HOW PRESERVICE TEACHERS' ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS ABOUT WRITING

INFORM THEIR VIEW OF WRITING INSTRUCTION: A CASE STUDY

by

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DEDICATION

To everyone who writes

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As a parent, I wholeheartedly agree that "it takes a village to raise a child." But as a doctoral candidate, I believe this axiom holds true for those who pursue advanced degrees. For me, it has taken a village to reach my destination in graduate school. I am grateful for the support of my family, my wise and caring committee members, and my friends throughout this journey.

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GLOSSARY

Attitudes: "internal beliefs that influence actions" (Schunk, 2012, p. 220).

Beliefs: "unquestioned presumptions and personal truths" which are "built on memorable episodes in [a person's life]" (Brindley & Schneider, 2002, p. 328).

Pre-service teacher: students who are education majors currently in the methods courses, but not yet in student teaching.

Writing: use of the written word to convey meaning. For purposes of this study, writing refers to both formal, academic communication as well as informal expression such as journal or letter writing.

English language arts: includes reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing (National Council of Teachers of English, 2015)

Methods class: course work that requires preservice teachers to blend theory and practice through placement in a K-8 classroom working under the supervision of a cooperating teacher.

ABSTRACT

Attitudes and beliefs about writing held by preservice teachers play a significant role in how they will approach writing instruction in their future classrooms. Teachers who engage in regular writing practice, possess knowledge of English language foundations and grammar, and have a positive attitude about writing will be better prepared to address the challenges of teaching students how to write. This study examined the attitudes and beliefs of seven elementary education majors who were enrolled in one writing-intensive English language arts course during the spring semester in 2016.

The participants in this qualitative case study were selected after taking the Writing Apprehension Test (WAT) as part of their coursework. A social constructivism paradigm provided the theoretical framework for this study. Data sources included: a questionnaire, two semi-structured interviews, a writing memories matrix, daily class observations, a focus group, field observer notes, and student work samples and journal entries. The data was analyzed in the context of student as writer and student as future writing teacher.

Six themes emerged within the framework of the analysis for both writer and future writing teacher: providing explicit and meaningful feedback; offering choice in writing topics; making writing fun, enjoyable, and possessing an enthusiasm for the subject; providing adequate instruction in writing foundations, skill, and grammar; allowing adequate time for writing practice; and helping students understand the "why" of writing. This study offers insight into how preservice teachers perceive and practice the writing process, what factors were influential in the development of their attitudes and beliefs, and what role those will play in writing instruction. In addition, this study explores how providing positive experiences with the writing process within the context of the six themes can bolster confidence and skill levels for soon-to-be teachers. Finally, this study concludes with suggestions for how teacher education programs can optimize instruction to remediate and reinforce skills, foster positive experiences with writing, and support future teachers in their journey.

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

Writing, the creative effort, the use of the imagination, should come first,
- at least for some part of every day of your life. It is a wonderful blessing
if you will use it (Ueland, 1983, p. 14).

The purpose of this study is to examine preservice teachers' attitudes and

beliefs about writing and their impact upon writing instruction in the K-8 classroom.

Working closely with prospective educators during their formative teacher

preparation coursework and in student teaching has given me a unique perspective

into the making of a teacher. These students enter teacher education programs with

a variety of experiences related to schooling and academic preparation which form

beliefs and attitudes about their own abilities and mastery of subjects. Of course,

this holds true for writing. Some students may have had a hit-or-miss approach to

writing in their elementary schooling. Others may have not received direct

instruction in grammar nor any clear, constructive feedback. Still others may lack a

thorough understanding of revision and editing. With the current emphasis on

writing in the curriculum as part of the Common Core English Language Arts

Standards, which set competency requirements for K – 12 writing, there is no

question that writing instruction will now play a bigger role in elementary

classrooms (Common Core State Standards [CCSS], 2015).

Background of the Study

Throughout a student's school career, his or her attitudes and beliefs are shaped by academic experiences. Likewise, other factors, such as family, can contribute to the development of these notions regarding their ability to learn a particular subject. Developed over time, these attitudes and beliefs are instrumental in shaping performance (Brindley & Schneider, 2002; Rosen, Glennie, Dalton, Lennon & Bozick, 2010; Shofel, 1991). Eventually, they form the student's core expectations about the ability to master subject matter (Parajes, 2003). Depending upon the experiences of the individual, the attitudes and beliefs formed may be positive, negative, or neutral.

When students enter the university, whether or not there is a level of awareness, these previously formed attitudes accompany them (Florio-Ruane & Lensmire, 1990; Lortie, 1975). For students pursuing a career in teaching, these dispositions play an even more critical role (Lortie, 1975). Without question, these attitudes and beliefs, which may have been formed more than a decade ago, will have a wide-sweeping impact across the curriculum, including pedagogical practices (Dart, Bouton-Lewis, Brownlee, & McCrindle, 1998; Whitney & Friedrich, 2013). Lortie (1975) investigated the significant role attitudes play on teachers in the classroom, in the formulation of their identity as a professional, and in how these attitudes permeate every instructional decision.

The attitudes and beliefs that teachers have about themselves as writers are particularly important. The National Writing Project, professional development in

response to teachers' concerns that they are unprepared or underprepared to teach writing, provides compelling evidence that our current teacher preparation programs are not adequately preparing students to teach writing (Bratcher & Stroble, 1994; Street, 2003; Whitney & Fredich, 2013). Moreover, this underscores the notion that new teachers lack confidence or skills in writing (Bratcher & Stroble, 1994; Street, 2003; Whitney & Fredich, 2013). Yet despite being enrolled in accredited teacher training programs, many preservice teachers feel unprepared or underprepared as writers and as future teachers of writing (Zimmerman, Morgan & Kidder-Brown, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

Research clearly demonstrates the powerful influence that prior attitudes play in how a preservice teacher will ultimately approach teaching, including writing instruction (Chambless & Bass, 1995; Colby & Stapleton, 2006; Lortie, 1975; Morgan, 2010; Street, 2003, Street & Stang, 2009). These self-efficacy beliefs, formed over a period of time, will greatly influence the preservice teacher's views of the writing process and instruction (Bandura, 1997). Understanding these attitudes and beliefs, how they are formed, and what can be done to change them can help guide and inform the approach to writing instruction in teacher education programs. According to Esquith (2007), "simple solutions to complex problems are embraced far too often" (p. xii). For preservice teachers to become competent and confident

writers, teacher education programs must acknowledge that a problem exists and take steps to remediate the deficiencies.

Not only must future teachers understand the fundamentals of the English language, they must be active participants in the process (Gebhardt, 1977). In other words, writing teachers must write (Augsburger, 1998; Bloom, 1990; Brooks, 2010; Cremin, 2006; Morgan, 2010; Murray, 2003; Whyte, Lazarte, Thompson, Ellis, Muse & Talbot, 2007). Consider the prospect of learning to drive from someone who could recite the driver's manual verbatim, yet has never operated a motor vehicle. Could one learn golf from someone who has never hit a tee shot or putted a golf ball on the green (Gebhardt, 1977)? So why would we contemplate that a person who does not actively engage in the process of writing could teach another how to write? Could that person possibly express the frustrations and fear of staring at the blank page or share the satisfaction of the finished piece of clear and concise prose? According to Bratcher and Stroble (1994), Colby and Stapleton (2006), Morgan (2010), and Smith (1983), the answer is no.

To fully understand writing, future teachers must experience the frustrations and joys of writing (Augsburger, 1998; Bloom, 1990; Gebhardt, 1977; Murray, 2003). They must wrestle with their fear of revealing a part of themselves on the page (Augsburger, 1998; Bloom. 1990; Cremin, 2006). Gebhardt (1977) stated that future teachers of writing must become "experienced in the agonies of trying to write" (p. 137). According to Cremin (2006), teachers who are writers are better prepared to share the inherent challenges a student encounters while writing.

Zinsser (2006) stated it succinctly: "writing is hard work" (p. 9). In writing, as well

as in all of education, in the words of Esquith (2007), "there are no shortcuts" (p.

xii).

<div align="center">Background of the Researcher</div>

As one who has engaged in the daily practice of writing for the last twenty-

seven years, I find that writing brings me clarity and a sense of delight. Occasionally

when I stare at the blank page or screen, a deep level of frustration, angst, and fear

result, as it does for anyone who writes. Although the task of writing takes

enormous effort, for me, it is worth it.

I admit that I love everything about writing. The joy of having a creative

outlet. The ability to think on the page to sort and understand my inner-most

thoughts or to master new subject matter. The wonder of stringing words together,

like sparkling gems, in precisely the right order to convey ideas. The thrill of

knowing that my choice of words has the power to bring someone to laughter or

tears. Initially, I believed that everyone else shared my deep and compelling love of

the written word. However, through my work with university freshmen and

students in a teacher preparation program, I learned that I was mistaken.

After entering my doctoral program in curriculum and instruction, writing

and the writing process quickly emerged to the forefront of my interest areas. While

teaching a seminar section for education students, and later completing a teaching

internship with a senior professor in an early learning-to-read course, I discovered a

similar trend. As writing was discussed, students would freely admit their apprehensions. "I'm not a very good writer," was frequently their lament. Others expressed open hostility about writing: "I hate writing," "It's a chore," and "Writing is so hard." After listening to preservice students' comments, one question emerged again and again in my mind – what impact will these attitudes have on their ability to teach writing in the K-8 classroom? I wondered if and how their less-than-positive mindsets would impact preservice teachers' approach to writing instruction in their future classroom.

Research Questions

1. How do preservice teachers perceive and practice the writing process?

2. What experiences shaped their attitudes and beliefs about the writing process?

3. How do preservice teachers' views of the process inform their thinking about teaching writing?

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to elementary education majors in one writing-intensive, English Language Arts (ELA) course at one western United States land-grant university. Consequently, the data is limited in scope and the findings potentially applicable only to this particular teacher education program. At this institution, the student population is predominately White and the majority of students declared as elementary education majors are female. Consequently, the

gender and ethnicity diversity of this is limited due to the enrollment in this institution and in the course.

Another limitation of the study is the possibility that students adjusted their responses out of concern that they would be shared with the instructor. Although students were assured that their participation was completely confidential, and at no point in the study did I share any information regarding the participants' identities or responses with the instructor, the possibility exists that some of their answers were altered based on this apprehension.

Finally, this study uses convenience sample from the pool of students in this course. As a result, the findings may reflect the experiences of a limited number of students. However, every effort was made to obtain a range of student attitudes about writing to provide the greatest detail and scope.

<u>Delimitations of the Study</u>

This study will examine students in one literacy methods course. Students will have completed approximately two years of the core education curriculum prior to their entrance in the teacher education program. No participants will be in the student teaching phase of their program; all are junior standing. Secondary education majors will not be examined in this study.

Significance of the Study

The ability to communicate clearly, succinctly, and competently in writing is an essential skill for the 21st century (Common Core State Standards, 2015). Whether one wishes to share the results of research, gain entry into the workforce or higher education, or pen a sentiment of love and affection, at best, the effective use of the written word can be the difference between conveying a lackluster, mundane message and one that has a profound impact. Unclear or incoherent writing may result in a garbled communication, where the reader is unable to glean the meaning the writer intended to convey. At worst, the writer's meaning may be lost in a sea of completely unintelligible words, thoughts, and ideas.

The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress in Grades 8 and 12 for the year 2011 (National Center for Education Statistics [NAEP], 2012) confirmed that the outlook for writing is dismal at best. According to the 2011 NAEP, over 70% of students in grades 8 and 12 are writing at the basic or below basic levels. As a result, many of these students are entering universities with a lack of mastery of even the most basic writing skills. Some of these students will eventually become teachers.

As these students enter universities and teacher education programs, the problem is complicated further. At the 1300 teacher education programs across the nation, instruction in writing methods continues to be ignored (Daisey, 2009). According to Tulley (2013), only "24.6% of English departments offered courses in the teaching of writing to preservice teachers since the late 1970s" (p. 38). This

uniform lack of coursework devoted solely to writing is true despite The National

Commission on Writing (2003) recommendation that "universities can help advance

common expectations by requiring courses in teaching writing for all prospective

teachers" (p. 32). Moreover, states have the power to buttress this expectation by

"insisting on successful completion of a course in writing theory and practice as a

condition of teacher licensing" (National Commission on Writing, 2003, p. 32).

However, this call to action has been unheeded.

On the continuum of literacy research, there is an overall dearth of research

about writing (Tulley, 2013). In the context of teacher education programs, some

studies have been conducted regarding writing attitudes of current practitioners in

the field. The National Writing Project acknowledged that teachers who lack

confidence in their writing abilities will "truly never be able to teach their students

to write well" (Street & Stang, 2009, p. 76). Through the creation of the National

Writing Project, professional development is in place to bridge the gap between

theory and practice, helping teachers transform into confident and competent

writers.

However, no such safety net exists for preservice teachers. There is no

uniformity in the amount of instruction on writing pedagogy required in teacher

education programs (Chambless & Bass, 2010; Daisey, 2009; Morgan, 2010; Tulley,

2013). Likewise, the amount of time spent writing in these programs varies

dramatically (Daisey, 2009; Norman & Spencer, 2005; Tulley, 2013). As a result, it is

no surprise that teachers are entering the profession with varying attitudes about

writing, skills, and self-confidence about themselves as writers. However, research demonstrates that attitudes are fluid and can be changed (Street & Stang, 2009). As the National Writing Project so clearly illustrates, the interplay of all these factors will influence the new teacher's ability to and attitudes about teaching writing (Whyte, Lazarte, Thompson, Ellis, Muse & Talbot, 2007). As a result, there is a tremendous need for more research regarding writing in teacher education programs, about the attitudes and beliefs about writing that preservice teachers bring to these programs, and what these programs can do to influence them.

CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

We must speak to our students with an honesty tempered by compassion: Our words will literally define the ways they perceive themselves as writers (Fletcher, 1993, p. 19*).*

<u>History of Writing Instruction</u>

Overall, there are few specific historical documents that provide a clear description of the history of writing instruction in the United States (Hawkins & Razali, 2012). In fact, there is "no singular version of history to recount here, for multiple histories of writing instruction in the U.S. exist" (Hawkins & Razali, 2012, p. 306). For most of the nineteenth century, writing instruction amounted to little more than an emphasis on handwriting technique, (National Council of Teachers of English Report, 2009) and mastery of spelling (Graves, 1994). During that time writing was considered "the physical act of putting ink to paper" (Hawkins & Razali, 2012, p. 306). At the close of the nineteenth century, writing instruction was typically offered at the end of the elementary school years, based on the logic that students would be better prepared to write once they had mastered basic literacy skills (Hawkins & Razali, 2012).

Around the transition to the twentieth century, classrooms offered practice in grammar, punctuation, and spelling with teacher led "sentence correction exercises" (Hawkins & Razali, 2012, p. 310). While letter writing practice was common, many times students simply demonstrated proficiency by replicating a sample piece of writing (Hawkins & Razali, 2012). After World War I, educators

began to embrace a more progressive view inspired, in part, by John Dewey

(Hawkins & Razali, 2012). As the transition moved toward "individualism and self-

expression," educators were charged with creating an environment to foster

creativity (Hawkins & Razali, 2012, p. 310). Textbooks in the 1940s featured

"chapters for teaching written composition," a shift from the focus on strictly

grammar and handwriting (Hawkins & Razali, 2012, p. 310). Throughout the 1950s

and 60s, textbooks "promot[ed] the need for students to write from personal

experience for authentic purposes and audiences" (Hawkins & Razali, 2012, p. 311).

Until the 1970s, writing instruction focused primarily on a "sequence of

essential skills" (National Writing Project & Nagin, 2003, p. 19). Teachers

emphasized "inauthentic word-and sentence-level" instruction (Hawkins & Razali,

2012, p. 311). Although the cornerstones of writing pedagogy centered on

demonstrating knowledge of grammar, punctuation, and understanding the

differences between distinct writing genres, a noticeable shift began toward viewing

language acquisition from a holistic perspective (Gebhardt, 1977; Hawkins & Razali,

2012; National Writing Project & Nagin, 2003). As a result, writing instruction

became more authentic with a goal of communicating ideas (Hawkins & Razali,

2012). At that point, experts began to embrace the idea that "children could only

learn to write by writing" (Hawkins & Razali, 2012, p. 311).

Historically, mastery of writing was assessed through the lens of the final

product (Calkins, 1986; Dreher, 1990; National Writing Project & Nagin, 2003; Perl,

Pekala, Schwartz, Graves & Silver, 1983; Street & Stang, 2009). Calkins (1986)

described writing instruction during that educational era as something that "was assigned and then corrected" (p. 13). However, research demonstrated that presenting writing skills independently from actual practice does little, if anything, to foster writing improvement (National Writing Project & Nagin, 2003). Bean (2011) described this prescriptive mode of instruction as "view[ing] writing as a set of isolated skills unconnected to an authentic desire to converse with interested readers about real ideas" (p. 17). Although writing is obviously a way to convey ideas, it is also a tool for thinking, understanding, and learning (Daisey, 2009; Graves, 2003; Murray, 2003; National Writing Project & Nagin, 2003; Street & Stang, 2009).

<div align="center">Development of Process Writing</div>

The need to communicate is a basic human desire. As early as the Lascaux cave paintings in France and Egyptian hieroglyphs, people sought to convey thoughts, feelings, and information. Children are not exempt from this wish for their ideas to be heard. It is essential for teachers to incubate this innate desire of their students. According to Graves (1983):

> Children want to write. They want to write the first day they attend school. This is no accident. Before they went to school they marked up walls, pavements, newspapers with crayons, chalk, pens or pencils . . . anything that makes a mark. The child's marks say, "I am." (p. 3).

To foster that intrinsic wish, teachers must not only create a classroom environment that provides ample opportunity to engage in writing, but also one that conveys a sense of enthusiasm for writing (Atwell, 1998; Calkins, 1986).

Until the early 1970s, teaching writing required students to identify and describe the "modes of discourse" (Calkins, 1986, p. 14). Historically, these were distilled into three classifications: "narration, persuasion, and information" (Benjamin, 2013, p. 17). However, Calkins (1986) outlined four categories: "persuasive, expressive, referential, and literary discourse" (p. 14). This trend evolved as researchers began to investigate the ways in which students write – an area that had been largely ignored until that time. In an effort to understand the many subtle elements that encompass the act of writing, researchers began to examine how students approached the task, or the actual process of writing (Atwell, 1998; Calkins, 1986; Emig, 1971; Graves, 1983, 1984; Nelms, 1994; NCTE, 2009; Perl, Pekala, Schwartz, Graves & Silver, 1983). Likewise, researchers also began to explore the writing process utilized by professional writers in an attempt to discern what behaviors differentiate the skills and habits of published authors from those employed by the novice (Calkins, 1986; Elbow, 1998; Murray, 2003; Street & Stang, 2009). According to Street and Stang (2009), there are two unifying process threads for professional writers: they are passionate about reading and they revise their work with regularity. However, regardless of the proficiency level or the process used, both beginners and advanced writers had one underlying objective in writing – the development and creation of the final written product (Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2007).

Graves' (1983) observations of children writing along with Emig's (1971) studies of twelfth graders' composition habits helped shift the focus of writing

pedagogy from singular skill instruction to a new form of process discourse. It is

noteworthy, however, that this shift began to emerge "around the time that *A Nation*

at Risk suggested a 'back-to-basics' approach" would lead to improved student

achievement (Hawkins & Razali, 2012, p. 313). The emphasis transitioned to an in-

depth exploration of the multiple events that occur during the process of writing

rather than merely the final piece of written work (Tompkins, 2004). Teachers

eagerly embraced this new and promising approach (NCTE, 2009). Regardless of the

terminology, researchers identified three distinct phases of the writing process: pre-

writing, or what happens before students write; composing, the act of putting

thoughts down on paper or digitally as a draft; and finally, post-writing, or what

happens after the initial writing, or revision and editing (Calkins, 1986; Graham,

MacArthur, & Fitzgerald, 2007; Graves, 1983, Tompkins, 2004).

Perl, Pekala, Schwartz, Graves, and Silver (1983) explained the emergence of

the process approach as a "complex shift in attitudes, behaviors, ideas, and

approaches" (p. 21). After examining this component parts of this method, these

researchers outlined six basic principles about writing instruction (1) "experience" -

students learn writing by writing; (2) "self-observation" - writers engage in self-

analysis of their own writing process; (3) "range" - writers experiment with and

master numerous genres; (4) "collaboration" – giving and receiving meaningful

feedback improves writing; (5) "audience" – writers must understand and adapt the

writing depending upon who is reading their work and, (6) "authorship" – the

responsibility for the writing rests with the writer (Perl, Pekala, Schwartz, Graves &

Silver, 1983, p. 22). This proved to be a significant shift in the approach to writing

instruction.

Although the writing process was ignored historically, Murray (2003) argued

that it is one of the most critical elements. By examining the progression of events,

providing direct instruction, and modeling the process of writing, rather than

merely teaching isolated skillsets and grammar, Graves (1983) opined that teachers

could better assist students in becoming proficient writers. Yet, there is a unique

subset of tasks in "the act of writing (planning, drafting, revision, editing)" (National

Writing Project & Nagin, 2003, p. 22). Within the process model of writing, students

were required to think, reflect, and analyze as they make decisions in their writing

process rather than engaging in rote memorization of the rules of grammar, spelling,

and punctuation (Bean, 2011; National Writing Project & Nagin, 2003). But this

further complicated the issue. In the words of researcher Donald Graves:

> The writing process is anything a writer does from the time the idea
> came until the piece is completed or abandoned. There is no particular
> order. So it's not effective to teach writing process in a lock-step, rigid
> manner . . . If you provide frequent occasions for writing, then the
> students start to think about writing when they're not doing it. I call it
> a state of constant composition (National Writing Project & Nagin,
> 2003, p. 23).

But the concept of process has even greater implications than simply how

one approaches the task. In addition, this perspective brought a notion of fluidity to

the beginning ideas of a piece which the writing process transforms into "more

coherent, complex, and clear" thoughts through revisions (Gebhardt, 1977, p. 137).

According to Gebhardt (1977), process gives students the opportunity to

comprehend that writing is not a "static thing" (p. 137). In other words, writing

unfolds organically.

Gallagher (2011) suggested that not only must students have a fundamental

understanding of the process of writing and engage in frequent practice, students

must fully comprehend "why they should write" (p. 7). Without this basic

understanding, students will not see writing as a meaningful and worthwhile

activity (Daisey, 2009; Gallagher, 2011). Instead, they will regard the task as

something unavoidable and only required to pass a course (Daisey, 2009; Gallagher,

2011). Effective writing teachers share not only the process of writing and

mechanics, but also why they value writing (Augsburger, 1998; Bloom, 1990;

Cremin, 2006; Gallagher, 2011; Morgan, 2010).

<div align="center">Writing – the "Neglected R"</div>

Today, the triad of basic skills taught in school is still known as the 3 Rs –

reading, writing, and arithmetic. While attention and research is lavished upon the

twin pillars of reading and mathematics, writing instruction has been routinely

ignored and "has become the neglected element of American school reform"

(National Commission on Writing, 2003, p. 9). The 1975, Newsweek Magazine cover

story, "Why Johnny Can't Write," made this dismal proclamation to readers (Sheils,

1975). In this article, professors from the nation's Ivy League institutions along

with major employers lamented the marginal writing skills displayed by high school

and college graduates (Sheils, 1975). Despite putting the grim state of writing of

high school graduates in the national spotlight, the warnings remained unheeded.

Twenty years later, MacDonald (1995) revisited employers' concerns about

the lack of competent writing skills for students, graduates of both high school and

college, who were entering the workforce. The author stated that writing instruction

was especially significant in terms of "graduates' job-readiness" (MacDonald, 1995,

p.3). According to MacDonald (1995), although writing instruction had transformed

over the years, one simple fact remained: teachers were still "*not* talking and writing

about . . . how to teach students to compose clear, logical prose" (pp. 3-4, emphasis

in original). This was true even though developing competent and confident writers

has "always been a fundamental aim of education" (National Commission on

Writing, 2003, p. 13)

A few years later, the National Commission on Writing (2003) underscored

the critical value of this third pillar in schools, by calling writing "an overlooked key

to transforming learning in the United States" (p. 13). The Commission concluded:

> Writing is not simply a way for students to demonstrate what they
> know. It is a way to help them understand what they know. At its best,
> writing is learning . . . As a nation, we can barely begin to imagine how
> powerful K – 16 education might be if writing were put in its proper
> focus. Facility with writing opens students up to the pleasure of
> exercising their minds in ways that drilling on facts, details, and
> information never will. More than a way of knowing, writing is an act
> of discovery (National Commission on Writing, 2003, pp. 13-14).

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, which offered the promise of

every child testing at grade level in reading and math by 2014, provided little in

terms of meeting the stated objectives (Garcia & Thornton, 2015). Despite these

grand and wide-sweeping promises of educational reform and achievement, NCLB

simply did not deliver. Moreover, NCLB virtually ignored writing achievement

(Colby & Stapleton, 2006). The impact of the more recently adopted Common Core

State Standards (CCSS), which places a renewed emphasis on writing throughout

the grade levels and across the curriculum, remains to be seen. However, one thing

is certain: writing proficiency no longer remains in the shadows.

