher is unique for each individual. While the personal dimensions of becoming a teacher may need to be given more attention, these dimensions also need to be viewed within the context of classroom teaching. Teachers often view themselves as having multiple roles or that their roles change according to the teaching context. The use of metaphors can enable teachers to represent their personal understanding of the teaching process, themselves as teachers, adults as learners, and schools as systems in a way that can be beneficial in exploring the complexity of teaching (Earle, 1995). However, it is this complexity that makes the use of a single metaphor limiting in examining understanding.

In an attempt to understand how teachers describe the development of their professional identities, the following statement about the use of metaphor was relevant to this study. Hunt (2006) writes, "...reflection which involves the exploration and articulation of an individual's use of metaphor is an important element in the process of demystifying the passage of personal knowledge into professional practice" (p. 328). The

metaphors constructed to describe the participants' teaching lives arise from their everyday teaching experiences. This variety of metaphors chosen by participants reflected a broad range of teaching identities and served as a reminder that identity is a dynamic, ever-evolving concept.

Metaphors contain information essential to participants' growth as professionals. Metaphors have the ability to reveal educational values, beliefs, and principles regarding how the participants view knowledge acquisition personally and in their classrooms. Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) proposed five perspectives by which people know and view the world. These are (1) silence, (2) subjective knowing, (3) received knowing, (4) procedural knowing and (5) constructed knowing (Belenky et al., 1986). Table 7 details these perspectives the perspective toward authority and knowledge that each represents.

Table 7

Summary of the Five Stages of Knowing as Proposed by Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986)

Stages	Description
Silence	Knowledge is based on the ideas of an external authority.
Received Knowledge	External authorities are the ultimate source of knowledge. However, learners are capable of receiving and reproducing knowledge but not creating knowledge on their own.
Subjective Knowledge	Knowledge is conceived of as personal, private, and intuitive. Experience is viewed as the most valuable source of knowledge.

(continued)

Table 7

Summary of the Five Stages of Knowing as Proposed by Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986)(continued)

Stages	Description
Procedural Knowledge	There is an investment in learning and applying objective procedures for obtaining and communicating knowledge. Learners begin to value the knowledge of the external authority as well as understanding that subjective knowledge may be fallable.
Constructed Knowledge	Knowledge is viewed as contextual. Learners experience themselves as creators of knowledge, and value both subjective and objective strategies for knowing. Learners develop an understanding that knowledge is relative. There is a desire to understand how systems of knowledge interact.

To understand the ways in which teacher created metaphors have the power to represent the realities of educational practice, the researcher utilized two of the five stages of knowing as described by Belenky et al. (1986). Of these five perspectives, the role a given teacher takes as the authority of knowledge in a classroom is generally regarded as existing within one of two epistemological orientations: (1) behaviorist and (2) constructivist. Received is considered to be from the behaviorist view of learning while constructed is from the constructivist view (Cheng, Chan, Tang, & Cheng, 2009; Vygotsky, 1986). Each of these positions affects the decisions teachers make about instructional modes and content delivery (Schraw & Olafson, 2002), as well as having a direct impact on the roles students take as learners.

Participants were required to create two teaching metaphors within the nine-week data collection period. Given the possibility that participants would merely choose

a metaphor from a bank of metaphors historically associated with teaching (Hofer, 2006), care was taken in the construction of the activity. Prior to creating their teaching metaphor, participants completed an activity (APPENDIX L) during the second weekly meeting. During this meeting, the purpose of the metaphor was discussed. As an introduction, participants created a metaphor comparing their classroom to a type of restaurant. One of the participants shared the following metaphor for her classroom:

I see learning like a family holiday dinner. It's chaotic, I tell people how it is, organized chaos. I cater to individuals. I make it, try to make it a fun experience. Sometimes I just hold on to my sanity until it's over and then it's a big sigh of relief (Weekly meeting 2, 10/27/2017).

Situating the first metaphor activity at the beginning of data collection, before participants had the opportunity to be influenced by the researcher or the other participants' views on teaching and learning, further diminished the likelihood that teachers would choose a metaphor suitable or acceptable to others.

In weeks two and six, the participants completed the personal teaching metaphor activity (APPENDIX I). The intent of creating metaphors was to help teachers reflect on their practice in relation to writing. The metaphors for six participants were not static. One participant chose the same metaphor both times, but not for the same reasons. Table 8 includes both metaphors identified by each participant. Further evaluation and description provide a unique perspective about the professional perspectives and practices of the participants.

Table 8

Teaching Metaphor by Participant

Participant	Metaphor 1 – Week 2	Metaphor 2 – Week 6
1	Butterfly	Coach
2	Coach	Cook
3	Play director	Artist
4	Tour guide	Coach
5	Ringmaster	Ringmaster
6	Shepherd	Gardener
7	Actress	Gym trainer

Metaphor Analysis

Initially, participants' metaphors were simply analyzed by comparing both metaphors. Coding revealed patterns related to the ways participants characterized themselves, their students, and the processes utilized to reach desired outcomes (Kember 1997). Data analysis also focused on the description of classroom interactions between the teacher and the students. A deductive approach (Berg, 2001) was used to determine whether teachers positioned themselves as acquisition based (A), participation based (P), or a blend of both (B; Sfard, 1998). The analysis provided a diverse range of teacher metaphors. Further analysis uncovered that a majority of participants' portrayals of practice were not consonant with their identified epistemological orientations.

Deeper analysis of the ways in which metaphors were validated provided a contextual foundation for coding and interpretation. As a result of these findings,

specific language from each metaphor was examined to discern the relationships between beliefs and teaching practice. In all metaphors but one, the students' role was directly associated to the teacher role (e.g., shepherd/sheep). One metaphor did not address students in the classroom. Two things were identified from the analysis: (1) all metaphors equated teaching as a process, and (2) all of these processes were evaluated by the quality of the end results. Moreover, none of the participants spoke solely about the process as an end in and of itself (e.g., the process of growth).

Even though all the metaphors were process driven, they were all ultimately goal oriented, not process oriented. The process of achieving an objective was described by participants in one of four ways: (1) creating a final product, (2) preparing for a final performance, (3) establishing a nurturing environment, and (4) arriving at a destination. Two of the thirteen metaphors (15%) described the process of creating a product, seven (54%) described preparing for a performance, three (23%) focused on the process of establishing a nurturing environment, and one (8%) described the process of arriving at a destination safely. The use of metaphors in this study revealed information that teachers may not be able to articulate in other ways.

Metaphor Classification

Metaphors were classified into two categories: teacher outcomes (TO) and student outcomes (SO). Each metaphor was labeled as either a teacher outcome (TO) which corresponds to the behaviorist epistemology (Olafson and Schraw, 2006), or a student outcome (SO) which corresponds to the constructivist (SO) epistemological stances in the

literature (Vygotsky, 1986). Table 9 reflects the differences in epistemological orientations in the literature and how they were applied to the current study.

Table 9

Epistemological Orientation: Teacher Outcomes or Student Outcomes

Orientation	Description of Teaching	Student Roles and Relationships in the Teaching Process	Group Appearing in the data: Teacher or Student
Behaviorist: Metaphors oriented to teacher outcomes (n=3)	Framed in terms of teacher's work	Student roles in the teaching process were negligibly evident.	Teacher
Constructivist: Metaphors oriented to student outcomes (n=10)	Framed in terms of student's work	Student roles in the teaching process were evident.	Student

Teacher Outcome Metaphors. Teacher outcome metaphors place a larger emphasis on the role of the teacher and the processes of the teacher than on the role of the student in contributing to the outcome (Patchen & Crawford, 2011). Students contribute little, if anything, to the learning outcome. When students do appear, they are described as passive recipients of the teacher's work. The teacher is perceived to be a highly skilled individual whose main task is to produce students as socially useful products. Badley and Hollabaugh (2012) described this as a transmission metaphor. Teachers who adopt transmission metaphors as their teaching reality believe that their responsibilities include passing knowledge to students. These teachers could undermine learning in the classroom by attempting to be the sole transmitter of knowledge.

Table 10 summarizes the TO metaphors (n=3) created by participants. In the “artist” and “actress” examples, students are observers of the teachers’ work. In the “butterfly” example, students are not addressed.

Table 10

Teacher Outcome Metaphors

Teacher As	Student As	Process	Objective
Artist	Observers	Creating a product	Masterpiece
Actress	Audience	Preparing for a performance	Deliver lines
Butterfly		Establishing a nurturing environment	More effective teaching

Artist. Jane Monae chose the artist as her second metaphor. She focused more on the creative processes required by the teacher. While she addressed teaching the children, students do not have a direct role in creating the final product. The following is Monae’s second metaphor and was identified as a TO metaphor:

My second teaching metaphor is that my writing is like that of an artist. I have a vision of what my masterpiece is supposed to be like. I am molding and drawing trying to create the perfect piece of art. This would be me teaching the children, trying to get them to learn the skill. In the end, the creating may not be perfect. It has flaws and many imperfections. Yet, it is perfect because it is a true expression of the person. We are all different and no two pieces of art will be the same (metaphor 2, 12/01/2015).

Actress. Jess Lowe chose an actress as her first metaphor to describe her role in writing instruction in her classroom. She explains:

In this job, you have to put on a show on a daily basis. Your content has to be entertaining and delivered in an engaging way in order to maintain your audience's attention. That is why I make it a point to always walk around the room, speak loud enough to demand attention, and use any gestures that might help me deliver my lines (metaphor 1, 11/08/2015).

The description of Lowe's role in the classroom places all of the attention on her and was categorized as TO metaphor. Students only have an observatory role as she presents the lesson.

Butterfly. John Crosby chose the butterfly as his first metaphor. His explanation was focused on himself as a teacher and was identified as a TO metaphor. Unlike Lowe and Monae, he does not address the students in the metaphor. He was in the second year of a new position, and he shared that he feels apprehensive about his instructional performance. The school district had assigned a retired teacher to help with writing at Site A, and he felt as though his abilities were being questioned. At the time this was created, Crosby was in a state of change. He stated that he feels like "...a butterfly waiting metamorphose from its larval state" (metaphor 1). He stated that he needed to stop taking the advice of other educators and start doing what had been most effective for the students.

Metaphors represent participants' understanding about their beliefs of themselves as teachers (Bullough, 1991). In all three of these metaphors, the focus is primarily on

the role of the teacher in the classroom. Examining the nature of professional relationships that metaphors reveal can be an important step in clarifying how teachers relate to the educational community

Student Outcome Metaphors. Unlike TO metaphors, in SO metaphors teachers and students collaborate to meet objectives. The teacher creates opportunities for students to learn. Badley and Hollabaugh (2012) described this as a facilitation metaphor. Teachers who adopt facilitation metaphors strive to create the optimal conditions for learning. While the teacher remains responsible for the details related to the learning that is intended to happen in their classrooms, they must help students grasp their own responsibilities for learning.

Table 11 summarizes the SO metaphors (n=10) created by participants. Objectives were addressed in each of these metaphors. While some were directly related to the content of the metaphor, others identified an objective related to student writing in their classrooms.

Table 11

Student Outcome Metaphors

Teacher As	Student As	Process	Objective
Cook	Cooks	Creating a product	Following a recipe
Coach	My team Players Athletes	Preparing for a performance	Writing composition

(continued)

Table 11

Student Outcome Metaphors (continued)

Teacher As	Student As	Process	Objective
Coach	My team Players Athletes	Preparing for a performance	Writing composition
Gym trainer	Clients		Meeting specific goals
Play director	Actors		Grand performance
Ringmaster	Circus performers		Circus act
Gardener	Plants	Establishing a nurturing environment	Learning letters and sounds
Shepherd	Sheep		Writing sentences
Tour guide	Tour group	Arriving at important destinations	Individual compositions

Cook. Lauren Rush identified the need to collaborate with her students when she is teaching writing. In her second metaphor, a cook, she describes why she chose this as a representation of her teaching and how it applied to her students. She stated:

...after going through all of this in the last couple of weeks. I was like, maybe I'm a cook. You have to define the right ingredients to make the right recipe. And if it doesn't work then tweak it. So, I took that to mean as you're going to work with your kids. See what works (metaphor 2, 12/09/2015).

Rush identified the need to build flexibility into her instruction. She also understands that teachers must strive to find the balance that all students need between teacher-

direction and self-direction. Her metaphor explanation indicates that she assumes that teachers and students share the responsibility for analyzing success in the classroom.

Coach. Three participants identified the coach as one of their metaphor choices. Badley and Hollabaugh (2012) state that coaches should provide motivation and allot time for practicing skills while developing new skills. Lauren Rush chose the coach as her first writing metaphor. Rush wrote:

...As a writing teacher I am there [*sic*] coach and I can push them to the point where they never want to see a paper again. I will drill and kill the structure of writing because after all practice makes perfect. When I conference with them that is like going over a game plan and strategizing my next move (metaphor 1, 10/29/2015).

She believes that students need to practice writing daily and was very focused on writing structure.