Not only did the National Commission on Writing (2003) report sound the

alarm on the dismal state of writing performance, it outlined four specific challenges

to improve writing instruction and student achievement. First, allotting adequate

time for writing instruction was deemed paramount (National Commission on

Writing, 2003). The report noted that developing thoughts on paper, finding a

writing voice, and understanding the differences in audience are concepts that need

time to develop and practice (National Commission on Writing, 2003, p. 20).

According to this report, "these skills cannot be picked up from a few minutes here,

and few minutes there, all stolen from more 'important' subjects" (National

Commission on Writing, 2003, p. 20). Simply stated, writing cannot be effectively

taught or learned in a piecemeal fashion.

Next, the National Commission on Writing (2003) report stated that careful

evaluation of writing is essential, but "a genuine challenge" exists due to both time

constraints and the complexity of writing assessment (National Commission on

Writing, 2003, p. 21). A position statement by The National Council of Teachers of

English (2002) indicated that one piece of work simply cannot paint an accurate and

complete picture of writing proficiency. This challenge related back to the issue of time, both for students to move through the process of "plan[ning], produc[ing], revis[ing], and edit[ing] a single piece of written work" and for teachers to assess the final product (National Commission on Writing, 2003, p. 22).

Given the disparity of evaluation utilized by districts across the country coupled with the subtle layers of intricacy of writing assessment, it was no surprise that the NCW report deemed "writing assessment [is] a genuine challenge" (National Commission on Writing, 2003, p. 21). Another concern arises from the task of evaluating writing – what makes a piece of writing "good?" Writing experts such as Atwell (1998), Calkins (1994), and Spandel (2009) have offered guidance. The "6+1 Traits" model, developed by Spandel (2009), provided a "research-tested" definition of good writing (Nauman, Stirling, & Borthwick, 2011, p. 318). Spandel (2009) stated that writing assessment is most effectively considered through the lens of six traits: ideas, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, voice, and conventions. This provided a clear framework for evaluating student writing.

Prior to Spandel (2009), the notion of what constituted "good" writing was readily understood, yet not easily defined. Most educators could identify a strong piece of student writing, but they could not necessarily explain "why" it was good in the same way (Spandel, 2009). Thanks to the work of Spandel (2009), teachers and students are now able to share this common language, which has proven to be a significant contribution.

Next, the third challenge is technology as it relates to writing instruction. The National Commission on Writing report outlined the positive role that technology has played in writing, suggesting that it is transformative in how students are "generating, organizing, and editing text" (National Commission on Writing, 2003, p. 22). In addition, the report noted that students today are comfortable with such technological ways of producing ideas and text and are "eager to use them" (National Commission on Writing, 2003, p. 21). The challenge, according to the report, lies in making sure these technological resources and adequate training in how to use them are widely available and distributed equitably (National Commission on Writing, 2003).

Finally, the predominant theme relates to underlying challenges of teaching writing (National Commission on Writing, 2003). The National Commission on Writing (2003) report noted the distressing concern that "teachers typically receive little instruction in how to teach writing" (p. 23). Specifically, the report stated:

> No matter how hard they work, these instructors, lacking any real understanding of what good writing is or looks like, are often ill equipped to teach it. Part of the difficulty is the pre-and in-service teacher professional development rarely offers teachers an opportunity to see themselves as writers – to experience the power and satisfaction of writing as a means of learning and self-expression . . . Writing is a prisoner of time in the preparation and continuing professional development of teachers (National Commission on Writing, 2003, p. 23).

Although the National Commission on Writing (2003) report offered constructive suggestions for reform, results of the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) at Grades 8 and 12 (2012) offered little

encouragement that progress has been made in levels of writing proficiency in U.S.

schools. The NAEP (2012) assessment was administered using technology, which

offered a unique glimpse into how students utilize computers in the process of

writing (National Center on Education Statistics, 2012) The 2011 NAEP report

defined "basic" as "partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are

fundamental for proficient work at each grade" (National Center for Education

Statistics, 2012, p. 7). The report defined "proficient" as solid academic

performance" and stated "[s]tudents reaching this level have demonstrated

competency over challenging subject matter" (National Center for Education

Statistics, 2012, p. 7). In grades 8 and 12, only 24% of students were proficient in

writing and 3% were advanced (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012, p. 1).

Nearly 75% of students at these grade levels are at either basic or below writing

abilities (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012, p. 1).

<div align="center">Writing Instruction in Teacher Education Programs</div>

The vast majority of preservice teachers receive more training in reading

principles and pedagogy than in writing instruction (Hall & Grisham-Brown, 2014;

Norman & Spencer, 2005). Teacher education programs throughout the country

vary dramatically, not only in the amount of writing required of preservice teachers,

but in the requirement of a standalone course in writing theory and practice

(Chambless & Bass, 2010; Daisey, 2009; Tulley 2013). Most training programs do

not require a writing course for graduation, nor do teacher certifications tend to require it (Norman & Spencer, 2005).

However, the research is unequivocal: the only way to improve writing skills at any level is through writing regularly (Colby & Stapleton, 2006). This should come as no surprise since the task of learning to write requires being actively engaged in the process of writing (Bratcher & Stroble, 1994; Colby & Stapleton, 2006; Shofel, 1991). However, to be an effective writing teacher demands more. According to Morgan (2010), teachers must be involved in the writing process to fully understand and experience the difficulties of the process, as well as the pleasure writing can bring. Simply stated, in order to teach writing effectively, teachers must be writers themselves (Bratcher & Stroble, 1994; Colby & Stapleton, 2006, Morgan, 2010; National Commission on Writing & Nagin, 2003; Street, 2003, Street & Stang, 2009).

Writing teachers must write so they can help students understand not only the process, but the challenges and struggles (Augsburger, 1998). Further, Augsburger (1998) argued that writing is an "intimate and intimidating task" that includes an underlying element of fear (p. 549). According to Gebhardt (1977), "the importance of *positive instruction by teachers experienced in the agonies of trying to write*" (p. 137, emphasis Gebhardt's). In other words, teachers cannot provide effective writing instruction unless they are writers themselves and have experienced the inherent struggles and fears. Murray (2003) echoed these sentiments:

> Teachers should write so they understand the process of writing from within. They should know the territory intellectually and emotionally: how you have to think to writer, how you feel when writing. Teachers of writing do not have to be great writers, but they should have frequent and recent experience in writing . . . If you experience the despair, the joy, the failure, the success, the work, the fun, the drudgery, the surprise of writing you will be able to understand the composing experiences of your students and therefore help them understand how they are learning to write" (p. 74).

Only by experiencing the ups-and-downs of the writing process first-hand can teachers fully comprehend and empathize with the struggles, frustrations, and joys of their students (Augsburger, 1998; Bloom, 1990; Morgan, 2010).

Moreover, Smith (1983) opined that teachers must view themselves as writers and likened the process of teaching this complex subject to being admitted to a club. According to Smith (1983):

> The first responsibility of teachers is to show children that writing is interesting, possible, and worthwhile. But there is also no way of helping children to write if the teacher does not think writing is interesting, possible, and worthwhile. Teachers who are not members of the club cannot admit children to the club. (p. 566).

In addition, Smith (1983) suggested that as "members of the club," teachers will have experienced the "emotional concomitants of writing and its blocks" (p. 564). Smith's (1983) views square directly with Augsburger (1998), Bloom (1990), and Morgan (2010) who argue that it is difficult, if not impossible, to share this critical underlying knowledge of the process of writing unless it has been experienced first-hand.

Although writing instruction lacks a cohesive approach overall in teacher training, the best practices in teaching writing are clear. In one meta-analysis for the Carnegie Corporation of New York, a broad spectrum of methods of writing instruction were examined in the context of middle school instruction (Graham & Perin, 2007). Graham and Perin (2007) identified the ten best practices of effective writing instruction as (1) time spent on writing instruction, (2) use of different forms of writing, (3) teaching the full spectrum of writing process, (4) engaging students, (5) utilizing different methods of classroom instruction (whole class, small groups, etc.), (6) utilizing modeling techniques, (7) offering support, (8) enthusiasm for writing, (9) having high student expectations, and (10) adapting assignments to meet student needs. While school reform efforts over the years have placed a brighter spotlight on the need for improved writing instruction in the K – 12 classroom, these implications have not filtered into teacher education programs.

Many teachers in the field express concerns that their university training did not prepare them for writing instruction (Chambless & Bass, 1995; Daisey, 2009; Martin & Dismuke, 2015; Morgan, 2010; Tulley 2013). Arguably, this is a direct result of the lack of emphasis on writing pedagogy in teacher training (Hall & Grisham-Brown, 2014). Since the amount of attention given to writing in teacher training programs varies so widely, the perception that new teachers feel unprepared or under-prepared to teach writing is not surprising (Daisey, 2009; Tulley, 2013). Considering most institutions provide writing pedagogy within a reading-intensive methods course, learning opportunities are limited for writing

(Martin & Dismuke, 2015; Morgan, 2010). The development of the National Writing Project sites throughout the country only serves to buttress the assertion that teacher training programs do not provide sufficient instruction in writing nor writing practice to develop competent and confident teachers of writing.

<u>The National Writing Project: Addressing the Concerns</u>

The development and evolution of the National Writing Project offers compelling evidence that teacher education programs are missing the mark when it comes to preparing future writing teachers. In 1974, James Gray founded the Bay Area Writing Project at the University of California, Berkeley for 25 teachers who were interested in improving writing instruction (Whitney & Friedrich, 2013; Whyte, Lazarte, Thompson, Ellis, Muse & Talbot, 2007). The National Writing Project has grown from this modest beginning to a federally funded organization with nearly 200 university-based locations in all 50 states that serves teachers from pre-school to college (National Writing Project, 2015; Whitney & Friedrich, 2013; Whyte, Lazarte, Thompson, Ellis, Muse & Talbot, 2007). Teachers voluntarily participate in a 4-to-5 week intensive professional development workshop which has three components: writing each day, workshopping their own written work, and publication (Whyte, Lazarte, Thompson, Ellis, Muse & Talbot, 2007). After completing the initial phase, participants are then eligible to participate in other National Writing Project workshops (Whyte, Lazarte, Thompson, Ellis, Muse & Talbot, 2007).

The National Writing Project's mission is to focus on "the knowledge, expertise, and leadership of our nation's educators on sustained efforts to improve writing and learning for all learners" (National Writing Project, 2015). The National Writing Project focuses on five "core principles" to improve writing:

1. Writing should not only be assigned but also *taught* K-16,

2. Although there is no one right approach to the teaching of writing, some practices are more effective than others; a research-informed community of practice is positioned well to design and develop comprehensive writing programs,

3. To develop professionally, teachers need frequent opportunities to systematically examine research and practice,

4. Teachers K-16 are the ideal agents of reform, and schools and universities are the ideal partners for investing together in that reform,

5. Teachers of writing must write (National Writing Project, 2015; Whyte, Lazarte, Thompson, Ellis, Muse & Talbot, 2007).

Through sustained, thoughtful, and research-based professional development for educators in P-20, the National Writing Project believes it can achieve the goal of everyone being "an accomplished writer, an engaged learner, and an active participant in a digital, interconnected world" (National Writing Project, 2015). While these are lofty goals to be sure, the need for competent and confident writers in the 21st century mandates that educators fervently pursue it.

The Unique Socialization of Teachers

According to Lortie (1975), individuals are inducted and prepared for entry into career paths through various combinations of education and experience. Teaching requires both general schooling and the "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 1975, p. 61). Unlike other career paths, such as the medical profession that requires significant shadowing of other current practitioners in the profession, students who become teachers have been actively engaged with educators during their academic careers.

> Those who teach have normally had sixteen continuous years of contact with teachers and professors. American young people in fact, see teachers at work much more than they see any other occupational group; we can estimate that the average student has spent 13,000 hours in direct contact with classroom teachers by the time he graduates from high school…The interaction, moreover, is not passive observation - it is usually a relationship which has consequences for the student and thus is invested with affect. (Lortie, 1975, p. 61).

Consequently, teachers throughout students' academic careers have an enormous amount of influence, either directly or indirectly, on teacher candidates. To a strong degree, their influences, both negative and positive, will largely shape how teacher candidates approach subjects in their own classroom.

Situated Learning

Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning provides a helpful framework

and context for understanding writing instruction. Unlike any other profession, the

choice to become a teacher brings with it roughly 12 years of academic experience

with past educators. Whether or not students are aware, they have been engaged in

the "apprenticeship of observation" of the profession over the lifespan of their

school career (Lortie, 1975, p. 1). This influence, both direct and indirect, plays a key

role in the attitudes and beliefs students hold about particular subjects and learning

as well as the way they will ultimately approach teaching it. Of course, the effects

may have been positive, negative, or some combination of the two.

Lave and Wenger (1991) offered a different perspective on the notion

of apprenticeships which has been a part of learning, both historically and in

contemporary society (p. 63). Learning, as a social practice, is a part of all

activities (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Although learning occurs regarding

"specific activities," it also relates to "social communities" (Lave & Wenger,

1991, p. 53).

By participating in learning experiences, students master knowledge

and join communities of practice through a process known as "legitimate

peripheral participation"(LPP) (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 29). LLP described

the way that new members of the group interact with established

practitioners (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Participation is "based on situated

negotiation and renegotiation of meaning in the world" (Lave & Wenger,

1991, p. 51). In addition, LLP explained how new participants become fully integrated into the community of practice and acquire new knowledge (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Lave and Wenger's (1991) notions of situated learning conflate with Lortie's (1975) observations of a teacher candidates' apprenticeship within the profession. Preservice teachers have directly observed teachers in their past classroom experiences. Regardless of the subject area, students experienced a subtle, nuanced interaction at play during instruction. Students in the classroom were unwittingly learning how teachers teach. Lortie (1975) first explained the notion of the "apprenticeship of observation" as a way of learning how to teach (p. 61). Likewise, Lave and Wenger (1991) later observed that "*participation* [is] a way of learning – of both absorbing and being absorbed in – the 'culture of practice'" (p. 95, emphasis Lave & Wenger's).

In the context of writing instruction, this apprenticeship and community of practice, knowingly or unknowingly, invites students to assimilate their mentors' attitudes and beliefs (Lave & Wenger, 1991, Lortie, 1975). Teachers' attitudes and beliefs about writing play a distinct role in the development of how a student feels about the process and practice of the craft (Brooks, 2007; Graves, 1990; Daisey, 2009; Street & Stang, 2009). These collective experiences, which may have been positive, negative, or indifferent, ultimately shape a preservice teacher's thoughts about writing (Hall & Grisham-Brown, 2014). As Greenleaf, Jimenez, & Roller (2002)

so aptly stated: "teachers don't just appear out of thin air. They are the products – as well as active agents – of the worlds from which they came" (p. 487).

When students enter the university, the attitudes and beliefs about writing that were formed throughout their academic careers follow them (Florio-Ruane & Lensmire, 1990; Lortie, 1975). They will have a direct impact on how future teachers approach writing instruction (Dart, Bouton-Lewis, Brownless, & McCrindle, 1998; Whitney & Friedrich, 2013). These thoughts will be a part of every instructional decision (Lortie, 1975).

Role of Attitude in Writing

Through this community of practice, as described by both Lortie (1975) and Lave and Wenger (1991), preservice teachers necessarily assimilate their mentors' attitudes about classroom subjects. Teachers' attitudes toward writing play a key role in developing a child's attitudes about reading and writing (Brooks, 2007; Graves, 1994; Daisey, 2009, Street & Stang, 2009). According to Brooks (2007), "students are more likely to become successful, enthusiastic, and engaged readers and writers when they learn from and are among teachers who display the same traits" (p. 177). Not only does effective writing instruction require a thorough knowledge of English language conventions, it demands confident teachers (Graham, Harris, Fink, & MacArthur, 2001). If teachers are to serve as mentors in the writing process, it follows that they must be comfortable in this role (Everson,

1991). Consequently, the attitudes and beliefs that will ultimately guide and shape the confidence levels of future teachers are worthy of in-depth examination.

<u>Development of Writing Attitudes and Beliefs</u>

As students enter the university setting, they bring with them roughly eighteen years of life experiences that molded and shaped their academic self-concept and self-efficacy beliefs (Lortie, 1975; Parajes, 2003; Rosen, Glennie, Dalton, Lennon, & Bozick, 2010; Shofel, 1991). Although students may lack sophistication in their understanding, they also grasp basic concepts of teaching and learning based on their prior school experience (Dart, Bouton-Lewis, Brownlee & McCrindle, 1998; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Lortie, 1975; Martin & Dismuke, 2015; Parajes, 2003). Martin and Dismuke (2015) suggested that these previous experiences can create unique challenges for teacher educators in that the attitudes and beliefs students bring to their programs may be deeply embedded. Greenleaf, Jimenez, and Roller (2002) stated it succinctly: "teachers don't just appear out of thin air. They are products – as well as active agents – of the worlds from which they came" (p. 487). Regardless when or how these attitudes and beliefs were formed, the totality of these prior experiences, nonetheless, merges to form the current beliefs that preservice teachers will carry into their future classrooms (Morgan, 2010; Street, 2003; Street & Stang, 2009).

Norman and Spencer (2005) examined responses from 59 preservice teachers regarding individuals who played a role in the development of their

identity as writers. In this study, 80% stated that teachers had the greatest influence

(Norman & Spencer, 2005). Out of that group, the overwhelming majority found an

elementary teacher to have the most powerful impact on his or her writing ability

and confidence (Norman & Spencer, 2005). Respondents described their teachers as

"enthusiastic, supportive, and encouraging" (Norman & Spencer, 2005, p. 30).

Providing opportunities for individual choice of relevant and meaningful writing

topics and journal writing were cited by students as influential (Norman & Spencer,

2005). In contrast, teachers who focused on "conventions rather than content" had a

negative impact on attitudes (Norman & Spencer, 2005, p. 31).

Likewise, feedback from teachers played a distinct role in attitude

development (Norman & Spencer, 2005). However, the perceptions of feedback

depended, in part, upon a student's mindset about writing. Norman and Spencer

(2005) found that students who considered writing an innate ability did not view

"corrective feedback in a positive light" (p. 34). In contrast, Norman and Spencer

(2005) found that students who perceived writing ability as flexible believed

feedback and encouragement from their professor helped them improve their

writing skills. This finding is consistent with Dweck's (2006) notion of growth

mindset.

Street and Stang (2009) examined the development of self-confidence in

writing of 25 teachers in the field. An overwhelming majority, 80%, indicated that

prior teachers and school experiences had a direct impact of their view of self-as-

writer (Street & Stang, 2009). Notably, the experiences of the teachers who lacked

self-confidence reflected recollections of "criticism, harshness, and resentment"

(Street & Stang, 2009, p. 84). The researchers found these negative experiences had

a "lasting effect" that continued into adulthood (Street & Stang, 2009, p. 85). Street &

Stang (2009) stated that the "collective experiences with school-based writing and

the disturbing consistency among the participants regarding their negative school

memories cannot go unstated" (p. 85). Consequently, teacher educators must

acknowledge and have an awareness of the experiences that shape the attitudes and

beliefs preservice teachers bring to their programs.

Role of Self-Efficacy in Attitudes and Beliefs about Writing

Self-efficacy is the belief system that an individual perceives as true

regarding his or her ability to navigate a particular task (Pajares, 2003; Zimmerman,

Morgan & Kidder-Brown 2014). According to Schunk (2012), self-efficacy is defined

as "personal beliefs about one's capabilities to learn or perform actions at a

designated level" (p. 146). Beswick (2006) explained that beliefs are "anything a

person regards as true" (p. 37). Bandura (1977) stated that self-efficacy beliefs can

predict behavior. In contrast, attitudes are "a positive or negative assessment of a

psychological object" (Beswick, 2006, p. 37). Although attitudes arise from beliefs,

there is "not a one-to-one correspondence between" them (Beswick, 2006, p. 37).

While beliefs are formed over a period of time and as the amalgam of a

myriad of experiences, they are ultimately responsible for how well an individual

believes he or she will be able to complete a given task (Bandura, 1977; Fishbein &

Ajzen, 1975; Zimmerman, Morgan & Kidder-Brown, 2014). Self-efficacy specifically refers to the beliefs or perceptions regarding the capability to complete a task rather than having the skills to correctly do so (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Schunk, 2012). The level of skill is irrelevant in terms of self-efficacy; in contrast, what is relevant is the belief regarding the capability (Bandura, 1997; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Notably, self-efficacy is not consistent across a spectrum of tasks (Zimmerman, Morgan, & Kidder-Brown, 2014). Instead, self-efficacy beliefs are "task specific and contextual in that one's self-efficacy can vary across the variety of tasks and circumstances they may encounter" (Zimmerman, Morgan, & Kidder-Brown, 2014, p. 143). For example, a student may consider reading and writing easy, but believe she is not strong in math. Likewise, a student may feel confident in math and science, yet believe his writing skills are poor.

Information about a person's self-efficacy beliefs can be discerned from four sources (Parajes, 2003). According to Parajes (2003), the most important source is from the "interpreted result of one's performance, or mastery experience (p. 140). Successfully completing a task increases self-efficacy, while failing to master a task may diminish it (Parajes, 2003). The next factor which exerts a strong influence on beliefs is observing others performing a task which allows for "social comparisons"(Parajes, 2003, p. 140). In addition, verbal feedback and social cues provide both positive and negative feedback which can impact attitudes and beliefs (Parajes, 2003). Finally, the physical state of the individual, such as being anxious about performance, can shape beliefs (Parajes, 2003).

According to Lavelle (2006), there is a direct correlation between a student's self-efficacy and feelings about writing. With higher levels of self-efficacy, writers are more likely to persist (Bandura, 1977; Brindley & Schneider, 2002; Lavelle, 2006). Self-efficacy is "a particularly powerful construct, as it is one of the few teacher characteristics that reliably predicts teacher practice and student outcomes" (Graham, Harris, Fink & MacArthur, 2009, p. 205). Street and Stang (2009) stated that "teachers' histories "play an important role in their ability – or inability – to use writing with their students" (p. 91).

While a thorough understanding of the intricacies and conventions of the English language is essential for writing teachers, a level of self-confidence is critical to the manner in which writing will be taught (Graham, Harris, Fink & MacArthur, 2001; Lavelle, 2009). Although a small number of studies explored self-efficacy in the context of math and science courses for preservice teachers, the intersection of self-efficacy beliefs and writing has been largely overlooked by researchers in teacher education (Graham, Harris, Fink, & MacArthur, 2001). Likewise, an even smaller number of studies have examined teacher perceptions about their own writing ability (Lavelle, 2009).

<center>Preservice Teachers' Attitudes and Beliefs about Writing</center>

Teacher attitudes play a role in every facet of the curriculum. In fact, teacher attitudes and beliefs about subject matter pervade all areas of decision regarding classroom practices and pedagogy (Dart, Bouton-Lewis, Brownlee & McCrindle,

1998). According to Dart, Bouton-Lewis, et al (1998) teacher attitudes have a direct impact on classroom practices and teaching pedagogy. McCarthey and Mkhize (2013) stated that these attitudes influence a teacher's approach to writing instruction. Street and Stang (2009) agreed that a teacher's background and experience with writing will play a significant role in his or her approach to teaching. Some of these beliefs will have a positive influence while others may present obstacles to teaching and learning. In addition to background, the level of "relational trust" fostered by the teacher will have a critical impact on student performance (Palmer, 2007, p. 28).

Research demonstrates that in order to teach writing effectively, teachers must be writers themselves (Draper, Barksdale-Ladd, & Radencich, 2000; Hollingsworth, 1988). Draper, Barksdale-Ladd, and Radencich (2000) cautioned teacher educators to avoid the assumption that preservice teachers actually write or enjoy writing. Further, these researchers emphatically stated: "we do not believe that teachers who dislike reading and writing can effectively foster the love of reading and writing in the children they teach" (Draper, Barksdale-Ladd, & Radencich, 2000, p. 187.)

In Norman and Spencer's (2005) study, 91% of the preservice teachers viewed writing as a trait that was "classified as either fixed – writing is a gift of talent one either has or doesn't have – or malleable – writing is a craft that can be improved with instruction and corrective feedback" (p. 34). This aligns with Dweck's (2006) views on fixed and growth mindset.

Street (2003) examined how pre-service teachers' attitudes about writing influence how they teach writing. Self-confidence in writing is absolutely critical (Street, 2003). Self-confidence, or lack thereof, informs the choice of activities, level of effort demonstrated, and persistence with challenging tasks (p. 34-35). According to Street (2003), understanding a teacher's level of self-confidence in writing is essential in fostering improvement in both writing and instruction.

Students whose attitudes and beliefs were shaped by successful experiences with writing will generally have more positive attitudes toward writing (Chambless & Bass, 1995; Colby & Stapleton, 2006). This confidence in writing will inform the approach to writing instruction (Colby & Stapleton, 2006, p. 354). To become confident and effective writers, teachers must become comfortable with the concept of writing, the process of writing, and be writers themselves (Bratcher & Stroble, 1994).

However, not all students have had positive experiences with writing. This will be reflected in students' attitudes and beliefs. Accordingly, teacher education programs must be prepared to address students with varied writing abilities and attitudes and beliefs about writing. Teacher training programs must recognize that students' past experience with writing dramatically influences how they will approach writing instruction (Street & Stang, 2009). Street (2003) stated that writing attitudes can be changed by courses that foster positive experiences and outcomes with writing.

Chapter Summary

Preservice teachers bring an amalgam of experiences, both positive and negative, that collectively shape their attitudes and beliefs about writing (Hall & Grisham-Brown, 2014). Since this will form the underlying approach to instruction, it is essential for preservice teachers to acknowledge these "deeply held assumptions" about writing (Draper, Barksdale-Ladd, & Radencich, 2000, p. 187). This is especially critical since these attitudes and beliefs will play a direct role in the way these preservice teachers value writing instruction and approach pedagogy in their future classrooms (Hall & Grisham-Brown, 2011). Hall and Grisham-Brown (2011) stated that these beliefs are not necessarily static and fixed. As a result, through guidance in teacher education programs, these attitudes and beliefs may be changed over time into new, more positive attitudes about writing (Hall & Grisham-Brown, 2011).

Hawkins and Razali (2012) stated that our writing history "influences not only the practice [of writing] itself, but the ways in which we each engage with and enact these practices in our classrooms" (p. 305). By examining one's history with writing, preservice teachers are able to "step back and see [themselves] and [their] teaching as residing within a larger story (Hawkins & Razali, 2012, p. 305). Norman and Spencer (2005) agreed that self-examination is critical to the process of understanding current attitudes and beliefs about writing, but also to change the trajectory of future ones. In fact, this element of reflection is promising for teacher education programs to foster a culture of change in beliefs and attitudes about

writing (Norman & Spencer, 2005). Stang and Street (2011) contended that these

writing histories "provide a place for teachers to grow" (p. 40). This further

underscores not only the critical role that writing histories play in student attitudes

and beliefs, but in the impact that teacher education programs can have in reshaping

them.

CHAPTER THREE - METHODOLOGY

Basically, if you want to become a good writer you need to do three things. Read a lot, listen well and deeply, and write a lot (Goldberg, 1986, pp. 53-54)

This qualitative study examined the writing attitudes and beliefs of seven preservice teachers. The purpose of this study was to understand how preservice teachers view and practice the writing process, to identify those experiences that shaped those attitudes and beliefs, and to understand how their views of the process inform their thinking about teaching writing.

This study took place during one semester in a writing-intensive English Language Arts (ELA) course prior to participants' student teaching experience. To explore and understand the factors that shaped the participants' attitudes and beliefs about writing, multiple sources of data were collected including, pre-and post-course Writing Apprehension Test (WAT) scores, a questionnaire, two in-depth semi-structured interviews, a focus group, class observations, journals entries, GPA, ACT or SAT scores, WRIT 101 grades, and work samples.

A qualitative approach was used because this allows for an "interpretive naturalistic approach to the world" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 4). Patton (2002) explained qualitative research gives a "holistic perspective" to the problem to be examined (p. 76). According to Leedy and Ormond (2005), qualitative research provides the opportunity to examine real-world "phenomena in all their complexity" (p. 133). Denzin and Lincoln (2008) described qualitative research as a "situated activity that locates the observer in the world" (p. 4). Considering questions through

a qualitative lens allows the researcher to "study things in their natural setting[s], attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings that people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 4). This approach offers the researcher the opportunity to engage in "a complex description and interpretation of the problem" (Creswell, 2013, p. 44). Furthermore, a qualitative approach permits data collection through multiple avenues that develop a rich and in-depth understanding of the participants, their perspectives, and how they developed.

Denzin and Lincoln (2008) likened the qualitative researcher to a "quilt maker" (p. 5). By adopting this more flexible and fluid approach of making connections of meaning, the researcher is able to "invent, or piece together, new tools or techniques" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 5). With a qualitative design, the researcher has the opportunity to actively seek connections between seemingly disparate pieces of information in an effort to discern meaning. Qualitative research tools also offer the freedom to stitch together multiple sources of information and perspectives, the very fabric of research, into a final form that brings forth a rich tapestry of meaning and understanding.

Moreover, employing qualitative methods honors "the voices of the participants" (Creswell, 2013, p. 44). Through the interview process, valuable insight into the participants' "interior experiences" is gleaned (Weiss, 1994, p. 1). According to Weiss (1994), a qualitative approach provides the opportunity to understand "how events affected their thoughts and feelings" as well as "what people perceive[d] and how they interpret[ed] their perceptions." (p. 1). By

interviewing participants, the researcher gains a deep understanding of the factors that shape their viewpoints (Weiss, 1994). The interview process offers a unique window of understanding into their varied and complex interior stories.

By examining multiple layers of data holistically, the researcher has an avenue to account for the multi-faceted interplay of factors that shape "situations, settings, processes, relationships, systems, or people" (Leedy & Ormond, 2005, p. 134). This provides the opportunity to dig deeply and unearth vast sources of information in order to build "rich data" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 126). By analyzing numerous sources of qualitative data, the researcher develops a rich and multi-dimensional portrait of each participants' inner-landscape.

<u>Case Study Research Design</u>

The nature of this research was well-suited for a case study design. According to Creswell (2013), the case study design allows the researcher to "explore[s] a real-life, contemporary . . . case over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information" (p. 97). Creswell (2013) suggests a case study is appropriate when there are "clearly identifiable cases with boundaries" and a goal to provide and "in-depth understanding of the cases" (p.100). According to Stake (1995), the goal of the case study goes beyond mere understanding; the objective is to "appreciate the uniqueness and complexity of the case, its embeddedness and interaction with its contexts" (p. 16). Yin (1994) explained that case studies may be "explanatory, exploratory, or descriptive" (p. 1).

This inquiry was defined by the parameters of specific time and place, or a "bounded" case study by examining students in one writing-intensive ELA course throughout a single semester (Creswell, 2013, p. 97). The bounded case study draws "attention to [the case] as an object, rather than a process" (Stake, 1995, p. 2). The data collected during that defined time period gives an in-depth understanding of the issues explored (Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994).

This collective case study examined seven students within one writing-intensive ELA course during one semester. A collective case study examines multiple participants to ascertain the "important coordination between the individual studies" (Stake, 1995, pp. 3-4). A case study is "not sampling research;" instead, the objective is to "maximize what we can learn" (Stake, 1995, p. 4). Case studies may be "intrinsic," when a researcher seeks to understand a particular case, or "instrumental," with a goal of understanding something beyond a specific case (Stake, 1995, p. 3). Stake (1995) acknowledged that given the nature of the research design, "not all cases may work out well" (p. 7). Nonetheless, a case is a "specific, a complex, functioning thing" (Stake, 1995, p. 2). This study is instrumental in seeking to understand the impact of attitudes and beliefs about writing on preservice teachers' future classrooms.

With a case study approach, the "researcher is a key instrument" (Creswell, 2013, p. 45). By placing myself in close context to the participants, in the methods class and by interviewing participants over the course of the semester, I had the ability to carefully evaluate and consider the information gleaned and formulate

patterns of meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Leedy & Ormond, 2005). Through multiple in-depth interviews with participants, conducting a focus group, and visiting the methods course each class period, I situated myself in the "activity that locates the observer in the world" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

Social Constructivism

A social constructivism theoretical framework perspective provided the framework for this study. According to Creswell (2013), the goal of social constructivism is to understand the world and "develop subjective meanings of [the participants'] experiences" (p. 24). Through this framework, the researcher examines the problem through a wide lens to understand and explore complex patterns of experience. According to Patton (2002), social constructivism explores what is known about reality rather than "constructing reality" (p. 96). The researcher gathers data through open-ended questions that are developed to be general in nature to allow participants to "construct the meaning of the situation" (Creswell, 2013, p. 25). The social constructivism framework guided the development of inquiry used in the questionnaire, the interviews, and the focus group. In addition, this framework guided the creation of the writing memories matrix. Through multiple lines of inquiry, participants described the attitudes and beliefs they have constructed their perceptions about writing, explored the forces which the participants believe shaped them over time, and how those views will inform their approach to writing instruction.

Constructivism asserts that humans understand and create their perceptions of reality and the world. However, it is important to note that constructivism is regarding the "construct[ion] of knowledge about reality, not constructing reality itself" (Patton, 2001, p. 96). According to Patton (2001), human perception is the result of being "'made up' and shaped by cultural and linguistic constructs" (p. 96). Newell, Koukis, and Boster (2007) state that the totality of circumstances and experiences intersect to form perceptions of reality. Rather than taking an exclusionary perspective, the constructionist approach examines the sum total of experiences which combine to define perceptions (Newell, Koukis, & Boster, 2007).

<u>Background of the Researcher My Writing History</u>

In order to fully discuss my writing history, I must first address my lifelong relationship with reading. One of my earliest and most fond memories is reading. My stay-at-home mother read to me daily and as much as I requested. My mother laughs when she recalls finishing a book as I sat on her lap. "Again!" I would chant and clap my hands until she started reading to me.

Although my parents were not college graduates, they fully understood the importance of education and the power of reading. But in our blue-collar family, money was scarce and purchasing books would have been a luxury beyond our budget. Yet my parents were firmly committed to exposing me to the printed word and reading regardless of our financial state. As a result, our Friday night outings revolved around visiting the Shelby Park Library. I remember the thrill of walking

hand-in-hand with my mother up the steps to the beautiful Carnegie building, knowing that on the other side of those enormous wooden doors was a new world, a world of books.

When we entered, the librarians called me by name. While they would strictly enforce the check-out limit with other patrons, they would bend the rules for me. I'd leave each Friday night with my armload of books; I was giddy knowing these books were mine – at least for the week. As I grew older, my feelings blossomed into viewing books as possibilities. Through them, I could be anyone, do anything, and go anywhere.

That sentiment about books permeates my life to this very day. I cannot imagine a day without reading: for information, for escape, or for sheer pleasure. A stack of possibilities always sits by my bedside, beckoning me. My life is enriched on a daily basis, thanks to my love of the printed word. I owe my parents a debt of gratitude that can never be repaid for creating a book-filled home (thanks to the public library) fostering enthusiasm for reading, and setting the stage for a lifelong joy of learning.

If you asked my mother about my reading habits, she would tell you it has been a lifelong pursuit. But if you asked her about my writing, she would say that I have been trying to write since I could hold one of those chubby, first-grade pencils. While I do not have my mother's recollections of my enthusiastic mark making, I have a vivid memory of the first time I received attention for my writing. In second grade, Mrs. Kemper asked us to write a story about our family. At that time, I was

lobbying for not just a sibling, but specifically a baby sister. I wrote a somewhat embellished tale that I proudly read aloud. I recall Mrs. Kemper's expression as my story entitled, "The Argument," unfolded. After hearing my tale of woe, my seven-year-old mind envisioned that she would call my parents to tell them they were being unfair to their only daughter. Indeed, Mrs. Kemper did call my house. However, the end result was not the one I expected.

While her call was mainly to let my parents know that their daughter was spinning yarns in front of the class, the other message was more subtle, yet incredibly significant to me. As I nervously watched my mother's reaction to Mrs. Kemper's call, at that moment I realized an important truth about writing – words could influence, persuade, and convince. My words. Although I was only a second grader, I fundamentally understood a greater message. Writing was, in essence, power.

Throughout elementary school, teachers praised my writing. Their positive feedback fueled my desire to excel and inspired me to engage in composition outside of school. Each day, I faithfully recorded my innermost secrets, dreams, and desires in my swirly, dramatic handwriting in a series of diaries that each locked with a tiny gold key. During my junior high years, I wrote constantly and secretly began work on a novel. Countless hours were spent developing my characters, outlining the plot, and creating scenes that, at least in my young mind, had the perfect balance of literary tension. As I wrote and re-wrote my story in longhand on yellow legal pads, I decided that I was going to become a writer.

One day, I summoned the courage to announce my career aspirations to my parents. My mother, who had just graduated college with a degree in education, was quick to share her opinion about my vocational choice. "Choose a real job," she advised. "You can write on the side." My father, who earned a living as a shift-worker at an oil refinery, agreed. "You'll never making a living [as a writer]," he cautioned. In retrospect, I know they were well-meaning and quite correct in their commentary. However, those words spoken with the best of intentions extinguished the flames that for so long had fueled my love of writing. I vividly recall sulking up the steps to my room, gathering the stacks of yellow paper that contained my carefully penned words and stuffing them in the trash can. For the next thirteen years, I wrote nothing more than what was required of me.

After graduating from college and teaching several years, I joined the Peace Corps. Before I left, a friend gave me a gift -- one that changed my life -- a beautifully bound travel journal. "You need to write about your experience," she advised. "You think you'll remember, but you won't." I thanked her for the thoughtful gift and even packed it my suitcase. But I was certain, for many reasons, that I wouldn't be using it. First, the journal was so lovely, I couldn't envision marring the pages with my mundane thoughts. Second, and more importantly, due to my parents' comments about becoming a writer, I was terrified to commit my words to paper. But I took a leap and began to record my observations and reflections about life as a Peace Corps volunteer. Twenty-seven years and 45 journals later, I rarely miss a day of putting pen to paper.

Upon returning from my Peace Corps adventure with my love of composition firmly intact once again, I entered law school. It was there where my passion for writing was taken to a new level through the lens of legal writing and research. In my doctoral program, I am now consumed with a passion for research about writing. It has propelled me in my quest for knowledge and understanding the attitudes and beliefs about writing that preservice teachers will ultimately take into the classroom. Knowing that not everyone loves writing in the way that I do, I seek to understand how the attitudes and beliefs that preservice teachers have about writing will influence how they teach this absolutely critical skill in the future.

<u>My Teaching History</u>

After graduating from college, my teaching positions were at inner-city elementary and middle schools. While teaching is critical at any age, the middle school placement had additional challenges: How to make education matter and motivate students to stay in school. Many had been held back, experienced failure, or lived in conditions that I could not have imagined. Although our household could afford just the essentials – no extras - I had a stable home life and felt loved. But seeing my students having to deal with hunger, not knowing where they would sleep that night, or family involvement in the legal system, it was difficult to make school and homework a priority in their lives. Moreover, my students and their families often failed to see the importance of an education or had less-than-positive experiences dealing with the educational system, administration, and teachers.

Others viewed schooling as something to tolerate until they reached the age where

they could simply drop out. I knew these students were at high risk of continuing

the path of their parents, entering a system that had taught them to distrust the

establishment. For most, it was a system that had failed them repeatedly. Believing

that education could provide a way out of poverty, I wanted to create an

environment that would encourage them to remain in school. Through writing, my

students could tell their stories and let their voices be heard.

The language arts book mandated by the district contained both writing and

grammar instruction presented in a manner that my students found dry and utterly

irrelevant. Thus, my goal became to find a way to make writing meaningful. At that

time during the early 1980s, rap music was gaining popularity. My students listened

to artists such as L. L. Cool J., Run D.M.C., and The Sugar Hill Gang. Although the beat

of the tunes that echoed from students' boom boxes was engaging, through

conversations with my students, I discovered that the words of the songs resonated

deeply with them, conveying eloquently what they were feeling and

experiencing. Listening to their discussions about the lyrics gave me the idea to

have students write their own rap songs. As a class, we would analyze the words of

their favorite songs examining word choice, structure, and content. Then the

students worked in pairs to write their own rap songs that they would share with

the class on Thursday afternoon. If the students actively participated during the

week and presented their work to their classmates, on Friday students could bring

in a boom box and listen to music. Students enthusiastically embraced this

approach to writing throughout the year and did not balk as much at other written assignments which were introduced. While I am confident their attitudes about writing improved dramatically in my class, I am uncertain as to whether this approach carried over to other content areas or gave them any motivation to continue their education.

As a Peace Corps volunteer with previous classroom experience, I was assigned to teach methods courses at Western Samoa Teacher's College, the only teacher preparation program in the country. While instruction in English was a challenge, was that education is a universal language. Students at the college wanted to effectively find ways to engage their pupils. Given the lack of supplies that was common throughout the school in the country, these courses were especially important to help them find creative and low-cost ways to deliver content.

Although my legal career fell outside the contours of the classroom, it was remarkable how much teaching was a part of my life in the law. As an attorney, it was critical to have the skills to distill the complexities of the law both in writing and speaking when conveying information to a client. As a litigator in the courtroom, it was my task to educate the jury about the case. Clearly conveying information, both verbally and in writing, was essential. These, too, are skills which are at the heart of being a teacher.

After moving to a university town, I had the opportunity to teach First-Year Seminar courses for incoming freshmen. The seminar course was not only designed

to help students connect with their instructor and peers, but also to foster critical thinking, discussion, and writing. Grading their first written assignment was a sobering experience. It was astonishing how vastly the students' writing abilities varied. While some students were undoubtedly capable of college-level writing, others struggled to write a thesis statement. Shockingly, some students' papers consistently lacked noun-verb agreement. Other students wrote in a simplistic manner that suggested that they suffered extreme word poverty or never had instruction regarding the importance of word choice. Some turned in what could only be described as a first draft. Clearly these individuals had never been taught revision. I was alarmed. Although it was not part of the formal curriculum, nor was it a writing class, I incorporated writing lessons each week. I bought every student in my class a spiral notebook. After students conveniently "forgot" their notebooks, I decided to keep the notebooks myself and bring them to class each day. My firm belief was that the more students wrote, the better their work would become. While they grumbled and groaned early in the semester, they engaged in daily writing practice. Not only did this help improve the skills of the struggling writers in class, it made stronger writers even better.

After entering my doctoral program in curriculum and instruction, writing and the writing process quickly emerged to the forefront of my interest areas. While teaching a seminar section for education students, and later completing a teaching internship with a senior professor in an early learning-to-read course, I discovered a similar trend. As writing was discussed, students would freely admit their

apprehensions. "I'm not a very good writer," was frequently their lament. Others

expressed open hostility about writing: "I hate writing," "It's a chore," and "Writing

is so hard." After listening to preservice students' comments, one question emerged

again and again in my mind – what impact will these attitudes have on their ability

to teach writing in the K-8 classroom? I wondered if and how their less-than-

positive mindsets would impact preservice teachers' approach to writing

instruction in their future classroom.

<u>Role of the Researcher</u>

My experience as a writer, professionally and personally, has shaped the

formulation and refinement of my research interests in my doctoral program. My

lifelong writing experiences made it virtually impossible to separate myself from the

topic. However, this approach permitted me to examine my thoughts, beliefs, and

motivations as the researcher (Creswell, 2013). Without question, by situating

myself in the research, I brought my conscious or unconscious views into the

research process (Maxwell, 2013). As a result, I could not extricate myself from my

perceptions of the research questions. However, by identifying, acknowledging, and

examining these views, I was better prepared to address my subjectivity and make

choices that would avoid unwittingly introducing bias.

To reflect upon my experiences, I drafted a "researcher identity memo" prior

to beginning my research (Maxwell, 2013, p. 34). Through this memo, I examined

"my goals, experiences, assumptions, feelings, and values as they relate[d] to [my]

research" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 34). Moreover, this memo allowed me to consider any concerns that interjecting my identity in the study might create (Maxwell, 2013; Silverman, 2005). In this way, I had the opportunity to reflect and make research decisions that were mindful of the identity that I necessarily brought to my study.

Likewise, the researcher identity memo was also used to explore possible bias regarding my committee chair, who allowed me to conduct my research within her classroom. It was critical to maintain an awareness of any influence this relationship might have on my research or interpretation of the data (Maxwell, 2013). By regularly engaging in mindful reflection, I made every effort to avoid any possible conflicts or bias. I revisited my researcher identity memo at various mileposts along the way, such as the coding and interpretation of the data. I believe my background in the law also gave me a unique perspective that allowed me to approach situations in my study from an objective and neutral stance. By having legal experience and utilizing those skills, I believe I had an added layer of protection in guarding against bias.

In addition to my researcher identity memo, I kept detailed field notes of my class observations. Other than introducing my research to students on the first day of class, I had no student interaction with the class as a whole. My role during the class observations was that strictly as an observer. During those observations, I took field notes (Maxwell, 2013). The field notes served three distinct purposes. First, the notes documented my observations as they happened. Next, I used this journal as a place to reflect upon not only the observations, but also my research as

it unfolded. Finally, my notes served as another layer of reflection to guard against researcher bias.

To understand my participants' responses in the context of the social constructivism framework, I utilized member checking and respondent validation. During the interviews, I paraphrased student responses at regular intervals to derive their subjective meaning (Creswell, 2013). By doing so, I could take immediate steps to correct my understanding and adjust my questions accordingly. Similarly, I endeavored to ask open-ended questions that would prevent leading the participant to a desired response. While the semi-structured interview questions were developed beforehand with this goal in mind, follow-up questions necessarily arise that were not previously scripted. I then had the opportunity to reflect upon the participant responses, my follow-up questions, and my interpretation of answers in my research journal and by revisiting my identity memo.

<u>Site Selection</u>

My research took place at one mid-sized, research institution in the Rocky Mountain west. The enrollment at this institution in Spring 2016 was 14,631 with 12,706 undergraduates (T. Dysart, personal communication, April 6, 2016). The distribution of the total student population was 6,819 females (47%) and 7,812 males (53%) (T. Dysart, personal communication, April 6, 2016). The ethnicity data for the overall student population is as follows: White (84%), International (5%), Hispanic/Latino (3%), Two races (3%), American Indian/Alaska Native (2%),

Black/African American (1%), Asian (1%), Unknown (1%), Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander (0%) (T. Dysart, personal communication, July 8, 2016). This university is considered a "high research activity" institution by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching offering a range of undergraduate bachelor's degrees and awards 50 or more doctoral degrees each year spanning 15 or more disciplines (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2015). At this school, the Department of Education is housed in the College of Education, Health, and Human Development, the third largest college with nearly 2000 students.

In Spring 2016, there were 402 students listed as elementary education majors which is 3% of the total undergraduate student enrollment at the land-grant institution (T. Dysart, personal communication, April 6, 2016). Of these students, 340 (85%) were females and 62 (15%) were males (T. Dysart, personal communication, April 6, 2016). The ethnicity of students enrolled in the elementary education major are as follows: White (92%), Hispanic/Latino (3%), Two races (1%), American Indian/Alaska Native (1%), Asian (0%), Black/African American (0%) (T. Dysart, personal communication, July 8, 2016). Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to conduct this study was received on December 3, 2015.

Table 1. Enrollment Data by Gender

Status	Enrollment	Female	Male
Total number of students	13,631	6,819 (47%)	7,812 (53%)
Graduate students	1,925	1,034 (54%)	891 (46%)
Undergraduate students	12,706	5,785 (46%)	6,921 (54%)
Elementary education majors	402	340 (85%)	62 (15%)

History of the Teacher Education Program in This Study

The land-grant institution located in the northwest at the heart of this study has a long history of providing teacher education (D. Redburn, personal communication, December 15, 2016). Initially, education coursework focused on agriculture and industrial subjects (D. Redburn, personal communication, December 15, 2016). In 1944, the college formed a department of education with a goal to prepare teachers for junior high and high school classrooms (D. Redburn, personal communication, December 15, 2016). In response to the teacher shortage between 1955-1970, the college responded by expanding the program to include a bachelor's degree for elementary teachers (D. Redburn, personal communication, December 15, 2016). In 1987, the department of education joined forces with another department to form the third largest college at the institution (D. Redburn, personal communication, December 15, 2016). The unified structure of these two departments as one college at this institution remains to this day.

The department of education offers three undergraduate majors: elementary education, K-12 education, and secondary education. Students in the elementary education program, which provides the foundation for certification for K-8 teaching, were the focus of this study. The elementary education program provides general education, which includes the university-wide required WRIT 101 *College Writing*, the Advanced Placement (AP) equivalent, or an ACT English score of 28 or higher, an SAT Critical Writing score of 650 or higher (A. Ellsworth, personal communication, September 14, 2015). Consequently, a student could move forward in the

elementary education program without ever having completed a college-level writing course.

This teacher training program offers methods classes in language arts, math, social studies, science, art, and health across the K-8 grade levels (A. Ellsworth, personal communication, September 14, 2015). Finally, this program requires extensive fieldwork and practicum experiences that are taken in conjunction with the methods courses (A. Ellsworth, personal communication, September 14, 2015). Elementary education students are required to spend four half-days in practicum placement while enrolled in methods courses for Language Arts, Creative Arts, Math, Social Studies, Science, and Health Enhancement (A. Ellsworth, personal communication, September 14, 2015).