Crosby's second metaphor described the importance of interacting with the students and what he feels the teacher role should be. He stated, "In the classroom, I think the role of the teacher is most like a coach, not a dictator or passive instructor, but an active encourager, motivator, leader of the classroom" (metaphor 2). He also shared that he felt like a coach during the years he believes were his best teaching years. Unlike Crosby, Rush described a coach more as the expert than the encourager.

Like Crosby and Rush, Smith chose the coach as his second metaphor. However, his rationale is completely different than the previous participants.

As a coach knows the strengths and weaknesses of his or her players I know the strengths and weaknesses of my students and how they write. A coach knows exactly how to get the most out of their players. They may have to yell and rant at some of them or quietly and gently motivate others. As a teacher I know what to say and how to say it to get the most out of my students. My coaching persona usually comes out while I'm conferencing with a student. I try not to line out what they have written. Instead I read what they have written, with them, and then make suggestions that they can take back to their desks and hopefully use to make changes and improvements to their writing (metaphor 2, 12/09/2015).

Each of these metaphors has very distinct qualities. However, there are several similarities. All of these participants take the position that all children can learn with encouragement and tending. The participants work to deepen learning so that the individual students will be continually strengthened.

Researchers have identified that coaching metaphors bring the thought processes and methods of respected coaches into the academic realm (Badley & Hollabaugh, 2012). Rush and Smith both discuss conferencing with students while developing a plan. Crosby and Smith also identify the need to provide motivation in order to encourage successful practices. All three participants communicated what the coaches' role should be in their classrooms. Successful coaches should try to prepare their students while making the student responsible for their own performance.

Gym trainer. During week six, Lowe stated that she chose a gym trainer as her second metaphor. She identified that it is the teacher's responsibility to ensure there is a plan and that all conditions are right for goal attainment. She wrote:

I chose this metaphor because of the approach I take when teaching writing.

When starting a new writing lesson, I always make sure to let them know what the goal we are trying to accomplish is, how we're going to accomplish it, and how I expect them to get it done. I feel like that is a similar approach to that of a gym trainer. They help you figure out what your goal is, show you how to accomplish it, and tell you exactly what you need to do in order to ensure your success (metaphor 2, 12/01/2015).

While her first metaphor was more focused on the delivery of instruction, this metaphor identified the role she takes when teaching her students about the writing process. The role explained through this metaphor focuses primarily on the teacher mapping the steps, providing guidance, and modeling skills in order to keep the class focused on the end result.

Play director. Even though, Jane Monae's first metaphor was very practice-oriented, she identified many players in the classroom and how their involvement shapes the outcomes:

A teacher is a play director. The teacher is the director and the students are the actors. The teacher writes the script for the students, preparing the cast for their grand performance. The teacher and students work daily in the theater, classroom, reading the script and practicing lines. The administrators are the

editors and critics. They come in and tell us what's working and what's not. They even give us information on the competition. Sometimes, they add lines and give us a supporting cast, specialist. The parents are the audience, here to watch and support (metaphor 1, 10/29/2015).

Jane's metaphor assumes that teachers set the destination, learning theory, and pace for the classroom. However, Jane acknowledges that her role is bound by the influence she has. The play director metaphor clearly recognizes that others outside the classroom can impact what is done and how the teacher is held accountable.

Ringmaster. Rhianna Jones is the only participant that did not change her metaphor after four weeks. However, she did expand on her view of how this metaphor influences her belief of how teaching writing should be in her classroom. In week two she wrote:

Teaching writing is like being a ringmaster. There are so many parts to teaching writing and I am trying to balance it all because everything is important. Capitals, periods, commas, exclamation marks, main idea, and good details, everything comes together in their writing and if they didn't learn it then their writing as a whole suffers. So you have to make sure their *[sic]* paying attention the first time you teach it. Then go back and review the grammatical rules of writing every day. I feel this metaphor is true when we are on the editing process of their writings. I look over their work, and I know that this particular student knows that capitals go in the beginning of a sentence. But, they forgot to put it in their writing. Or when they don't know where to put a period. This is why teaching

them to brainstorm is important, but most students do not understand why it's so important. When you are teaching writing, you can't let anything drop. I feel I have to be in control of the class and make sure they are all doing their part in writing and understand how important it is.

In week two, her description of the ringmaster was very focused on grammar, punctuation, and conventions. Like Rush, she identified the need to find balance in the classroom. Jones noted that while there are skills involved, writing is a process and not everyone is at the same place every day. Like a ringmaster, this requires her to orchestrate her classroom instruction in a way that meets the needs of all students while staying on schedule.

Gardener. In her second metaphor, Taylor Drake compares her students to plants and she has the role of gardener. Drake explains that the teacher shapes the classroom environment to support the learning of each student:

When you have a garden, you have to water, you have to nurture, you have to make sure they have the sunlight in order to grow and flourish, and that's the way kids are. If you water them and feed them correctly, they will flourish and they would do great things (metaphor 2, 12/01/2015).

Just as the gardener 'waters' and 'nurtures,' the teacher spends her life working to create an environment in which students 'flourish.' For Drake, it is the teacher's responsibility to ensure that all conditions for optimum learning and growth are present.

Shepherd. Taylor Drake chose two metaphors that require nurturing in order to produce growth.

The metaphor that describes me the best is the sheep herder. This metaphor characterizes me as a writing teacher in the following ways. First, I'm constantly guiding my students every step of the way. I try to make sure that all students understand to the best of their abilities. I'm a kindergarten teacher so I have to teach the students the letters and sounds first. Students have to know this first before they move on to anything else. Once students understand letters and sounds they will understand that letters make words, words make sentences, and sentences make paragraphs (metaphor 1, 11/01/2015).

Tour guide. Jay Smith was very focused on the process as he chose his metaphors. As he explains why he chose the tour guide as his first metaphor, he discusses how he interacts with the students as they move through the process.

I believe the tour guide metaphor best characterizes me as a writing teacher because I am literally guiding my students through the writing process. When you go someplace you aren't familiar with, you get a tour guide to make sure you get to all the important places and see everything there is to see. As a writing teacher, I am constantly guiding my students through the writing process. Every writing prompt I assign to the class I model first as a teacher. While I'm writing the story I am constantly walking the students through my thought process. For example, after every major part of my story I will go back and reread it looking for errors or better ways to write the story. I also ask the students for their input; what would they change or how would they say that. I have seen substantial

growth in my students' writing and I feel that a large part of that can be attributed to me being their writing tour guide (metaphor 1, 10/30/2015).

According to Jay's explanation, the teacher is obligated to provide guidance and modeling, while meeting the goal of students' learning. He provides students with the support and knowledge they need to journey with him. He believes that his guidance has had a direct impact on their writing ability.

Summary of Metaphor Analysis

Being able to articulate one's personal conception of teaching and learning is a critical component of teacher education. Being able to share this information requires inventive means. Through the creative use of metaphor teachers can portray their personal philosophies of teaching, their vision of their goals as teachers, and their sense of classroom realities. Vygotsky (1986) stated that knowledge is constructed through language-mediated interaction with peers and mentors and through interaction with the environment. One assignment commonly used in teacher education programs as a method of prompting reflection on the process of teaching and learning is the metaphor. The use of teaching metaphors along with a reflective process can help teachers identify conflicts between their beliefs and their roles as teachers (Tobin & LaMaster, 1995). The current study utilized 13 metaphorical images of current classroom teachers to investigate the beliefs participants have of themselves as teachers of writing.

Metaphors are a rich source of eliciting information about those who compose them. Moreover, metaphors are succinct, and while potentially complex in their construction, they are relatively easily communicated. Teachers regularly speak of being

creative in their work, but less often refer to themselves as creators. Even more infrequently do they speak about their roles as they present different subjects. These metaphors present a rich set of information regarding the roles of the seven participants as writing teachers. The metaphors do not require specialized knowledge to evaluate. However, interpretation is entirely subjective, and much of the interpretation is inferential. While identifying trends and categories in the metaphors proved to be a difficult task, the explanations gave insight into how teachers view their roles in the classroom and how they approach teaching writing.

Three major findings have emerged from this research. First, no metaphor can be analyzed with one view or level of analysis. Teacher attention, orientations, and decisions are complex conceptions are not founded on a single vision (Patchen & Crawford, 2011). Participant explanations of work reflect multiple roles and perspectives. The analysis of participant metaphors revealed a degree of dissonance between metaphor topics and descriptions that complicates research claiming that teacher understandings fall on one side or another of any epistemological and/or metaphoric divide (Martinez, Sauleda, & Huber, 2001; Patchen & Crawford, 2011; Saban, 2010). The findings also suggest a level of occlusion that resulted because of the researcher's request for multiple metaphors (Sfard, 1998). This request also generated multiple epistemological views (Olafson & Schraw, 2006) without considering that a comparison of the metaphors may not be easily interpreted due to the presence of multiple elements. Further analysis into the ways the participants described their metaphors, as well as

having each participant provide feedback on the findings, provided a better understanding of the metaphors' meaning.

Secondly, not all metaphors are chosen based on the interactions between the participants and the students in their classrooms. Metaphors are chosen based on the current campus-related situations and views of the participants. A few participants described challenging and unpredictable situations that acknowledge the changing nature of the job and the emotional reactions to it.

The present study provides important data on the types of metaphors that participants chose to describe themselves as teachers of writing. At the broadest level of analysis, participant metaphors reflected the current emphasis on constructivist, participation based, views of teaching and learning (Sfard, 1998). From the analysis of the metaphor choices, it can be argued that participants are currently involved in a transition from a more teacher-oriented system to a student-oriented system. This is crucial because the current reforms regarding teaching and learning are strongly dominated by constructivist perspectives, student-oriented, as opposed to the behaviorist theories, teacher-oriented. The constructivist and behaviorist perspectives differ greatly in their views of knowledge acquisition and the roles of the teacher and the students in the learning process. Constructivists put emphasis on the role of the students in the process of learning, while behaviorists emphasize the process of knowledge transmission from teacher to student. From the standpoint of constructivists, knowledge is constructed by the students themselves. In contrast, behaviorists believe the teacher plays a central role in the transmission of knowledge. Accordingly, current reforms assume that the

teacher is no longer the transmitter of knowledge but more of a facilitator for students' active learning.

Thirdly, no participant chose metaphors that project the notions of standardization, control, judgement, or defect. For example, there is no mention of a doctor, judge, or soldier. This finding implies that the participants' rejection of some metaphorical images is no less important than their positive choices. This finding also supports two major implications: (1) The overall propensity to reject a view of teaching as controlling and judgmental could imply that teachers spend a good amount of time attempting to control their students' learning, and (2) it could also imply that participants in this study put forth an effort to separate their classroom practices from the controlling and judgmental aspects that teachers face. The findings from these metaphors support the need for teachers to look more closely at how they perceive themselves in relation to their teaching practices.

Challenges

During week four of data collection, many of the participants seemed stressed and frustrated. There were a lot of extra district and campus deadlines scheduled in the weeks before Thanksgiving break, and it was evident in the interactions the researcher was having with the participants. Several observations and interviews had been rescheduled due to campus conflicts. The researcher decided to explore what the participants identified as the things that keep them from teaching writing. The following conversation took place at the weekly meeting on November 10, 2015:

Researcher: What are the things that keep you from being able to teach? Teach writing, teach reading, teach whatever? What are all of the things that keep us from being able to do our jobs correctly? I don't mean correctly by PDAS. I mean correctly, just how do you go in and teach?

Rush: I mean, like picture day, picture day throws you for a loop. When you have to stop and do the TELPAS collections, that throws you for a loop, and we have to stop to take the Istation test that throws you.

Monae: Anything that interrupts your regularly scheduled plan makes the difference.

Jones: My computer lab. Have to go to computer lab. Have to go to Istation lab. Have to go to Science lab.

Rush: And then when the computers don't work.

Jones: Oh yeah.

Smith: Our district checkpoints that are supposed to take half hour to 45 minutes that take...Like I said, last week we had kids that were finishing up there writing sample from the writing test at two o'clock in the afternoon.

Rush: So did we.

Smith: And then the principal brings it up at the principal's meeting and people are like, 'Well, why do you let them take that long?' And she's like, 'do you want a realistic sample of what they can do or do you just want me to pick this up when they're halfway through it, put a grade in it and turn it in?' And then...

Researcher: What's the answer to that question?

Smith: They're getting hounded because of the scores and so, what, you pick up a math test that's halfway done, put whatever what they got on the Scanton, run it through, and then they gripe at you because of this and that? And I'm not talking us, I'm talking to you all.

Researcher: In general?

Smith: Yes, the upper ups, the higher level.

While early in the conversation the campus' requirements and district testing became obvious deterrents to teaching, state testing and regular schedules were also discussed as factors that influence classroom practices.

Lowe: That's what I know I think about all the time, because I know in those trainings, they'll have us do it, like, in the SIOP training all these things that...

Well, the student needs to be moving around. Well, the student needs to be presenting or all this stuff. But I can't assess them that way when, at the end of the year, they're going to be assessed on a paper and pen thing. So, I'm going to practice paper and pen stuff, because that's what they're going to be tested on. So, it's really hard for me to plan something where they are, I don't know, drawing something or designing something else when I know that they're going to be assessed at the end of the year.

Rush: Even then our time is so short.