Prior to taking any of the methods course work, students are required to complete EDU 382 *Assessment, Curriculum, & Instruction*, a 3-credit course (A. Ellsworth, personal communication, September 14, 2015). To take methods courses for social studies or science, students must have successfully completed identified subject-area prerequisites (A. Ellsworth, personal communication, September 14, 2015). Likewise, math methods students must have completed the three required math courses. Language arts methods students must complete EDU 331 *Lit and Literature for Children*, a three-credit survey of children's literature course (A. Ellsworth, personal communication, September 14, 2015). However, students are not required to complete EDU 330 *Emergent Literacy,* a three-credit learning-to-read course prior to the K-8 language arts methods class (A. Ellsworth, personal

communication, September 14, 2015). This program does not require a course devoted to writing instruction, nor is one currently offered.

<center>History of EDU 330 – *Emergent Literacy*</center>

The foundational learning-to-read and early literacy course in this program is EDU 330 *Emergent Literacy* which is three credits (A. Ellsworth, personal communication, September 14, 2015). However, prior to 2009 this course was EDEL 305 *Principles and Practices of Early Literacy K-3* for four credits (A. Ellsworth, personal communication, July 31, 2016). In 2009, in conjunction with standardizing course numbering within the university system, the decision was made to make all courses in the program three credits (A. Ellsworth, personal communication, July 31, 2016). As a result, elementary education students are only required to take the following courses to fulfill their degree requirements - EDU 330 *Emergent Literacy*, EDU 397 *K-8 Methods: Language Arts*, and EDU 438 *Literacy Assessment, Diagnosis and Instruction* - for a total of nine credits in English Language Arts (A. Ellsworth, personal communication, July 31, 2016).

Today, *Emergent Literacy* introduces students to the rich and complex world of phonics, developmentally appropriate classroom practices for literacy instruction, and translating theory into practice using authentic texts and real-world examples (A. Ellsworth, personal communication, September 14, 2015). In addition, students learn how to assess programming for struggling readers and devise differentiated instructional plans (A. Ellsworth, personal communication,

September 14, 2015). The pre-requisites listed in the course catalogue are EDU 331

Lit and Literature for Children, EDU 382 *Assessment, Curriculum, & Instruction,* and

junior standing (A. Ellsworth, personal communication, September 14, 2015). While

ideally EDU 330 should be taken before EDU 397 *K-8 Methods: Language Arts* to

scaffold the language arts methods course, many students take the courses

concurrently (A. Ellsworth, personal communication, September 14, 2015).

Consequently, these students are at a distinct disadvantage (A. Ellsworth, personal

communication, September 14, 2015).

One writing-specific three-credit course, EDU 263 *Methods of Teaching*

Grammar, was developed to give students a review or foundational skills in

grammar (A. Ellsworth, personal communication, September 14, 2015). Even

though the course was offered, it was not required (A. Ellsworth, personal

communication, September 14, 2015). This course remains listed in the course

catalogue, but has not been offered since 2012 (A. Ellsworth, personal

communication, September 14, 2015).

<u>The Course: EDU 330 - *Emergent Literacy*</u>

Participants were enrolled in one writing-intensive ELA course, EDU 330 -

Emergent Literacy, during the Spring 2016 semester, which ran from January 13

until May 6. There were 35 students enrolled in the class with 30 (85%) females and

5 (15%) males. This is consistent with the overall enrollment of the Department of

Education demographic. The course met on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:40 p.m.

until 2:55 p.m. During the fall semester, two sections are offered. In the spring and

summer, one section is available each term. No writing-specific methods course is

offered or required in the curriculum. Since I completed a teaching internship in this

ELA course as part of my doctoral program in Fall 2014, I requested access to this

course in Spring 2016 to conduct my dissertation research. I chose this course for

my study for three reasons: the professor provides daily, intensive instruction on

writing skills; she has a deep understanding of both the conventions and process of

writing, and she writes for professional and personal reasons.

According to the course catalog, there are three pre-requisites listed: junior

standing; EDU 331, a children's literature course; and EDU 382, an assessment

course. The catalog description of EDU 330 reads as follow: "Current theory

concerning Emergent Literacy and developmentally appropriate classroom

practices. Emphasis is on a balanced approach which includes phonics and other cue

systems, use of authentic children's literature, and use of programmed reading

materials." Writing instruction is incorporated in direct daily instruction, writing

journals, case studies, and other written assignments. The EDU 330 Spring 2016

syllabus is attached as Appendix A.

<div align="center">Participants</div>

During the first week of class, all students enrolled in the course took the

WAT (Daly & Miller, 1975) (Appendix B). The WAT assessment was administered as

part of the quizzes section on the syllabus. On the first day of class, the professor

excused herself from the room near the end of the period. At that time, I introduced

myself and my research project. I explained that I would be observing in the class

each day during the semester. Finally, after I explained the participation

requirements and the time commitment for participants, I advised students that I

would give everyone who completed the study a $25 gift card.

I reviewed and ranked the WAT scores for the entire class (N=35). WAT

scores fall on a continuum from 26, the highest apprehension level, to 130, the

lowest apprehension level. In this class, the score range was 49 – 121 with a median

of 85.30. My original plan was for participants to have higher levels of writing

apprehension as evidenced by a score between 26 and 59, but not higher than the

WAT median score of 78. However, before I started my study I anticipated that I

might be required modify my parameters for several reasons. First, the scores may

not have fallen within my desired range. Next, students who were invited to

participate based on their scores may decline to participate. As a result, I was fully

aware that I might be required to reframe the criteria for my study.

Eleven students had WAT scores that were below the median of 78 as

defined by Daly and Miller (1975). On January 15, 2016, I sent each of these

students an individual email inviting them to participate in my research. Three

students responded affirmatively. Five students declined citing work, school, or

personal reasons. Three students did not respond. On January 17, 2016, I emailed

the next four students who were ranked based on their WAT scores. Two replied

that they did not wish to participate and the other two did not respond. On January

19, 2016, I emailed the remainder of the class seeking participants. Four students responded affirmatively and two students replied that they would be willing to participate if needed. The final four participants had WAT scores ranging from 91 – 113, which indicated lower levels of writing apprehension. Each student chose a pseudonym by which they would be identified in the study.

My original plan for this study was to purposefully select five to seven participants from the initial group (Maxwell, 2013; Patton, 2001). However, this plan assumed that there would be a pool of students that fit the criteria for my study and that they would be willing to participate. According to Stake (1995), "choosing a case may "be no 'choice' at all" (p. 3). While there were 11 students that fell below the median score of 78, only three agreed to be a part of my study. As a result, I had to quickly reframe my study in order to proceed during the Spring 2016 semester. The WAT scores of the new participants gave me the opportunity to understand what factors influenced the attitudes and beliefs of writers across the spectrum, and to examine how these attitudes and beliefs inform both apprehensive and confident writers' approaches to writing instruction. While Stake (1995) stated that different numbers of participants are appropriate for different studies, "balance and variety are important; opportunity to learn is of primary importance" (p. 6).

Table 2. Summary of Participants

Participant	Age	Year	GPA Grade	WRIT 101	ACT English/ Reading Score	WAT #1
Sadie	20	Junior	3.74	A	26/28	49
Sydney	20	Junior	3.3	B	21/20	62
Amber	20	Senior	4.0	Exempt	32/36	64
Kay	21	Senior	3.38	B-	22/25	82
Lily	20	Junior	3.93	A	24/27	93
Gina	32	Senior	3.65	B	Not available	94
Mary	20	Junior	3.94	A	26/25	113

Data Collection

Multiple methods for data collection were used with the participants: WAT scores, a questionnaire, a graphic representation, two semi-structured face-to-face interviews (one at the beginning and the second near the end of the semester), a focus group, class observations, observer field notes, participant work samples, GPA, WRIT 101 grade, and ACT or SAT English/reading scores, and selected writing journal entries.

Table 3. Data Sources

Data Source	
Writing Apprehension Test (WAT) pre- and post-test	(Appendix B)
Questionnaire	(Appendix C)
Two semi-structured interviews	(Interview #1 – Appendix E, Interview #2 – Appendix G)
Graphic representation – Writing memory matrix	(Appendix D)
Class observations	
Field observer notes	
Focus group	(Appendix F)
Student work samples and journal entries	
ACT English/reading score	
GPA and WRIT 101 grade	

<u>Writing Apprehension Test (WAT)</u>

The development of the WAT began with 63 items rated on a five-point Likert scale (Daly & Miller, 1975). Items originally included were modeled based on a previously tested communication apprehension survey (Daly & Miller, 1975). Daly and Miller (1975) grouped the items into categories that explored concerns about "anxiety about writing in general, teacher evaluation of writing, peer evaluation of writing, as well as professional" (p. 245). A factor analysis was conducted on the 164 student responses from undergraduates (Daly & Miller, 1975, p. 245).

The final instrument consisted of 26 statements that participants rank on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Scores range from 26 to 130 with a mean of 78. Scores between 97 and 130 indicate a low level of writing apprehension. Scores between 60 and 96 do not have a significant level of apprehension; however, participants scoring on the outer ranges will experience apprehension levels similar to the neighboring categories. Scores between 26 and 59 suggest high levels of writing apprehension. Lower numbers in any score range suggest greater levels of anxiety (Daly & Miller, 1975).

During the Spring 2016 semester, the WAT was administered on the first day of class and given to me in a sealed envelope. I graded and ranked the WAT scores to determine my initial pool of possible participants. For purposes of the quiz grade points, I advised the professor that all of the students completed the assessment and should be awarded the three points. The WAT score served as the initial screen for

selecting participants. The second WAT was administered only to study participants at the beginning of the final interview.

Questionnaire

Study participants responded in writing to a questionnaire with ten open-ended questions. These questions were designed using the social constructivism framework to glean information about the participants' past experiences with writing and writing teachers throughout their academic careers that may shed light upon their attitudes and beliefs about writing. Questions also asked participants to consider the writing process and major influences. This questionnaire was developed to provide a view into the inner-thoughts of the participants utilizing a social constructivism framework (Creswell, 2013). These questions were tested in a pilot study with junior-standing elementary education students in Spring 2014 and again in Fall 2015. Pilot studies are a useful tool in the clarification of various aspects of design elements (Maxwell, 2013). After reviewing student feedback from the pilot study, I revised each set of questions for clarity. As a result of these two small-scale pilot studies, the questions had been refined to obtain specific information about attitudes and beliefs about writing and the factors that influenced their development.

Before the face-to-face interviews, study participants received a copy of the questions via an email communication and were asked to respond. Once completed, students were asked to email their responses back to me. This approach allowed the participants to have time to engage in a thoughtful, reflective, and unhurried

response. By reviewing their answers prior to our first interview, I could develop follow-up questions for my semi-structured interview. In addition, this questionnaire gave me the opportunity to have an introductory glimpse of each student's writing and thought process about writing.

Semi-Structured Interviews and Graphic Representation

Two semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants, one at the beginning and the second at the end of the semester. According to Weiss (1994), it is preferable to conduct more than one interview with the same participant. The questions were developed using a social constructivism framework. Creswell (2013) states that the interview questions should be framed to elicit more specific and detailed responses rather than generalities. In addition, interviews also provided the opportunity to gain in-depth information that could not be gleaned from observation or other sources (Weiss, 1994).

At the beginning of the first face-to-face interview, participants completed an informal sketch or drawing in a writing memory matrix to represent their recollections about writing from four different time periods in their academic life to facilitate discussion and provide another, non-verbal layer of meaning. This graphic representation element, which was developed to allow the participant to construct meaning from past experiences, was tested in a pilot study in Spring 2014. Student feedback from the pilot study was enthusiastic and indicated this activity was an enjoyable way to begin our face-to-face interview. Students in the pilot study also reported that it helped them feel more relaxed. However, the primary goal of the

writing memories matrix was to allow the participants to utilize a multimodal

expression to promote deeper thinking and engagement with their attitudes and

belief formation. Students affirmatively stated that this activity gave them the

opportunity to reflect upon their writing history in a unique fashion. The data

collected through the questionnaire, the two semi-structured interviews, the writing

memories matrix, and the focus group was self-reported. Follow-up questions at

each stage allowed me to seek clarification, but all answers were based on the

participants' self-perception of beliefs in response to the questions.

Students were offered a choice of location, either on or off-campus for the

interviews. After discussing each student's preference, all of the interviews took

place in my office because it was quiet, comfortable, and convenient. The choice of

location allowed students to speak freely during the interview since it was private.

The first interview took place during the second week of the semester and lasted

approximately one hour for each student. The second took place during the

fourteenth week of the semester lasted less than 45 minutes. Each interview was

audio recorded and transcribed by me. During the interview, I also took notes.

To validate the data, I used member checking or "respondent validation"

(Maxwell, 2013, p. 126). According to Maxwell (2013), this is the "single most

important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what

participants say and do and the perspective they have" (p. 126). During the

interviews, I would periodically summarize the responses and ask if my

understanding was correct. At this juncture, the participant would agree that my

summary was correct, offer additional information to clarify my understanding, or correct any misinterpretations. By having participants engage in frequent and immediate clarification, I was also able to be sure I was not inadvertently interjecting bias into my questions or my interpretation. To further guard against any misconceptions in my interpretation of the data and provide a secondary review, I asked participants to review their transcripts.

<u>Class Observations</u>

According to Creswell (2013), observations provide a "key tool for collecting data in qualitative research" (p. 166). Observations include details about the "physical setting, participants, activities, interactions, conversations, and your own behaviors during the observations" (Creswell, 2013, p. 166). During the spring semester, I attended Emergent Literacy each class period and sat in the back of the room so as not to interfere or be a distraction. I took detailed notes on the writing instruction provided at the beginning of each class. I also noted any reactions, questions, or comments from my study participants. My written observations were recorded during the class period observed. After reviewing my notes each day, I made additional notations to fill in gaps, elaborate, or to reflect.

On the first day, I interacted with the students when I explained my research project. For all remaining class periods, I simply observed the instruction (Creswell, 2013). In that role, I was an "outsider of the group under study, watching and taking field notes from a distance" (Creswell, 2013, p. 167). Although I observed the

writing instruction specifically, I also noted any questions, comments, or concerns from my participants.

<u>Focus Group</u>

The goal of a focus group is to foster dialogue and discussion among participants to learn their thoughts and feelings on a topic (Krueger, 1998; Krueger & Casey, 2000). Since the goal is self-disclosure, it is critical that facilitators create a "comfortable, permissive environment" (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p. 9). Focus groups typically have five to ten participants, which is "small enough for everyone to have an opportunity to share insights and yet large enough to provide diversity of perceptions" (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p. 10). The focus group questions, which were developed using a social constructivism framework, were open-ended and presented in a logical fashion (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p. 12). According to Krueger and Casey (2000), a "questioning route" is the preferred for academic research and was used to develop the questions (p. 43). This method, in contrast to the "interview guide," provided a more complete and sequenced line of inquiry (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p. 43). Questions should be "clear, short, open-ended," "move from general to specific," and "use the time wisely" (Krueger & Casey, 2000, pp. 42-43). Finally, the role of the moderator is to elicit the "feelings, comments, and thought processes of the participants," not to achieve consensus (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p. 12).

The focus group took place the week after the class mid-term examination in a conference room on campus. Six of the seven participants attended. Gina was unable to attend due to family commitments. I specifically chose this week so the

students would not be distracted by exam preparation. I facilitated the focus group, which lasted approximately 90 minutes. The meeting was audio recorded and transcribed by me. During the focus group, I also took notes. Although I created questions to guide the group, many of the student responses elicited additional, tangential information from other participants.

Student Work Samples and Journal Entries

As part of the data collection process, I examined and analyzed exemplars of participants' written work. By doing so, I gained another perspective about the problem being studied (Maxwell, 2013). This approach added a layer of depth through the examination of actual writing samples of both formal and informal work products. In addition, this served as a point of triangulation (Maxwell, 2013).

Throughout the semester, I collected and analyzed participant journal entries. These more informal written pieces offered a glimpse into attitudes, beliefs, and feelings about writing depending upon the prompt. The journal entries were in response to an assigned, weekly prompt, such as a favorite quote, a response to an inspiration short reading in class, or a free write. Responses were handwritten and were typically one to two pages. The journal grades were for completion of the response.

In addition, I collected and analyzed two formal written assignments that were a practical application of the skills learned in class. In these assignments, students assumed the role of the school reading specialist who evaluated and made recommendations for a fictional student. Further, these exemplars allowed me to

observe the participants' writing over the course of the semester. I used a 6+1 traits

analysis to evaluate the assignments (Spandel, 2009).

Prior to the beginning of the semester, the professor and I discussed plans

regarding the collection of student work product during the semester. The journals

were kept in individual notebooks with names on the front cover. Once a week,

students placed their journals in two canvas bags. After class, I took both bags to my

office. I retrieved the participant journals from the bags, made copies, and then

placed them back in the bags in a random fashion. For the case studies, students

placed their work in an envelope. At the end of class, I took the envelope, made

copies of the participants' work, then replaced them arbitrarily. I then returned

them to the professor. After the case studies were graded, I was able to access

participants' grades through the online gradebook. I purposefully collected the work

in this manner to protect the identity of my participants.

Additional Information

In addition, the following quantitative descriptive data was collected for

participants: overall GPA and the WRIT 101 grade. I personally collected this

information from the electronic database. These data points served as another

method of triangulation (Maxwell, 2013). ACT English and Reading scores were

collected if available. The ACT test is a standardized benchmark that measures

academic readiness for college. The reading section tests comprehension and the

English tests usage, mechanics, and rhetoric.

Data Analysis Strategies and Process

In qualitative research, data analysis occurs in three phases. First, the researcher must prepare and organize the data (Creswell, 2013). Next, the researcher determines themes for the data by coding the content (Creswell, 2013). Then the researcher is able to distill the information into conclusions (Creswell, 2013). My data analysis utilized the social constructivism framework.

According to Creswell (2013), the researcher should also describe his or her personal experiences relating to the phenomena being studied (p. 193). The purpose of this step is to "set aside researcher experiences" (Creswell, 2013, p. 193). First, I reviewed my notes taken during the interview for each participant immediately prior to beginning my transcription (Maxwell, 2013). Listening to the interview as I transcribed it added another layer of meaning to my perceptions of the content. After I completed the transcription, I then read the interview as transcribed and made notes on my observations. This allowed me to develop "tentative ideas about the categories and relationships" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 105). Next, I reviewed the questionnaire responses, the graphic representation, and the observation notes, and journal entries and coded the data. I completed the same procedure for each participant. In case studies, Creswell (2013) stated an analysis contains in-depth descriptions through which patterns will emerge.

Next, I coded the data by compiling a list of significant statements from the interviews, questionnaire responses, and the drawings to describe the participants' attitudes and beliefs about writing (Creswell, 2013; Maxwell, 2013). The same

procedure was done for the focus group transcripts. These statements were then

grouped into themes, or "broad units of information" which were distilled into an

overall group of five to six categories through "lean coding" (Creswell, 2013, pp. 184

– 185) In addition, a written description of the participants' experiences was

developed to provide a "textural description" of the experiences that included

verbatim quotes (Creswell, 2013, p. 193). The "structural description" described

how the phenomenon was experienced (Creswell, 2013, p. 194). The textural and

structural elements were combined to form the "essence" (Creswell, 2013, p. 194) of

the experience. According to Creswell (2013), this describes both what was

experienced and how it was experienced. During each phase of review, I created a

memo observations and ideas for further development.

Next, I reviewed the documents collected during the semester. I examined

the journal entries for content. I analyzed the work samples using the 6+1 traits

model (Spandel, 2009). Similarly, I reviewed the descriptive regarding GPA, ACT or

SAT scores, and WRIT 101 grades. I compared the work samples with grades from

the writing course to determine the level of congruence between the participant's

writing in the ELA class. This allowed me to draw inferences that could not be

gained during an interview (Maxwell, 2013).

<u>Methods of Achieving Trustworthiness and Credibility</u>

Triangulation was used to corroborate the data. According to Creswell

(2013), researchers collect data from multiple sources to "provide corroborating

evidence" (p. 251). This technique, while not foolproof, can provide validity to the

data (Creswell, 2013, p. 251). In addition, Creswell (2013) stated validity and

reliability may be enhanced through "prolonged engagement and persistent

observation" (p. 250). In this study, data was collected from multiple sources to

provide layers of meaning and over the period of a semester.

A case study involves a "real-life, contemporary context or setting" (Creswell,

2013, p. 97). This analysis also provides significant statements from participants

and incorporated verbatim quotes. This level of detail provided a "rich, thick

description" which according to Creswell (2013) allows readers to "make decisions

regarding transferability" (p. 252) and validity.

By keeping a research journal throughout the semester, I was able to guard

against researcher bias (Creswell, 2013). This journal served as a cross-check to be

sure I did not distorting the data or make interpretations based upon my

experiences, biases, or orientations (Creswell, 2013).

Chapter Summary

Originally, I envisioned this study involving students with higher levels of

apprehension about writing. However, due to the students who agreed to

participate in my study, I had to reframe the parameters to include more confident

writers within the framework of my research questions. While this was not the

initial conception, the data yielded provided a rich comparison of the participants

across the spectrum as writers, the attitudes and beliefs they possess about writing,

what factors influenced them, and how those will impact and inform their approach

to writing instruction. Consequently, I found that my research evolved into a more

complex and interesting study than I anticipated.

CHAPTER FOUR - RESULTS

"If you know the fundamentals of writing practice and have been doing them, you have something to stand on. No one can knock you over. This is true confidence." (Goldberg, 1990, p. 7).

This chapter will examine the research questions that guided the study organized around responses from each of the seven participants: (1) How do preservice teachers perceive and practice the writing process?, (2) What experiences shaped their attitudes and beliefs about writing?, and (3) How do preservice teachers' views of the process inform their thinking about teaching writing? In order to become confident and effective writers, teachers must be comfortable with the concept and the process of writing and be writers themselves (Bratcher & Stroble, 1994, Street & Stang, 2009).

Data was collected during the spring 2016 from participants enrolled in EDU 330 *Emergent Literacy*, a 3-credit course designed to prepare future teachers in K-8 to teach reading and all other aspects of English language arts. This course met on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:40 until 2:55 p.m. each week.

Prior to the beginning of class, an agenda was written on the board for students to provide a roadmap to the day's activities. The class followed a similar daily format. First, each class opened with a short selection shared to motivate and inspire soon-to-be teachers. Then, the professor presented writing tips and techniques to launch the next lesson. These short mini-lessons were tightly sequenced and coordinated as skills building blocks. Early in the semester, basic grammar and writing tips, such as subject/verb agreement the "rule of three," were

reviewed. The instruction was provided not only as a refresher, but structured to provide ideas of how to approach and integrate writing instruction in their future classrooms. Lessons were presented that distinguished "teacher talk," the more academic language that future educators must know, from "kid talk," the way in which teachers should introduce a concept in a developmentally appropriate fashion. For more practice and reinforcement, students could complete grammar review modules in their course pack. However, these self-checking modules were optional and not part of the grade. Consequently, students who felt proficient did not need to complete the assignment. Those with uneven skills, while encouraged to complete the practice exercise, were not required to do so as the focus of the class was reading, not language basics. As the semester progressed, the building blocks of more complex grammar and writing tips were presented such as verbals, appositives, and prepositional phrases.

Likewise, strategies for revision and editing were offered. Students practiced the daily skills in the context of authentic text such as stories from newspaper and magazine articles. For example, on January 26, 2016 two sentences from a newspaper article regarding the Flint, Michigan water crisis were on the board. Individually, each student edited the sentences. Then as a group, the class worked together to revise the sentence omitting weak linking verbs, combining the sentences, and removing repetition. The professor worked through the example and the class decided on the final product. Finally, the professor discussed how to incorporate this activity by grade level. The objective of the writing tips was to help

students transform their own writing, as well as their future students, from lackluster and ordinary to strong, fluent, and concise prose.

These grammar and skills mini-lessons were designed to last 10 to 15 minutes per class period. However, several times these lessons lasted beyond the allotted time because the majority of students had not mastered the concept as writers. For example, on February 9, 2016, the class struggled during the review. As a result, on February 18 and 26 the professor offered two, optional out-of-class grammar help sessions to review concepts covered to-date for students who wanted additional assistance. Nineteen students attended the first session and seven attended the second. The addition of writing basics to the schedule, however, did subtract from time that could have been dedicated to teaching children to read.

<u>Participants</u>

While each participant will be profiled in-depth, the following table summarizes the attitudes and level of writing self-confidence for each of the participants that emerged after an examination of the data collected.

Among the seven participants in this study, the attitudes and beliefs about writing were varied as would be anticipated. Likewise, student levels of self-confidence fell at varying points along the spectrum. Some of the students, like Mary and Gina, had very high levels of self-confidence as writers and strong positive feelings about writing. In contrast, Sydney and Sadie fell at the opposite end of the continuum. Both students had negative attitudes about writing and lacked self-

confidence as writers. Although all of the participants expressed varying attitudes and levels of confidence, every student indicated that their feelings about writing would have a strong impact on their teaching of writing. Categories developed for grouping the students as reluctant, emerging, and confident writers.

Table 4. Participants' Attitudes and Self-Confidence

Participant	Attitudes	Writing self-confidence	Category
Sadie	Negative	Reluctant	Reluctant
Sydney	Negative	Reluctant	Reluctant
Amber	Neutral	Emerging	Emerging
Kay	Neutral	Medium-high	Confident
Lily	Positive	Medium-high	Confident
Gina	Positive	High	Confident
Mary	Positive	High	Confident

Reluctant Writers

Sadie

Sadie is a 20-year-old junior who was born in a suburb of a state capital. Sadie had a GPA of 3.74 and WRIT 101 grade of A. Her ACT English and reading scores were 26 (78th percentile) and 28 (88th percentile).

She recalled only learning manuscript and cursive letter formation regarding writing in the early grades. Although she was cooperative, during the first interview her body language suggested that she did not like talking about writing. Specifically, she fidgeted when discussing her writing memories at the beginning of the interview; however, she did not appear distressed or uncomfortable. As the

interview continued, she became more relaxed. It is also possible that she was nervous.

Around third or fourth grade, Sadie reported some teachers used writing journals that were not graded. But she noted that most writing instruction during that time utilized worksheets. "I hated them," she stated. When she was 12-years-old, she moved to a small rural community in a different state. In sixth grade, she remembered an "awesome" writing teacher who had the class examine different types of writing and "submit their work to contests." Sadie noted this teacher had the most influence on her writing because she permitted choice on topics. Sadie said this class was "one of the first experiences I had with revision and working on multiple drafts." Nonetheless, in middle school, she described writing as "a lot more structured and a lot less fun."

There were about 200 students total in her high school and 50 in her graduating class. Sadie did not recall doing much writing during that time. "We wrote scholarship essays," she said. When she entered college, Sadie was "dreading" WRIT 101. "The writing instruction I had in school didn't really prepare me for college," she said.

Sadie felt like she would be a better writer today if her "teachers had let her write more." "I did not have to write much during my school career," she said. In addition to a lack of practice, Sadie also expressed negative feelings based on the way writing was presented in school. "I remember writing as being more of a punishment instead of a fun activity," she said.

Sadie the Writer. Sadie used words such as *dread, punishment,* and *difficult* to describe writing. Her initial WAT score of 49 was congruent with her negative perceptions of herself as a writer and fell squarely in the range of 26 to 59 which indicated high levels of writing apprehension. Her experiences with writing were mixed. "I like to write when it is journals, creative writing, or opinion," she said. But she viewed writing papers for class in a "formal style" as negative. In addition, Sadie found revision process frustrating.

At the beginning of the semester, Sadie was "kind of nervous about it and dreading all the writing [I] would have to do." However, she felt "a little more confident" toward the end of the semester due to "more emphasis on grammar." "I feel like I'm writing better," she reported. Her score of 53 on the second WAT showed slight improvement, but she still remained in range of high levels of writing apprehension.

Sadie the Future Writing Teacher. Sadie had strong opinions about writing instruction. First, the best teachers make writing "fun and enjoyable" for students. "It shouldn't feel like punishment," she said. One way to accomplish this was by giving students choice regarding topics on assignments that were applicable to real-life situations. Sadie also strongly believed writing should never involve worksheets, which she deemed busywork. Teachers should "never give pointless writing assignments." This sentiment dovetailed into her opinion that teachers should always explain the "why" of writing.

Sadie would differentiate instruction and be supportive of student efforts. "I will make sure I'm not giving assignments that the strong writers will be successful at," she stated. In terms of support, she will be "available for struggling writers." In addition, she will offer opportunities for students to practice writing in "low-risk" settings such as journals or ungraded assignments. One of the most important things she will do in the classroom is give her students "an understanding of sentence structure and grammar." "Students believe their teachers know everything," she said. "But if a teacher speaks with bad grammar, students may assume what the teacher has said is correct. Students may even repeat what the teacher has said using bad grammar."

Sydney

Sydney is a 20-year-old student who was born in a suburb of a major metropolitan area. Sydney had a GPA of 3.3 and ACT English and reading scores of 21 (58th percentile) and 20 (52nd percentile), respectively. Sydney was pleasant and appeared comfortable during our interviews.

Beyond learning manuscript and cursive letter formation, she did not have much recollection of writing instruction during her early school years. She stated, "I remember a lot of subjects [from pre-K to fourth grade], but writing was not one of them." During fifth to eighth grade, Sydney specifically recalled daily journal writing in fifth grade. "For some reason, I loved the prompts," she said. "The teacher didn't grade the content but just made sure we were doing them." During that time period,

teachers pointed out her writing mistakes in front of other students. "That really brought my confidence down," she said.

Sydney described her high school as "not very prestigious" and noted that the "teachers didn't really care if I came to class or not." In addition, there was rampant misbehavior at her school. There were about 300 students in her grade, but only 200 graduated. "That was the norm," she reported. When asked about her opinion on the 66% graduation rate, Sydney stated, "I think because students didn't care and they didn't have parents pushing them and the teachers didn't care."

In college, Sydney disliked her WRIT 101 course in which she earned a B. The teacher didn't make the course "interesting." According to Sydney, the coursework required her to "read and write papers – that was pretty hard." Since writing wasn't one of her favorite subjects, she said, "reading a book about writing wasn't that intriguing to me." She didn't like the text, which was titled *Writing About Writing*. "It was the most boring book I've ever had to use," she said.

Throughout her educational journey, Sydney found the consistent lack feedback frustrating. Despite her levels of apprehension, receiving meaningful feedback did make a difference whether it related to improvements needed or pointing out solid writing. In her opinion, a mere grade on a paper without feedback meant little.

Sydney the Writer. Overall, Sydney reported that she has never liked writing and found it to be a negative experience. "I'm not very good at it and that is probably why I don't like it and it is frustrating," she said. However, having choice in her topic

influenced her feelings. Having a "more open-ended topic" instead of an assigned one made her enjoy writing a bit more. In addition, she felt that writing flow and vocabulary were important traits in writing, but specifically she noted both of these were among her weaknesses. Likewise, she considered her spelling skills were deficient.

Sydney has never seen herself as a writer. "I don't feel confident or comfortable as a writer," she said. "I feel like I hadn't yet got the skills as a junior in college to write." While her initial WAT score of 62 did not fall into the high level of writing apprehension range, 26 to 59, it was well below the mean of 78. However, her score was on the low end of the middle-range, where students do not tend to exhibit significant apprehension. According to Daly and Miller (1975), scores falling at either end of the middle-range may experience apprehension related to the adjacent level. As a result, her reported feelings about writing were consistent with higher levels of apprehension.

The most influential person to her writing was Sydney's sister who would proofread her papers. Sydney described her writing process as "not the best." She faced difficulty with procrastination when faced with a writing assignment. "Getting started on my papers is the hardest thing because sometimes I have a hard time putting my thoughts on paper," she said. After beginning, "it usually starts going good." While teachers noted that she had good ideas, Sydney felt she lacked the vocabulary to express herself adequately.

In addition, she did not like editing her papers. "Once I'm finished with it, it goes downhill again," she said. "I know I have to re-read it and I don't like doing that." However, she had little, if any, instruction how to edit her work. "I wasn't taught how to edit my papers and really don't see the value in it," she said. However, her dislike of editing her work may also be linked to her procrastination. "I wait 'til the last minute, so I don't have time to [edit]," she stated. "I don't think I'm like a strong writer, so reading back is kind of painful."

However, Sydney reported that her attitude about writing has changed for the better over the course of the semester. "No one had ever taken the time to break down a paper and give me the writing tools to be a better writer," she said. Likewise, she has learned how to edit her papers and understands the impact it has on her final product. "Before this semester, I wouldn't really even read it and now I re-read it, revise, and have other people look at it," she stated. "I guess I feel more comfortable with other people reading my writing, I guess." Sydney felt her writing had "definitely" improved, but she still didn't love doing it. "Papers are definitely easier for me now and when I re-read them now I'm like, wow, that actually doesn't sound too bad," she reported. Her score of 70 for the second WAT near the end of the semester was congruent with improved levels of apprehension.

Sydney the Future Writing Teacher. According to Sydney, teachers should make students feel comfortable writing. In addition, writing should be fun. One of the most important things a teacher can do is "talk to their students about what it means to be a good writer and why it is so important that we have those skills."

Giving students choice about their topics and "letting them write about their own lives" would help them "love writing."

Sydney stated that the best teachers are enthusiastic about writing. "They don't just come to class and say here's the prompt, go write about it," she said. Patience in helping reluctant writers, specifically taking the time to "talk to students about what it means to be a good writer," was mentioned as critical.

Despite her negative feelings about and experiences with writing, Sydney believed that she could bring strengths to teaching the process. "I think I'll have ways to get my students to enjoy writing," she said. When probed about ways in which she would make writing more enjoyable, she stated that she would give her students choice on the topics and let them "write about their own lives." Likewise, Sydney believed that teaching the editing process was essential. "I know how important [editing] is because I didn't do that and I know the consequences of not doing it," she said. Finally, she felt that giving meaningful feedback gave writers the opportunity to improve.

Summary of Reluctant Writers

Sadie and Sydney expressed negativity about their prior experiences with and attitudes about writing. Specifically, Sydney felt a great deal of frustration about the writing and revision process because she'd never been taught how to approach the tasks. Likewise, both felt they had never had enough writing practice or skill development. Neither student felt adequately prepared for college-level writing.

Sydney specifically noted that she had rarely received meaningful feedback on her writing.

Both students emphasized the need for meaningful instruction that provides the foundation for future, more complex writing tasks. Neither recalled having significant classroom time devoted to developing basic skills, learning grammar, and writing practice during their K-12 schooling. As a result, they believed that their writing was deficient.

However, Sadie and Sydney stated their confidence had improved during the semester. Although neither student considered herself a writer, each stated that learning the basics had an impact on improving their level of confidence. Both students felt better equipped to face the challenges of teaching writing after greater emphasis on foundational skills, grammar, and revision.

<u>Emerging Writer</u>

<u>Amber</u>

Amber is a 20-year-old senior from a mid-sized city. Amber had a GPA of 4.0 and ACT English and reading scores of 32 (95th percentile) and 36 (99th percentile), respectively, making her the highest achieving student in this study. Her ACT English score made her exempt from WRIT 101.

It is worth a brief discussion of the completion of Amber's Graphic Representation at the beginning of the first interview. After I explained the task, Amber appeared eager to begin and asked if she could use colored markers. She

produced a package of colored gel pens from her backpack and proceeded to meticulously draw. During the task, she was completely engaged and didn't seem to notice or acknowledge my presence as she worked. Her detailed and colorful representations took about 15 minutes, roughly 3 times longer than any other participant.

The focus of her early school years was to write small words associated with pictures. Her depiction included a lined tablet paper with dotted lines, upper and lower case letters, and words, such as "flower" in neat manuscript and a multi-colored drawing of the image. For grades five through eight, Amber drew an ice cream cone with 3 colorful scoops and a cherry on top. "It was on a board somewhere showing us how to build a paragraph like your ice cream cone with your supporting paragraphs then your conclusion is like the cherry on top. I wrote 5-paragraph essays like nobody's business," she said. "I feel like that was the really big focus throughout grades K-12." In her high school years, she recalled writing about reading. However, she lamented that most of the work was handwritten in class. "I tend to be a perfectionist," she said, "so being able to type things is definitely better for me." Since beginning college, Amber has written "a lot more papers than [she] ever did in high school synthesizing information and ideas." Amber credited her 11th grade English teacher with having the most influence on her writing because he gave both meaningful assignments and specific feedback. She also stated that he read every written assignment. This was of particular importance to her.

<u>Amber the Writer.</u> Amber's first thought on writing was, "Ugh, why do we have to this and how long does it have to be?" Amber repeatedly stated she did not like writing and did not feel that her education adequately prepared her for the rigors of college writing. "I don't feel like I learned much about writing in high school," she stated. "I had a couple English classes that were kind of a joke." However, she scored in the 95th percentile on the English portion of the ACT and a perfect score on the reading section. Her WAT score of 64 was middle-range and would evidence no strong feelings of writing apprehension, but is near the lower end of the spectrum. Her second WAT score, while improved, remained in the middle-range at 73.

Amber felt creating outlines for papers and structuring them properly were strengths, but admitted procrastinating beginning writing projects. "Because it's not one of my favorite things, I tend to put it off," she said. "The process of actually writing isn't something I look forward to." But she acknowledged that she was able to write if forced to do so. "I think I'm a decent writer when I know what I'm supposed to be writing about," she said. In stark contrast to every other participant, Amber did not like having choice her writing topics. "I do better if I'm assigned because I don't feel like I'm very good at coming up with a topic," she said. Additionally, feedback was of prime importance to Amber.

<u>Amber the Future Writing Teacher.</u> On multiple occasions, Amber expressed that she did not like writing. However, she felt that might make her a better teacher. "I understand the perspective of not loving writing so I know that every student is

not going to love writing," she said. As such, she considered it a strength for the classroom. She stated:

> To a certain extent, I think the fact that I don't love writing is kind of a strength, in that, I remember having a lot of teachers who loved writing so much that we all kind of just put ourselves in a different box. She loves writing, so that's why she's a good writer, but we hate writing so that's why I think having a teacher who's, like you know, I don't love writing either, but here are ways that we can enjoy it and try to become better writers.

Amber acknowledged that she has had teachers "who have a genuine enthusiasm for writing." But she said, "I'm not gonna fake that. I don't like writing."

Summary of the Emerging Writer

Amber used words such as "not one of my favorite things," "don't love writing," and a "have-to task" when discussing writing. Despite her obvious and self-professed anxiety about it, Amber achieved a near-perfect score on the English portion of the ACT which tests usage, mechanics, and rhetoric. Of all of the participants, Amber has the highest levels of academic achievement. She valued structure and being assigned a specific writing task. In addition, she is a self-professed perfectionist. While her WAT score is in the mid-range, which is not indicative of writing apprehension, she was vocal about her dislike of the task of writing.

<u>Confident Writers</u>

<u>Kay</u>

Kay is a 21-year-old senior. Kay had a GPA of 3.38 and ACT English and reading scores of 22 (61st percentile) and 25 (79th percentile), respectively. She earned a B- in WRIT 101.

During our interviews, she was pleasant and cooperative. She grew up in a small farming community with a population of less than 300. Kay's high school had 29 total students and five in her graduating class. She did not have much recollection of writing in the early grades beyond "abc stuff" and "pictures and writing below them." In grades five though eight, Kay remembered journaling prompts given by the teacher and writing for five to ten minutes daily. There was "no pressure because he didn't grade them," she said, "so you could be more open about your writing."

During one of her high school English classes, the writing rigor increased dramatically. "We did a grammar every day, daily writing prompts, and I got my butt kicked," Kay said. "We should have had these skills in elementary school, but she taught me a lot." Kay found it challenging. "It was really hard for me, but I eventually got there," she said. "She pushed us into it, we didn't want to do it, but, you know, she forced me to be a decent writer." Kay credited this high school English teacher as having the most influence in her education and instilling a positive attitude about writing.

But in college, Kay had a difficult time with writing. "I didn't have a strong background," she said. "So I struggled a lot in college in those classes." With the exception of her English teacher in high school, Kay suggested that her teachers were ill-prepared to teach writing. "They were really nice, but they weren't the best teachers," she said. "I never really felt pushed when I was in school." She wrote, "I never had a lot of grammar when I was younger and I wonder if it could have been that [the teachers] did not feel confident in it."

Kay the Writer. Kay linked her enjoyment of writing to her love of reading. "I liked the creative side [of writing]," she said. "It's a stress-relieving thing." In addition, Kay liked writing song lyrics. "I wanted to write my own songs, but when I got into high school, I started to write in my journal in a song fashion," she stated. This is consistent with her mid-range WAT score of 82, slightly above the median of 78, is not indicative of writing apprehension.

However, in terms of her current level of writing skills, Kay wrote, "I wouldn't say that I am a poor writer, but I feel I need help." Although she does not mind the task, Kay does not like having anyone read her writing. "It really gives me anxiety to know that someone is going to read my writing," she said. However, she couldn't articulate the origins of this fear.

Kay found it easy to put her initial ideas on paper. "It's super-easy because I know I can put that into another draft – it's not something that someone's going to read," she said. Likewise, Kay loved journaling because "no one will read it" and simply getting her ideas down on paper.

In contrast, it is challenging for Kay to write about topics for which she has

no strong opinions. She also noted that it is difficult to write about topics she doesn't

enjoy. In addition, having page "constraints" is a frustration. If there is a minimum

number of pages, Kay feels like she is "always repeating" herself in her attempt to

reach the target. "So I just try to fill," Kay said. "I think I have to get all that filled out

and I just add fillers and I just think that makes my writing poor." By trying to write

the required number of pages, Kay felt like her writing was actually worse "because

I've extended it and it's full of fillers." However, Kay said this may be because she

lacks an extensive vocabulary "to get those stronger ideas."

Although Kay always liked writing, her second WAT score increased by

nearly 20 points to 101, one of the larger increases. Kay's new score placed her in

the top range of 97 to 130 which indicates a low level of writing apprehension. Kay

attributed her improved confidence to EDU 330 during spring semester. Regarding

her biggest influence in writing, she said:

> Actually I'd like to hear my first interview because this class [*Emergent*
> *Literacy*] has really helped me as far as to become a better writer. So
> it's made me be way more confident . . . I saw how much different my
> attitude has changed in my writing. I guess it's because I went through
> a little bit more grammar than I was used to.

Kay the Future Writing Teacher. Kay found it critical for teachers to make

writing fun so it didn't feel like a "chore." "Every student, no matter how they learn,

will learn if you make it fun," she said. "If it's not fun, it will turn into something that

you hate." Kay thought that incorporating choice into writing would help achieve

this goal of making writing enjoyable. "It's very hard to write," she said, "but it's fun

when you can really get into what you're talking about." Kay recalled her English

teacher giving the class choice on a 10 – 15 page research paper and the impact that

made. "Choice is huge," she said. "When you are a writing teacher, you want your

kids to be good writers and it really shouldn't matter too much on the content. You

want them to enjoy it while they're writing."

Kay thought it was important for students to "go at a correct pace." She

acknowledged that students of all abilities would be in the classroom, so it was

important to challenge the more gifted students while supporting the struggling

ones. Kay stressed that repetition, daily writing practice, and grammar skills were of

the utmost importance. Having a teacher who had mastered the fundamentals and

was a confident writer would be critical.

Lily

Lily is a 20-year-old junior who was home schooled until third grade. Lily had

a GPA of 3.93 and ACT English and reading scores of 24 (74th percentile) and 27

(81st percentile), respectively. She earned an A in WRIT 101.

She was comfortable and talkative during our interviews. She reported that

she learned to read when she was four. During her home school years, Lily

frequently wrote in journals about activities that centered around nature and

science. Her most significant memory was writing stories when she was seven

"about animals living in the forest." Although her mom, an English major, "tried her

best to teach me about the English language, I was too obsessed with science to care

that much." As a result, Lily's home school years consisted of "mainly writing in a journal, reading the Little House series, and developing science experiments."

According to Lily, her mother was the main influence on her love of writing. Lily described her mother as an "avid" journal writer. She observed her mother write "for a few hours each day" in "normal notebooks that she filled up since she had us." Lily had the following recollection about her mother's journals:

> She said she liked to document things like to talk about good times and to get through the bad times. She would read over them years later. She let me read a few of them, but not all of them. One day, we can all read them. It was weird to read them. She said things that we didn't know about her. She might talk about problems that she had that we didn't know she had.

Her mother bought Lily her first journal when she was 6-years-old. Lily reports still writing in her diary on a regular basis, particularly when she travels.

In 4th grade, she began attending public schools. She recalled writing daily journal prompts, which she enjoyed. "We could answer them however we wished," she said. In middle and high school, Lily wrote letters to her grandparents every week. But her attendance suffered in the middle grades. "I just didn't go," she said. "It was really boring." She then attended a large high school in a mid-sized city with approximately 1200 students. Her high school world history course and AP Literature classes required extensive writing.

Upon entering college, Lily hadn't had to do as much writing as she anticipated. "I haven't written a lot in college and I don't know why. The classes here don't require that much writing," she said. "I wrote a lot more in high school."

Lily the Writer. From an early age, Lily has always enjoyed writing. "Having a relative who wrote daily and made it a priority to write inspired me to do the same," she said. Lily still writes letters to friends and family and in her journal each day. "It [writing] is a positive experience for me," she stated. "I would much rather spend time working on an essay than studying for a test." Overall, writing has been a consistently positive experience for her.

On the initial WAT, Lily scored a 93, which evidenced a lack of apprehension. Since it falls at the upper-end of the middle-range, it was consistent with her low levels anxiety about writing. Her second WAT score of 104 showed improvement and placed her in the low-end of the upper-range which was indicative of low writing apprehension.

Lily characterized herself as a strong writer, but she noted many gaps in her knowledge. "I've always gotten really good grades and I never had to redo them [papers], but I don't know as much as I should," she said, "I don't think I'm as good [a writer] as I thought." She attributed this to a lack of instruction in grammar skills and foundational basics. Likewise, she hadn't been required to practice much writing in college.

In terms of the writing process, Lily liked having choice. When assigned a topic, her effort correlated with how "seriously [I] wanted to take it" or "how much it was worth." She thought that also made her end product suffer. "Usually they don't ever turn out as well because I'm pretty bored with it," she said. When she could choose, Lily stated the entire process was "more enjoyable all around" and

enhanced the research phase of writing. The only experience she characterized as
negative with writing was having to complete a 10-page government paper "about a
boring topic that I cared nothing about."

 Although Lily said she did not like writing drafts or editing, since they
weren't creative, she clearly articulated that she not only knew how to, but utilized,
both elements of the process. "I go back and re-read it aloud to myself and fix any
errors," she said. "I catch sentences that could be re-written for better fluency and
restructure paragraphs, if needed." Finally, she had others proofread her work to
offer feedback. However, at the end of the spring semester, Lily now conducts an
even more in-depth critique of her final product.

    <u>Lily the Future Writing Teacher.</u> Lily expressed strong opinions related to
feedback on writing. Lily would have preferred it to be specific and detailed beyond
a cursory "good job" or "great." Good grades made Lily assume she was a strong
writer. Specific feedback could have been beneficial in strengthening her skills. As a
result, Lily planned to provide detailed, meaningful, and specific feedback on both
strengths and weaknesses to her students.

Next, Lily believed that writing instruction was fun and engaging when
students had choice in their topics. By giving them a choice of short, low-stakes
projects, it would make practice enjoyable. "They're not going to want to get better
if they don't like it," she said. Likewise, she planned to enhance student enjoyment
by making writing assignments relevant to their lives. She also noted that allowing

students to write in journals for short periods of time each day would be fun, low stakes, and give much-needed practice time.

Finally, Lily felt it was critical to support writers of all abilities. "I will never discourage kids from writing," she said. "If there's a student who's not a strong writer, you don't say your writing sucks, you want to show them how to get better." To help writers of all abilities, Lily planned to use examples of good writing, modeling, and provide meaningful feedback.

Gina

Gina is a 32-year-old non-traditional senior who is married with children. Gina had a GPA of 3.65. She received a B in WRIT 101, which was taken in 2002 at another institution. There were no standardized test scores available because she was a transfer student. On the WAT, Gina scored a 94, which is at the upper-end of the middle range. This score is consistent with her lack of writing apprehension. Her second WAT was 119, an increase of 25 points.

She recalled letter formation and a focus on handwriting in the early grades, but little else. Gina has always been a strong writer and stated she was "ahead of her peers" in writing in middle school. During high school, she was homeschooled by parents "who never had a college education." Mainly she recalled writing in her diary, because it "kept things in perspective." In college, Gina continued to keep a journal and write letters for pleasure.

Gina attributed her positive feelings about writing to her past teachers. "I've never had a teacher who made me feel writing was a chore," she said. "I went to

school with kids who struggled with writing, but I had teachers who were positive about the writing experience." During her education, Gina had grammar lessons in her classes. "I think that helped immensely by knowing the basics and having the foundations made writing not overly difficult." However, Gina also attributed her lack of writing apprehension to her overall positive attitude. "A lot of it is your mindset," she said. She also noted that friends and family members who liked to read her work contributed to her positive feelings.

Gina the Writer. It was clear that Gina enjoyed writing and the writing process. "For me, writing is easy," she said. "Without the ability to write, I would feel lost in a world of chaos." Outside of her coursework, she writes for pleasure in journals and as a form of escape. Although she likes writing for her own purposes, "I like having a paper that I can relate to my future career." She preferred to do her writing by hand. "It helps me think and remember," she said. In addition, Gina appreciated that writing "leaves memories for another person in the form of letters or cards."

Gina described her process as "keeping the prep to a minimum." She outlines, but they are brief and concise. In her first draft, she ignores spelling and grammar. Although she didn't feel like her process had changed, she stated "throughout my life, I've learned what my writing process looks like and have embraced it in order to use it to the best of my advantage." In addition, Gina valued feedback in her writing process. According to her, even "good writing can always be better."