Lowe: Yes, even then it's just...

Rush: You factor in lunch, you factor in specials, you factor in A.R, you factor in taking them to the restroom...

Teachers' beliefs about the importance of writing instruction are reflected in the way they approach issues that threaten writing instructional time. All seven participants stated that they felt they faced many challenges because they were writing teachers. These deterrents to writing can come from external sources that are out of the teachers' control and have a powerful impact on instructional choices. Through the analysis of this data, three categories were identified as the greatest challenges participants faced pertaining to writing instruction: (1) time, (2) student motivation, and (3) standardized test preparation practices.

Time

Time constraints were a prevalent source of frustration, and time to teach writing in ways that focus on children's creativity and expression was difficult for participants to find. Both sites had daily schedules that included announcements, bell schedules, mandatory meetings, and conference times. There were also a number of interruptions that over the nine-week data collection period that required participants to reschedule meetings with the researcher. In one case, an observation was stopped in the middle of the lesson because the participant forgot that her students were attending a magic show when she scheduled the observation (FN, 10-29-2015). Project deadlines also have an impact on how time is utilized in the classroom. Rhianna Jones wrote:

Today I finished the G/T projects in class. I felt bad because I had to shut down learning for the other students in the class that didn't have to do the projects, but the deadline for the project is Thursday. I want to make sure they are all done...I am so happy to be back to teaching tomorrow (participant 5, daily journal 11).

Three of the seven participants also explained that the writing process is time consuming for students, and that being able to provide a consistent time each day is very difficult based on campus' demands. Consistent practice over long periods of time is necessary in order for students to develop as writers. However, it is often difficult for educators to keep up with their curriculum demands much less include any additional instructional periods. All seven participants communicated the need for more classroom time than what was allocated for writing in the district created scope and sequence. As is stated in the literature, a large amount of time is required for students to learn about writing skills and knowledge, as well as to actually write (National Commission on Writing, 2004). However, only one of the seven participants had a consistent, daily writing time.

Student Motivation

Every participant in this study identified the need for implementing motivational techniques and writing for a purpose as a means to generate interest because most students do not enjoy writing for various reasons. Cutler and Graham (2008) state that writing requires students to stay motivated and understand their purpose for writing in order for students to remain interested in the task. During the weekly meeting on November 10, 2015, generating interest and student participation were discussed. The following is an excerpt from that conversation:

Crosby: Well, I really think with the writing that the kids come in and they just don't want to write.

Smith: It's amazing. They can sit down and they can't tell each other a story over what they did over the weekend, but if you ask them to put it on paper immediately after you got them telling you, they turn into a...

Lowe: And that's what they don't understand, because they think writing is such a drag. They can't do it. It's impossible. But it's like, you're telling me a story. If I ask you a question, you can tell me verbally. All you do is put it on writing, and they don't make the connection.

Rush: It doesn't transfer.

Crosby: If you can start, you know, in kindergarten or first grade...every lesson they're writing at least a sentence. Just writing something and when they're writing every day, they just could...it's not such a...

Researcher: I think one of the things that I've seen a lot is...One of the questions that I have, it just came to me today, is do we ever tell kids, 'Write a sentence that you think would make somebody else laugh' and not talk about it, but have them write it. Then share it with somebody, and see if it gets the intended response.

Does that make sense?

Crosby: Yeah, and what love about what Daisy did on the last composition, she had the kids write a riddle or a joke to start their introduction. It was great. The kids love it.

Rush: They ran with it.

Crosby: And I think we're still stuck in this, 'We got to do composition', 'We got to do it on a composition' and 'It's all getting ready for STAAR. With kids there's no fun in it.

Monae: I think that's the thing, if it's not fun or if it's not engaging, they are not going to do it.

Crosby: There's no fun in learning.

Monae: I know in my class, my kids, they don't want to do the worksheets. If I give them the worksheet, oh it's over. They are just like 'What?' They don't want to do it.

To overcome the negative feelings and challenges that students have with writing, all participants in this study discussed how they must constantly motivate and give their students a purpose for writing. Motivational issues arise when students perceive writing tasks as simply another task to be completed. Research suggests that motivation is an important component in writing development (Graham & Harris, 2013; Troia et al., 2009). When a writing assignment lacks any connection to student personal experience and interests, motivation is often lost. Jay Smith had his students complete reading responses to their favorite books. Figure 2 shows how he uses this as a way to validate what students have read while giving them a place to publish and share their writing.



Figure 2. Reading Response Wall in Jay Smith's classroom

To foster student motivation, the participants utilized a variety of ways to create classroom conditions and authentic writing tasks that made writing meaningful and interesting. Rhianna Jones commented on making learning enjoyable as a means of keeping students engaged when she is teaching writing. She stated:

It becomes tedious. So many things that we have to make sure that the children are doing, instead of just making them develop a love for writing and reading. That's the main goal. I think, just make sure that they enjoyed it, and if they didn't enjoy, just find something about it that brings out their creativity in that they can find something that they enjoy or appreciate it (participant 5, interview1, 10/21/2015).

At the third weekly meeting on November 5, 2015, there was a discussion about the materials and guidelines provided by the district scope and sequence. Jones also commented that the scope and sequence had some good activities, but she was concerned

about the lack of ideas for extensions included in the plans (FN, 11/5/2015). Five of the seven participants identified that they felt challenged to find extensions that would encourage more creative writing. As is the case with many activities, becoming a better writer requires that students write. This means actual writing for real audiences, not merely listening to lectures about writing, doing grammar drills, or discussing readings. Students already do extensive amounts social writing. Several examples include: emailing, keeping journals, creative projects, instant messaging, texting, and blogging.

At the weekly meeting on November 10, 2015, four of the seven participants brought examples of the authentic activities their students had completed throughout the week. Jay Smith also used their experiences with social writing and information about Texas history to integrate writing. Figure 3 is an example of an authentic writing idea that builds on the social writing students are becoming accustomed to that was shared with all participants at the weekly meeting on November 10, 2015.

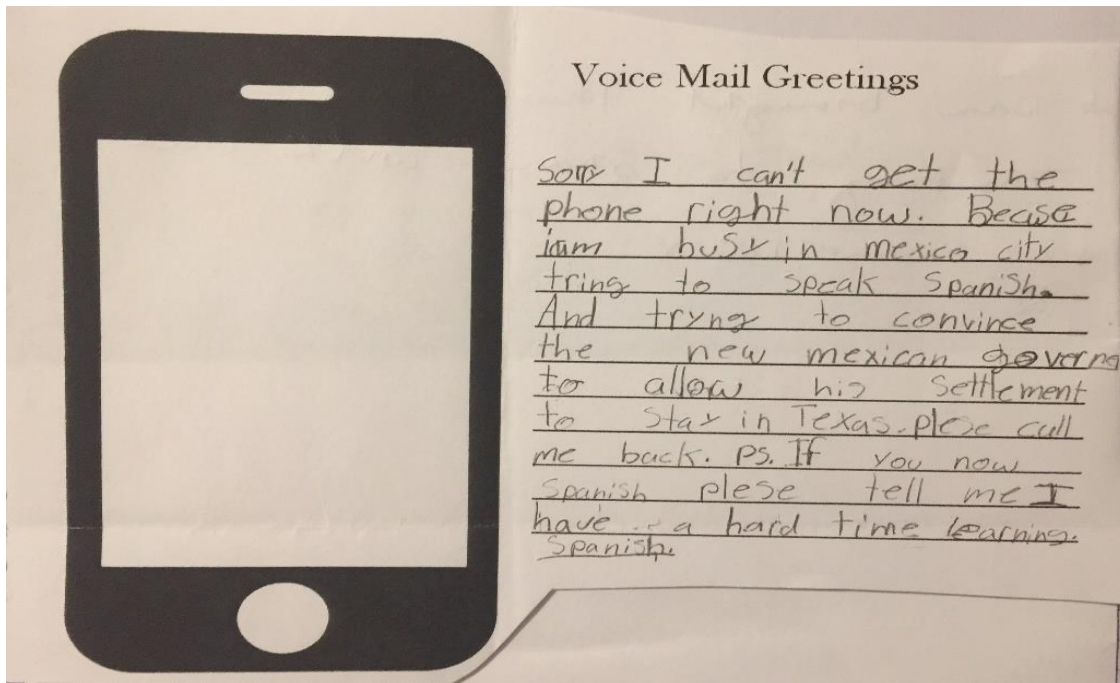


Figure 3. Texas history assignment shared by Jay Smith

Jones was also determined to implement some of the ideas in her classroom. She decided to have her students brainstorm facts about a concept or person the class was studying in social studies and create a book. Jones shared the activities documented in Figures 4, 5, and 6 at the weekly meeting on November 10, 2015. She stated that her students were so excited to make their own books.

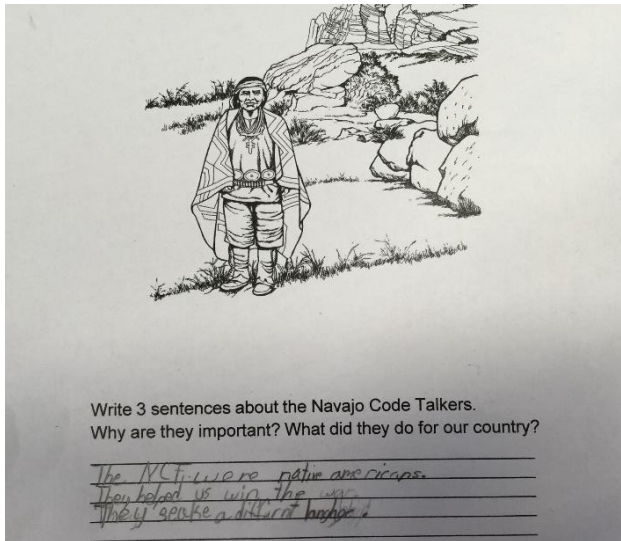


Figure 4. Information about Navajo Code Talkers

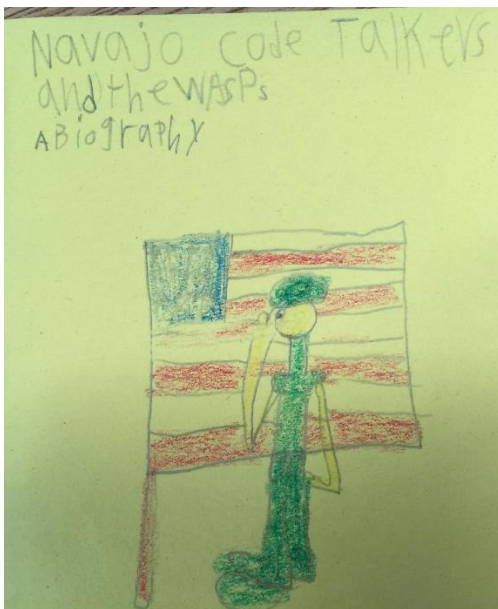


Figure 5. Original cover by a student in R. Jones' second grade class

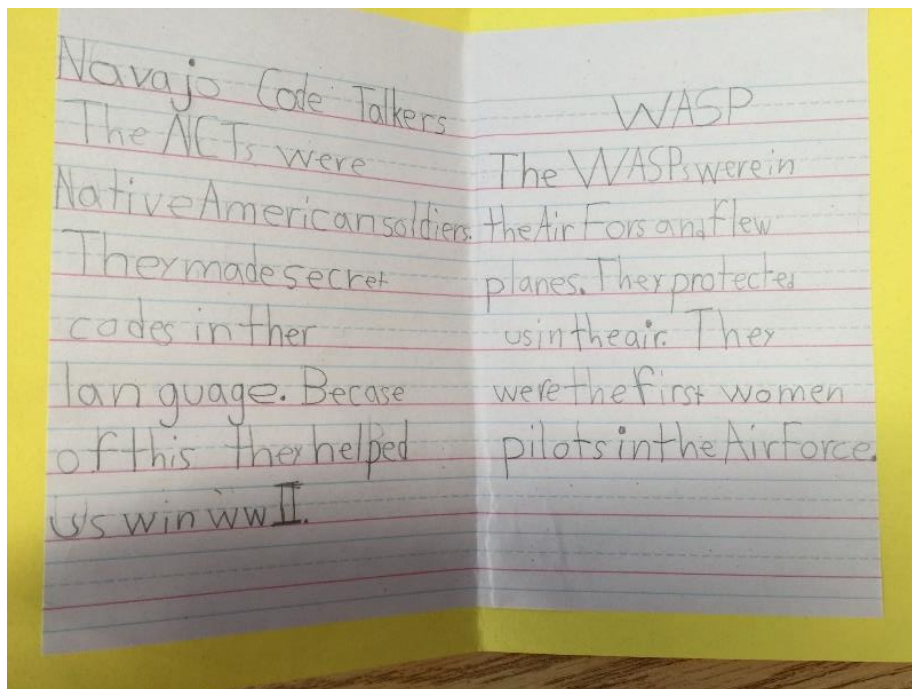


Figure 6. Inside of the Navajo Code Talkers and WASPS biography

John Crosby also shared a composition that a student had written about how special his mother is. Figure 7 is an image of the composition that he shared.

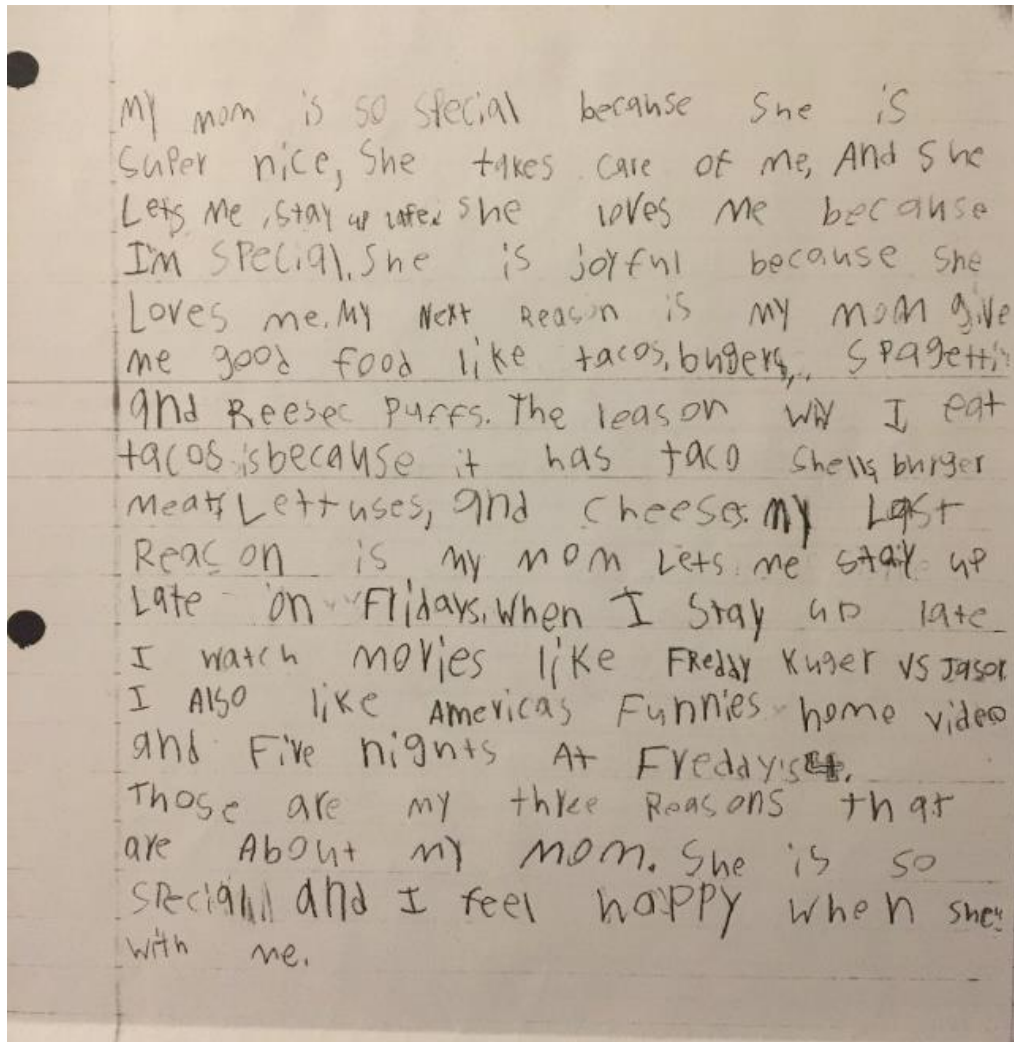


Figure 7. Composition about a special person

Lauren Rush stated that she was always looking for ways to give students meaningful writing activities that made them consider a new audience outside of the school community. She supported this when she stated:

... in many ways I am also a cook because I have to understand that following a recipe will not always work or suit everyone's needs. I have to have the creativity

to create writing activities that will be meaningful to my students (participant 2, interview 3, 12/9/2015).

She understands the need to foster individuality among her students when she is teaching writing. At this same weekly meeting, she shared Figure 8 and Figure 9, the letters her students had written to veterans in honor of Veteran's Day.

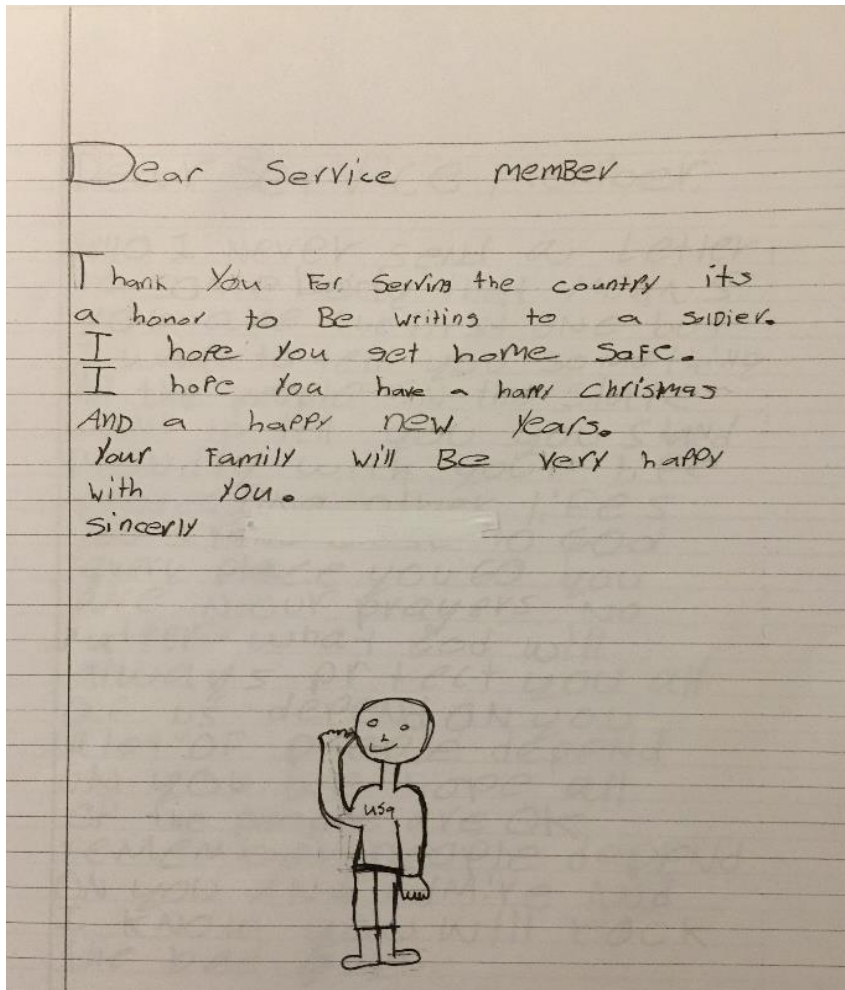
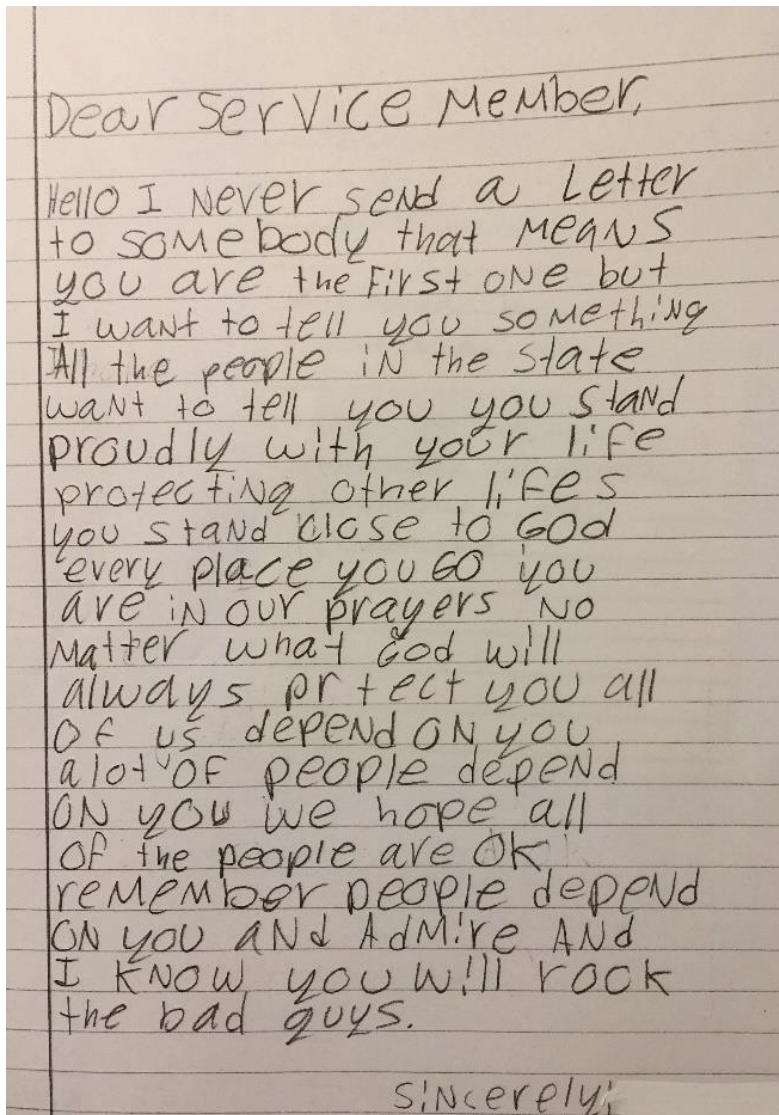


Figure 8. Veteran's Day Letter 1



Dear Service Member,

Hello I never send a letter
to somebody that means
you are the first one but
I want to tell you something
All the people in the state
want to tell you you stand
proudly with your life
protecting other lives
you stand close to God
every place you go you
are in our prayers no
matter what God will
always protect you all
of us depend on you
a lot of people depend
on you we hope all
of the people are OK
remember people depend
on you and admire and
I know you will rock
the bad guys.

Sincerely,

Figure 9. Veteran's Day Letter 2

Writing requires motivation (Hayes, 2000) and that motivation stems from purpose. It is important for students work to be relative and meaningful to them. Based on the findings of the study, teachers believe that students will put more effort into their writing when the writing is important or relative to their lives. Students are more likely to enjoy an assignment if it has interest or has meaning to them. Authentic writing makes the connection between real life and school, allows students' choice, and increases

students' motivation towards writing (Bruning & Horn, 2000). In order to overcome students' negative feelings regarding writing, teachers must integrate motivational techniques as well as purposeful writing into their writing instruction (Sullivan & Tinberg, 2006). Individuals may write for different purposes; to remember, to learn, to plan, to organize, and to teach others and themselves (Calkins, 1986). The more people write, the more familiar it becomes and the more they are motivated to do it.

Test Preparation Practices

In schools that place emphasis on testing, teachers feel compelled to spend significant amounts of time on test preparation. When the stakes are high, teachers move away from teaching to the curriculum and focus all of their attention on preparing students for the upcoming test (Au, 2011; McCartney, 2008). Determining how much time is necessary for teachers to prepare students for standardized testing varies from one classroom to another, depending on the level of importance placed on a particular test, difficulty level of test content, and how the teacher believes the scores will reflect on their instructional performance (Volante, 2006). Even though participants claimed that standardized testing challenges their professional judgement and narrows the curricula, there was an emphasis placed on using materials that would help students prepare for the state assessment.

In this study, the four participants who currently teach fourth grade were the only ones who were directly responsible for preparing for a state level standardized test. John Cosby stated that he felt the pressure of the test relatively early in the school year after

learning a critical piece of information regarding the required genre of the composition.

He stated:

Now we know that the paper has to be, it's going to be expository, and basically that's all the writing we're doing and the kids are already...I could feel them bored with it. The first few weeks we are doing so well. You know, things are more enjoyable, things like having kids write about the topics they want to write about (participant 1, interview 1, 10/21/2015).

Jess Lowe stated that she felt the same pressure. When asked to describe a typical week of writing in her classroom, she responded:

We've been working on expository compositions, making sure that they are understanding the format of the paper and then...well that's mainly what we do in writing. We do grammar, spelling, other things like that, that's going to reinforce their composition later on (participant 7, interview 2, 11/12/2015).

Even though the other participants did not have a scheduled state test, the results of the data analysis indicate that all of the participants take assessment into consideration when planning their daily writing activities. All participants reported making changes in their instructional practices in order to help students prepare for upcoming assessments both formal and informal. For example, in her third interview, Lauren Rush explained how the district writing specialist wanted for the students to use a specific graphic organizer. She stated that she was instructed to "...give it to them for homework, make sure they draw it, and have it committed to memory. So, by the time the tests comes, they won't be lost" (participant 2, interview 3, 12/9/2015. Participants also reported that

preparing for assessments takes a great deal of time and effort which compromises specified learning outcomes and higher learning. During the data collection period, the district implemented a mandatory fall TELPAS practice. All participants were required to collect writing samples based on prompts written by district personnel. Although participants agreed that testing had merit, they argued that standardized testing is not used appropriately and does not accurately reflect their teaching ability and performance.