<u>Gina the Future Writing Teacher.</u> Gina clearly looks forward to the opportunity to teach writing. During both interviews, her body language and speech reflected her enthusiasm. She spoke rapidly and leaned in as she answered questions. In addition, her gestures became more animated and expansive. I wrote down my observations of her mannerisms in my interview notes.

Gina had strong feelings about the necessity of practice and foundations in writing instruction. In addition, she stated that it is essential for teachers to be well-versed in grammar. "We can't teach what we don't know," she said. "The knowledge of the English language is our responsibility [as teachers]. I must be proficient in the subject myself."

In Gina's opinion, she would be well-equipped to help children who were struggling and provide individualized writing instruction. "You need to find what works and invest the time in that child," she said. "You need to take into consideration that every student is different." However, she stated that teaching writing was a multi-layered process. "Not every assignment is going to make every student proficient in writing and that is key," she said. For example, with a reluctant writer, Gina said it could be as simple as using "blank comic book pages to encourage them to write and make it fun." According to Gina, feedback is essential to make good writing better.

One of the challenges Gina contemplated was where families weren't supportive of or didn't see the value in writing. "That might be one of the biggest issues," she said. "Students may come from homes where they aren't exposed to

writing or they don't see the value in it." She also noted that parents who don't feel

comfortable with writing may be reluctant, or even unable, to help their child.

Notably, Gina observed what she deemed lack of interest in writing

instruction in teacher education:

> I don't feel like there is a push to teach us to teach kids to write. There
> is more focus on technology in education that I find disturbing. As the
> majority of the student population seems satisfied, and perhaps even
> happy about that, I am afraid that we will see a drastic decline in the
> lack of spelling skills, creative thought and the simple ability to write.
> I'm glad that I can teach my students not only to write, but to enjoy the
> process. Of all the things that can be taken, your words are completely
> yours.

Mary

Mary is a 20-year-old junior who has lived in multiple cities during her

childhood. Mary had a GPA of 3.94 and ACT English and reading scores of 26 (82nd

percentile) and 25 (75th percentile), respectively. She earned an A in WRIT 101.

From her earliest memory, she fostered her love of writing through books and

reading. "My parents read me Harry Potter when I was little and when I could read

them myself, I read all that I could. But I really loved writing so I would get the lined

paper where you could draw pictures and write my own Harry Potter stories," she

said. "I guess you could say I learned to write from J.K. Rowling." In fifth through

eighth grade, she said that instruction was on mechanics. "It was as if they were

teaching mechanics and herding us to write the way they wanted us to write," she

said. Mary described her high school years as the best because she had an inspiring

instructor who was "a joy to have as a teacher." In college, she started as an English

major, but felt that teaching was her calling. However, when she changed her major,

her advisor in the English department had misgivings. Mary said:

> When I told my teacher I was switching to elementary education, my teacher told me you better come to me if you're not academically challenged. He was serious because he said you're not going to be reading these kind of books. I mean, he was right in some aspects because some of the classes we take are – they don't challenge us very much.

The decision to switch her major to education was based on a high school

program in which she participated in grades nine through 12 that allowed her to

teach in the school's preschool. "I loved teaching and being a part of the kids' lives,"

she said. "By senior year, I was the head teacher," she said. "I got to teach the

teachers, the kids, and implement programming." While she admitted that she

enjoyed her English major and the professors, Mary missed teaching and children.

"When I went back after spring break, I realized how much I missed little kids," she

said. "That's when I decided to switch." Currently, she teaches part-time in a

Montessori school and works as a nanny for a family.

Mary has always been a strong student with a deep love for writing. "I love

school, 'cause school's just fun and learning is fun," she said. "That sounds so cheesy,

but it is for me." She credited her mother and J.K. Rowling as her biggest writing

influences, as well as growing up in a home where she was surrounded by books.

Mary the Writer. Mary repeatedly stated how much she loved writing.

Likewise, she described with great enthusiasm the types of writing projects she

enjoys. She especially likes creative writing, but also likes writing about children

and teaching. When she gets an idea for a story, she gets tries to capture the idea right away. "When I'm sitting there and have a random idea for a cool story, like an idea that I can't stop thinking about, that's when writing comes easy for me," she said. "When I'm thinking about something really hard, it just flows. If I don't have paper, I just use my phone." While Mary prefers choice in her topics, she finds ways to "tweak it to stimulate interest." But Mary likes the process of writing even when it is challenging. "Even if my ideas are difficult to put on paper," she said, "I feel like I'm unloading my brain."

She enthusiastically described her multi-layered process in detail. She found getting her ideas down, particularly when she had a choice of the topic, especially easy. Her first step is to make an outline, which she writes by hand. Likewise, Mary prefers to handwrite her first drafts. "I'm a lot more creative when I'm with a pencil and paper," she said. During the first draft, Mary focused on getting her ideas down. "I can organize it later," she said. Next, she begins her revision process. By looking it over multiple times in different ways, Mary is able to make the most improvements and polish her final work product. "I read my formal papers aloud so that I can hear mistakes and sentence flow," she said. "Doing so helps me revise more easily than if I were to read my work silently." Mary reads every paper at least 2 to 3 times, but sometimes more, and makes changes.

At the beginning of the spring semester, Mary identified as a strong writer. This was confirmed by her initial WAT of 113. Despite having a firm foundation and a high level of confidence, Mary didn't find the grammar instruction and

foundational elements that were part of each class to be redundant. "Coming into the semester, I felt like I was a good writer," she said. "But I still found something to learn." Her second WAT score of 115 evidenced a continued, but slightly improved, high level of writing confidence.

   Mary the Future Writing Teacher. Mary is clearly excited to teach writing to her students. During both interviews, I specifically noted her demeanor, which I characterized as lively, enthusiastic and animated, in my interview notes, when she discussed writing in her future classroom. There is no question that writing will play a key role in Mary's classroom and her enthusiasm will be evident to students.

   To facilitate instruction, Mary said it would be important to "get to know each student as an individual and take the time to understand their backgrounds." In her view, this was critical. "My philosophy with teaching writing, or anything, is to get to know your students, get to know their home life, get to know anything you can about them as an individual," she said. "With writing, that would be so important when you are reading their work. You need to have insight if they are struggling with something and how you can help."

   By allowing students to have "creativity, free choice, and setting goals" in writing instruction, Mary would maximize their opportunities for success. In fact, Mary said the best writing teachers "stimulate creativity while promoting learning about writing." But she was mindful that not all students will share her enthusiasm for writing. "I know that not everyone thrives when they're writing," she said. "Some kids detest writing." However, she felt that her self-identified strength of experience

would be beneficial with those students. "It [experience] will help because I understand the process," she said. "I can help them through it." In addition, Mary underscored the need for frequent writing practice and exposure to books and reading to support writing development.

Mary wished her instructors in the program would "challenge us more and hold us accountable to be great educators." She mentioned that her classmates struggled with some of the basic grammar concepts. "They didn't seem to know much [about grammar]. I could tell they didn't get it based on their questions," she said. Even though she is a confident and competent writer, Mary expressed grave concern regarding the lack of writing instruction in the teacher education program. Her words echoed Gina's observations. She stated:

> In our teacher education program, there is not much writing instruction. WRIT 101 and Emergent Literacy are the only writing instruction I've had so far in this major. I feel that we need to have a required grammar and writing class, because so many students don't get that valuable instruction.

Summary of the Confident Writers

Four of the seven participants were confident writers. The range of initial WAT scores for this group ranged from 82 to 113 placing three of the four in the middle range where students do not experience a significant level of writing apprehension. Only Mary fell firmly in the low level of apprehension category with a score of 113. On the post-test, every confident writers' score improved to some degree with a range of two to 25 points. While Mary's score improved the least, her initial score was the highest. However, the remaining 3 participants' scores

improved dramatically, ranging from eleven to 25 points. This was the largest point increase for all of the participant groups.

All of the students in this group discussed the importance of feedback in becoming proficient writers. Notably, the two most confident writers in this study emphasized the importance of meaningful feedback. In Gina's words: "Good writing can always be better." Input from readers was welcomed and embraced as a path to improvement. These students viewed feedback has helpful, not punitive. In fact, they were critical of teachers who offered minimal or cursory comments.

Likewise, all of these students wrote frequently and regularly. While obviously they completed papers and essays for school, each engaged in writing on a personal level. The formats included journaling, song lyrics, letters, and creative writing. Each student expressed that writing provided a level of enjoyment and satisfaction in their life.

Kay and Mary specifically linked their love of writing to reading. During their childhoods, these students had vivid memories of books. Both affirmatively expressed that reading and early exposure to books had a profound impact on their attitudes about writing. Reading was associated not only with school, but with home life where they read a variety of genres for pleasure and entertainment. Their memories about reading were positive. While both students noted that they are still avid readers, it was challenging to do so when they were in school. Mary did more reading during the semester breaks. She recalled reading 40 novels over the course of one summer.

Table 5. Pre- and Post WAT Scores

Participant	WAT score #1	WAT score #2	Point difference
Sadie	49	53	+4
Sydney	62	70	+8
Amber	64	73	+9
Kay	82	101	+19
Lily	93	104	+11
Gina	94	119	+25
Mary	113	115	+2

<u>Themes</u>

Several themes emerged across the participants:

- providing explicit and meaningful feedback

- offering choice in writing topics

- making writing fun, enjoyable, and possessing an enthusiasm for the subject

- providing adequate instruction in writing foundations, skill, and grammar

- allowing adequate time for writing practice

- helping students understand the "why" of writing

Each theme will be discussed in detail and illustrated with student quotes below.

Providing Explicit and Meaningful Feedback

Every student specifically mentioned feedback as critical, although the reluctant writers expressed the most frustration at non-existent or anemic feedback from teachers. Many students lamented receiving generic remarks such as "good job" or "great" or simply a grade on their papers and deemed it useless. Overall, students felt feedback should underscore and reinforce writing strengths and give specific ways a paper could be improved. Some students expressed frustration at a lack of meaningful feedback during their educational careers and felt like they would be better writers had it been provided. While students noted that some writing must be in an ungraded, low-stakes setting, such as journal writing, when feedback is given, it must be specific to be useful. Knowing what they did well and ways their writing could be improved were associated higher levels of self-confidence. All of the participants were committed to providing in-depth feedback to promote writing success. The concept of feedback appeared equally within student as writer and student as future writing teacher.

Table 6. Feedback

Quote	Source and Participant (if known)
"Building students' confidence in their writing abilities relies on positive reinforcement and constructive criticism"	Questionnaire – Amber
"The best thing a teacher can do is give detailed, helpful feedback."	Questionnaire – Sadie
"My high school teacher was always open for us to come into her classroom for help. She would say, 'come to my house, email me, call me, I can help you out.' Before school, lunch, or pre periods she was always open for helping us. Having her give up her time for us instilled this respect that she was there to help. She didn't want to give you bad grades, but if you weren't willing to work, she wasn't afraid."	Interview #1 – Kay
"Feedback was the number one thing that frustrated me in high school and college. Especially getting a paper back that said good job. I had doubts as to whether I took all this time to write this and did my teacher even read it? Teachers should put as much effort in as I do."	Interview #1 – Amber
"I will focus on the positive aspects of their work at all times. It is important to correct a paper and reinforce the concepts. However, it is also important to point out what your like and the things that work well in a student's writing. If a teacher constantly points out the things that are wrong without a focus on the things that are right, the student will quit trying."	Questionnaire – Gina
"It would have been helpful if my teachers commented more on my content in my papers with probing questions, not just writing expand here."	Questionnaire – Mary
"One of the craziest styles of teaching (to me) is when teachers always let errors slide. Teaching students how to correct their errors makes them better writers."	Questionnaire – Mary

<u>Table 6 Continued</u>

"I wish my teachers would have taken good writing more seriously and spent more time grading the mistakes."	Questionnaire – Lily
"The way I see it, if I have papers returned that say well-written or good job, that's pretty much useless. Even if it's an A paper, you should be able to give some sort of feedback. You can always improve. It also builds that relationship that shows you respect what [the students] are doing."	Interview #2 – Amber
"I feel like by really working with them, not just that 'you got a 70 on this paper,' but actually sitting down with them and explaining what they did wrong and why they keep making those mistakes so they can fix it."	Interview #2 –Sydney
"The teachers just gave me good grades and they really didn't analyze my writing very well. Like the teachers just gave me good grades and they really didn't mark it up or say even if it was good. They didn't say I could do better."	Interview #2 – Lily
"I'll want to spend time actually critiquing their writing and actually giving them solid feedback to help them get better instead of just giving them a good or bad grade and not telling them why. I think a lot of teachers in the past did that and it didn't help a lot."	Interview #2 – Lily
"I will never put down a kid. If you're putting yourself out there as a writer you're already in a vulnerable state because you are putting your thoughts on paper. If a kid is trying, he may not be there at all, but at least if he's trying, applaud the fact that he tried. It's a first step."	Interview #2 – Kay
"Feedback and knowing good grammer [sic] helps students have confidence in their reading and writing."	Journal - Sydney

Table 6 Continued

"Give feedback. Having students write something, collecting it, and never doing anything with it is completely useless. Practice won't be beneficial if they are doing it wrong."	Focus group
"When a teacher hands me back a paper with a C or even a D on it and only put that, no feedback, I'm like what the heck. You gave me this bad grade, but no feedback, so I can't learn from the mistakes I did make."	Focus group
"The teacher's role in teaching writing should be really focused on giving constructive feedback. Kids learn to write by writing, so I will have them write and then really take the time to go through their work and commend the good things while giving suggestions on how to improve other things for next time."	Focus group
"I wish teachers would let students share their writing with each other and get feedback."	Focus group
"I think my writing never sounds good, but I don't really know what to do about it."	Focus group
"Sometimes I wondered if they read it. I could tell by where it was stapled and there wasn't even a fold."	Focus group

Offering Choice in Writing Topics

Likewise, the majority of the participants mentioned choice as important.

Amber was the only exception who stated she preferred to have topics assigned.

Students overwhelmingly believed that it is easier and more enjoyable to write

about a topic that you had chosen or was in some way relevant or meaningful to

their life or career. Assigned topics were associated with terms such as "chore,"

drudgery," and "dread." Most indicated that choice was directly linked making

writing fun and enjoyable, another prominent theme. The concept of choice related

to both the student as writer and the student as future writing teacher. The majority

of the students indicated they would give choice in topics in their own classrooms.

Table 7. Choice

Quote	Source and Participant (if known)
"The worst thing a writing teacher can do is force students to write about things that are not meaningful."	Questionnaire – Sydney
"Teachers should give students the choice of meaningful, authentic experiences when it comes to writing assignments."	Questionnaire – Sadie
"My teachers did a good job when they let us be creative and pick our own topics. I've always found it much easier to write extensively on a topic a chose than to write on a topic assigned to me."	Questionnaire – Mary
"Writing is better when you have more freedom to explore topics that are of interest to you."	Questionnaire – Gina
"Writing is easy and fun if I get choose what I write about or it's something that interests me."	Interview #1 – Lily
"Giving students choice makes writing less of a chore."	Interview #2 – Kay
"You don't mind spending a lot of time on it. It just takes the drudgery out of it."	Interview #2 – Lily
"If you can get students to connect with things they are interested in, they will enjoy writing more."	Interview #2 – Amber

Table 7 Continued

"Writing is so much easier when you care about the topic and when I can take responsibility for what I'm writing about."	Focus group
"If I care about the topic, the writing comes easy to me."	Focus group

Making Writing Fun/Enjoyable/
Having an Enthusiastic Teacher

All of the participants mentioned that writing should be a fun activity, not something to dread or fear. Students believed that enjoyment was directly linked to having choice in writing topics. There was much overlap on the concept of choice and making writing fun and enjoyable. Likewise, student who learned from teachers who were enthusiastic about writing tended to enjoy writing more. Students said they would make efforts to make writing instruction fun to promote positive attitudes about writing for their future students. Likewise, they believed it was important for teachers to have a sincere enthusiasm for writing.

Table 8. Making Writing Fun/Enjoyable/Having an Enthusiastic Teacher

Quote	Source and Participant (if known)
"I wish my instructors would offer fun and exciting ways to practice my writing skills."	Questionnaire – Lily
"I remember writing being a punishment instead of a fun activity."	Questionnaire – Sadie
"The worst thing a teacher can do is make writing boring."	Questionnaire – Lily

<u>Table 8 Continued</u>

"The best writing teachers always go into class with a positive attitude about writing."	Interview #1 – Sydney
"My teachers just weren't stimulating interest. Were they just not excited about writing? They never said things like this is gonna be a fun paper to write or let us choose our topics."	Interview #1 – Mary
"I think teachers sometimes make it seem like okay, now we're gonna write, and it's this huge deal and so it makes the students feel like it's something to be feared or this big challenging thing to do, but it shouldn't feel that way to students."	Interview #1 – Amber
"Don't make writing all about right and wrong. Find a way to incorporate writing in fun ways."	Interview #2 – Gina
"It's always easy when I do things like opinion pieces or about subjects I'm interested in. Like when I get to choose a topic. It's easy to write about something that you like."	Interview #2 – Lily
"The best writing teachers have a lot of enthusiasm about writing and don't just come to the class and say here's the prompt, go write about it."	Interview #2 – Sydney
"Every student will learn if you make it fun."	Interview #2 – Kay
"When deciding on whether something is busy work or homework, you should ask yourself some questions first: Will the student's [sic] benefit or will they just be board [sic]?"	Journal – Sydney
"I want to help students love writing by letting them write about their own lives."	Focus group
"I want to keep my students from thinking writing is a scary, horrible thing.	Focus group

Providing Adequate Instruction in
<u>Writing Foundations, Skill, and Grammar</u>

All of the participants noted that knowing grammar and the foundational

skills of writing were critical to success both as a writer and a teacher. But many felt

they were ill-prepared for college-level writing. Many students stated that they

lacked many of the grammar basics and lamented that there were not more

opportunities to learn and practice them. Likewise, several students expressly

stated that they had not been taught how to revise and edit papers. The lack of this

basic knowledge hindered their confidence in writing. While the reluctant and

emerging writers stated that they would like more courses in grammar and

foundations, notably, the confident writers thought this was important and

welcomed more opportunities to learn and practice.

Table 9. Foundations, Skills, and Grammar

Quote	Source and Participant (if known)
"I feel like I have bad grammar. I just never learned it. So I'm pretty bad with it. If you asked me a question about what are the different parts of speech, I wouldn't know."	Interview #1 – Lily
"Grammar does matter. It shows your intelligence."	Interview #1 – Sadie
"The writing I had in high school didn't really prepare me for college."	Interview #1 – Sadie
"I feel like now if I did have instruction, I guess I would always be thinking about how I need to take longer on my papers and start editing them and send them to someone else to look over."	Interview #2 – Sydney

Table 9 Continued

"I'll show ways of doing it that are step-by-step who just can't sit down and write because I can't do that."	Interview #2 – Amber
"Grammar lessons were difficult growing up, but I think that helped immensely. Knowing the basics and having the foundations to be a good writer made writing assignments not overly difficult because we knew the foundations."	Interview #2 – Gina
"To communicate effectively, a teacher must be knowledgeable about the correct use of grammar. . . a teacher must put effort into developing his or her grammar skills. We as educators need to make sure that we speak and write correctly to uphold our credibility."	Journal – Mary
"When you teach your students grammer [sic], you are building them to have confidence in their reading, writing and speaking. Grammer [sic] is the base of English and if we want our students to succeed in school no matter what subject they first need to learn grammer [sic]."	Journal – Sydney
"Understanding grammar translates to understanding grammar translates to understanding how the English language works, so if we are to teach the next generation to speak and write properly, we must be able to do so as well."	Journal – Amber

Allowing Adequate Time for Writing Practice

Students acknowledged that the best way to become a proficient writer was by having the opportunity to practice regularly. Whether in ungraded journals or formal papers, students stated that frequent and regular opportunities to write led to success. All of the students stated that they would carry this forward in their own

classrooms even if they had not had the opportunity to do so during their

educational journey.

Table 10. Practice

Quote	Source and Participant (if known)
"The best thing a writing teacher can do is provide lots of writing opportunities."	Questionnaire – Lily
"You just have to practice a lot. You have to work at it."	Interview #1 – Lily
"It's really just a habit for me. I like to write and I do it a lot."	Interview #1 – Mary
"Learning writing, you know, it's repetition, repetition."	Interview #2 – Kay
"I write a lot. It's common sense – the more you do it, the better you get."	Interview #2 - Gina
"I'm not very strong at it [writing] and I need to practice it more."	Interview #2 – Sadie
"Kids learn to write by writing, so I will have them write."	Interview #2 – Amber
"Part of it is just practice."	Focus group
"I'd make writing part of the learning every day. It might be journals or letters, but every day."	Focus group
"I just don't remember spending much time writing when I was in elementary school."	Focus group
"I've written fewer papers in college, so I haven't had much opportunity to enhance my skills."	Focus group

Table 10 Continued

"They need lots of practice in a low-key setting."	Focus group
"The only way you get better is to practice, practice, practice."	Focus group

Helping Students
Understand the "Why" of Writing

Some of the students indicated it was important for students to understand the "why" of writing. Interestingly, the reluctant and emerging writers stated this was a key issue they would address in writing instruction in their classrooms. This could be accomplished by allowing their students to engage in real-world writing opportunities or make connections to the different purposes of writing. Giving students authentic writing experiences allowed greater enjoyment as well. This was a concept the participants planned to take forward into their future classrooms.

Table 11. Understanding the "Why" of Writing

Quote	Source and participant (if known)
"Take the time to really talk to their students about what it means to be a good writer and why it is so important that we have those skills."	Questionnaire – Sydney
"Teachers should try to help build an appreciation for writing so it shouldn't be scary or horrible."	Interview #1 - Gina
"Give students the why – why do I need to do this?"	Interview #1 – Sadie
"Make it fun and something that they need to know for the future so it's applicable for their life."	Interview #2 – Lily
"Make writing applicable for real-life situations and not just writing for the teacher."	Interview #2 - Sadie

Table 11 Continued

"I don't think students think about why they write. You pass a note to your crush in grade school. You take notes in class. You fill in a test, write a to-do list, and address and sign a Valentine."	Journal - Gina
"It's a huge part of it – showing your students a wide variety of purposes that writing serves. If they know they will use a skill later in life, they will be more likely to learn it."	Focus group
"Share the purpose of writing with authentic experiences."	Focus group

Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined in detail the responses and data collected for each participant in the context of the research questions: (1) How do preservice teachers perceive and practice the writing process?, (2) What experiences shaped their attitudes and beliefs about writing?, and (3) How do preservice teachers' views of the process inform their thinking about teaching writing? Three categories of writing attitudes emerged: reluctant, emerging, and confident writers. The data was presented from the perspective of participant as writer and participant as future writing teacher. From that, 6 themes emerged as significant and influential in the development of writing attitudes and beliefs: feedback, choice, fun/enjoyment, and enthusiastic writing teachers, grammar and foundational skills, practice, and understanding the "why" of writing. In chapter 5, I will connect the data presented and themes to the research and make recommendations as to the implications for

teacher education programs. Finally, I will conclude with suggestions for future

areas of research.

CHAPTER FIVE - CONCLUSION

"Writing is hard work. A clear sentence is no accident . . . If you find that writing is hard, it's because it is *hard."* (Zinsser, 2006, p. 9).

This study explored the formation and influences of writing attitudes and beliefs and how they would impact writing instruction in future classrooms for seven preservice teachers. The participants' confidence levels about writing ranged from reluctant to emerging to confident. This study was framed by three research questions and concluded with the six themes that emerged which played a role in the development of their attitudes and beliefs and in their future classrooms: (a) providing explicit and meaningful feedback, (b) offering choice in writing topics, (c) making writing fun, enjoyable, and possessing an enthusiasm for the subject, (d) providing adequate instruction in writing foundations, skill, and grammar, (e) allowing adequate time for writing practice, and (f) helping students understanding the "why" of writing. Although there was some natural overlap between these categories, the themes were distinct.

Apprenticeship of Observation and Situated Learning

Lortie's (1975) apprenticeship of observation and Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning provide a context for understanding these themes within a social constructivism framework. When a student considers a future career path, many factors shape the decision. A child may aspire to become a physician or dentist because of positive interactions with his or her healthcare provider. Likewise, a

family member in a particular profession may play a role in the decision-making

process. Someone might choose a field, such as the law or journalism, based upon

television shows or movies. But unlike any other profession, the choice to become a

teacher brings with it roughly 12 years of academic experience with past educators.

Whether or not students are aware, they have been engaged in the "apprenticeship

of observation" of the profession over the lifespan of their school career (Lortie,

1975, p. 1). This influence, both direct and indirect, plays a key role in the attitudes

and beliefs students hold about particular subjects and learning as well as the way

they will ultimately approach teaching it. Of course, the effects may have been

positive, negative, or some combination of the two.

Lave and Wenger (1991) expanded the notion of the apprenticeship. The

social practice of education is necessarily a part of the classroom. Although the

learning can relate to specific activities, it is also part of the larger notion of social

communities (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 53). In mastering knowledge and joining

communities of practice, students engage in the process of "legitimate peripheral

participation" (LLP) (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 29). This participation is based on

"situated negotiation and renegotiation of meaning in the world" (Lave & Wenger,

1991, p. 51).