Writing Instructional Practices

Writing instruction must include ample in-class and out-of-class opportunities for writing, including writing in digital spaces, and should involve writing for a variety of purposes and audiences, including audiences beyond the classroom. Teachers need to support students in the development of writing habits and writing preferences for life outside school (Yancey, 2009). The participants shared their ideas of what writing looks like in their individual classrooms. Information regarding the instructional practices of each participant was also gained through observations of their writing lessons. All participants agreed that the district provided a curriculum guide with a common scope and sequence to use as a guide for planning lessons. However, the participants had different experiences in how they supplemented the curriculum guide to plan for daily lessons.

Even though, four out of seven participants expressed that assessment was a huge focus of their writing instruction, the researcher observed many activities and practices that were intended to strengthen overall writing. All participants were observed using components of the writer's workshop model (Atwell, 1987) in their writing instruction,

but the complete process was never observed. One of the most common instructional practices observed was minilessons. It is not known if the tasks played a role in making the students more proficient writers.

Figure 10 and Figure 11 are images collected from an observation of Jess Lowe on December 7, 2015. Lowe was introducing idioms to her class, and the students were given the task of illustrating one that was assigned by the teacher. Even though the students are allowed choice when creating the illustration, the activity is teacher-directed. Both of her metaphors support the idea that she believes that students need guidance and a process that is established by an external authority. She stated:

As an actress in a play you try to present your lesson in a way that is entertaining, engaging, and educational, whereas as a gym trainer you take a firmer approach in a step-by-step format. There is less “theatrics” when taking the gym trainer approach. Usually when I am introducing something fairly new I am less demanding on the students. I try to make it interesting while still making it educational. Also, I allow more student input and classroom discussions. On the other hand, I take more of a gym trainer approach when we are covering things that are about to be assessed. I give quick recaps of what we already know, and I go through a step-by-step process of how they must do it (participant 7, metaphor comparison, 12/17/2015).



Figure 10. Idiom illustration of it costs and arm and a leg.



Figure 11. Idiom illustration of she was caught red-handed.

Modeling was another way that participants engaged students in the writing process. Five of the seven participants were seen modeling part of the process for their students. Modeling invites students into the writing process and allows them to see and hear the process of writing as the teacher thinks and talks through it. It was the participants' writing that oftentimes served as a writing model. Students need to see and hear that even the people they perceive as good writers struggle with the process (Robbins, 1992). In other words, teachers who act as models help students see the process from the inside out.

The literature supports the development of a writing community, where all members of the class are writing, including the teachers (Atwell, 1991; Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1983; Graves & Kittle, 2006). During data collection, participants began to rely upon each other in order to make changes to their instructional practices. The participants would email each other for ideas and information. Ideas were generated by the group during weekly meetings that were utilized during observations. During the process of data collection, the participants also praised each other for their personal writing ability. Rhianna Jones shared that she had several articles published when she was in college. She also wrote a chapter in a book. Several of the other participants read her work. Crosby stated, "Have you read her work? Wow! She is really good" (FN, 11/17/2015). Unfortunately, of the five participants observed modeling and sharing their writing, none of these participants continued to write while the students were writing. Johnson (1992) agrees that through modeling and sharing writing, or becoming a member

of the class as a participating writer, student metacognition and success in writing increase.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' personal beliefs of themselves as writers and the impact these beliefs have on their writing lives and teaching of writing. In this chapter, background information for each participant was presented individually. Data collected from multiple sources was analyzed in order to identify themes. Common themes that emerged across cases were presented and illustrated by pertinent examples drawn from the data.

The metaphors created by the teachers were reflections of how they see themselves as writers and served as a reminder that identity is a dynamic, ever-evolving concept. These metaphors were created from their everyday teaching experiences. Since they reveal educational values, beliefs, and principles, metaphors contain information essential to participants' growth as professionals.

Though critically important for college and career, the teaching of writing should also be geared toward making sense in a life outside of school, so that writing has ample room to grow in individuals' lives. It is useful for teachers to consider what elements of their curriculum they could imagine students self-sponsoring outside school. Ultimately, those are the activities that will produce more writing.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' personal beliefs of themselves as writers and the impact these beliefs have on their writing lives and their teaching of writing. The participants came to this study with unique personal writing experiences and teaching experiences. The findings presented in this study were not intended to be a comparison between the participants.

The data from this study was used to answer two research questions.

Research question 1. What are teachers' beliefs of themselves as writers?

Research question 2. What impact do their stated beliefs have on their personal writing practices and teaching of writing?

Summary of Findings

Writing is a complex process requiring skills in many domains from generating ideas, to using voice to communicate effectively, to publishing. Writing experts agree that to teach writing effectively, teachers must first be writers (Atwell, 1991; Bridge & Hiebert, 1985; Calkins, 1994; Emig, 1977; Graves, 1983; Murray, 1990; Ray, 1999). Teachers must be able to discover and understand the process of writing themselves to be able to effectively teach this process to students. For teachers to help students incorporate writing into their lives, teachers must first incorporate it into their own lives.

No longer can we say that if we just let children write, they will develop into good writers. Atwell (1991) states teachers must participate in the process to see why and how writers write and to know how to create the kind of conditions that facilitate skillful student writing in their classrooms. Examining teacher beliefs then comparing them to actual practice with regards to writing facilitated gaining an understanding about teaching pedagogy in the classroom.

According to constructivist theory, preservice teachers' beliefs are well-established and resistant to change by the time they enter college, specifically those that influence how they conceptualize teaching (Cross, 2009; Ng, Nicholas, & Williams, 2010). Although preservice teachers do not receive as much coursework that emphasizes teaching writing to children as they do for teaching reading (Myers et al., 2016), they do enter teacher education programs with years of their own writing experiences from their K-12 educations while having observed many examples of writing instruction. These early experiences help shape beliefs and attitudes towards writing and often determine the pedagogical decisions made by new teachers with regard to writing instruction (Norman & Spencer, 2005; Street, 2003).

Research in the beliefs a teacher brings to the classroom builds an understanding of the problems and challenges teachers encounter regarding writing instruction. Pajares (1992) believes that the area of teachers' beliefs is lacking in the literature because mental constructs are challenging to study. This current study of how teachers' beliefs about themselves as writers and how these beliefs impact classroom instruction involves much more than simply identifying what teachers believe. The findings from this study

contribute to the field of writing instruction because they address a key component that has been scarcely identified in the literature, the role of the teacher.

Teachers Stated Beliefs of Themselves as Writers

The findings of this study support previous research indicating that teachers' beliefs of themselves as writers influences their confidence and sense of self-efficacy for teaching writing (Hall & Grisham-Brown, 2011) and that both positive and negative external factors influence these perceptions (Daisey, 2009).

- The participants believe that they are adequate writers.
- The participants all identified areas that they could improve in relation to their writing.
- The participants believe that reading impacts their writing.
- The participants believe that they write for a variety of purposes, but enjoy writing when it is about something personal.
- The participants believe that writers should have a support system to help them with the process.

Impact of Stated Beliefs on Writing Practices

The findings from this study implied an inconsistency in writing teachers stated beliefs and teaching practices. The data revealed that participants' instructional practices combined content, students' choices, personal experiences, authorship, positive feedback, and sharing of writings by the teacher and the students. The participants' stated beliefs included writing as an integral part of the elementary learning environment for the development of lifelong writers and learners. However, the findings also suggest that

teachers have sound pedagogical beliefs about writing but are unable to translate them into practice due to contextual reality and perceived expectations from campus and district administration. For example, participating teachers stated that they understood the importance of implementing a process approach to teaching writing, but there was little evidence in their practice. During a scheduled observation with the teacher, the researcher witnessed students copying questions and answer choices from a test formatted worksheet. When the researcher questioned this, the participant replied, “That way they don’t waste time flipping back and forth” (FN, 11/12/2015). Butler (2006) reported that classroom instruction and teacher beliefs were often inconsistent due to an array of variables such as school philosophy or government and state mandates. Several factors that could explain this inconsistency include: (1) narrowing of the curriculum due to standardized testing, (2) mandated curriculum and a common scope and sequence, (3) the changing role of the teacher, and (4) campus and district policies and requirements. Teacher training and professional development are also factors that could explain the inconsistency. While these external factors do impact the instructional practices utilized by the teacher, they do not define the identities, the beliefs, or the practices of the participants as writers and teachers.

Standardized Testing

Even though this study did not specifically focus on the impact of standardized testing and practices, it was impossible for the researcher to analyze this data set without acknowledging the restrictions testing imposes on classroom instruction. Au (2011) stated that “testing is promoting the standardization of teaching that both disempowers

and deskills teachers” (p.30). Jess Lowe writes, “Teaching has been turned into a numbers game because of standardized testing. If your numbers don’t add up, then you must not be doing your job” (participant 7, daily journal 3).

Standardized tests limit the type of writing students do. Many tests of writing include a significant portion of multiple-choice and short-answer items that do not require students to write extended compositions. These tests encourage teachers to emphasize a test-based approach that focuses on the application of a fixed set of skills, which means that students learn little about the processes of composing and the rhetorical dimensions such as audiences and purposes for writing. This is also exacerbated by the increasing reliance of standardized tests on machine scoring. Machine scoring systems can diminish student learning because they tend to prioritize features like mechanical correctness and sentence or word length rather than more substantive dimensions of writing.

In the elementary grades, standardized tests narrow the entire curriculum to content directly related to the test. English Language Arts (ELA) teachers are faced with the decision to focus instruction on the literacy skills measured on standardized tests (Sundeen, 2015). Moreover, reading is more prominent than writing on most tests, and teachers spend more time teaching reading comprehension skills rather than writing. Higher-order critical reading skills are deemed more essential for student success. Even when English language arts teachers deliberately teach beyond the test-based curriculum, important aspects of writing such as revision do not get attention, so students read a narrow range of texts and have limited opportunity to learn strategies for and the value of revising, rather than just proofreading, their writing.

Mandated Curriculum

Instruction is also diminished by mandatory curriculum resources that have been developed to prepare students for standardized tests. All participants stated that they are required to follow a district created pacing guide. It was suggested that deviation from the pacing guide could be evaluated negatively by an appraiser. Such curricula require teachers to use prepared materials which they did not develop and which may not address the needs of actual students in their classrooms. In some cases, mandated curricula come with scripted lessons and/or pacing guides that determine when specific content should be taught, leaving teachers limited opportunities to make instructional decisions. Materials and requirements like these de-professionalize teachers, reducing their authority and autonomy in instruction. Teachers are merely focused on campus and district requirements by going through the required motions or completing a checklist of items covered, thus redefining how they prioritize work in their classrooms.

The Changing Role of the Teacher

The role of the teacher has changed due to the amount of and heightened stakes of standardized tests given every year. Participants reported that required tasks have increased because teachers are expected to complete work related to testing in addition to their regular teaching duties. These tasks include: (1) collecting, organizing, and analyzing data associated with tests, (2) grouping and regrouping students according to the data from test performance, (3) developing vertical articulation of the curriculum to align with tests, and (4) coordinating students' assignments, based on test scores, to remedial programs. As a result of spending more time on data analysis and planning

tasks like these, participants felt they had less time for writing instruction in their own classrooms. Most teachers are expected to spend an increasing amount of time on practice tests or drill sessions to prepare students for tests. Instructional time spent on high-level writing skills such as how to use strategies of invention in writing is replaced by how to perform well on the relatively low-level skills required in standardized tests.

Teachers make innumerable decisions everyday regarding ways to engage their students as writers and learners. These decisions stem from beliefs that have been shaped by mentors, theories, coursework, observations, professional organizations, and writing experiences. However, due to the implementation of more testing and standardized curriculum, the teachers' true beliefs may not be visible to the outside observer. The perception may be that the role of the teacher is to simply teach to the test, thus manifesting an inconsistency in teachers' beliefs and instructional practice.

Teacher Training and Professional Development

While studies note the lack of proficiency in students' writing (National Commission on Writing, 2003; Persky et al., 2003), much of the recent research on adolescent literacy does not prescribe ways to improve students' writing. Rather, it focuses more on students' need for increased reading instruction in the hopes that this would translate to the improvement of the students' writing skills (Graham & Perin, 2007). Participants reported feeling that they were ill-prepared. They reported either not knowing what the process approach entails or they fail to come up with ideas to materialize the stages of the process approach in their context. The lack of uniformity in

the education of ELA teachers negatively affects the students as not all teachers have the same knowledge of the writing process and instruction to draw upon in their classrooms.

The expectations for writing are vastly different from grade level to grade level, and teacher preparation focuses more on literature (Myers et al., 2016). The K-12 experiences shared by the participants could be founded on good, but wrong intentions. There is an increased need for vertical alignment across all grade levels. Hansen and Farris (2010) explain:

Secondary teachers often assume they are preparing students for college courses when often those teachers may be completely unaware of the content of college courses. Even when they are aware of the content of each other's courses, secondary and post-secondary teachers may serve different masters as high school teachers usually face a mandate to prepare all of their students to pass standardized multiple choice and time essay exams whereas college teachers often have more freedom to take time in their classrooms to help students write several drafts of papers and explore the content of reading in some depth (p. 169).

This example shows high school teachers not only being unaware of college expectations but also aiming their intention in the wrong place. Thompson (2002) believes college students are responsible for their own grades, yet at the high school level, it is teachers who are commonly accountable for students' grades. Sullivan and Tinberg (2006) report high school tends to focus on test preparation, five paragraph essays, and "deficiencies rather than strengths" (p. 344). This implies that students are evaluated differently. Choices for instruction are based on the needs of standardized tests that have a high

impact on college admission, but little or no effect on student writing preparedness (Au, 2011; Kiuahara et al., 2009; Sundeen, 2015). This insinuates that teachers are trying to provide good instruction, but are preoccupied with the wrong things.

College level writing is also evaluated differently. Writing focuses on the five-paragraph essay form, classical rhetoric, sociopolitical, writing across the curriculum, and professional writing emphasizing skills such as rhetorical knowledge, critical thinking, process writing, and conventions (Sullivan & Tinberg, 2006). Brockman, Taylor, Kreth, and Crawford (2011) state that college instructors have identified weaknesses in first year student papers that are characteristic of unrevised first drafts including unclear arguments, insufficient thought on the topic, poor organization, lack of development, and careless proofreading.

Teacher training and professional development play an important role in classroom instructional choices. At every level of education, the students' expected outcome, the assessment system, and the teachers' level of education varies enough to produce differences in the ways teachers approach teaching writing. Despite the data collected on students' writing abilities, very little research has been done about the curriculum of methods courses for ELA teachers to address these issues. At the elementary school and middle school levels, university trained teachers receive methods classes that focus more on literature than writing. Methods courses teach strategies to help students process information. High school educators must have at least twenty-four college hours in the specific subject they are seeking to be certified in. Teachers of high school writing usually have English hours or degrees. Moreover, college instructors and

professors typically have multiple degrees in their chosen field. Dickson et al. (2006) recognized that “the work conditions and resources provided by different institutions [to educators of writing] vary tremendously” (p. 313). The variability of methods courses could be one potential reason why the current trends on students’ writing proficiency have not changed much in the last decade (Dickson et al., 2006).

Smagorinsky and Whiting (1995) argue that little research has been done in regard to the general methods courses that future English educators typically enroll in while pursuing their undergraduate degree. More simply, these education methods courses focus on providing future teachers with the theory behind instructional practices and the pedagogical implementation of these practices. Instead of advancing teaching candidates’ subject area knowledge, these methods courses aim to develop the potential candidates’ instructional practices and provide the theoretical background for practical strategies for the various types of student learners the teachers will encounter over the course of their career. The lack of consistent standards regarding the education of ELA teachers causes disparities in teacher education as well as the instruction students receive in the classroom.

Theoretical Framework

Other disparities arise based on how individuals construct knowledge. Lee (2011) argues that an individual’s mind is exclusively responsible for making meaning of experiences. As each individual constructs meaning based on his or her own experiences, no two individuals will construct exactly the same meaning even though they may have experienced very similar events (Crotty, 1998). Through social interactions, the learner

constructs meaning. According to the social constructivist theory, “the learner is not an empty, passive vessel waiting to be filled with drops of knowledge from an instructor’s lecture. Rather, he/she prefers to be actively involved in hands-on learning activities that interest him...” (Palincsar, 1998, p. 135). This development of knowledge occurs when individuals interact with peers, teachers, and others in the environment and with the environment itself. Throughout this study, writing was seen in several different environments using a variety of activities. Information from observations, field notes, and examples of writing collected by the researcher in the present study suggest that all writing was based on a scheduled topic or subject. Additionally, the lessons observed all had an expected outcome that was outlined either by the district or curriculum. Activities that promoted creative thinking were not observed. Creswell (2013) writes that “individuals seek to understand the world in which they live and work” (p. 24), which guides the process of creating meaning. Innately, individuals combine multiple aspects of the world to construct meaning of various experiences and understand experiences found in the natural world.

According to Vygotsky (1978), development was tested by assessing what students already knew in the Russian schools of his time. However, Vygotsky (1978) also questioned whether student accomplishments while under instruction might be better markers of their potential intellectual growth than their unaided accomplishments in the following statement:

Over a decade even the profoundest thinkers never questioned the assumption; they never entertained the notion that what children can do with the assistance of

others might be in some sense even more indicative of their mental development than what they can do alone (p. 85).

Vygotsky defined this idea as the ZPD. In defining the idea, he describes the ZPD as “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (1978, p. 86). Understanding Vygotsky’s (1986) description of the ZPD is very important as it measures the issue of student learning clearly in terms of growth. Growth, in Vygotsky’s model, happens through the internalization of what begins as social interaction. Thus, implying that growth happens through the process of interaction with a teacher. The researcher for the present study did not observe any form of pretest or informal assessment of what the students in the participants classrooms may know before instruction began. There was interaction with peers and the teacher, but the lessons were focused on the final objective.

Vygotsky (1986) also describes linguistic development as a process that begins with external, socialized communication, only later to be translated into internal speech and articulated how the ZPD applies to language development:

The acquisition of language can provide a paradigm for the entire problem of the relation between learning and development. Language arises initially as a means of communication between the child and the people in his environment. Only subsequently, upon conversion to internal speech, does it come to organize the child’s thought, that is, become an internal mental function. (p. 89)

It is the responsibility of the teacher to create an effective learning environment for literacy acquisition (Vygotsky, 1986). Vygotsky (1978) wrote

...teaching should be organized in such a way that reading and writing are necessary for something...that writing should be meaningful....that writing be taught naturally....and that the natural methods of teaching reading and writing involve appropriate operations on the child's environment (pp. 117-118).

Vygotsky can therefore offer us a model for understanding student learning; it is a developmental process in which concepts are internalized through social interaction.

Implications

America's public school system requires extensive training, certification, and ongoing professional development of its teachers. Public schools serve children who possess a variety of characteristics and present several challenges. Students are grouped heterogeneously in classrooms, and this requires the individual teacher charged with serving and challenging each of them to meet all their learning needs. Even though the pressures of high stakes testing continue to increase, professional preparation to help these teachers deal with diverse learning styles and disparate needs, and ongoing professional development offering training in effective writing instructional practices and current research on teaching and learning, need to become routine in public schools. After reviewing the findings of this study, it is recommended that the school community work to create a culture where authentic writing is a priority. In order to maintain this writing culture there are several recommendations for current teachers, school administrators, district administrators, and teacher preparation programs.

Current Teachers

Teachers are strong in teaching their other content areas; however, when it comes to teaching writing as the previous research has shown, and this study has revealed, teachers do not feel equipped with adequate skills to help students learn how to write. The theoretical framework utilized in the present study suggests that teachers must create an effective learning environment for literacy acquisition (Vygotsky, 1986). Teachers should teach the writing process to help students understand what writing entails and how writing is a tool to help them succeed in their college or career endeavors. Moreover, teachers can assist students with achieving academic success by overcoming their own fears, frustrations, and anxieties when it comes to teaching writing. Teachers can initiate writing assignments that draw on students' interests and provide ways to share their authentic writing experiences. One way to do this is by embracing the unique experiences students bring to the classroom.

When treating all students, the same, teachers ignore their cultural and educational backgrounds (Tucker et al., 2005). This may create a learning environment where students feel they do not have a sense of belonging nor that teachers care about their academic needs. Students learn best when teaching involves movement and open discussions where students are able to share their viewpoints (Parsons, 2008). It is difficult for teachers to embrace what students bring to the classroom, culturally and intellectually, when many students lack motivation to express themselves through writing. Vygotsky (1986) posits that cognitive, social, and motivational factors are interrelated in development. Moll (1992) used Vygotsky's analysis of the development of

concepts to gain insight into providing effective education for linguistically and culturally diverse students:

One advantage [of a sociocultural approach] is that in studying human beings dynamically, within their social circumstances, in their full complexity, we gain a much more complete and...a much more valid understanding of them. We also gain, particularly in the case of minority children, a more positive view of their capabilities and how our pedagogy often constrains, and just as often distorts, what they do and what they are capable of doing (p. 239).

Analyzing how students learn, as well as acknowledging and attempting to understand the culturally-conditioned knowledge they bring to the classroom, can help lead to effective teaching.

In addition, teachers should have an open dialogue about the pros and cons of the writing environment on their campuses. Teachers should not be frightened or intimidated by addressing writing challenges in the classroom with administrators. Teachers can act by displaying models of high quality writing examples, creating an environment where writing is valued and respected, providing opportunities for students to share their writing stories, inviting local authors to discuss how they write, sharing their own writing story, initiating different ways to assess writing, and model writing with their students.

School Administrators

School administrators have a shared responsibility in creating an environment where writing is happening in all content areas. Administrators must become

leaders that believe in the importance of writing and support teachers in the classroom (McGhee & Lew, 2007). Many administrators do not feel they possess enough knowledge about writing instruction to hold discussions with teachers. However, teachers need to be able to converse with those in authority if they are having difficulty implementing instruction due to classroom disruptions, students' low-level skills, and the shortage of effective writing materials. Administrators can put teachers at ease during discussions if they emphasize that teachers are respected and not considered incompetent because they want to address certain issues pertaining to their instructional practices and classrooms. Administrators and teachers can build a strong working connection if both parties learn to respect and listen to each other's concerns about writing instruction.

Principals also need to seek out information to help support writing teachers. When they have strong knowledge about writing and are aware of research-based writing practices, administrators can help teachers become effective in writing instruction (McGhee & Lew, 2007). Graham and Hebert (2010) suggest the more we practice writing, the better writers we become. This is not just true of students. Donald Graves (1983) states the importance of seeing yourself as both a writer and teacher before entering the classroom:

The teaching of writing demands the control of two crafts, teaching and writing. They can neither be avoided, nor separated. The writer who knows the craft of writing can't walk into a room and work with students unless there is some understanding of the craft of teaching. Neither can teachers who have not

wrestled with writing, effectively teach the writer's craft...There is a road, a journey to travel, and there is someone to travel with us, someone who has already made the trip (pp.6-7).

Keeping this in mind, it is critical for administrators to provide teachers opportunities to examine their own beliefs about writing before entrusting them with the task of teaching others.

School administrators can also use their knowledge to provide opportunities for teachers to attend professional development workshops. Administrators should choose quality professional development workshops that provide ways that teachers can discuss, develop, read, assess, research, and study writing across disciplines (Yancey, 2009).

School districts should provide principals with access to current research, journal articles, and learning communities to inform and equip them with data needed to help teachers. It is imperative that principals have access to the necessary tools to provide support and are comfortable in assisting teachers who are teaching writing.

School Districts

School or district-based training has a great influence on the methods used by teachers in the teaching of student writing, and that influence was evidenced by the results of this study. Participants indicated such trainings and workshops as being their primary source for finding methods to use to teach students writing. Participants also communicated that the expectations of the district can be somewhat overwhelming. School districts often provide professional development without the input of what teachers really need to enhance their instructional practices. Teachers need to know what

effective writing instruction looks like in the classroom, and they need to be able to express what their instructional needs are without feeling inadequate or threatened by school administrators. School districts can assist principals in becoming stronger leaders of writing by following McGhee and Lew's (2007) principles for administration:

- Become knowledgeable about the writing process and best practices in writing instruction;
- Provide teachers with long term support, follow-up, and feedback about writing in the classroom;
- Avoid scripted writing programs that do not align with the writing process;
- Communicate the importance of writing to the school community; and
- Celebrate writing publicly and serve as an audience for student and staff writing.

Furthermore, districts can take the initiative and evaluate teachers' needs pertaining to writing instruction in all content areas. One way that school districts could accommodate teachers is by providing tools as well as an instructional coach that can support them in the classroom. This may be more difficult for high schools because many of the well-known literacy coaches, such as Calkins and Atwell, have perspectives that primarily focus on the teaching of writing in the elementary and middle grades.

Teacher Education Programs

Despite national concerns about the importance of writing instruction, little emphasis is placed on teaching writing in most teacher education programs (Nagin, 2006). Although there is a strong research base that recommends the integration of reading and writing (Skeans, 2000), most teacher certification programs spend the

majority of their time focusing on reading instruction and ignoring the importance of preparing teachers to provide writing instruction (Norman & Spencer, 2005). The results of this study demonstrate that teachers do not feel well prepared to teach writing after college. Teacher education programs need to increase the quantity and quality of courses offered in teaching writing for pre-service teachers. Colleges have limited courses in helping teachers prepare to teach writing (Grisham & Wolsey, 2011), and colleges need to provide opportunities for preservice teachers that will enhance literacy courses at the college level (Ng et al., 2009). Coursework needs to focus more on specific research-based methodologies for teaching writing and give preservice teachers clearer expectations of how often and in what ways they should teach writing in their future classrooms.

Teachers often rely on the strategies they learned in school. They enter teacher education programs with years of their own writing experiences from their K-12 educations having observed many examples of writing instruction. These early experiences help shape beliefs and attitudes towards writing and often determine the pedagogical decisions made by new teachers with regard to writing instruction (Norman & Spencer, 2005; Street, 2003). Although preservice teachers' beliefs about writing are well-established by the time they enter teacher education programs, promising research has been conducted that suggests their beliefs are evolving and that it is possible to help them develop into "self-regulated, critically reflective professionals" (Ng et al., 2010, p. 278). Courses aimed at influencing the beliefs of preservice teachers have many features in common that help produce desirable change including teachers actually engaging in

writing, examining, and reflecting on their current beliefs about writing, reflecting on their practice teaching, participating in collaborative group work, and learning about alternative teaching models (Beswick, 2006).

Pre-service teachers should be equipped with strong writing instruction skills, regardless of their content area, to assist students in becoming skillful writers. The study revealed that while they remembered writing in college, none of the participants could recall a class that explained how to teach writing during their tenure in college. Education majors graduate lacking the essential tools to become teachers of writing. This may be the reason why so many teachers choose not to teach writing because they lack the knowledge of how to teach writing.

Recommendations for Future Research

The present study added to the body of literature related to teacher beliefs and the impact they have on instructional practices. However, there are many areas that still need to be addressed. This study provides direction for future research on challenges that hinder writing instruction, the lack of writing focus in preservice teacher preparation, and the lack of critical thinking being applied during writing instruction.

Teachers bring beliefs to the classroom that they cannot implement due to challenges that hinder writing instruction. Instructors of writing must examine their own beliefs and conceptions about writing to prevent those attitudes from determining instructional decisions that impact students' opportunity to learn and grow (Cutler & Graham, 2008). Unfortunately, writing time receives the least amount of attention from teachers. The current study supports that when teachers have unexpected schedule

changes or become short on time, writing time is the first thing to be eliminated from the schedule. Educators need to place a focus on writing instruction. Writing should not be an isolated task. In order to help students make progress with their writing skills, students need time to learn to write and time to independently practice their skills (Calkins, 2003; Freeman & Freeman, 2004). Teachers need to understand the importance of and model writing in math, science, and social studies as well as in their literacy classes in order to maximize writing time even in the presence of these challenges.

Many teachers have expressed that they are not prepared well to teach writing in their teacher education programs (Morgan, 2010; Pardo, 2006). In a survey of 174 primary teachers (Cutler & Graham, 2008), only 44% of teachers reported that their preparation to teach writing was adequate, and 28% rated their preparation as poor or inadequate. In addition, they found that 72% of the teachers took an eclectic approach to writing instruction, joining elements of process writing and skills instruction. Based on their findings, Cutler and Graham (2008) made seven recommendations, one of those being the need to improve professional development for writing instruction in teacher education programs stressing, “It may not be enough to introduce teachers to new writing practices and encourage them to apply them” (p. 916). The current study also found that teachers from several types of teacher preparation programs believed that their teacher preparation program did not prepare them to teach writing effectively. Research examining how teachers are prepared needs to be conducted to develop methods of preparation that improve teachers’ feelings of confidence and level of preparedness to teach writing.

Critical thinking skills are an essential component of a teacher's repertoire (Shapiro & Kilbey, 1990), and teachers have a responsibility to reflect on their practices. The results of the current study support a lack of critical thinking being utilized by the teacher when making instructional decisions about writing. Shapiro and Kilbey stated:

Perhaps the most challenging job facing administrators and teacher educators is that of assisting teachers in critically examining these discrepancies between practice and theory and to facilitate the necessary changes. While this may seem to be a formidable task, it is a necessary one. If teachers are to regain professionalism in the teaching of writing, they must regain some of the responsibilities for classroom decision-making (p. 69).

It is important to note that critical thinking occurs best in a supportive environment. Critical thinking involves personal and professional risk-taking and can be a very uneasy process. When a teacher's beliefs are challenged, especially by an external agent, the teacher's self-perception as an educator is at risk. Administrators and teacher educators must challenge teachers to think critically while promoting an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect. Teachers must know that their experience and knowledge is valued. Ultimately, they must be encouraged to use that knowledge and experience to form new perspectives about their instruction. For example, professional development could help teachers integrate best practices, such as the explicit teaching of strategies, within the process approach they are currently implementing. Professional development should be focused on enhancing teacher knowledge related to teaching writing. Future studies

should also consider including observational measures and measure variables over time to determine if and/or how training and intervention result in change.

Conclusions

Beginning at a very early age, external factors influence personal writing ability and beliefs. Formal writing instruction begins in the elementary grades and is supported by teachers who should have knowledge of effective practices for teaching writing. Research states that students who do not learn to write well will face academic challenges in the classroom since writing is a tool that is useful in learning content knowledge and is necessary for demonstrating learning (Graham & Perin, 2007). If students can write well, they will be more likely to have success in their academic careers and in the work setting. The National Commission on Writing (2004) reported that writing is a skill that is valued by employers and helpful in seeking jobs and promotions, making it a necessary skill beyond students' academic careers. For these reasons, there is an urgency for all learners to become proficient writers.

According to a national assessment of students' writing achievement, which measured the abilities of students in grades eight and twelve to communicate effectively through writing, only twenty-four percent scored at the proficient level (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). Based on these results, most students do not have adequate writing skills. This may be due to the increased stakes of standardized testing. When the stakes are high, classroom instruction is altered to teach test related material, and best practices are ignored. There is also no value placed on the beliefs and skills the teacher contributes to the success of the student. In a system that is oppressed by

standardization, guided by scripted programs, and restricted by pacing guides, to allow one's beliefs to interfere with decision making could be viewed as a form of insubordination.

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APPENDIX A
INFORMED CONSENT

Informed Consent to Participate in Research

You are being asked to participate in the research project described below. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate, or you may decide to stop your participation at any time. Should you refuse to participate in the study or should you withdraw your consent and stop participation in the study, your decision will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you may be otherwise entitled. You are being asked to read the information below carefully, and ask questions about anything you don't understand before deciding whether or not to participate.

Title: ELEMENTARY TEACHERS OF WRITING: PERSONAL WRITING BELIEFS AND THEIR IMPACT ON TEACHING WRITING

Student Investigator(s): Lisa Hamblen

Faculty Sponsor: Kathryn Matthew, Ed.D.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research is to explore teachers' personal beliefs of themselves as writers and the impact these beliefs have on their teaching of writing.

PROCEDURES

The research procedures are as follows: Data will be collected in the fall of 2015 over a seven week period. Data collection will include three interviews, four classroom observations, and field notes kept by the researcher. Participants will be given three sets of structured journal prompts and keep a daily writing journal. This journal will be the participants' writer's notebook for the duration of the study. Each participant will also create a personal teaching metaphor at the beginning of data collection and one at the end of data collection. Participants will compare the teaching metaphor they create in the beginning of data collection to the one they create at the end of data collection.

EXPECTED DURATION

The total anticipated time commitment will be approximately seven weeks.

RISKS OF PARTICIPATION

There are no anticipated risks associated with participation in this project.

BENEFITS TO THE SUBJECT

There is no direct benefit received from your participation in this study, but your participation will help the investigator better understand how the writing process is being taught and why students are struggling to become better writers. The investigator may also identify new strategies to improve writing instruction in all grade levels.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of your study records. The data collected from the study will be used for educational and publication purposes, however, you will not be identified by name. For federal audit purposes, the participant's documentation for this research project will be maintained and safeguarded by the Faculty Sponsor for a minimum of three years after completion of the study. After that time, the participant's documentation may be destroyed.

FINANCIAL COMPENSATION

There is no financial compensation to be offered for participation in the study.

INVESTIGATOR'S RIGHT TO WITHDRAW PARTICIPANT

The investigator has the right to withdraw you from this study at any time.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

The investigator has offered to answer all your questions. If you have additional questions during the course of this study about the research or any related problem, you may contact the Student Researcher, Lisa Hamblen, at phone number 832-726-9266 or by email at hamblenl9261@uhcl.edu. The Faculty Sponsor Kathryn Matthew, Ed.D. may be contacted at phone number 281-283-3598 or by email at Matthew@uhcl.edu.

SIGNATURES:

Your signature below acknowledges your voluntary participation in this research project. Such participation does not release the investigator(s), institution(s), sponsor(s) or granting agency(ies) from their professional and ethical responsibility to you. By signing the form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.

The purpose of this study, procedures to be followed, and explanation of risks or benefits have been explained to you. You have been allowed to ask questions and your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. You have been told who to contact if you have additional questions. You have read this consent form and voluntarily agree to participate as a subject in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent at any time by contacting the Principal Investigator or Student Researcher/Faculty Sponsor. You will be given a copy of the consent form you have signed.

Subject's printed name: _____

Signature of Subject: _____

Date: _____

Using language that is understandable and appropriate, I have discussed this project and the items listed above with the subject.

Printed name and title: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: _____

Date: _____

THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE (UHCL) COMMITTEE FOR PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS HAS REVIEWED AND APPROVED THIS PROJECT. ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING YOUR RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT MAY BE ADDRESSED TO THE UHCL COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (281-283-3015). ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS THAT ARE CARRIED OUT BY INVESTIGATORS AT UHCL ARE GOVERNED BY REQUIREMENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. (FEDERALWIDE ASSURANCE #FWA00004068)

APPENDIX B

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Demographic Variables

Name: _____

Current Teaching Assignment: _____

1. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

2. Select the ethnic and/or racial background with which you most identify.

- ☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Caucasian or White
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- ☐ Two or More Races
- ☐ Some Other Race: _____

3. What grade level do you currently teach? _____

4. How many years have you been teaching? _____

5. Please list prior teaching assignments (if different from assignment listed above).

6. What teaching certificates do you have?

- ☐ Valid: _____
- ☐ Invalid: _____

1. Please list degrees earned.

7. What type of teaching certification training program did you graduate from?

- ☐ Traditional: College/4-Year University
- ☐ ACP: Education Service Center Sponsored (HCDE/Region 4)
- ☐ ACP: School District Sponsored
- ☐ ACP: University Sponsored
- ☐ ACP: Privately Sponsored (iTeach Texas/Teach-Now)

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW/REFLECTIVE JOURNAL QUESTIONS BY CATEGORY

INTERVIEW/REFLECTIVE JOURNAL QUESTIONS

Key for Color Coding	
Interview Week 1	Journal Week 2
Interview Week 4	Journal Week 3
Interview Week 7	Journal Week 4

Writing experiences\influence at home K-12

1. What are your first memories of writing?
2. Describe what you remember concerning writing experiences in your home as you were growing up.
3. Were you encouraged to write as a child, or was it something that you only did if it was required? Please explain.
4. Did anyone at home positively or negatively influence your attitude toward writing? Please explain.

Writing experiences\influences at school K-12

5. What types of writing experiences did you have in school (K-12)?
6. Did you have any teacher(s) who influenced your view of writing? If so, what do you remember about these teachers?
7. What do you remember about your teachers' philosophy about writing?
8. During your K-12 school experience, how would you describe your view of yourself as a writer?
9. Did you have any peers that were good writers? What made them so?

Writing experiences/education - teacher prep program

10. What types of writing experiences did you have within your undergraduate course work?

11. Describe the writing classes you had in college.

12. Did any of these classes explain methods for teaching writing in elementary school?

If so, what were the key points?

13. How would you describe your confidence level concerning teaching writing at the time that you graduated from your teacher prep program\college?

14. How did you approach writing in college? What type of routines worked for you?

Professional Development/Continuing Education

15. Have you taken any writing courses or been involved in any types of professional development workshops since graduating with your undergraduate degree?

16. Did you take these trainings by choice or were they required?

17. In what ways do you feel that these trainings/courses have influenced your writing instruction?

18. How has the professional development you have taken after college affected your confidence in teaching writing?

19. What have your students taught you about writing?

Federal, State, District, Campus Influences

20. What state-, district- or building-wide policies or mandates have influenced your writing instruction?

21. Does your district provide you with any curricular materials, programs, or assessments to use for writing instruction? Describe the resources you are provided.
22. Have your colleagues influenced your writing instruction? If so, in what ways?
23. Within your teaching environment, what has impacted your writing instruction and your feelings toward teaching writing?
24. Do you teach with anyone you would regard as an excellent teacher of writing? What do you believe makes them a great writing teacher?

Beliefs about writing instructional practices

25. What are your major beliefs about teaching and learning in general?
26. What do you believe are the most important goals of an effective writing program?
27. Describe a typical week of writing instruction in your classroom?
28. What do you enjoy about teaching writing?
29. What struggles do you encounter as you teach writing and how do you address these challenges?
30. What do you feel has influenced your instruction the most?
31. How does your personal view of writing impact your classroom practices?
32. How do you believe your students view themselves as writers?
33. Has participating in this study changed the way you choose instructional activities for your students?
34. What types of writing experiences would you like your students have in your classroom?

35. Do you think reading influences our writing? If so, in what ways? If not, then why not?

Teacher as Writer

36. Do you consider yourself a good writer? Why or why not?

37. Has your view of yourself as a writer evolved over time?

38. What types of personal writing activities do you do on a regular basis? How do you integrate these into your classroom instruction?

39. In what ways do you feel your personal writing activities or experiences have any impact on the way you approach teaching writing?

40. What do you consider one of the best pieces of writing you have ever done? What makes it your best piece?

41. What do you consider one of the worst pieces of writing you have ever done? What makes it your worst piece?

42. How has participating in this study changed your view of yourself as a writer?

APPENDIX D

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS WEEK 1

1. Do you consider yourself a good writer? Why or why not?
2. What are your first memories of writing?
3. Did anyone at home positively or negatively influence your attitude toward writing?
Please explain.
4. What types of writing experiences did you have in school (K-12)?
5. What types of writing experiences did you have within your undergraduate course work?
6. Have you taken any writing courses or been involved in any types of professional development workshops since graduating with your undergraduate degree?
7. Did you take these trainings by choice or were they required?
8. In what ways do you feel that these trainings/courses have influenced your writing instruction?
9. Does your district provide you with any curricular materials, programs, or assessments to use for writing instruction? Describe the resources you are provided.
10. What do you remember about your teachers' philosophy about writing?
11. Do you think reading influences our writing? If so, in what ways? If not, then why not?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS WEEK 4

1. What are your major beliefs about teaching and learning in general?
2. Were you encouraged to write as a child, or was it something that you only did if it was required? Please explain.
3. Describe a typical week of writing instruction in your classroom?
4. Describe the writing classes you had in college.
5. Did any of these classes explain methods for teaching writing in elementary school?
If so, what were the key points?
6. How has the professional development you have taken after college affected your confidence in teaching writing?
7. What state-, district- or building-wide policies or mandates have influenced your writing instruction?
8. How does your personal view of writing impact your classroom practices?
9. How did you approach writing in college? What type of routines worked for you?
10. Did you have any peers that were good writers? What made them so?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS WEEK 8

1. What do you believe are the most important goals of an effective writing program?
2. Do you feel that your personal writing activities or experiences have any impact on the way you approach teaching writing?
3. What do you consider one of the best pieces of writing you have ever done? What makes it your best piece?
4. What do you consider one of the worst pieces of writing you have ever done? What makes it your worst piece?
5. How has participating in this study changed your view of yourself as a writer?
6. Has participating in this study changed the way you choose instructional activities for your students?
7. Have your colleagues influenced your writing instruction? If so, in what ways?
8. What have your students taught you about writing?
9. What types of writing experiences would you like your students have in your classroom?

APPENDIX E

STRUCTURED JOURNAL PROTOCOL

STRUCTURED JOURNAL WEEK 2

1. Describe what you remember concerning writing experiences in your home as you were growing up.
2. During your K-12 school experience, how would you describe your view of yourself as a writer?
3. How would you describe your confidence level concerning teaching writing at the time that you graduated from your teacher prep program\college?
4. How do you believe your students view themselves as writers? Why?
5. Please describe a memorable “writing moment” that happened in your class this week. Please include examples of student work.

STRUCTURED JOURNAL WEEK 3

1. Do you teach with anyone you would regard as an excellent teacher of writing? What do you believe makes them a great writing teacher?
2. What do you enjoy about teaching writing?
3. What types of personal writing activities do you do on a regular basis? How do you integrate these into your classroom instruction?
4. What do you feel has influenced your instruction the most?
5. Please describe a memorable “writing moment” that happened in your class this week. Please include examples of student work.

STRUCTURED JOURNALWEEK 4

1. Within your teaching environment, what has impacted your writing instruction and your feelings toward teaching writing?
2. What struggles do you encounter as you teach writing and how do you address these challenges?
3. Did you have any teacher(s) who influenced your view of writing? If so, what do you remember about these teachers?
4. Has your view of yourself as a writer evolved over time?
5. Please describe a memorable “writing moment” that happened in your class this week. Please include examples of student work.

APPENDIX F

IDEAS FOR USING THE WRITER'S NOTEBOOK

How to Use the Writer's Notebook for Daily Journals

Use your notebook to breathe in the world around you. You can write about:

- 1) What amazes/surprises/anger you
- 2) What you wonder about
- 3) What you notice
- 4) Small details that intrigue you
- 5) Conversations you overhear
- 6) Memories
- 7) Lists
- 8) Photos, articles, ticket stubs or other artifacts
- 9) Your own sketches, drawings or doodles
- 10) Quotes or inspiring passages from books or poems

Prewriting Strategies for Your Writing

- 1) Write in Your Writer's Notebook. A writer's notebook gives you an easy, informal, no-pressure way to start thinking about a topic. Great for brand-new "seed ideas".
- 2) List Ideas. Lists are a great way to gather material. The idea is to generate ideas. Don't worry if some ideas are better than others. And don't worry too much about getting the ideas in the right order.
- 3) Make a Web. You may have done this before. Put the main idea in the center, and make a "spoke" for each connected idea.

- 4) Create a Simple Time-line. Jot down when each important event happened. Now, where do you want to start the writing? At the beginning of the timeline? In the middle? At the end?
- 5) Three by Three by Three. Give yourself three minutes to write three ideas on three different topics. Great for generating ideas.
- 6) Free Write. Give yourself a short amount of time (five to seven minutes) to jot down ideas, words, fragments related to a topic. If you are doing this right your pen should never leave the page. One friend of mine calls it "Hot-Penning." Don't think: write! Let your pen go wild. Later you can go back and circle any parts you want to use.

APPENDIX G

DAILY JOURNAL WRITING PROMPTS

Daily Journal Writing Prompts

1. What amazes you about teaching?
2. What surprises you about teaching?
3. What angers you about teaching?
4. What are some small details that intrigue you?
5. What do you notice most about your students' writing ability?
6. Write about a conversation you overheard that made you laugh.
7. Write about a conversation you overheard that made you scratch your head.
8. Write about something a student said that made you laugh.
9. Make a list of things you would change about your students' writing ability.
10. Write about something a student said that made you call their parents.
11. Write about a favorite memory from elementary school.
12. Write about a favorite memory from high school.
13. Write about a place you love to visit.
14. Write about your day. What was the best part?
15. Write about someone who has inspired you.
16. If you could do anything else, what would it be? Why?
17. Who is the first person who comes to your mind when you read this? What makes them special?
18. Write 5 things that you would like others to say about you.
19. If there was a museum exhibit about you, draw what things would be on display. Write a statement about why each item is included.
20. Write about how you feel about the STAAR test.
21. Create a timeline of your day.
22. Create a timeline of the week.
23. Give yourself three minutes to write three ideas on three different topics.
24. List 5 things you could write about. Pick one and make a web.

25. Create a Venn Diagram and compare yourself to your favorite elementary school.
26. Write down the name of a famous athlete. List 5 ways that you are alike. List 5 ways you are different.
27. What is your favorite hobby? What do you like about it?
28. What is the worst thing that you have to do when you clean your house? Why?
29. What is your favorite meal? What makes it special?
30. Spiders or snakes? Why?

Respond to one of the following quotes:

31. Skilled writers do not always follow the shortest route between themselves and their meaning. *Ralph Fletcher*
32. Exercise the writing muscle every day, even if it is only a letter, notes, a title list, a character sketch, a journal entry. Writers are like dancers, like athletes. Without that exercise, the muscles seize up. *Jane Yolen*
33. Teach the writer and not the writing. Our decisions must be guided by what might help this writer rather than what might help this writing. *Lucy Calkins*
34. Conferring is not the icing on the cake; it IS the cake. *Carl Anderson*
35. The teacher is the chief learner in the classroom. *Donald Graves*
36. Everybody walks past a thousand story ideas every day. The good writers are the ones who see five or six of them. Most people don't see any. *Orson Scott Card*
37. You don't learn to write by going through a series of preset writing exercises. You learn to write by grappling with a real subject that truly matters to you. *Ralph Fletcher*
38. It's misleading to think of writers as special creatures, word sorcerers who possess some sort of magical knowledge hidden from everyone else. Writers are ordinary people who like to write. They feel the urge to write, and they scratch that itch every chance they get. *Ralph Fletcher*
39. Rewriting is the essence of writing well: it's where the game is won or lost. The idea is hard to accept. We all have an emotional equity in our first draft; we can't believe

that it wasn't born perfect. But the odds are close to 100 percent that it wasn't. *William Zinzer*

40. Writers develop in the same messy, unpredictable, mysterious ways that their stories do. *Carolyn Coman*

APPENDIX H

PARTICIPANT TIMELINE

Participant Timeline for Data Collection

Timeline	Dates	Activity
Week 1	October 19-23	Set Information Session Set 1 st Set of Teacher Interviews Daily Journals Weekly Writing Meeting
Week 2	October 26-30	Create a Personal Teaching Metaphor 1 1 st Set of Classroom Observations 1 st Structured Journal Daily Journals Weekly Writing Meeting
Week 3	November 2-6	2 nd Set of Classroom Observations 2 nd Structured Journal Daily Journals Weekly Writing Meeting
Week 4	November 9-13	2 nd Set of Teacher Interviews 3 rd Structured Journal Daily Journals Weekly Writing Meeting
Week 5	November 16-20	3 rd Set of Classroom Observations Daily Journals Weekly Writing Meeting
Week 6 Holiday	November 23-27	Create a Personal Teaching Metaphor 2 Written Comparison of Personal Teaching Metaphors
Week 7	November 30 – December 4	4 th Set of Classroom Observations Daily Journals Weekly Writing Meeting
Week 8	December 7 - 11	3 rd Set of Teacher Interviews

		Discussion of Comparison of Personal Teaching Metaphors
Week 9	December 14 - 18	3rd Set of Teacher Interviews, continued Discussion of Comparison of Personal Teaching Metaphors, continued Weekly Writing Meeting

APPENDIX I

PERSONAL TEACHING METAPHOR - WEEKS 2 AND 6

Personal Teaching Metaphor

Directions: Please answer the questions below to create a personal teaching metaphor.

1. What metaphor describes you as a writing teacher?
2. Explain how this metaphor characterizes you as a writing teacher.
3. What examples from your teaching experience illustrate your metaphor?
4. Do you think this metaphor influences or guides your teaching? If so, how?

Websites with Examples:

<http://www.teachhub.com/8-metaphors-understanding-role-teacher>

<http://www.learner.org/workshops/nextmove/metaphor/>

<http://ed.psu.edu/englishpds/discussion/metaphor8-02.html>

APPENDIX J

PERSONAL TEACHING METAPHOR COMPARISON QUESTIONS – WEEK 6

Week Six: Personal Teaching Metaphor Comparison

Directions: Please compare the two metaphors you have written. Use the following questions to help you organize your thoughts.

1. What two metaphors did you choose?
2. How are the two metaphors similar?
3. How are they different?
4. How do the two of them identify you as a writing teacher?
5. How do they define the students in your classroom?

APPENDIX K

WEEKLY MEETING ACTIVITY – WEEK 1

Week One – Weekly Writing Meeting

10-22-15

3:30 pm

1. What is writing?
2. List as many forms of writing as you can.
3. What functions does writing serve?

**Start writing,
no matter what.
The water does
not flow until
the faucet is
turned on.**

- Louis L'Amour

APPENDIX L

WEEKLY MEETING ACTIVITY – WEEK 2

Week Two – Weekly Writing Meeting

10-27-15

3:30 pm

Metaphor Activity

Benefits of creating and analyzing metaphors:

1. Metaphors clarify our attitudes.
 2. Metaphors show us how we perceive our students and colleagues.
 3. Metaphors are a springboard for change.
 4. Through metaphors, we meet ourselves.
- Imagine your classroom as one of the “restaurants” listed below. Which would it be and why?

Gourmet restaurant

Truck stop

Fast food

Family holiday dinner

School cafeteria

Vending machine

Mall food court

Hot dog stand

Delicatessen

Outdoor barbecue

APPENDIX M

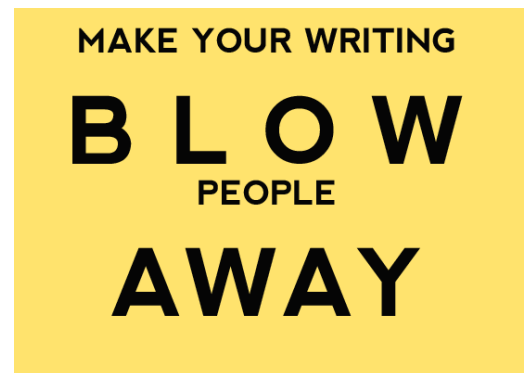
WEEKLY MEETING ACTIVITY – WEEK 5

Week Five – Weekly Writing Meeting

11-19-15

3:30 pm

4. How do you think your beliefs of teaching writing have changed because of your participation in this study?
5. What instructional changes have you made as a result of your participation?
6. How has participating made you question the instructional decisions you make?



APPENDIX N

WEEKLY MEETING ACTIVITY – WEEK 7

Week Seven – Weekly Writing Meeting

12-1-15

3:30 pm

Metaphor Activity

Benefits of creating and analyzing metaphors:

1. Metaphors clarify our attitudes.
 2. Metaphors show us how we perceive our students and colleagues.
 3. Metaphors are a springboard for change.
 4. Through metaphors, we meet ourselves.
-
- Imagine your classroom as one room of a house. Which would it be and why?