In considering the intersection of theories by Lortie (1975) and Lave and

Wenger (1991) regarding the development of teacher candidates, these students

have been observers and participants in all of the previous classrooms throughout

their schooling. Those subtle, nuanced interactions gently shaped and molded the

students' attitudes, beliefs, and approach to the overall educational process as well as specific subjects.

In the context of writing instruction, this apprenticeship and community of practice, knowingly or unknowingly, invites students to assimilate their mentors' attitudes and beliefs (Lave & Wenger, 1991, Lortie, 1975). Teachers' attitudes and beliefs about writing play a distinct role in the development of how a student feels about the process and practice of the craft (Brooks, 2007; Graves, 1990; Daisey, 2009; Street & Stang, 2009). These collective experiences, which may have been positive, negative, or indifferent, ultimately shape a preservice teacher's thoughts about writing (Hall & Grisham-Brown, 2014). As Greenleaf, Jimenez, & Roller (2002) so aptly stated: "teachers don't just appear out of thin air. They are the products – as well as active agents – of the worlds from which they came" (p. 487).

When students enter the university, the attitudes and beliefs about writing that were formed throughout their academic careers follow them (Florio-Ruane & Lensmire, 1990; Lortie, 1975). They will have a direct impact on how future teachers approach writing instruction (Dart, Bouton-Lewis, Brownless, & McCrindle, 1998; Whitney & Friedrich, 2013). These thoughts will be a part of every instructional decision (Lortie, 1975).

My purpose in this chapter is to discern how the participants assimilated these attitudes and beliefs about writing during their apprenticeships and communities of practice and to suggest how this will inform their future teaching of writing. In addition, my goal is to make recommendations regarding how teacher

education programs can support writers at all stages of development and foster improved self-confidence and competence in writing. Finally, I suggest areas for future research.

Meaningful Feedback

Feedback was one of the most significant themes that emerged in this study for both the student and the future writing teacher. Frustration was a common sentiment regarding the quality and amount of feedback provided by previous teachers. For the writers whose levels of self-confidence were reluctant or emerging, this was particularly troubling. They simply did not know what they were doing incorrectly or how to improve. A teacher's experience with writing will have a significant influence on how he or she approaches writing instruction (Street & Stand, 2009). Amber called it the "number one thing that frustrated me in high school and college." Regardless of the quality of the final product, "even on an A paper," Amber stated that a meaningful critique could always be provided. Additionally, reluctant writers, such as Sydney, stated that feedback required more than just a grade. In her high school her teachers simply "didn't care." Verbal comments and social cues provide positive and negative feedback, which have a direct impact on a student's attitudes and beliefs (Parajes, 2003). Sydney felt frustrated by the lack of feedback because she didn't know what mistakes she was making or how to fix them. Students' writing histories influence how they "engage with and enact these practices" as teachers (Hawkins & Razali, 2012, p. 305).

However, the confident writers lamented about marginal or non-existent feedback as well. Although students whose attitudes and beliefs were shaped by successful experiences tend to feel more positive about writing (Chambless & Bass, 1995; Colby & Stapleton, 2006), the way in which they were taught will still have an influence (Street & Stang, 2009). Lily felt cheated because her past teachers "just gave [her] good grades and didn't analyze [her] writing very well." As a result, her higher levels of writing confidence were incongruent with her actual writing ability. Having received papers in her college classes with "A's" or "Nice Job!" at the top, Lily believed she was a competent writer; however, when her writing was critically examined, it failed to meet the standard of clear prose. Consequently, Lily felt short-changed and misled by teacher feedback. But even the most confident writer, Mary, found it troubling when teachers "let errors slide." Mary actually wondered if these teachers could not correct the mistakes because they did not know the fundamentals of grammar themselves. To effectively teach writing, teachers must be writers themselves (Draper, Barksdale-Ladd, & Radencich, 2000). It is quite possible that Lily and Mary had teachers who lacked writing skills or confidence to adequately assess a student's written work. Many teachers feel unprepared or under-prepared to teach writing (Daisey, 2009).

It was interesting to note that all of the participants articulated that they planned to give detailed feedback as teachers. Perceptions of feedback depend on a student's mindset about writing (Norman & Spencer, 2005). Students who view writing ability as fixed consider feedback unhelpful, non-supportive, and punitive

(Norman & Spencer, 2005). In contrast, students who believed writing ability was flexible found feedback and encouragement helped their writing improve (Norman & Spencer, 2005). In this study even the most reluctant writer, Sadie, stated that providing meaningful responses to student writing was "the most important thing a teacher can do" and indicated she will do so in her own classroom. However, to be meaningful, the participants agreed that it must be more than the assault of the red pen. It must be a balance of constructive criticism that helps the writer understand the mistakes and learn from them, but that also provides positive reinforcement on the aspects which were done well. Words such as *being available, taking the time*, and *explaining what they did wrong* were consistent refrains in how all of them planned to approach the task. This positive view of feedback for all participants appeared consistent with the improved levels of self-confidence as evidenced by the increase in each student's second WAT score.

Although most of these students did not feel they had received adequate feedback in their pre-college years, moving forward, all of them planned to make it a priority as teachers. Sydney, one of the most reluctant writers, specifically stated that the feedback provided this semester in EDU 330 had a dramatic impact on the improvement of her writing and level of confidence. According to Street (2003), writing attitudes can be changed by courses that foster positive outcomes with writing. A future study could follow this group of participants after three to five years of teaching to see if they continue to provide extensive feedback for writing.

Choice

Students overwhelmingly deemed choice in writing topics as influential in their attitudes as writers and as future writing teachers. According to Norman and Spencer (2005), the choice of relevant and meaningful topics played a powerful role in developing positive writing attitudes. Words such as *drudgery* and *boring* described experiences with topics that were mandatory. Amber admitted that when faced with a writing assignment, her first thoughts were, "Ugh, why do we have to do this and how long does it have to be?" This held true for both the reluctant and confident participants. One of the reluctant writers, Sadie, said she liked writing in "journals or creative writing," but didn't enjoy having to do more "formal papers." Likewise, Sydney appreciated the low-stakes daily journal writing in elementary school.

Notably, all of the confident students wrote for pleasure. Kay enjoyed "the creative side of writing," such as song lyrics. Lily and Gina appreciated journal and letter writing. For Gina, writing was also a way to clarify her thinking. "Without writing, I would be lost in a world of chaos," she said. Mary was an avid creative writer and former English major. All of these students clearly expressed that they choose to write in their personal lives. However, in terms of assignments, they did appreciate the opportunity to choose meaningful topics. Lily characterized her only negative experience as having to write a 10-page government paper "about a boring topic that I cared nothing about." When Kay was tasked with writing about a topic for which she "has no strong opinions," her writing was weak because she tends to

use "fillers." Mary explicitly stated her preference for choice of topics, but could "find ways to tweak it to stimulate interest."

Amber, the emerging writer, was the only exception. She preferred the structure of a required topic to know what she was "supposed to be writing about." Amber "wasn't good at coming up with ideas."

In discussing their future classrooms, the notion of choice was nearly universal and directly related to the theme of making writing fun and enjoyable. Teacher attitudes will directly influence the approach to writing instruction (McCarthey & Mkhize, 2013). Sydney unequivocally stated, "The worst thing a writing teacher can do is force students to write about things that are not meaningful." But even the most confident writers agreed that choice made the task easier. Mary found it "much easier to write extensively" on a topic she had chosen. Lily summed it up succinctly: "If you have a choice in topics you don't mind spending a lot of time on it. It just takes the drudgery out of it."

Although Amber did not explicitly indicate that choice would be important in her future classroom, she stated it would be helpful to "connect [writing] with things they are already interested in." This would make students "more inclined to learn and practice now." As an outlier in this study, it would be interesting to follow Amber as a single case study as she transitions into her own classroom.

Making Writing Fun, Enjoyable, and Possessing Enthusiasm

Linked directly to theme of choice was the notion that writing should be fun and enjoyable. Students stated that having choice made writing a more positive experience. Embedded within this theme was the thought that teachers should possess a sincere enthusiasm for writing. Students have a better chance of becoming "successful, enthusiastic, and engaged readers and writers when they learn from and are among teachers who display the same traits" (Brooks, 2007, p. 177). According to Norman and Spencer (2005), teachers who are "enthusiastic, supportive, and encouraging" about writing have a powerful influence over the attitudes and beliefs their students hold about the subject (p. 30).

In this study, students had a wide range of past experiences with writing. Gina, a confident writer, had overwhelmingly positive experiences. Students whose attitudes and beliefs were shaped by successful experiences with writing will generally have more positive attitudes toward writing (Chambless & Bass, 1995; Colby & Stapleton, 2006). "I had teachers who were positive about the writing experience," Gina said. In contrast, Sadie, one of the reluctant writers, used terms such as *dread, punishment*, and *difficult* to describe her relationship with writing. "I remember writing as being more of a punishment," Sadie said. This lack of writing confidence will inform her approach to writing instruction (Colby & Stapleton, 2006).

In terms of teaching writing, it was clear that the majority of the participants wanted to make the task an enjoyable experience. The reluctant writers, Sadie and

Sydney, agreed that the best writing teachers make writing fun. Sydney directly

linked the level of enjoyment to choice. In addition, Sydney believed the best writing

teachers were enthusiastic. In addition, the confident students, who already enjoy

the process of writing, stated that making writing fun and enjoyable would be a

priority. According to Lily, the failure to do so made the task a "chore." Like Sydney,

Lily and Mary articulated a direct link between fun and choice in writing topics. For

Gina, finding what interests her students would make writing more enjoyable -- for

example, incorporating blank comic book pages. Gina and Mary, the most confident

and competent writers, displayed such an authentic enthusiasm for writing that it

will unquestionably permeate their classrooms. Teachers who are comfortable in

the process of writing and are actually writers themselves will be the most effective

writing teachers (Bratcher & Stroble, 1994).

Instruction in Foundations, Skills, and Grammar

All of the students stated unequivocally that having adequate preparation in

the foundational language elements and grammar was absolutely critical for them as

writers and as future teachers. Yet several students, both reluctant and confident,

knew their writing skills were anemic when they entered the university.

Sadie chalked up her instruction as little more than a series of worksheets,

which she "hated" and deemed "useless." While Sydney knew her grammar and

spelling skills were lacking, she also had little instruction in how to revise and edit

her work. Kay, a confident writer, didn't have a strong background in grammar or

the fundamentals. A thorough understanding of the intricacies and conventions of the English language is essential for teachers (Graham, Harris, Fink, & MacArthur, 2001; Lavelle, 2006). As a writer, Lily didn't "know as much as [she] should."

Kay didn't have much grammar in school and wondered if it was because her teachers "weren't confident in it." Likewise, Mary questioned whether some of her elementary and high school teachers had a working knowledge of the conventions of the English language. Mary deemed a having knowledge of grammar essential to an educator's "credibility." Many professionals currently in the field express concerns that their teacher training programs did not adequately prepare them for writing instruction (Chambless & Bass, 1995; Daisey, 2009; Martin & Dismuke, 2015; Morgan, 2010; Tulley, 2013). The National Writing Project has attempted to mitigate this problem by offering intensive professional development in writing skills and practice since 1974 for current practitioners (National Writing Project, 2015). However, not all current teachers have the ability or are willing to participate.

At the institution where this study was conducted, it is possible for a student to enter with Advanced Placement (AP) credit for WRIT 101. Likewise, a score of 28 or greater on the English portion of the ACT exempts a student from WRIT 101. Consequently, this means that a student could attend four years at the university without being required to take a college-level writing course. In this study, Amber was exempt from WRIT 101 based on her ACT English score. While this is troubling for all university students, this is especially problematic for future teachers, who should be well-versed in grammar and writing foundations.

As future teachers of writing, all of the participants acknowledged that they need to be comfortable with writing fundamentals. Yet, teacher education programs continue to place minimal or no emphasis on writing pedagogy (Hall & Grisham-Brown, 2014). Furthermore, there is little consistency in programs across the nation regarding the amount of writing required (Chambless & Bass, 2010; Daisey, 2009; Tulley, 2013). Gina commented that she "didn't feel like there was a push for us to teach kids to write." Within the Department of Education, EDU 263 *Methods of Teaching Grammar* remains listed in the schedule of classes. However, it has not been available for students to take as part of their teacher training since 2012.

Most programs simply do not require a stand-alone course in writing principles and pedagogy (Norman & Spencer, 2005). But as the National Writing Project so vividly demonstrated, there is clearly a need for more required writing coursework in teacher training programs (National Writing Project, 2015). In this study, the more reluctant students stated they will need to continue working to improve their skill level in order to be effective teachers.

<u>Practice</u>

Foundational skills are critical, but having time to practice writing is also of the utmost importance. The only way to improve writing skills, at any level, is through writing regularly (Colby & Stapleton, 2006). Becoming a better writer simply requires being actively engaged in the process of writing (Bratcher & Stroble, 1994; Colby & Stapleton, 2006; Shofel, 1991). The National Commission on Writing

(2003) deemed allotting adequate time for writing instruction as paramount.

A common refrain from participants underscored the necessity of practice at the college level. As Kay said, "Learning writing, you know, it's repetition, repetition." Lily said there simply hadn't been much opportunity for practice. "I haven't written a lot in college and I don't know why," she said. The participants were genuinely curious and concerned why there were so few meaningful writing assignments, coupled with precise and helpful feedback, in a program that was designed to prepare future teachers. In the focus group, one of the students wondered, "I don't know how can I teach something I don't know." However, the participants noted that practice would be a key component in their future classrooms. According to Lily, "The best thing a writing teacher can do is provide lots of writing opportunities." As future teachers, practice in their classrooms would be frequent, in different formats such as "journals and letters," and be both formal papers as well as "low-stakes" assignments.

But practice takes on a unique meaning for future teachers. To teach writing effectively, teachers must be writers themselves (Bratcher & Strobe, 2010; Colby & Stapleton, 2006, Morgan, 2010; National Commission on Writing & Nagin, 2003, Street, 2003; Street & Stang, 2009). Morgan (2010) concluded that teachers must write to fully understand and experience the process. In this way, teachers can better help students understand and navigate the challenges and struggles of writing (Augsburger, 1998). Murray (2003) argued that teachers must "understand the writing process from within" (p.74). As Augsburger (1998), Bloom (1990), and

Morgan (2010) concurred, by experiencing the joys, struggles, and frustrations of

writing first-hand, teachers are able to comprehend and empathize with their

students. Smith (1983) stated it was difficult, if not impossible, to share this crucial

underlying knowledge of the process of writing without experiencing it directly.

<u>Understanding the "Why" of Writing</u>

In the participants' future classrooms, the final theme that emerged was

helping students understand the "why" of writing. According to Smith (1983),

teachers must "show children that writing is interesting, possible, and worthwhile"

(p. 566). According to Gallagher (2011), students must fully comprehend "why they

should write" (p. 7). Without this basic understanding, students will see not see

writing as a meaningful and worthwhile activity (Daisey, 2009; Gallagher, 2011).

Instead, they will regard the task as merely unavoidable (Daisey, 2009; Gallagher,

2011). Effective writing teachers share not only the process of writing and

mechanics, but also why they value writing (Augsburger, 1998; Bloom, 1990;

Cremin, 2006; Gallagher, 2011; Morgan, 2010).

A few of the participants expressed the importance of making sure their

students understood this issue. Lily planned to help her students know that writing

is "applicable for their li[ves]". Even the most reluctant writer, Sadie, found this

critical. She intended to "make writing applicable for real-life situations and not just

for the teacher." Gina suggested that students rarely "think about why they write"

and plans to address that in her curriculum.

Recommendations

When examining the data collected in this study, it was clear that all of the

participants' attitudes and beliefs, which spanned the spectrum, had been shaped by

their "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 1975, p. 1) and their "situated

negotiation and renegotiation of meaning in the world" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p.

51). Consequently, these students came to their teacher education program after "a

process that takes place in a participation framework, not in an individual mind"

(Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 15). In every first-year Torts class, law students learn the

adage, "you take the plaintiff as you find her." The same could be said of our teacher

candidates: They come to us with different degrees of writing self-efficacy, varied

foundational knowledge and skill ability, and a wide range of educational

experiences and influences. Whether or not a student is aware, these previously

formed attitudes, beliefs, and experiences accompany them (Florio-Ruane &

Lensmire, 1990; Lortie, 1975; Palmer, 2012). While students may fail to grasp this

notion, teacher education programs must not only acknowledge these stark

realities, but take affirmative steps to address the concerns. Future K – 8 students of

our graduates deserve nothing less.

The six themes that emerged in this study, (a) providing explicit and

meaningful feedback, (b) offering choice in writing topics, (c) making writing fun

and enjoyable and possessing an enthusiasm for the subject, (d) providing adequate

instruction in writing foundations, skill, and grammar, (e) allowing adequate time

for writing practice, and (f) helping students understanding the "why" of writing,

were in the context of both the participant as writer and future teachers. Since teacher training programs must deal with students' writing levels, as well as contemplate their majors as future teachers, recommendations will be made regarding each theme within this framework -- preservice teachers as writers and preservice teachers as future writing teachers.

Preservice Teachers as Writers

Students enter teacher training programs with a wide variety of writing abilities, educational experiences, and attitudes and beliefs about writing. The attitudes and beliefs they bring to the program play a powerful role in how they will approach writing instruction (Chambless & Bass, 1995; Colby & Stapleton, 2006, Lortie, 1975; Morgan, 2010; Street, 2003; Street & Stang, 2009). These concerns simply cannot be minimalized when considering curriculum in teacher education programs. If these issues are ignored, there is a clear risk of perpetuating the problem. Through swift and affirmative action, teacher educators can break the cycle and create confident and competent writers who are well-prepared for writing instruction.

As the 2011 NAEP National Center for Education Statistics (2012) report so dramatically illustrated, 75% of students in grades eight and 12 are not proficient writers. These students are entering the workforce and our universities. It follows that some of these students will major in elementary education. Yet, we expect these very students, who lack competence and confidence, to become writing teachers

when they lack the skills themselves. Without addressing the problem, this cycle will undoubtedly continue.

At the institutional level, the first step is to acknowledge that there are real problems which college students encounter. Universities should consider adding more writing requirements beyond WRIT 101. In fact, additional writing courses should be embedded within every major with one class per academic year. Doing so, however, requires an institutional commitment to improved writing across the curriculum and financial support for the additional faculty and course development. It also requires scaffolding for faculty who may not know how to incorporate writing into their content area. But a concerted effort at this level would reap countless benefits for graduates and employers.

For Departments of Education, these changes require not only monetary contributions, but a firm belief that they will meet their students "where they are." By doing so, programs can then provide the necessary coursework and support for their majors to grow and thrive as writers. Teacher educators must avoid the assumption that preservice teachers actually write or enjoy writing (Draper, Barksdale-Ladd, & Radencich, 2000). Since students typically receive more training in reading principles and pedagogy (Hall & Grisham-Brown, 2014; Norman & Spencer, 2005), one simple solution is to offer a writing principles and pedagogy class. In this course, preservice teachers could receive constructive feedback to improve their writing, have ample time to practice, and establish a firm foundation in grammar and skills. Through modeling and direct instruction, students would

learn how to incorporate choice of topics, which also makes writing fun and enjoyable, as well as learn ways to incorporate the notion of "why" write. Without a course strictly devoted to writing, there is simply no way to accomplish this monumental task.

Also within the context of a writing course, it would be critical to incorporate a reflection component that allows students to delve into an examination of their own writing attitudes and beliefs. According to Hawkins and Razali (2012) writing histories "influences not only the practice [of writing] itself, but the ways in which we each engage with and enact these practices in our classrooms" (p. 305). Norman and Spencer (2005) concurred that self-examination of writing attitudes and beliefs is not only critical to understanding them, but for changing their trajectory. In this way, training programs can take a critical stance and foster a change in how students approach writing (Norman & Spencer, 2005). According to Stang and Street (2011), an examination of writing histories "provides a place for teachers to grow" (p. 40). Teacher training programs are singularly poised to help students face their fears about writing, improve their level of competence and self-confidence, and reshape their attitudes and beliefs into more positive ones before they enter the classroom full-time. In addition, a writing course would give strong writers the opportunity to reinforce, strengthen, and hone their craft. Attitudes can be changed and improved by courses that foster positive experiences and outcomes with writing (Street, 2003).

However, if an additional course could not be included due to total credits for graduation constraints, another alternative would be a standard grading rubric for writing within the department of education. All faculty members within the department could come together to develop a rubric that would be used to evaluate written assignment within the department. Using a model such as the 6+1 traits could provide a framework for evaluation and a shared language for writing assignments.

Students as Future Writing Teachers

To become confident and effective writers, teachers must become comfortable with the concept and process of writing (Bratcher & Stroble, 1994). But it is more than just possessing a level of comfort. Simply stated, teachers must be writers themselves. They must understand the "process of writing from within" (Murray, 2003, p. 74). By being a writer, a teacher can help students comprehend the challenges and struggles that are an inherent part of the process because the teacher has experienced them first-hand (Augsburger, 1998; Bloom, 1990; Gebhardt, 1977; Morgan, 2010; Smith, 1983). This shift renegotiates the teacher's role from "evaluative" or "judgmental" in the final product view to a more "cooperative, advisory role as consultant" (Root & Steinberg, 1996, p. xix). Although it is important for writing teachers to be active participants in the process, it is also critical from an attitudinal perspective. Draper, Barksdale-Ladd, and Radencich, (2000) framed the issue in grave terms: "We do not believe that teachers who dislike reading and writing can effectively foster the love of reading and writing in

the children they teach" (p. 187). In other words, if teachers do not understand and engage in the process of writing, it is highly unlikely they will be able to nurture those positive attitudes in their future classrooms. While not every teacher may ultimately enjoy writing, having a firm grasp on the foundational skills will necessarily increase the level of confidence in writing instruction.

By requiring a course devoted to writing principles and pedagogy, universities can begin to bridge the chasm that leaves many graduates feeling ill-prepared to write and to teach writing. Due to the wide disparity in the amount of writing instruction in teacher training programs, many current teachers have expressed that they felt unprepared or under-prepared to teach writing (Chambless & Bass, 1995; Daisey, 2009; Martin & Dismuke, 2015; Morgan, 2010; Tulley, 2013). The National Commission on Writing (2003) expressly noted that there is typically "little instruction in how to teach writing" and that graduates are "ill equipped to teach it" (p. 23). According to the National Commission on Writing (2003), "no matter how hard they work, these instructors, lacking any real understanding of what good writing is or looks like, are often ill equipped to teach it" (p. 23). Similarly, the National Writing Project further underscored that a lack of emphasis on writing has been an on-going issue (Whitney & Friedrich, 2013). At minimum, a course that provides writing foundations, grammar, and meaningful feedback and practice would help remediate weak or deficient writing skills for those who desire to teach K-8 students.

A stand-alone writing course could also bolster levels of self-confidence of teacher candidates before they enter classrooms of their own. Since education majors' attitudes and beliefs about particular subjects and instruction are uniquely shaped over the course of their educational careers, teacher training programs have the opportunity to help students examine and reframe them (Martin & Dismuke, 2015). These negative perceptions about writing have a "lasting effect" will carry over into the classroom (Street & Stang, 2009, p. 85). However, these attitudes are not static or fixed (Hall & Grisham-Brown, 2011). These deleterious feelings can be improved by courses that offer positive experiences with writing (Street, 2003). As a result, teacher educators have the unique opportunity to encourage reflection upon a student's personal writing history and take affirmative steps to foster positive attitudinal shifts.

<u>Suggestions for Future Research</u>

Writing is the neglected element in the instructional triad known as the 3 Rs – reading, writing, and arithmetic - and it has also been largely ignored in the research. Consequently, numerous topics are ripe for further investigation.

First, a large-scale project could examine the writing attitudes and beliefs of students who are entering elementary education programs nationwide. The WAT could be administered at the beginning of the program and again at graduation to compare any changes in attitude during their training. Data could be assembled by institution and examined to determine those programs with the greatest impact in

fostering positive shifts. Those programs could then be explored to determine what factors may have influenced the changes.

Next, more research could examine the impact of reflection upon personal writing histories in teacher education programs. In following the research of Hawkins and Razali (2012) and Stang and Street (2011), an in-depth review of the ways in which programs utilize reflection to effectuate attitudinal shifts could offer insight into ways to incorporate this practice into coursework and practicum experiences.

Finally, researchers could examine the impact of post-graduation writing support for teachers in their first three years in the classroom. By doing so, institutions could glean a valuable understanding of the needs of their graduates within the community. With this knowledge, programs could adjust and change to better serve their graduates and the K – 8 students in their communities.

Summary and Conclusion

Students in teacher training programs come from a wide range of experiences with writing. Accordingly, the levels of writing competency a student may possess vary greatly. Those experiences, both in the classroom and from external sources, are also largely responsible for the attitudes and beliefs students hold about writing and themselves as writers. While these attitudes may be deeply held, they are not fixed and can be changed. By better understanding these attitudes, how they are shaped, and how they can be transformed, teacher training programs

can be positioned to help their students develop their writing skills and their self-

confidence as writers.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

EDU 330 EMERGENT LITERACY SYLLABUS

EDU 330 Syllabus/Spring 2016

Bring EDU 330 coursepack and any readings assigned as HW to class.
This tentative schedule may be adjusted due to student needs.

WEEK 1
Jan. 14 (Th)
- Introduction to course
- Survey, pre-assessments D'Nealian handwriting

HW:
- CP article: *Why Teachers Need to Write Well*
- Writing Journal*:* Introduce yourself
- Book Scavenger Hunts: Purpose and Construction. Practice with *Sound It Out!*
- Module 1: nouns
- Who are your instructors? Department of Education website search. Study any 4 c.v.'s in "Curriculum & Instruction." One must be your instructor. Who has "walked the walk" and actually taught in K-8 settings?

WEEK 2
Jan. 19 (T)
- WT: *that* vs. *who,* Rule of 3
- 4 language arts + 5 building blocks

- Basal readers: Dick and Jane

- D'Nealian handwriting: Palmer/vertical (ball-stick) vs. D'Nealian/Slanted

HW:
- WJ: Goals
- Create scavenger hunt with *BOL*
- D'Nealian –copy favorite poem as per CP instructions
- Read D'Nealian handwriting notes in CP
- Read Chapter 1 (Savage)
- Design study guide for Chapter 1
- Word Collection #1: Rule of 3
- Module 2: verbs

Jan. 21 (TH)
- WT: appositives, sentence combining, avoid weak linking verbs
- Reading teacher vocabulary
- History of reading
- Phonemes vs. graphemes
- Building blocks: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension

HW:
- Design study guide for chapter
- Read D2L posting: *Why Johnny Can't Read* excerpt
- Design quiz for classmate on Rudolph Flesch's excerpt
- Read Chapter 2 (Savage)
- Design a study guide for Chapter 2
- Practice D'Nealian, review CP notes about rationale for teaching handwriting
- Writing tips practice, appositive practice in CP
- Modules 3 + 4 (Adjectives, Adverbs)
- BA
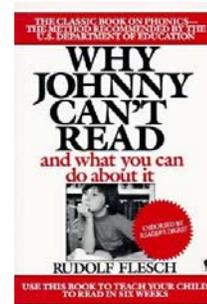
WEEK 3
Jan. 26 (T)
- D'Nealian assignment due
- WT: Varied openers—introductory prepositional phrases
- *BOL* Scavenger hunt exchange activity
- Phonemic awareness skills and activities
- Syllables-in-my-name game

HW:

- WJ: Prepositional phrase poems + reflection
- Word Collection #2: Compound adjectives + noun
- Read CP article by Yopp & Yopp on phonemic awareness
- Prepare for quiz on Yopp & Yopp reading
- Study CP pages on phonics order: Understand early. intermediate vs. advanced word/phonics study sequence
- Study CP language activities. Select your favorite 3. Be prepared to lead class with one activity.
- TBA

Jan. 28 (Th)
- WT: Varied openers—infinitive phrases
- Phonics: 3-part definition, one-to-one correspondence, graphic organizer consonant doubles: blends vs. digraphs vs. silent combos vs. doublets
- W vs. WH. Practice exercises CP.

HW:
- Read first section of Chapter 3 on "consonants" (Savage)
- Design study guide for chapter 3/first section: consonants
- Complete phonics + parts of speech matrix CP
- Word Collection #3: Blends and Digraphs
- Investigate special consonants C and G—what is the generalization? Hint: vowel markers. Write the generalization as Savage presents it in chapter 3 and be prepared to share this information in class.
- Modules 5 + 6 (Prepositions, Direct/Indirect Objects)
- Fun Quiz CP (As you have read chapters 1 + 2 in Savage, this quick review exercise should take you no more than 20 minutes.)
- Write a paragraph that provides a phonics teaching sequence rationale: (1) consonants before vowels, (2) single consonants before double consonant units, and (3) C/G principle. Word process and double-space text. Create a key or code that identifies a particular color to a writing tip. Finally, use different colored

highlighters to differentiate writing tips. Remember, _content is king_. First draft your initial thoughts and then go back and _read aloud_, revising as needed to incorporate all writing tips, which have been addressed in class. Your task is to have explained: Why do teachers teach the particulars of phonics (consonants and vowels) in a fairly standard order? (versus a willy-nilly, random approach to instruction?)
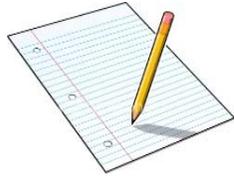
Note: you should be able to draft a rationale paragraph in 10-15 minutes; your revision with attention to writing presentation and writing tips should take no more than 10 more minutes. Total time for this assignment: 30 minutes or less.

WEEK 4
Feb. 2 (T)
- WT: Varied openers—verbals
- Peer review of rationale paragraphs
- Peer review of Word Collection #3
- Quiz on Modules 1-6
- Soft/hard C/G principle
- Soft/hard C names activity
- Activities to practice C/G, read aloud: _Prince Cinders_

HW:
- WJ: Dear Ann
- C/G cloze activity in CP
- Word Collection #4
- Read chapter 3 in Savage (vowels). Study carefully short vs. long vowels.
- Take-home quiz
- TBA

Feb. 4 (Th)
- Review WT—subject/pronoun agreement, number/amount, few/less
- Phonics BINGO
- vowel categories: short/long/other; rationale for instructional order; full-time vs. part-time vowels, initial vs. medial vs. final position---English is a positional language

- Short vowels: patterns, phonograms, word families
- Decodable text
- High-image short-vowel words
- Read aloud: *Cats Know Best*

HW:

- Courspack review exercises
- Reread Chapter 3, vowels (Savage)
- Design study guide for chapter 3/second section (vowels)
- Module 7 (Predicate nouns, predicate adjectives)
- Bring *BOL* to class
- Take-home quiz
- TBA
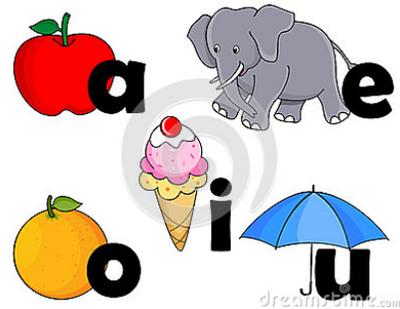
WEEK 5
Feb. 9 (T)

- WT: AAAWWUUBBIS words (subordinating conjunctions used to introduce dependent clauses)
- Long vowels: patterns (magic-e, digraphs, 49% generalization "*When two vowels go a-walking…*"), phonograms, word families
- *BOL* search Section 1 for vowel lists, phonogram lists
- Brainstorm CVC words that change their short-vowel sounds to become long-vowels with the "silent-e" (Compare with BOL list)

HW:

- WJ: Grade inflation
- Reread chapter 3 short section about "R-controlled vowels"
- Reread the short paragraph in chapter 3 that presents vowel teaching order and rationales
- Write a paragraph that presents a rationale for why teachers might elect to teach vowel elements in *each* of the following ways: (1) short vowels before long vowels, (2) long vowels before short vowels, and (3)

short and long vowels together/contrast. Finally, take a stance and explain your positionality—*why* do you believe the approach you advocate is the best one? Word process, double-space text. Create a key or code that identifies a particular color to a writing tip. Finally, use different colored highlighters to differentiate the following: introductory prepositional phrases, introductory verbal phrases, introductory subordinate clause/introductory phrase that begins with AAAWWUUBBIS words, appositive phrases, and rule of 3. Remember, *content is king*; first draft your initial thoughts and then go back and *read aloud*, revising as needed to incorporate all writing tips, which have been addressed in class. [Note: you should be able to draft a rationale paragraph in 15 minutes; your revision with attention to writing presentation and writing tips should take no more than an additional 15 minutes. Total time for this assignment: approximately 30 minutes.]

Feb. 11 (Th)
- WT: short sentence; review varied openers
- R-controlled vowels (bossy-r combos, -ar, -or and other patterns)
- Special vowel digraphs: long- and short-double o
- Functions of Y as consonant and vowel (position): implications for decoding and encoding

HW:
- Word Collection #5: Varied openers
- Writing tips practice TBA
- Y and W practice
- List 5 example words for each generalization in CP
- Categorize words and identify spelling pattern
- Read *Phonics in Proper Perspective* excerpt (D2L pdf. file)
- Module 8 (Four basic sentence types)
- TBA

President's Day
Federal holiday
Feb. 15   WEEK 6

Feb. 16 (T)

- WT: Point of view (POV)
- Vowel diphthongs: au/aw, ou/ow, oi/oy

- Read aloud: *Mrs. Huggins and her Hen Hannah*

HW:
- WJ: Busy work
- Word sort
- Provide minimum of 5 example words for each vowel generalization
- Complete *Mrs. Huggins* phonics word sort activity

Feb. 18 (Th)
- WT: Topic sentences/word choice
- Phonics knowledge to aid in spelling short- and long-vowel words, homophones
- Syllable patterns: closed, open, silent -e
- Schwa
- Direct, explicit instruction and the 4-parts of an instructional lesson

HW:
- Phonics and grammar review exercise
- Topic sentence exercise
- Read Chapter 4 in Savage
- Design a study aid to accompany chapter 4
- Phonics Mastery assignment
- Take-home quiz
- No Modules assigned this weekend; instead focus on upcoming mid-term

WEEK 7
Feb. 23 (T)
- WT: Share topic sentence HW responses
- Quiz on Chapter 4 (Savage)—open notes
- Review explicit, systematic phonics approaches
- Review activities in coursepack: vocabulary sort, expectancies

HW:
- WJ: Michael Stone, winners vs. whiners
- Read chapter 6 in Savage
- Design a study aid to accompany this short summary chapter
- Read "Clarifying Phonics" in CP
- Read "Basic Principles" in CP
- Complete phonics cloze summary

- Take-home quiz

Feb. 25 (Th)
- WT: semi-colon
- Phonics BINGO (expert version)
- Review for mid-term
- Review syllable patterns: open, closed, silent-e
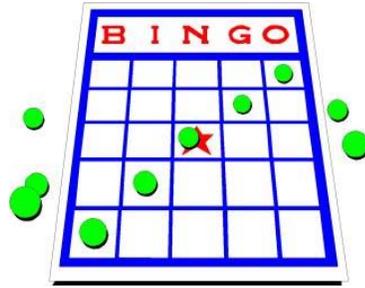
HW:
- Re-do Phonics Mastery assignment only if mastery not met
- Mock mid-term
- Mid-term preparation
- Read Chapter 5 (Savage)
- Design study guide
- CP spelling questionnaire
- T-chart: Characteristics of Able Spellers vs. Challenged Spellers (behaviors and attitudes)
- TBA

WEEK 8
March 1 (T)
- Spelling and phonics
- Spelling stages: scribbling….conventional
- Able vs. tentative readers + spellers: behaviors and attitudes
- Mid-term practice (item types: constructed response, application and analysis)

HW:
- WJ: Favorite Quote
- Prepare for mid-term

March 3 (TH)   Mid-term—full class period

HW
- Word Collection #6: Varied word choice
- Read pdf. file in D2L: *So What's a Schwa Sound Anyway?*

- Compose a 2-paragraph response: paragraph 1 offers a narrative summary of salient points; paragraph 2 is your reflection/analysis of ideas. Word process, double-space.
- Vowels Rule! CP spelling rules for primary-grade students
- TBA

WEEK 9
March 8 (T)
- What makes English spelling difficult?
- Spelling generalizations and English orthography, Phonics informs encoding---how?
- Able vs. tentative spellers: skills and behaviors

HW:
- WJ: Free choice
- Read CP article: *Spelling exceptions: Problems or possibilities?*
- Vowels Rule!
- TBA

March 10 (TH)
- Activities and then follow-up quiz on FLSZ, Catch a Lunch, Kiss the Cat, the Milk Truck, and other spelling rules
- Spelling lists: Analyze grade 4 list
- Modules 9 and 10 (Conjunctions and Sentence Patterns—simple, complex, compound, compound-complex)
- TBA

HW (to be completed over spring break)
- WJ: Identify 2-3 goals for yourself (check in with what you wrote during Week 2) as we enter the final third of the semester. How will you be pro-active in taking steps to realize these goals?
- Read CP spelling article: *What Can Children's Spelling of....*
- Read Chapter 4 in Allington's *What Really Matters to Struggling Readers*
- Create a study guide to accompany Allington's Chapter 4
- Module 11

- Read Allington's *What Really Matters to Struggling Readers* on your own time. I will not formally assign chapters; consider this a chance to pace yourself with your other assignments. Focus on chapters 2-6 for final exam.

WEEK 10--NO CLASSES week of March 14-18

WEEK 11
March 22 (T)
- Past tense: /d/, /t/, and /ed/
- Preview Word Collection #7: -ED as morphological marker
- Fluency defined
- Fluency, sight words, DOLCH words, how fluency impacts comprehension

HW:
- WJ: "Do-overs" vs. "getting it right" the first time
- Word Collection #7: -ED as morphological marker
- Read CP article on fluency: *Reading Fluency Assessment and Instruction*
- Take-home quiz based on CP fluency article

March 24(Th)
- Reader's Theater
- Morphemic analysis, word structure, free and bound morphemes, inflected vs. derived words, syllable patterns
- Case study #1: Fluency + Word Recognition

HW:
- Case study #1
- Module 12
- Word Collection #8: Derived Words
- TBA
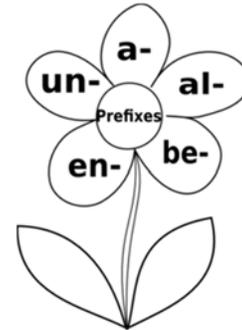
WEEK 11
March 29 (T)
- Case study #1 due
- Morphemic analysis, syllable patterns cont.
- Mastery assignment: Morphemic analysis

HW:
- WJ: Dear Ann
- Word Collection #9: Syllable patterns
- Read in Allington text: How to select vocabulary words
- Read in Allington text: Tier 1, 2, and 3 words
- TBA

March 31 (Th)
- Vocabulary pre-test
- Vocabulary do-rights
- Vocabulary levels (unknown, acquainted, established)
- Lean versus rich context clues
- Read aloud: *The Story of Z*

HM:

- CP vocabulary support material
- *Story of Z activities*
- Module 13
- Word Collection activities

WEEK 12
April 5 (T)

- Case study #2: Vocabulary
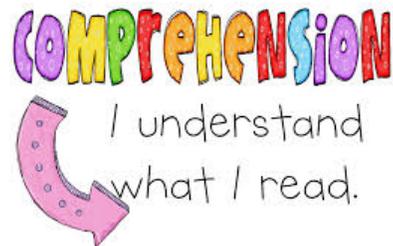- Comprehension skills, levels
- Read aloud: *Dandelion*

HW:

- WJ: Dear Ann
- Word Collection #10: Free choice
- Take-home quiz

April 7 (Th)

- Teacher analysis of textual features: page layout, white space, sentence presentation, language features
- Read aloud: *Crow Boy*
- Vocabulary activities

HW:

- Case study #2
- Module 14
- Take-home quiz
- TBA

WEEK 13
April 12 (T)

- Case study #2 due
- Comprehension activities applied with read aloud: TBD

HW:

- WJ: "Pretty good" might not be good enough

- WJ: Work on Showcase Writing journal entry to be shared
- Take-home quiz
- TBA

April 14 (Th)
- Early writing experiences: lists, writing from a picture
- 6+1 traits assessment of student writing

HW:
- Dyslexia reading (D2L pdf. file)
- Take-home quiz

WEEK 14
April 19(T)
- Sharing Day for Writing Journals—3 copies to be randomly distributed to classmates
- Dyslexia—preparation for case study
- Case study #3: Dyslexia

HW:
- Case study #3
- Take-home quiz

April 21 (Th)
- Poetry fun + reading comprehension
- Review activities for the final
- Sample exam items shared

HW:
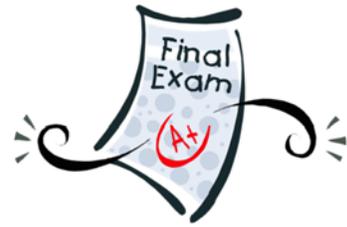- Case study #3

WEEK 15
April 28 (T)
- Case study #3 due
- Review activities for the final
- Sample exam items shared

HW: TBA

April 28 (Th)
- End-of-semester review activities to prepare for the final

FINAL EXAM: May 2, 12-2 p.m. Room TBA
<u>EDU 330 ASSIGNMENTS</u>

EDU 330 Emergent Literacy
Spring 2016

Instructor: Ann Ellsworth, Ph.D.
Office: 138A Reid Hall
Office Phone: 994-5793
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Required Texts (all are available in the MSU Bookstore)
1. *EDU 330 Emergent Literacy Coursepack* (Ann Ellsworth)
2. *Sound It Out* (John Savage, most recent edition)
3. *What Really Matters for Struggling Readers* (Richard Allington, most recent edition)
4. *The Reading Teacher's Book of Lists* (Ed Fry and Jacqueline Kress, most recent edition)

Assignments*	**Due Dates**
Surveys (3 points)	Throughout the semester
Mastery: D'Nealian printing/manuscript (3 points)	Week 2
Mastery: Phonics (2 attempts) (5 points)	Week 6
Mid-term exam (35 points)	Week 7
Mastery: Morphemic analysis (2 attempts) (5 points)	Week 13
Quizzes (18 points)	Throughout the semester
Case study responses (36 points)	Throughout the semester
Writing Journal (15 points)	Throughout the semester
Word Collection (10 points)	Throughout the semester
Final Exam (comprehensive) (70 points)	Finals Week/TBA

Grading (total points: 200)

*Due dates are approximate; they may be adjusted depending on pacing of course topics, etc.

A   92-100%
A-   90-91%
B+   88-89%
B   82-87%
B-   80-81%
C+   78-79%
C   72-77%
C-   70-71%
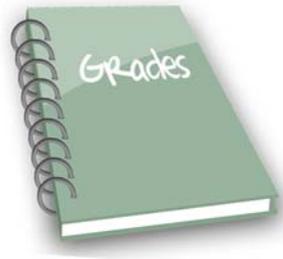
To make continuous progress in the Teacher Education Program at Montana State University-Bozeman, students must earn a "C" or better.

APPENDIX B

DALY-MILLER WRITING APPREHENSION TEST (WAT)

DALY-MILLER WRITING APPREHENSION TEST (WAT)

Directions: Below are a series of statements about writing. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by circling whether you **(1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) are uncertain, (4) disagree, or (5) strongly disagree** with the statement. While some of these statements may seem repetitious, take your time and try to be as honest as possible. There are no right or wrong answers. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

1. I avoid writing.
   (1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) uncertain (4) disagree (5) strongly disagree

2. I have no fear of my writing being evaluated.
   (1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) uncertain (4) disagree (5) strongly disagree

3. I look forward to writing down my ideas.
   (1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) uncertain (4) disagree (5) strongly disagree

4. I am afraid of writing essays when I know they will be evaluated.
   (1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) uncertain (4) disagree (5) strongly disagree

5. Taking a composition course is a very frightening experience.
   (1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) uncertain (4) disagree (5) strongly disagree

6. Handing in a composition makes me feel good.
   (1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) uncertain (4) disagree (5) strongly disagree

7. My mind seems to go blank when I start to work on a composition.
   (1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) uncertain (4) disagree (5) strongly disagree

8. Expressing ideas through writing seems to be a waste of time.
   (1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) uncertain (4) disagree (5) strongly disagree

9. I would enjoy submitting my writing to magazines for evaluation and publication.
   (1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) uncertain (4) disagree (5) strongly disagree

10. I like to write my ideas down.
    (1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) uncertain (4) disagree (5) strongly disagree

11. I feel confident in my ability to clearly express my ideas in writing.
    (1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) uncertain (4) disagree (5) strongly disagree
12. I like to have my friends read what I have written.

(1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) uncertain (4) disagree (5) strongly disagree

13. I'm nervous about writing.
    (1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) uncertain (4) disagree (5) strongly disagree

14. People seem to enjoy what I write.
    (1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) uncertain (4) disagree (5) strongly disagree

15. I enjoy writing.
    (1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) uncertain (4) disagree (5) strongly disagree

16. I never seem to be able to clearly write down my ideas
    (1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) uncertain (4) disagree (5) strongly disagree

17. Writing is a lot of fun.
    (1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) uncertain (4) disagree (5) strongly disagree

18. I expect to do poorly in composition classes even before I enter them.
    (1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) uncertain (4) disagree (5) strongly disagree

19. I like seeing my thoughts on paper.
    (1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) uncertain (4) disagree (5) strongly disagree

20. Discussing my writing with others is an enjoyable experience.
    (1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) uncertain (4) disagree (5) strongly disagree

21. I have a terrible time organizing my ideas in a composition course.
    (1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) uncertain (4) disagree (5) strongly disagree

22. When I hand in a composition I know I'm going to do poorly.
    (1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) uncertain (4) disagree (5) strongly disagree

23. It's easy for me to write good compositions.
    (1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) uncertain (4) disagree (5) strongly disagree

24. I don't think I write as well as most other people.
    (1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) uncertain (4) disagree (5) strongly disagree

25. I don't like my compositions to be evaluated.
    (1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) uncertain (4) disagree (5) strongly disagree

26. I'm no good at writing.
    (1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) uncertain (4) disagree (5) strongly disagree

Daly, J. A. & Miller, M. D. (1975). The empirical development of an instrument to measure writing apprehension. *Research in Teaching English, 9*(3), 242 – 249. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/40170632

APPENDIX C

WRITTEN QUESTIONAIRRE

1. My elementary school writing teachers did a good job when they:

2. I would have learned more about how to become a better writer if my teachers had:

3. The best two ways a writing teacher can help students is:

4. The worst two things a writing teacher can do are:

5(a). Looking back, I wish my writing teachers would have:

5(b). Right now in my teacher education courses, I wish my instructors would:

6. The number one goal for a writer is:

7. My most significant memory about writing is:

8. The person who had the most influence on my writing is _____ because s/he:

9. To me the two most important things about writing are:

10. When I am a teacher, the two most important things I can do to help students with writing are:

APPENDIX D

GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION: WRITING MEMORIES MATRIX

Writing memories

For each time period please make a drawing that represents a memory about writing

Pre-K through grade 4	Grades 5-8

Grades 9-12	College

APPENDIX E

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW #1

Semi-structured interview #1

General background information:

a. Educational background – high school size/grades
b. Year in the program
c. Favorite education courses/why
d. Least favorite education courses/why
e. Favorite non-education courses/why
f. Least favorite non-education courses/why

1. Discussion of drawing:
   a. Pre-K – grade 4
   b. Grades 5 – 8
   c. Grades 9-12
   d. College

2. What traits do you think make a good writer?

3. What aspects of writing do you find easy or enjoyable?

4. What experiences have you had that influenced this?

5. What aspects of writing do you find difficult or challenging?

6. What experiences have you had that may have influenced this?

7. What two words best describe you as a writer?

8. When you think about being a teacher, what do you think will be the two most important factors in teacher writing to students?

9. What strengths will you bring to teaching writing?

10. What challenges will you have to overcome?

11. Finish the sentence. The best writing teachers:

APPENDIX F

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Opening:

1. Tell us your name and your year in the program.

Introductory:

2. What are the first three things that come to mind when you think about writing?

3. Writing: positive or negative experience? Why?

Transition:

4. Looking back, what factors may have influenced your feelings about writing?

Key questions:

5. What does the writing process look like for you?

6. What parts of the writing process feel easy or enjoyable to you?

7. What parts of the writing process feel frustrating or challenging?

8. Has your writing process changed? If so, how? What prompted those changes?

9. What is your view of teaching writing? In your future classroom, what three things will play a key role in writing instruction?

Ending questions:

10. If you had a chance to give future writing teachers advice, what would you say?

11. Moving forward, are there any changes would you suggest to improve writing instruction in our teacher education program?

12. Is there anything else anyone would like to add that you didn't get a chance to say?

APPENDIX G

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS #2

Semi-structured interview #2

1. What traits make a good writer?

2. What aspects of writing do you find easy or enjoyable at this point?

3. What factors influenced this?

4. What aspects of writing do you find difficult or challenging at this point?

5. What factors influenced this?

6. When you think back to the beginning of the semester, how did you feel about writing?

7. Have your feelings about writing changed? If so, how?

8. When you think back to the beginning of the semester, how did you feel about yourself as a writer?

9. Have your feelings about writing changed? If so, how?

10. What two words would you use to describe yourself as a writer today? Explain why.

11. At this point, what strengths do you believe you will bring to teaching writing?

12. At this point, what obstacles will you still have to overcome in teaching writing?

13. What steps will you take to overcome these?

14. Please finish the sentence: The best writing teachers:

15. When I think of myself as a writing teacher, I will always:

16. When I think of myself as a writing teacher, I will never: