

2015

Enhancing Teachers' Skills and Students' Success in Writing using Elementary Teachers' Experiences in Writing Instruction

Lundie Spivey Gray
Walden University

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Lundie Gray

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Review Committee

Dr. Kevin Quinlan, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty

Dr. Mary Lou Morton, Committee Member, Education Faculty

Dr. Marvin Putnam, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer

Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2015

Abstract

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Teachers' Experiences in Writing Instruction

by

Lundie S. Gray

M.S., Georgia Southern University, 2006

B.S., Georgia Southern University, 2005

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Ed.D. in Teacher Leadership

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December 2015

Abstract

This study addressed the issue of struggling student writers in a K–5 rural elementary school. This phenomenological study, based on social constructivist theory, investigated elementary teachers' experiences to determine effective writing strategies. Six teachers who had taught writing in the elementary grades for 5 consecutive years volunteered to participate in the study. All teachers participated in a focus group, and 2 teachers provided additional data via individual interviews. Member-checking was used to ensure trustworthiness of data. The data were analyzed; emerging themes developed categories and, through horizontalization and triangulation, gaps in writing instruction were revealed. Analysis from the teachers' perspectives led to key factors which contribute to successful writing instruction, incorporate more writing instruction school-wide, promote unity of teachers for planning and discussion of writing instruction, and use curriculum plans in writing instruction that leads to enhanced student success. This study sought to provide teachers with strategies for developing efficient writing instruction for students using a 9-week curriculum writing guide. This study will improve teachers' skills and lead to enhanced writing instruction and student learning by making connections between enriched teacher experiences; this study will also provide insights into the design and delivery of more effective writing instruction that creates local-to-global changes in student writing success.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this project study to my mother, Camellia Ortiz Spivey. I know I have gotten where I am because of her constant support and faith in me to realize my success in completing this program.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge the instructional guidance and endless encouragement of my doctoral committee, Dr. Kevin Quinlan, Dr. Alicia Beth, Dr. Marylou Morton, and Dr. Lewis Putnam who were helpful, extremely patient, and brilliant in yielding ideas for perfecting my study. I owe them a great deal of gratitude.

I acknowledge also the support and guidance my family gave me through this often challenging process. I would like to especially thank my husband, Hardy, my daughter Amellia, and son Parker, for their enduring assistance, tolerance, and love. I could not have completed this process without your continuous encouragement.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

A key component of literacy development involves mastering the skill of writing. Within elementary schools, writing is one of the most vital parts of a student's beginning communications, and students' early literacy development heralds the start of their success in society (Graham et al., 2012). As a student acquires the ability to write, she or he will begin to develop in other academic areas, such as reading, mathematics, social studies, and science (Tompkins, 2013). Therefore, as a student's ability to write affects every aspect of that student's daily life, enhancing writing ability will increase the individual's chances of success in American society.

Focusing on the education of our American society, as the economy changes, technological advances occur, and diverse populations grow, there is a need to put writing at the forefront of academic instruction. According to research (e.g. Alber-Morgan, Hessler, & Konrad, 2007; Dutro, 2010; Helsel & Greenberg, 2007), there is rising concern that students within the United States are not meeting the basic standards for writing. With societal changes and the rising concern for students, the educational system is faced with the challenge of helping struggling writers succeed (Dutro, 2010). In recognizing there are struggling writers, there should be an awareness of the importance of improving students' writing skills and making this topic a part of the educational atmosphere and dialogue.

With an urgency to build a literate community of individuals armed with writing skills, some educational systems have acknowledged the concern of struggling writers.

Some school systems, locally and nationally, for example, have encouraged teachers to implement effective writing instruction to teach students. Despite this encouragement there often continues to be a lack of emphasis on the writing curriculum (Dutro, 2010; National Writing Project & Nagin, 2006). Often the writing curriculum is not stressed because teachers have difficulty understanding how to teach writing, so they often become unmotivated and spend little time planning or fitting it into their daily schedules (e.g., Applebee & Langer, 2009; Dutro, 2010; McCarthey & Ro, 2011; Tompkins, 2013). The lack of emphasis of the writing curriculum has allowed writing to be pushed to the side of the “R’s” for academics (Tompkins, 2013). Without educational administration and teachers pushing for more productive writing time in the classroom, the academic curriculum falls short and minimizes the chances for students to be accomplished writers.

Although writings complex nature poses many challenges for educators and students, it is essential in the school curriculum. Writing skills must be emphasized if teachers want their students to succeed (Graham et al., 2012). According to the National Writing Project and Nagin (2006),

Today, there is an urgency to reconsider the relationship of writing to learning as well as the place of writing in our schools as we make every effort to meet our students’ needs in the information age and prepare them to become informed and active citizens in the twenty-first century. (p. x)

The most important goal of any type of writing curriculum and atmosphere at the school should be to foster productive, successful student writers (National Writing Project & Nagin, 2006). Given the challenges of the differing types of programs used to teach

writing, a teacher must jump this hurdle and acquire the expertise to manipulate a chosen program to make it effective.

Educators may need to look at their own writing instruction to change the cycle of struggling writers, and they should be concerned with empowering their teaching by changing writing instruction to meet the needs of students (Graham, MacArthur, & Fitzgerald, 2013). Teachers should provide instruction where children can experience writing on a daily basis through meaningful, functional, and genuine experiences (Cunningham & Cunningham, 2010). When teachers use newer skills required to increase students writing success, they can decrease the difficulties of writing and increase students' abilities to develop written language effectively and confidently (Parr & Limbrick, 2010; Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde, 2012). Teachers should desire to transform their approaches to writing instruction, and offer instruction that enhances students' abilities on performance standards and promotes a lifetime of writing.

When teachers lack the understanding of how to teach writing and lack confidence, writing instruction is not emphasized and students writing skills suffer. At an elementary school in rural Georgia, referred to as School E9 for this study, more students are averaging in the low-achieving levels than in the exceeding or achieving proficiency levels on the Georgia State writing assessment, third through fifth grade (Kingery, 2007; Rural Elementary School, 2014-2015). There is, therefore, a growing need to communicate with educators who teach writing at School E9, and discover ways to improve writing instruction. This conversation is needed to help educators improve their own teaching and learning skills. Through dialogue and examination of their own

approaches to teaching, teachers can become more effective instructors prepared with improved instruction and confidence in the core subjects (National Writing Project & Nagin, 2006; National Writing Project 2010). As educators further examine and discuss their writing instruction, they will gain abilities to teach writing more confidently and accurately (Applebee & Langer, 2009). It is significant, then, for teachers to develop knowledge of, and fully comprehend, writing instruction in order to change their approach and make a difference in student achievement.

The key to increasing student success in writing may be application of effective teaching skills that promote improved writing instruction. Through a new approach to teaching and learning, students will be guided by teachers equipped with enhanced skills and adequate resources; teachers who, themselves, are confident writers and who have the desire to improve outcomes in student writing skills, the aim of this project study! Through this qualitative study, I investigated teachers' experiences with teaching writing, their strengths and weaknesses in designing and delivering writing programs, and their opinions on ways to improve writing instruction.

Definition of the Problem

Students should progress through each grade knowing how to write successfully and be prepared for their next year of instruction. Given this professional and academic duty, the pressure is high for elementary school teachers across the nation to be effective in teaching writing skills to all students in kindergarten through fifth grade (Applebee & Langer, 2009). To achieve this aim, teachers must have adequate tools to teach writing; they must be efficient; they must be confident about their ability to teach writing. If

elementary school students are struggling in writing, based on test results and levels of proficiency, the problem could lie with teachers' approaches to writing instruction.

A rural, Title I elementary school (K–5) in Georgia, with approximately 650 students, is under pressure to have more successful writers based on their past state performance test scores (Rural Elementary School, 2014-2015). Adhering to the Title 1 funds under the No Child Left Behind Act (2002), meant to provide the school with financial support to improve the performance of economically and/or disadvantaged students, the school strives to meet the educational needs of low-achieving students in the low income school (Rural Elementary School, 2014-2015). The state funding is used specifically to provide teachers with quality tools and improved instructional approaches to minimize existing gaps, or prevent gaps in learning among all students (Rural elementary School, 2014-2015). Even though the state funding has been given to address areas of concern for School E9 students, a problem within the students' writing skills still exist, so awareness about the severity of this problem could help promote future Title 1 funding in this problem area.

A gap appeared with the Spring 2007 writing assessment outcomes for third and fifth grades. For this study, I reviewed the Spring 2007 through Spring 2013 writing assessment outcomes and they revealed that the school remained in the lowest percentages status for meeting and exceeding performance levels on the state's writing standards over the years that were reviewed (Kingery, 2007; Rural Elementary School, 2014-2015). With the data profile of student performance proving to be at low percentages on the writing assessment within the county, there is a concern for future

student achievement. Local, state, and national studies, along with state testing, were reviewed to provide further evidence of the struggles students are facing in writing. The result was a call to the educational community to support the reality that there is a problem, such as at rural School E9, as compared to other schools within the county, state, and nation (Georgia Census, 2010; Georgia Department of Education, 2015a). If there is not pressure to establish true literacy learning within writing in the general education classroom, an achievement gap will continue to remain between students in the district, state, and nation.

The impacts of struggling with writing, as being experienced within School E9, are that students are not learning the necessary literacy skills to become active participants in reading/English language arts academics. The problem could be the absence of an effectively implemented program, a lack of individual or collegial planning, challenges of teaching writing, or simply the lack of teacher confidence to teach writing (Applebee & Langer, 2011; 2013). If educators do not gain more knowledge, share, or give their own input to reevaluate their writing instruction in the general education classroom, the problem will continue. Identifying with the problem at School E9, the current situation is not fostering productive, successful writers, and this could be the case within other school systems. There is a need for teachers in all schools, districts, states, and the nation, to bring awareness to this problem and change approaches to writing instruction for students.

An area of concern for elementary grade teachers is how to improve writing success among students. In School E9, the problem is that there are struggling writers

coupled with a need for teachers to improve their writing instruction. If teachers do not reflect upon their own writing instruction, students may continue to struggle with writing (Parr & Limbrick, 2010). The need, then, is to have teachers reflect upon and share their writing instruction while expressing, from their own perspective, what is occurring in their own classrooms and in the school. The idea for this study was to gain insight into teacher experiences with writing instruction and, that the data analysis would inform the development of a plan designed with teachers and students in mind. The aim was to improve teaching practices aimed at enhancing student outcomes in writing, one that can produce change and lead to writing success for teachers and students in School E9, and be representative for other schools.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

I discovered that some local schools, such as School E9, are struggling to meet the expectation of preparing all students to write successfully. Through a review of the data it was apparent a problem exists on the local level where students are struggling in the core subject of writing (Kingery, 2007; School E9, 2014-2015; Local County Schools, 2014-2015a, 2014-2015b; Georgia Department of Education [GDOE], 2015a, 2015b; U.S. Department of Education, 2014; The Governor's Office of Student Achievement [GOSA], 2015). Through my discovery phase I found that a problem does exist and I identified a factor that could be hindering teachers' writing instruction. The issue was the allotted amount of time given to writing instruction; thus, causing the problem to be continuous.

I began with examining the local school, School E9, to find the source of struggling writers. In reporting statistics, the School E9's fact profile sheet for the district's 2013-2014 report year indicated there were 32 teachers educating 774 students in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade (Local County Schools, 2014-2015a, 2014-2015b). Approximately 301 of the 774 students enrolled in the third grade through fifth grade population are tested on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) and the state performance-based writing assessment (Local County Schools, 2014-2015a, 2014-2015b). With the students in the district placed at nine particular elementary schools, such as School E9, the district has to ensure each student is getting effective writing instruction.

The district committees strive to provide an atmosphere that improves achievement in all academic areas, especially writing. Therefore, to find the source for struggling writers at the local level, I began searching School E9's district to identify concerns and terms taken to minimize the concerns. In spring, 2001, the State Board of Education became aware of struggling writers in elementary grades, and saw a need to have higher percentages of students meet and exceed writing standards (GDOE, 2015a). The Board contracted with the National Center of Education and the Economy to develop strategies and training to improve writing instruction (Glazer, 2009; Cohen, Peurach, Glazer, Gates, & Goldin, 2014). The National Center of Education and the Economy suggested implementing America's Choice program to approximately 160 schools, renaming it State's Choice to reconstruct the writing instruction in these schools (Glazer, 2009; Cohen et al., 2014). School E9's district raised concerns for its schools to have

higher percentages of students meeting and exceeding state standards for writing on the CRCT and state performance-based writing assessment. Locally, the county's elementary schools began implementing the State's Choice strategies to improve their annual yearly progress in writing. The problem was that some schools, such as School E9, continued to have struggling writers.

On the local level, struggling writers are identified through local and state analyses gauged by a writing assessment and a comprehensive test. To search writing assessments, I found that School E9 adheres to Georgia Law and follows 2010 Georgia Code, Title 20, Chapter 2, Article 6, Part 12, § 20-2-281 of the Education Act (2010), which required further assessment of third, fifth, eighth, and eleventh grade students by testing their writing capabilities with a performance-based writing assessment (GDOE, 2015b). For elementary grades, the third and fifth grade writing assessments, referred to as Georgia Grade Three Writing Assessment and Georgia Grade Four Writing Assessment, are unpublished documents kept at the schools to be analyzed for comparisons within the school, to show students their writing performance level, to improve students' future writing abilities, and to guide teachers' writing instruction (GDOE, 2015b). Due to the transitions with testing on the state and local level, writing tests were not given for the 2014-2015 school year for the third and fifth grade students; therefore, 2013-2014 was the last recorded data for the performance-based writing assessment (School E9, 2014-2015; Local County Schools, 2014-2015a). I reviewed the most recent statistics that could be obtained for identifying struggling writers located in unpublished documents kept at School E9.

Through this process I discovered the unpublished documents of the spring 2006-2007 State performance-based writing assessment at School E9. The report indicated the lowest percentage for exceeding standards in all areas on the performance-based writing assessment for third and fifth grade, with students performing at the 8th percentile or lower for the district (Kingery, 2007). The outcomes from the assessment also reported having the highest percentage of ‘does not meet standards’ in all areas tested on the performance-based writing assessment for third and fifth grade, showing the highest percentages for ‘not meeting the standards’ in the county (Kingery, 2006-2007).

Following the unpublished documents from 2006-2007 through the 2013-2014 school years, I found School E9’s 2013-2014 School Improvement Plan (School E9, 2014-2015). The plan indicated that, for the fifth grade writing assessment outcomes, there has been minimal growth with a constant percentile status within the 70th percentile range, with fifth graders outcomes at 72% of students that met and exceeded writing standards in spring 2013 (School E9, 2014-2015). The minimal growth in years indicates the need to minimize percentages of students ‘not meeting the standards’ in all areas tested on the performance-based writing assessment and points out that students are not exceling in their writing abilities at School E9.

Looking for further evidence on comprehensive tests, I followed up with the school district for updated statistics and found the district administered a new Georgia milestones test for the 2014-2015 school year, instead of the CRCT to assess students on their Performance Standards (GOSA, 2015). The last documented CRCT results would be spring 2014, and for the district report card it would be 2013-2014 (GOSA, 2015).

According to the last recorded 2013-2014 District Report Card (U.S. Department of Education, 2014), students' writing abilities were assessed in accordance with the reading/English language arts curriculum for third grade through twelfth grade on the CRCT for comparisons on local, state, and national levels.

I reviewed the state CRCT results up to the year 2014 on the elementary level for further indicating writing abilities at School E9. For School E9, in comparison of the 2010-2011 through the 2013-2014 school years, there was an increase in students not meeting standards, and a decrease of students exceeding the standards over the 4 year span. In the 2010-2011 school year there were 588 elementary students tested on the English language arts portion, with 17.3 % not meeting and 22.2% exceeding the standard (GOSA, 2015). For the 2013-2014 school year there were 693 students tested on the English language arts portion, with 18.4 % not meeting and 17.4% exceeding the standard (GOSA, 2015). Though there were some gains in strength of numbers of a 3.6% gain within meeting standards from 60.6% in 2010-2011 to 64.2% in 2013-2014, and an increase of 105 students in the 4 year span, the school's administration began to raise concern of students' abilities when they saw the increase in students not meeting the standard and decrease in the students exceeding the standard (GOSA, 2015).

To add to the evidence, the 2013-2014 AYP data for the English language arts on the CRCT at School E9 indicated the third graders were exceeding with only 11.7%, with fifth graders scoring lower also with 27.7%. The data analysis indicated the total number of students that did not meet the standard in third grade was 23.4%, and fifth grade was 9.6% of students (GOSA, 2015). From a local stance, these student outcomes of low

percentages of exceeding, and some high percentages for not meeting, the standard raises concern. Therefore, the problem further becomes a school, district, and state issue because, according to AYP, all students' scores in the district are accounted for on state-wide standardized testing for comparison, whether it is past state-wide measurements (CRCT) or new state-wide measurements (Georgia milestones). The review of data indicates that School E9 shows signs of having struggling writers, a factor which affects the students, teachers, and school as a whole.

Even with the data offering support for evidence of the problem, a factor causing struggling writers in local areas, such as School E9, could be the amount of time given to teachers to incorporate writing instruction and devote some to the core subject of writing. I inspected the county's master, daily scheduling for each elementary school, and the schedules revealed that the majority of allotted time for core subject instruction was required to be devoted to math and reading (Local County Schools, 2014-2015b). Specifically for School E9, I found there was a writing block within English/language arts of 30-45 minutes; language arts was split from writing instruction and allowed approximately 15 minutes for writing instruction (Local County Schools, 2014-2015b). If administration and teachers are not prompted to put writing at the forefront of their schedules and allot more time to instruction, writing will be pushed behind the core subjects and students will not receive efficient writing instruction (Nauman, Stirling, & Borthwick, 2011). Therefore, if teachers are only given little amounts of time to teach writing, then teachers might not be taking the time to reflect upon their own experiences to improve the writing instruction, a factor which may be hindering teachers'

instructional approach (Applebee & Langer, 2011). The evidence, then, showed there was a need to increase the amount of time that writing instruction is being offered locally, as within School E9, because this could be causing struggling writers.

Local and state data indicated evidence that there are struggling writers on the local level, especially within School E9. This factor offered evidence that teachers may not be given enough allotted time to devote to writing instruction, which indicates there could be a gap in the practice. If the importance for the core subject of writing is not stressed by administration, then teachers may not see the importance of reflecting upon their own experiences, or working together within groups to improve writing success for students. The evidence I found helped to identify that locally there needs to be a change in the approach to writing instruction, and teachers need to reflect upon their experiences with writing instruction to implement more efficient writing instruction. This approach is needed if the desire is for students to surpass the basic levels and move into the exceeding or proficient achievement levels for writing.

Evidence of the Problem on National Levels and from Professional Literature

With the diversity of students present within today's writing classrooms, the classroom of the past is no longer an acceptable learning atmosphere. In some cases, traditional writing classrooms have allowed students to become, or continue to be, struggling writers (National Writing Project & Nagin, 2006; National Writing Project, 2010). The goal is to create successful writers, and the more awareness placed on the need to have students accomplish writing standards, there will be greater demands placed on the need to help students succeed in new writing classrooms (National Commission on

Writing in America's Schools and Colleges, 2003; 2006). Identifying that there is a desire to meet writing expectations of a diverse population of students, I sought to show evidence that there is a problem of struggling writers at national levels and within the professional literature of scholars.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is a nationally representative assessment that assesses trends for comparisons in students' abilities within the eighth and twelfth grades of writing performance in the United States (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 2011). The assessment was the first writing exam given through a computer-based program. I examined national reports of comparison in 1998, 2002, 2007, and 2011 by the NCES (2011). The gains on the achievement levels for 8th graders and 12th graders proved that, for both groups, 27% performed at or above the proficient levels, and 80% performed at or above the basic level. I found that females within both groups outperformed the males with a performance gap of 19 points in grade 8, and 14 points in grade 12. After reviewing the reports there was an increase for *proficient* and *advanced* achievement levels in writing performance scores from 1998-2011, but the NCES' team still questioned why there was a difference between males and females, and if the gains in both groups were enough (NCES, 2011). The gains in basic achievement levels were high, but still needed to be increased, and there needed to be more gains in proficient or advanced achievement levels within both gender groups (NCES, 2011). The decision was to further advise educators to continue to reform and restructure writing instruction with the aim of having a national gain of proficient and advanced levels within writing abilities across all grade

levels and genders (NCES, 2011). Educators from this standpoint are no longer to settle with below, at, or basic performance levels for writing, and to be asked to create more successful writers that excel in their performance levels with all groups and genders.

There are also national committees of scholars that seek to minimize the gaps that are present in students' achievement levels in writing. The committees of the National Writing Project and Nagin (2006) have concluded that educators can no longer accept below or basic achievement levels for writing (National Writing Project, 2010).

According to the committees, educators must prepare students to become above level or proficient writers, or our nation will become less successful as a whole (National Writing Project & Nagin, 2006; National Writing Project, 2010). With evidence that there are worries from a national standpoint on the success of the nation's student writers, educators can see a connection with their own unsuccessful writers within their classrooms and the national situation.

Additionally, national studies on the problems of struggling writers in elementary schools indicate that professionals are seeking answers to help students struggling in writing. In one national study, Applebee and Langer (2011) reviewed national assessments, completed case studies within six New York Schools, studied schools with excellent marks in teaching of writing, and completed a national survey on writing instruction. Focusing on the methods and procedures that are used for writing instruction, the authors discussed the fact that educators who teach writing must do their part in minimizing unsuccessfulness in student writing by using their instruction (Applebee & Langer). If educators do not look to restructure their writing instruction,

there will continue to be larger gaps and less student writing success within the nation (Applebee & Langer). This reality identifies the need for teachers to restructure their writing instruction in order to enhance students' success.

With the evidence of the problem on national levels, there has been a rise in acknowledging the problem in professional literature and how to improve student success in writing. Peterson's (2014) scholarly work on student achievement discussed the fact that students within first grade through twelfth grade classrooms are struggling due to their inability to communicate what they have learned in the written form. Peterson argued that, with struggling writers present within the classroom, educators have to get on the students level and make a difference by first acknowledging what challenges are seen with particular students. Peterson notes also that strategies, such as explicitly teaching the stages of the writing process, balancing and continuously reviewing the grammar conventions, and developing strategies that are motivating, can help address and identify the key difficulties of writing. Once teachers recognize there is a problem, they will be better informed of where to start correcting the problem for struggling writers, such as indicated in this professional literature.

Focusing on the challenges students face within writing, some studies identified that students may be struggling because writing is not put in the forefront of learning within academics. Mo, Kopke, Hawkins, Troia, and Olinghouse (2013), along with Troia and Olinghouse (2013), acknowledged that students need writing skills sufficient for tasks in and out of school, so they focused their studies on finding ways of changing writing from the neglected "R" into a main part of the core subjects in today's

educational practices. Mo et al. recognized the implementation of the Common Core Standards adopted by 45 states within the United States and concluded that, although it unified standards for writing, the time for instruction was mostly devoted to math and reading, and writing instruction was supposed to be intertwined cross-curricula.

Struggling writers may be showing up more in our classrooms because Common Core Standards (CCS) are pushing subjects, as in writing, to the side and putting the pressure on the heavier content areas of reading and math (Mo et al.; Troia & Olinghouse). With more students beginning to struggle in writing, it was determined there was a lack of evidence-based instructional practices being used in writing instruction (Mo et al.; Troia & Olinghouse). Therefore, for truly comprehensive writing instruction to help struggling writers meet the expected standards as tested for the CCS on writing performance, educators will need to invest more time on developing writing instruction (Mo et al.; Troia & Olinghouse). One key component of writing success is developing writing instruction that will change writing from being a neglected “R” to a main subject in education. The professional literature proves it is important to put concern into what is being developed and taught for writing instruction.

Putting the focus on instruction, a set of scholars who dedicate their work to improving writing instruction and learning for all students are the National Writing Project (NWP) and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The NWP (2015), along with the Writing Framework for the 2011 NAEP, were created and designed to help teachers meet the needs of struggling student writers and raise an awareness that a lack of time given to writing in classrooms could be creating the struggle students are

having with creating successful writing pieces. In the 2011 Writing Framework, the NAEP expressed a view that there should be more attention devoted to the curriculum of writing and a push for more professional development in writing for teachers. Some supporting statistics given by the NWP in the “Improving Writing and Learning in the Nation’s Schools” 2011 brochure (NWP, 2015) is that learning to write is essential in succeeding in college. This view was supported by 98% of Americans, and the idea that schools should devote more time to teaching students to write well was supported by $\frac{3}{4}$ of Americans. Committees, such as these, are acknowledging there are struggling writers and are offering ways for improving writing instruction, as well as ideas of why improving writing instruction is important for students’ future success.

Studies investigating students’ challenges with succeeding in writing are identified in different avenues. In the review of studies around writing instruction, Nauman, Stirling and Borthwick (2011) acknowledged that students have difficulties in writing, and expressed that perhaps it is the writing instruction. To identify what makes good writing, they examined the views of 60 classroom teachers from urban high-needs schools and suburban schools to get their perspectives. If educators do not do their part in minimizing unsuccessfulness there will continue to be larger gaps and fewer students having writing success (Nauman, Stirling, & Borthwick). Without support or advice, teachers are often left asking themselves, “How do I teach writing in my classroom?”, so systematic change, restructuring, and reform have to be desired within classrooms by teachers before there will be any changes made (Nauman, Stirling, & Borthwick). Therefore, teachers have to begin the movement for improved writing instruction.

Once the teachers have the motivation to create change and alter their approaches to instruction, they can begin to see differences within the outcomes. Graham, MacArthur, and Fitzgerald (2013) noted, if educators identify students are struggling with writing, then educators can understand why there needs to be a shift in writing instruction. These authors note it is important for educators to align writing instruction with teaching and learning theories to meet today's students' learning styles and promote writing success. The shift in writing instruction will come from the educators, which is seen as positive influence, and called a "reflection" on the teacher's experiences that will enhance their students' performance through improved writing instruction (Graham, MacArthur, & Fitzgerald). If educators' reflect on their own experiences with writing instruction to improve it, the improved instruction could help students achieve success on writing assessments and could promote further teacher reflection of their experiences with teaching instruction.

Often teachers are given a set of writing standards to achieve, and are never asked how they achieved the standards, or how they felt as they achieved the standards. Applebee and Langer (2011) suggested the core of writing success begins in the elementary years, and is developed through the influence and motivation of the teacher's writing instruction by having a more reflective teacher. A reflective teacher can pinpoint what needs to be changed in their own instruction, a factor which is often more helpful in creating instruction that is suited for the students (Applebee & Langer). To promote more writing success through improved writing instruction, more inquiry needs to be completed in the areas of influence, experiences, and motivation embedded in a teacher's

writing instruction (Applebee & Langer). Therefore, more focus should be placed on teachers using reflective experiences with their writing instruction to improve instruction for their students, which identifies a gap noted within the literature.

In conclusion, as seen from the national databases and literature, struggling writers can be found within many different schools and locations, taught and researched by different professionals. It is apparent that there is a desire to identify the struggles students face and help them have writing success, even though there are challenges of meeting measurable outcomes and creating effective writing instruction. Although there are ample reviews of why there are struggling writers within schools, now there is a need for an examination of the teachers' reflective process on their experiences with writing instruction, and what could be done to help students succeed from the teachers' viewpoint.

This study fell into this educational category in that it has the potential to contribute to the professional literature and provide teachers with support to reflect upon and discuss true experiences in writing instruction, reform writing instruction, lessen the challenges with developing writing instruction, and enhance student writing skills. The goal is to help struggling writers succeed, and this can be done by investigating teachers and hearing their view of what writing instruction is, and what writing instruction should become in the teachers' classrooms and schools.

Definitions

This section consists of definitions of special terms associated with this study.

Professional learning communities: Development groups of teachers offered to faculty and administrators to build knowledge and skills for effective writing instruction using collaborative grouping (National Writing Project & Nagin, 2006; National Writing Project 2010)

Social constructivism theory: To shape learning, is the “construction of meaning and knowledge through the interaction with others” (van Merriënboer & de Bruin, 2014, p. 27) as learning is a social endeavor hinging on the social relations of those sharing the same activities and identities within the learning environment (Vygotsky, 1978).

Struggling writers: Students failing to achieve basic writing standards (Alber-Morgan, Hessler, & Konrad, 2007; National Writing Project, 2010).

Writing instruction: Following the United States adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) of 45 states, writing instruction means “providing teachers and schools with a set of expectations for the skills, processes, and products that will be expected of students from kindergarten through 12th grade.” (Graham, MacArthur, & Fitzgerald, 2013, p. 27).

Significance

The problem is that there are struggling writers represented in local and national educational settings, and this project can bring awareness to what could be causing students to struggle in writing, while also discovering ways to address the problem efficiently. I discovered that writing instruction is a huge component in the success of students’ writing abilities and its’ importance in today’s classroom is essential. Even though writing is a fundamental tool, writing has not been emphasized as one of the core

subjects in the general educational classrooms, a reality which teachers often experience first-hand. As teachers try to meet the needs of their students in accordance with performance standards, heavier emphasis is placed on other subjects due to the depth of the subject's standards and testing. With the emphasis being taken away from writing, teachers face many challenges in developing their writing instruction and the lack of the amount of time needed to teach and improve writing instruction. Due to the challenges teachers face with developing, teaching, and improving writing instruction to enhance students' writing performance, this study arose.

For the problem, I sought to identify what kinds of writing instructional practices could be used to enhance students writing success discovered through elementary level teachers' experiences with writing instruction. The objective was to address a need to reform writing instruction within the local setting and beyond; therefore, studying this problem may help educators identify the importance of teachers' viewpoints in promoting a restructure of writing instruction to build evidence-based instruction that produces more successful writers. The potential significance is the establishment of effective writing instruction to promote student academic success, which is relevant for all educators, scholars, and practitioners who support educational reform.

Research Question

Given the growing population of 21st century students in American classrooms, there is a need for more investigation and further reform in teaching and learning practices to meet the needs of a diverse population of learners. This study was guided by the question: What are the writing instructional strategies of teachers at the elementary

level? Although the focus was on struggling writers within elementary grades as pertaining to the ways students are taught, students may be struggling with writing due to the lack of reflective experiences with writing instruction made by the teacher; this is a gap noted in the literature. Ample evidence was found around the issue of the student writing process and strategies, but little was found on the examination of the teachers' experiences as to improving their own writing instruction to help students succeed, so I sought to investigate teachers' experiences with writing instruction.

I discovered there is a need for teachers to create real change by discussing, developing, and following researched writing programs and strategies that can be incorporated into instruction in manageable approaches. To create change, the study was based on a qualitative methodology and guided to discover writing instructional strategies teachers can use to improve instruction. The idea was that the teachers' experiences with writing instruction would be based on the following: experiences with teaching evidence-based writing instruction; strengths and weaknesses in writing programs that have succeeded or failed; strengths and weaknesses in planning for writing instruction; experiences school-wide or in their classroom; and, experiences with ways to improve writing. The question derived was the driving force behind taking a qualitative approach because I needed teachers' perspectives on what they were experiencing in writing instruction to conclude what could be changed, added, or replaced to improve the writing curriculum for teachers to teach, and students to learn.

Review of the Literature

Search Strategy

To identify relevant literature the following databases were used: ERIC, EBSCOhost: Academic Search Complete, Education Full Text, and Education Research Complete, ProQuest: Education Journals, Dissertations and Theses Global, Profession Education, and Research Library, and Google Scholar. Operators I used for searching through the databases were “and” and “or.” The operator “and” was used to narrow and limit the search to make it specific, such as student and writers, writing and elementary, and teachers and writing instruction. The operator “or” was used to expand the search to include any of the search terms, such as writing “or” instruction, student “or” writer, elementary “or” teacher. The following search terms were used in the searches: literacy, writing, student writers, elementary writers, struggling writers, writing learning, elementary writing, writing instruction, writing teaching, writing strategies, writing techniques, writing planning, writing research, professional learning communities, and social learning theory. While searching for related literature I chose databases, Boolean Operators and phrases, and search terms that would give a thorough analysis associated with the problem and theory of the study while helping me build a sufficient review of the literature gathered.

Introduction

The literature review covers the following topics: definition of writing, conceptual framework, writing instruction, strategies, and techniques, the writing process, writing curriculum, and a conclusion. I began by offering a developed definition of writing and

gave evidence behind the conceptual framework for the study. Throughout the literature review, I focused and presented information on the background of writing instruction, strategies, and techniques, the writing processes, and specific learning and teaching practices of writing, while tying back into the main idea of helping students succeed in writing. Though much was learned through the development of the literature review, the literature I reviewed gave evidence for ideas of the gaps within the research and the support that lead the development of the study.

Definition of Writing

Within the educational setting writing has been, and will always be, a form of communication for learners in grade levels K-12, extending into college and/or work, and home life. Fletcher and Portalupi (2001) once defined writing “as the skill of writing down particular words, in a particular order, to create effects. Students will use writing in countless ways: to communicate, express, question, persuade, synthesize, [and] teach” (p. 1). Fletcher (2013) later explained the idea that writing is a way to express knowledge about what is known and learned. The definition for writing in the classroom, however, has altered over time and led to the development of writing programs that give teachers and students a format to follow within the classroom. Within today’s educational society the push for the Common Core State Standards has created another definition for writing, which is represented as “a critical instructional implication of the standards” (Brock, Goatley, Raphael, Trost-Shahata, & Weber, 2014, p. 7) to be accomplished for writing by students. Following these definitions, I conclude that writing is a student’s expression of one’s knowledge of ideas about a topic and the use of a form of communication; thus, a

student's writing ability is structured within the writing strategies and techniques that a student has developed within a classroom. Even though the definition for writing has changed, the commonality of all the definitions are that writing should be an authentic task in that students are successful.

Conceptual Framework

As the definition of writing evolved, so has the student population, student needs, and the classroom structure. Striving to provide a sufficient learning atmosphere, today's educators teach students who differ in ethnicities, cultures, backgrounds, socio-economic status, interests, ability levels, and disabilities (Council for Exceptional Children [CEC], 2015). With the diversity of students present within today's classrooms our students need acceptable atmospheres to have successful writing opportunities. Wagner (2014) and Brock, Goatley, Raphael, Trost-Shahata, and Weber, (2014) expressed there is a need to create a shift in the delivery of core instruction, such as writing, to address the needs of learners within the 21st century. In creating a shift in instruction, there becomes awareness of the writing instruction that was being delivered in past years of traditional classroom instruction. Now the shift signifies why there is a need to move into more theory-based classroom instruction to have successful student writers, which is the framework for guiding this study in relation to the problem of struggling writers.

Focusing on why there needs to be a shift in instruction to enhance student writing success, scholars (e.g. Ash & D'Auria, 2013; Cooper et al., 2011; Tompkins, 2013; Wagner, 2014) supported the view that traditional instruction, such as lecturing on a topic and having the students drill out writing for the topic, does not always increase students'

achievement levels, or produce an adequate learning environment for all student writers. Gentry, McNeel, and Wallace-Nesler (2014) further explained that, in order to foster true writing for students, there has to be emphasis on effective teaching from the teacher's standpoint. To meet the expectations of today's classrooms, an alignment of instructional practices with teaching and learning theories could promote the best success for students and teachers (Brock et al., 2014; Wagner, 2014). If educators choose to align instructional practices with teaching and learning theories, they could be promoting achievement for all students using more efficient learning atmospheres for writing.

Acknowledging growing concerns for writing as a core subject helps identify the trend of importance placed on aligning instructional practices with teaching and learning theories to aid students in their writing abilities. According to Boon and Spencer (2010), from the late 1900s up into the more recent 2000s there has become an awareness that all learners must succeed in the core subjects, including writing. There is also growing concern on the curriculum content being taught and the process by which it is being delivered instructionally (Boon & Spencer). Given these rising concerns, educators should minimize the use of traditional classroom techniques and incorporate elements of scientifically-based learning theories to build an effective instructional environment where the best practices of writing instruction are being offered.

Focusing on learning theories that drove the study, McLeod (2014) discussed theorists (e.g. Piaget, 1959; Vygotsky, 1962, 1978, 1987) who developed theories based on learning and development while focusing on how children learn and develop. Piaget's (1959) and Vygotsky's (1987) work both fall under cognitive development theories,

which puts thinking into the forefront of the learner. These theorists desired to study how people actually constructed learning. McLeod pointed out that Vygotsky's (1987) work acknowledged that socialization of individuals is important in making the meaning of things, as in the social aspect precedes the actual development of learning. McLeod also expressed that Piaget's (1959) work was being done around the same time as Vygotsky's, but differed in that he viewed the development of understandings, as in schemas, preceding learning because the task of making sense of things within our original schemas would be the learning. Though there are differing views between Piaget's and Vygotsky's views on learning, these two theorists helped set the foundation for using social theory into practice within the classroom. Piaget's and Vygotsky's work focused on the curiosity of a young child and the need for active involvement in her or his own learning and development (McLeod, 2014).

Though Piaget's (1959) work gave rise to how we view the educational setting and learning, Vygotsky's (1987) work embraces the aspect of learning via teachers to students in that teachers play a central role, which is essential in this study. Vygotsky's work is supported by constructivist theory, which suggests that learning is created through authentic experiences and social interactions. This process allows learners to construct meaning and to be active in creating their own learning and development (Sincero, 2011). Coming from this perspective of using the learner as the constructor of meaning, Vygotsky's social constructivism theory emphasizes that meanings and understandings of things are discovered through the socialization encountered by the learner, whether it be a child or an adult. In relation to the educational setting,

Vygotsky's work gives support for educators to tap into the inner workings of social constructivism, in that teachers play a significant part in helping students learn and develop and helping other teachers learn and develop. Using constructivism in the school setting for framing instructional delivery and guiding professional communities allows active participants to learn through collaboration with other learners, as in the students or the teachers (Ryan & Cooper, 2010). Embracing social constructivism could provide students and teachers with an atmosphere where writing instruction and learning is enhanced through building collaboration among fellow classmates and colleagues.

Implementing theory into practice, and coming from the social constructivism theory, it is apparent that the social aspect of this theory could help students succeed in their writing abilities by promoting social collaboration among teachers and students alike. As the social constructivist theory is foundationally based in learning theories, it centers on promoting socialization as a key factor in learning (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978). The investigation for this study revealed that the social learning approach has been around for many years, and if teachers apply the true basics of the social learning theories techniques they will enhance student learning, as well as colleague learning (Lancer, 2015). Basing this study on the aspect of the social learning theories, in relation to Vygotsky's work, creates significance between learning in social contexts and educators building active learning communities where students help each other in their writing endeavors, and with other colleagues, to build a more efficient writing instruction. In order to advance education to meet the needs of our society in addressing struggling

writers, we have to move into the use of theoretical basis of theories, such as social learning theories to guide teacher awareness and development.

From the foundation of social learning theories, Bandura (1977), a social learning theorist, posited learning occurs in social context, allowing people to learn from one another through observational learning, imitation, and modeling. Building on the frameworks of being able to produce learning through social contexts, there is an approach that may be conducive in providing four main stages of the social learning theory or imitation; close contact, imitation of superiors, understanding of concepts, and role model behavior (Bandura, 1977). One approach that supports the strategy of working together to create change in core subjects, such as writing, and may be developed on the basis of the social learning theory, is a professional learning community. The National Writing Project (NWP & Nagin, 2006) supported the view that professional learning communities offer “available development resources to help faculty learn about effective practices and develop their knowledge and skills as writing teachers” (p. 95). The contents are that educators could improve their own teaching and learning skills by collaborating in communities of learners (Foord & Haar, 2013; Huffman, Hipp, Pankake, Moller, 2014). Foord and Haar (2013) suggested professional learning helps teachers redirect education by developing skills to enhance student achievements. Huffman, Hipp, Pankake, and Moller (2014) further suggested the collegial interactions and collaboration of teachers promotes their professional learning. Hord (2004), noted that, when teachers are active in a professional learning community, “the most beneficial part of the experience was that they were learning together and had

time to collaborate and plan for the implementation of their learning” (p. 52). This point is significant in that the core element of true professional learning is using the idea of collaborative, social learning amongst teachers to work together using current theories and practices to develop instructional ideas for specific subjects or problems, such as addressing the needs of struggling writers.

By using the idea of collaborative learning to reach desirable goals for effective writing instruction, one type of community teachers can develop is a professional learning community. This community is built around the idea of a focus group where the social learning theory guides the outcome of the positive behavior to be imitated through the educators (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2015). A focus group consists of a group of teachers who have come together to address a purpose, issue, or goal they desire to improve or establish. Professional learning communities, such as a focus group, are powerful, effective, professional development tools that deepen teachers’ thinking through research, feedback, collaboration, and problem solving (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2015). Foord and Haar (2013), Hord (2004), Huffman, Hipp, Pankake, and Moller, (2014), and Stewart and Shamdasani (2015) supported the view that the main goal of collegial interactions is to improve professional development within schools by increasing teacher interactions with a partner, or within a group working towards the betterment of the students. When educators hone their own craft and work together to promote a transformation in thinking they will grow professionally and begin to acknowledge the need to change instruction (Collay, 2011). This literature indicates that

applying social learning theory and techniques within a school can provide a beneficial atmosphere for students and teachers.

If teachers desire success for all students, commitment and change are necessary for lifelong learning and professional growth. Professional growth occurs when teachers become active learners within the school community and have a desire to improve their own skills and knowledge, as well as those of others (Foord & Haar, 2013; Collay 2011). For educators, professional learning means the time they have to devote, and change they have to create, for the outcomes that are needed, which are often viewed by teachers as undesirable and achieved at a slow pace. As reform efforts of the nation and society are placing educators in the forefront of improving the educational system, teachers will have to collaborate by using their knowledge, experiences, and skills to improve their teaching and learning (Collay, 2011). When professional teachers are studying and learning together they are enhancing their skills and awareness of student needs, such as those of struggling writers. From the literature given, for the basis of a theory the view is that educators play an important role in student learning and development; therefore, by working together and following the foundational social learning theory's framework, educators can create the change that is needed to help students succeed in writing.

Writing Instruction, Strategies, and Techniques

The current struggle with teacher practices and sub-standard student writing is not new as writing instruction, and its challenges, evolved over decades of teaching strategies and techniques used by teachers. From the 1900s to the 21st century, writing instruction developed and adapted to the needs of students (Tyler, 2013). Tyler noted that, in

developing the skills of writing within the 1900s, educators first began using traditional techniques of skills-based or direct instruction from the teacher. Kucer (2014) explained that the primary goal for direct instruction was for the teacher to present a skill, students to grasp and master the skill, and later concentrate on building content within the subject. The direct instruction technique offered many struggles for students in that they were expected to have an ending product, rather than developing the process of how to write. This practice limited a student's expression in writing, while increasing her or his frustration.

In coping with the struggles students faced through direct instruction and learning to write, educators began to view the struggles as challenges to develop a proper writing instruction that met the needs of every child. The idea was to limit the struggles students faced, while decreasing the challenges by developing an efficient writing instruction. Tompkins (2013) noted that educators strived to teach students using traditional instructional strategies that would promote student success, but little concern was placed in providing instruction for the diversity of students. Tompkins pointed out that “[a] generation ago, behaviorists influenced how teachers taught” (p. 4) and learning was geared toward an entirely teacher-centered classroom in which teachers structured lessons and assignments around repetition of drill and practice, emphasizing the one-size-fits-all method. Experience with this method began moving educators towards a more facilitative form of instruction instead of the lecture approach, giving rise to the idea of process writing. A result was the push for interaction among teachers and students, and for teachers to begin teaching teachers as developed and suggested in the Bay Area

Writing Project (BAWP). This project was created in the 1970s and has continued to promote success in writing for 40 years (University of California Berkeley Graduate School of Education, 2015). Created through the collaboration of the University of California, Berkeley and Bay Area schools, BAWP was designed to help teachers teach writing and enhance leadership roles, and reform through professional development. The idea behind the BAWP led educators to believe they had a say in transforming the writing curriculum because, as teachers, they have the ability to improve the teaching of writing within all grade levels. The writing curriculum was now seen as something that could be transformed and expanded to meet students' needs.

As investigations focused on expanding the writing curriculum, a necessity arose for students to effectively learn the skills of writing, rather than to robotically put words on paper (Entwistle, 2012). Entwistle noted that teachers needed to change their roles from being teacher-centered to becoming a facilitator by guiding students through writing techniques. Teachers no longer dominated the writing classroom; they facilitated and guided students through their writing instruction.

Restructured writing instruction could be the answer to achieving student writing success. To accomplish writing success for struggling writers, educators must foster an effective writing program that provides students with the most beneficial writing success (Graham, MacArthur, & Fitzgerald, 2013; Fletcher, 2013). The challenge today is to identify what strategies would be effective; the focus of this study. Fletcher (2013) suggested that, to acquire these effective strategies for writing, educators will need to reflect on their practice with the aim of reforming instruction and leading the focus away

from the product to the writing process. Though a focus on the fundamentals of grammar mechanics and organization would still occur, most importantly is the need for creativity and the idea of the writing process (Fletcher, 2013). Fletcher posited that, through the idea of incorporating a writing process, teachers would become the motivators who challenge other teachers to build better writing instruction. Building better instruction with effective writing strategies could further encourage students to put their ideas on paper and express themselves creatively through writing instruction.

In transitioning from teacher-dominated classrooms to student-focused classrooms, educators in the 21st century began to incorporate best practices of writing instruction to promote students' active engagement within their own writing. There are many effective strategies and writing instruction tools, such as the Writing Process, Writer's Workshop, and 6+1 Traits Model, through which students can be offered best practices that build a confident writer (Culham, 2003, 2005, 2013). Culham noted that these forms of writing instruction can accomplish two goals; helping students express themselves by creatively writing and communicating thoroughly and, most importantly, helping them pass their standardized writing assessments. The main goal of each writing instruction should be first and foremost to transition students to meet their personalized goals, while also meeting state, local, and national goals.

The Writing Process

Focusing on the importance of incorporating effective writing strategies in writing instruction, writing instruction can evolve to meet student struggles in writing. The writing process emerged from its more conventions-based beginnings to a focus on

students and teachers working together to establish a more productive instruction. The main idea of the writing process today is for students to choose their own interest and their own topics, thereby allowing them to produce material of which they desire to take ownership (Campos & Fad, 2014). The five components addressed in the writing process (i.e. prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) allows students to take responsibility for their own writing by blending in the components as they occur in the process (Campos & Fad, 2014). The five components create a foundation for students to build different types of writing by brainstorming, putting ideas down, checking once, checking and polishing, and making it presentable as their own piece of work. In using this approach students become authors of their own work, and going through the five components they begin to take responsibility for the writing they are creating, while evolving from a skill to a product form of writing instruction.

The writing process gave way to development of other writing programs, such as the Writer's Workshop, which was developed by combining some of the same elements of the writing process. The implementation of a writer's workshop is an excellent way to enforce the elements of the writing process (Bogard & McMackin, 2012; Tompkins, 2010; Fletcher & Portalupi, 2001). Tompkins (2010) exclaimed that, though Writer's Workshop includes the elements of the writing process, the process can actually be revisited throughout one's writing, instead of completing them in an orderly fashion as proposed by the writing process. In the Writer's Workshop students are still given the elements of choice and time over their writing and learning processes (Bogard & McMackin, 2012). Fletcher and Portalupi (2001) noted the components of mini-lessons,

conferencing, writing time, and group sharing time, in order to create an environment where students of varying abilities “can acquire [writing] skills, along with fluency, confidence, and desire to see themselves as writers ” (p. 1). Once a comfortable environment is established, students allow their confidence to rise and they begin to see themselves as true writers using writing tools.

As the theory and practice of writing instruction developed, Writer’s Workshop led to the rise of the 6+1 Traits Writing Model. During the 1980s a group of teachers desired a writing instruction that allowed students to assess their own writing by playing an active role which established the 6+1 Traits Writing Model (Culham, 2003, 2005; Spandel, 2009, 2011). Spandel (2009, 2011) chimed in on the idea and expressed the idea that, through incorporating the 6+1 traits, a teacher will begin to see students gain the necessary elements of writing. To define good qualities of writing, Culham (2003, 2005) claimed that the 6+1 Traits considers the six elements of ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions to evaluate work. Higgins, Miller, and Wegmann (2006) further suggested the 6+1 traits “provide the language needed to teach students what to revise, and through instruction students learn how to do so. 6+1 Traits fit naturally into the writing process as they make teaching writing more focused and purposeful” (p. 312), contributing to a successful writing climate. The 6+1 Traits Writing Model allowed students to see structure in writing, and provided them with a tool, or actual steps, to use while creating a writing task. The 6+1 Traits Writing Model also offered teachers a template that would ease students into a more structured writing plan than students previously had.

As writing strategies, programs, and techniques developed, and teachers began to incorporate them into their writing instruction, the writing curriculum began to change. There became a necessity to view all students as writers, but to use the best practices possible to teach students how to write, a process guided by the writing curriculum (Graham, MacArthur, & Fitzgerald, 2013). As time passed there was a push for more student interaction and the development of peer collaboration from students and among teachers. A new writing curriculum was needed.

Writing Curriculum

In considering writing, teachers' ideas are going to be the guiding force for a new writing curriculum in the classroom. Lenski and Verbruggen (2010) advocated that there is a need for teacher roles to improve student writers across all grade levels by incorporating such tasks as writing conferences into their instruction. This approach is needed so students can be better prepared to face future demands when asked to perform. According to Lenski and Verbruggen, they learned a great deal about writing instruction over the past twenty years, and a key learning outcome is that teachers must be sure they are employing the type of approach to instruction that benefits all students. The simple answer is that the writing curriculum every child needs has to be enriched and modified by the teacher through enhanced instruction and time spent with the students through discussion.

In order to provide an effective writing curriculum, investigators and educators will need to refer back to theoretical-based approaches to incorporate into the classroom, which will guide teacher awareness of students' abilities and development of student

learning. Developed on the basis of the social learning theory, learning communities will allow educators to improve their own teaching and learning skills by collaborating to improve writing instruction and push for a better writing curriculum. As Powell and Kalina (2009) suggest, through the use of social communities teachers will be moving towards a more social constructivist approach developing effective strategies through the social context. If there is an expectation for teachers to change the writing curriculum, teachers must learn through the social network of other professionals on how to incorporate the best writing instruction possible. This point is particularly poignant given the focus of this study.

As reform efforts of our nation and society are placing educators in the forefront of improving the educational system, teachers will need to take action to improve their teaching and learning within the writing curriculum. When teachers are studying and learning as a learning community, they are enhancing their skills jointly and individually, and becoming more aware of student needs. According to Wood (2007), teachers are the “primary agents for necessary changes in teaching and learning” (p. 290) and, to become those agents, they must adapt new tools that enhance the teaching and learning process. Aligning with this view, King (2011) suggested learning communities help teachers redirect education by developing skills to enhance student achievements, and the collegial interactions and collaboration of teachers promotes professional learning. According to Seed (2008), “[t]hrough collaboration, teachers form a learning community that establishes its own goals, manages its own resources, shares shortcomings, respects each member, and constructively criticizes practice” (p. 587). From those aspects of creating

‘community’, respect is a dominant component in that, if members don’t respect each other, in all its forms, it’s hard to accomplish the other components of the community. Hinging on the theoretical basis of social learning, teachers can learn how to enhance their instruction by learning from others who have had prior experiences with teaching writing; therefore, teachers will begin to promote more change in the writing curriculum.

In moving towards becoming more knowledgeable writing instructors, teachers must be willing to express their ideas and collaborate. In line with this idea, a key tenet of a learning community is that it offers opportunities for collaboration of the members by assuming particular roles. In a review of learning communities, Lakey (2010) noted that roles in a community take on many forms, such as “Caretaker... the Rebel, the Know-it-all, the Goody-Two-Shoes, the Earnest Puzzler, the Enforcer of Political Correctness, and other typical roles people play in learning groups” (p. 87). Lakey noted the key is for individuals to recognize who occupies these roles, and to work as an authentic group in supporting each other. When educators hone their own craft and “find ways to encourage their colleagues to engage in processes that will further their thinking, adapt their beliefs, and foster a desire to teach differently” (Lambert et al., 2002, p. 32) they are growing professionally. Supporting this view, according to Lakey (2010) professional growth occurs when teachers become active learners within the school community and have a desire to improve their own skills and knowledge, as well as those of others. This point is significant in that the core element of true professional learning is using the idea of collaborative learning amongst teachers to work together and use

current theories and practices to develop instructional ideas for specific subjects or problems.

As educators become aware of new instructional frameworks, and understand and apply the theories behind these frameworks, they tend to choose the best practices to instruct students and guide colleagues; they become more informed teachers. The application of best practices will produce accomplished and experienced teachers who bring all aspects of writing into play. The process of researching, analyzing, and synthesizing theories and theories, such as the constructivist and social learning theory, has led to the understanding that each may represent different elements. All elements, however, relate and have followed each other by being improved and adapted to the needs of students and educators during specific eras. Exploring and applying these elements within each teaching strategy, such as direct or indirect instruction, the writing process, Writer's Workshop, and 6+1 Traits, can offer a broader sense of what students need to have success in writing.

Conclusion

The strengths of writing theories and writing practices are evident, but the weaknesses allows for more examination to be done. Although the literature reviewed was helpful in initiating the move toward the use of social constructivist elements in the classroom, it lacked the support of 'how' to connect the movement of information from teachers to students when engaged in writing instruction. The literature reviewed also expressed the need for educators to grow through professional learning, formal or informal, and collaborate with others to create change. There was a lack of content,

however, in what teachers' were experiencing with writing instruction to help promote change in students' writing success.

As providers of writing instruction in schools, there must be a positive stand for teachers to educate and communicate, and be armed with a full knowledge of the gaps that exist, why they exist, and what can be done to minimize them in writing for students in the future. By doing these things, educators will be taking on leadership roles and helping promote the learning abilities that enable them to educate students on new and upcoming learning techniques in writing. Throughout the decades, teachers have experienced difficulties when cultivating writing instruction, and students have experienced frustration upon writing tasks; however, by becoming more knowledgeable about investigations done within the writing field, educators will be more prepared to face the needs of our students within the 21st century.

Implications

The project direction was guided by focusing on helping struggling writers by researching writing instruction from the teachers' points of view. The research question was then established: What instructional strategies should teachers use in writing instruction to improve student writing at the elementary level? I chose a qualitative design to investigate the research question with the intent of using a qualitative method of data collection and analysis for this doctoral project. The process led me to identify what the implications might be should the study unfold as proposed using this qualitative approach.

The method planned was collecting data from a focus group session and in one-on-one interview sessions. From the sessions, I anticipated gaining insight into the point of view of the teacher participants' writing instruction by openly discussing ideas specific to the problem. It was anticipated that the teachers would discuss how their experiences with writing, specific to their own classrooms and schools, could identify strengths and weaknesses in their writing instruction. From the data collected I also anticipated that the teacher's discussions would further lead to particular findings to the problem. I then anticipated that the analysis would point out key areas that needed to be addressed within School E9 to increase successful student writing outcomes. From the analysis findings, I anticipated that the teachers would need help in developing their writing instruction.

The implications about possible project directions emerged from my reflective and projective process of anticipating the findings through the data collection and analysis processes. With the anticipated finding of the need for developing writing instruction, and possible project directions, I decided I could help the school re-shape current approaches to the teaching of writing. One possible project direction was implementing a scheduled 35-45 minutes of writing instruction into each classroom. A second possible project direction that emerged was the lack of a school writing program. I could respond to that direction by implementing a K-5 writing program such as Calkins' (2008a, 2008b) Writer's Workshop across the school. A third possible project direction that emerged from the anticipated findings were that there was little individual or collegial planning for writing instruction. From this direction I could help teachers build something such as a curriculum plan with guided instruction that would instruct them on

how to plan and teach writing instruction, and further develop a learning community based on their unity of instruction. Each possible project direction sought to minimize struggling writers by offering a positive choice that would enhance the teaching and learning processes.

From the anticipated findings and possible project directions, the main implication is that the study might lead to successful writing among students at the school, and beyond the school. I anticipated that, by looking at their own approaches to writing instruction, the project would inspire teachers to want to build successful writing instruction and transform the writing curriculum present at the school. The overarching hope is that this study would leave the colleagues with an approach to self-improvement that will continue long after this doctoral project.

Summary

Developing writing skills is a fundamental task a learner must accomplish in an educational career. Therefore, it is evident that investigations and studies need to be conducted to discover evidence-based strategies and frameworks to guide educators in the best possible solutions to writing instruction, especially for students in the elementary years. The main goal of this project study was to improve writing success for student writers through improved writing instruction, especially for struggling writers, using what I gathered from this completed study.

Section 1 outlined a problem that exists relative to student under-achievement in writing skills. The definition of the problem was given to acknowledge that there are struggling writers present in local classrooms, and to bring awareness of a need to study

more in this field of education. Evidence of struggling writers is represented within the local setting, to national levels within the United States, through professional literature, and a discovered factor on the local level was provided. Locally, the school chosen for the study, School E9, has a 4-year span of scoring in the lowest percentages of meeting or exceeding writing standards within the county. The national databases and professional literature provided data and information that advised educators to become more informed about efficient instructional frameworks and strategies to restructure writing instruction to best meet struggling writers' needs. The discovered factor evidenced that there was a lack of allotted time given to writing instruction for teachers on the local level which could be causing struggling writers.

I created specific definitions by listing a set for the study, such as listing the foundational theory of the study as social constructivist theory. The importance of addressing the problem of struggling writers by completing the study is stressed in the Significance. Searching for a solution to the problem, and to guide my investigation and study, I developed a research question: What are the writing instructional strategies of teachers at the elementary level? To complete a further review of the topic, a review of literature illustrated what scholars discovered, completed, and suggested within the same field of educational examination as the study. The section outlined the 'thoughtful' direction I decided on for the potential implications for the study, and the anticipated outcomes I expected to be useful for helping School E9 teachers and students with the issue of struggling writers.

Section 2 presents the methodology for the study and begins with the study design and approach by exploring the local problem, defending the selection of a qualitative design and approach, and addressing comparisons of other methodologies. Section 2 continues with depicting the setting and sample, the process of data collection, data analysis and findings from analysis, and the summary of participant rights.

Section 3 begins by introducing the project for the study, explains the project, outlines a full description and goals, and provides a rationale for the chosen project. The section includes a thorough review of literature to address the project through analysis and critical review of current professional literature. The implementation of the project addresses the potential resources and existing supports, potential barriers, proposal for implementation and timetables, and roles and responsibilities of teachers and others. Section 3 continues with the project evaluation offering justification of the project and the stakeholders. The section concludes with implications, including the contribution social change, by discussing the importance of the project to the local community and far-reaching.

Section 4 consists of the reflections and conclusions for the final study by first addressing the project strengths and recommendations for remediation of limitations. Scholarship, the challenges of project development and evaluation, and enhanced concepts of leadership and change describe the learning derived from the project design and implementation process. The section continues with the analysis of self as scholar, analysis of self as practitioner, and analysis of self as project developer. From a reflective analysis standpoint I describe the insights I learned about myself in the

development and implementation of the project. The project's potential impact on social change covers the importance of the project overall, and leads into the implications, applications, and directions for future research relative to the final study and project development.

Section 2: Methodology

Introduction

Literacy development of students in elementary grades must be enhanced. Thus, teachers need to interweave the elements of writing on a daily basis through academic learning and collegial planning to improve writing instruction (Parr & Limbrick, 2010). Many students in the United States are failing to achieve basic writing standards due to the lack of effective instruction, so restructuring of learning and teaching strategies in writing instruction may be needed (Alber-Morgran, Hessler, & Konrad, 2007; Dutro, 2010; Solomon, 2009). Supporting this idea, the nation, states, counties, and schools have explored many avenues to minimize the gaps that exist in writing instruction. The problem is that teachers are faced with meeting measurable outcomes for writing (Solomon, 2009), while they must concurrently develop, or follow, a writing program which causes challenges for the teachers and their instruction. Therefore, the challenges teachers face could be causing the overall problem to occur within local schools.

One local elementary school in particular, School E9, has struggling student writers and may need to restructure the writing instruction that is being offered to students. The academic planning committee at the school identified that an increasing number of students are failing to achieve basic writing standards, so the national problem has become an issue in local classrooms. To understand the roots behind this local and national problem, the study was designed to gain teachers' insights into writing instruction by having them share their experiences with planning and delivering writing instruction. The overarching aim was to explore how the teachers can build a stronger

writing curriculum so they will be better prepared in their instructional roles. This outcome would be achieved by using the descriptions of elementary teachers' experiences with writing instruction that can be incorporated into classroom instruction in a manageable approach.

Qualitative, Phenomenological Design and Approach

The study employed a qualitative methodology design as there was a need to investigate a group of participants' (teachers') experiences with teaching writing instruction, and this approach would yield appropriate data needed to answer the study's research question. A qualitative approach is rooted in sociology and relies heavily on a constructivist perspective in which there are claims created through the perspectives of others (Creswell, 2013). The study focused on the perspective of the teachers, but there was also a need to put an emphasis on the social aspect of teachers and teaching.

As the study was dependent on the environment in which they were present, there was a need to examine the knowledge of the individuals (teachers) who shared the same activities and identities, and their own learning in how to teach writing (Vygotsky, 1978; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Therefore, the study was driven by a social constructivist perspective, as supported by the qualitative method. Because I chose the social constructivist view, I relied on the perspectives of participants and drew conclusions about a problem that was occurring at a local school to help solve their problem (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I employed this approach because the research question would best be answered through the perspectives of teachers who shared the same social aspect, and the

data would rely heavily on their perspectives with writing instruction to produce a solution for School E9, and others who have struggling writers.

A review of methodologies for this study revealed the quantitative approach would not best serve the study's aims. With the qualitative method, the idea for the study was to rely on the participants and what they have experienced. My study, therefore, was guided by the meanings of individual experiences as the perspectives of the participants, unlike the quantitative approach, which is primarily focused on a postpositivist worldview and is rooted in psychology (Creswell, 2013). Specifically, the quantitative approach focuses on the use of cause and effect relationships, the manipulation of variables, the use of measurement, or the testing of theories to collect data that is statistical for comparison (Creswell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). A qualitative approach engages the participants to derive meaning and understanding, which was the basis idea for this study, rather than predicting or controlling the participants as the tactic for a quantitative approach (MacDonald, 2012).

Though quantitative studies do include observations and surveying, which could be beneficial to the study, the data collected needs to be interpreted into numeric data which is not sufficient for the study. Qualitative studies include inquiry and the interpretations of the data collected, which allows emerging themes to be discovered among the findings; the basis for my study. MacDonald (2012) suggested the qualitative investigation becomes more of a participant action research (PAR) approach, rather than controlling the action of the participants. The desire is to develop a more thorough understanding of the experiences to study the nature of the teachers in a systematical

manner, as within qualitative studies, rather than quantifying the nature of the problem as in quantitative studies (Yin, 2010). In reviewing the differences between methodologies for the study, the qualitative paradigm emerged as the basis since I chose to inquire about a particular group's individual experiences upon a similar situation to discover ways to create a solution to a problem.

In considering the need for a deeper enquiry, approaches are presented to show comparisons and make further justification of the best suited approach for this study. For a phenomenological approach, the researcher should seek to understand individuals' shared understandings of a phenomenon, seek the development of understandings of the phenomenon, and be able to produce practices or policies derived from the understandings (Creswell, 2012). The phenomenological approach was best suited for the study because the teachers' experiences with writing instruction would be gathered through data collection, and the analysis of data would likely produce valuable insights gleaned from participants shared perspectives. Unlike a grounded theory approach, which looks to generate a theory to determine what causes or influences teachers' experiences (Merriam & Tidswell, 2015), for phenomenological research the study sought to understand what experiences the teachers have with writing instruction. This point was critical because the teachers live the phenomenon of teaching writing instruction to struggling writers on a daily basis in the same school, which is the foundation of this study.

The study would also not be best suited with ethnographic research, narrative research, or a case study research. In an ethnographic study the goal is to spend extensive time studying cultural or social groups in their setting to gain an understanding of the

culture's nature and interpret the patterns and meaning that are culturally established by the group (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The study is not suited to an ethnographical approach because I did not study a culture-sharing group, rather I examined the experiences of the teachers' and gained insight into their viewpoints derived from those experiences. Narrative research did not suit this study because I did not seek to narrate a life story or, more specifically, choose to chronologically order a series of events reported by an individual, or represent the meaning behind experiences of an individual's story (Creswell 2012). Specifically, the study did not depict a teachers' life story. This study differs from narrative because each participant has their own experiences by having taught and continuing to teach writing, which was the driving force for the data collection.

Case study research typically explores an issue specific to one case, and examines how that case illustrates the issue (Yin, 2010). This application differs from this study in that the essence of the teachers' lived experiences with writing instruction of the phenomenon was examined. The comparisons given between each of the approaches, and my study, confirm that the approaches presented would not best be suited to derive a deeper understanding of individual's perspectives with writing instruction, which was needed to solve the problem.

Using phenomenology, I studied teachers' shared experience: teaching writing for five or more years. It was anticipated the data gathered from the participants' experiences would inform me of the gaps, policies, and practices needed to improve instructional techniques needed to enhance student writing outcomes in School E9.

Participants

I first sought permission from the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to begin the recruitment of participants and collection of qualitative data. With the approval from the IRB, and obtaining permission to complete the study, I began the selection of a specific host site. School E9 was chosen for the study of the teachers' experiences with teaching writing instruction to the struggling writers at the school. Once the site was chosen, a Letter of Cooperation was submitted to the appropriate destinations.

I first submitted the Letter of Cooperation: County Site to the district to request access to the host school site. The district asked me to submit an outline of the study, an approved Proposal, and an IRB certification number for the district to review. The district reviewed the material and gave their approval by signing the Letter of Cooperation: County Site, and sending it through e-mail. I was then allowed to contact the host school site. I submitted a Letter of Cooperation: School Site to the principal of School E9 requesting the cooperation of the host site and the principal's approval to host the study. I also provided the school principal with an approved Proposal. The principal granted me access by signing and sending the Letter of Cooperation: School Site through e-mail. The host site was now available, so I focused on how many and what kind of participants to select, and how to gain access to them.

In qualitative, phenomenological studies, participant numbers range in numbers from one up to hundreds, but the importance is not the number or sample size; rather, it is the particular phenomenon that the individuals being studied have experienced (Creswell,

2012; Yin, 2010). Following this advice, I created criteria (i.e. participants had to have taught writing for 5 consecutive years in the elementary grades, had to be currently teaching writing, and consented to participate in the voluntary study) for selecting the participants, which was focused on the elements of a qualitative, phenomenological study based on criterion sampling. Criterion sampling was chosen as the sampling strategy to uphold the phenomenological essence of a group experiencing similar things within a similar setting. The criterion sampling approach was justified for the selection process in that the volunteering participants had experienced the phenomenon being studied.

Adhering to the phenomenological approach in recruiting participants, the school teaching staff was invited to participate in the study based on the criterion sampling. To accomplish this, I asked the principal to provide an e-mailed list of the faculty e-mails so I could introduce the study and ask for volunteers to participate. The principal was assured that all faculty e-mails were used once and deleted after this step. I sent the e-mail Letter of Recruitment: Participants, as approved by the IRB, to the faculty e-mails and then deleted the e-mails to uphold privacy. In the e-mail Letter of Recruitment: Participants, I outlined the study, discussed the inclusion criteria for participants, included the participant's role in the study, explained that the confidentiality and privacy of participants would be upheld, and offered the teachers a choice in volunteering.

I gave an overview of the study by providing its purpose within the E-mail Letter of Recruitment: Participants, which outlined the study's process and role of participants, and offered what the study could accomplish. The criterion for sampling was listed to ensure the volunteers experienced the phenomenon being studied. An overview of the

participants' role outlined my expectations of the volunteers throughout the study. The letter stated I would uphold confidentiality of the names of the participants and the site by protecting their identity and privacy. I explained that all teachers who met the inclusion criteria may volunteer and, if they were interested in participating, they would need to follow up with me. Those interested in participating were asked to reply through e-mail to me within one week providing their name, grade level, how many years they have taught, and an e-mail address and phone number. Those who did not wish to respond were told they would not encounter any negative consequences.

After obtaining responses from interested participants through e-mail, I created a volunteering roster of the first six respondents. Using this roster, the Informed Consent Form was sent through e-mail to the six respondents, and they were asked to reply in 1-2 weeks. I explained that if any questions or concerns arose about the form, or the study, I would be willing to answer all. The form began with an introduction that invited the teachers to participate, offered the goal of the study, introduced who was conducting the study, and gave my role for maintaining integrity and quality throughout the study. It continued with the purpose that drove the study, expressed the background for what theory guided the study, and listed procedures for what the participants would be doing in the study with examples. The Informed Consent Form discussed how participation was voluntary, outlined the risks and benefits involved in participating, included the decision of no physical compensation, and offered support for confidentiality and privacy of participants to be upheld throughout the study. The form gave the teachers contact

information if they had questions, and offered them a choice in continuing to volunteer with their statement of consent.

After receiving the Informed Consent Form, all six teachers replied that they were willing to be involved, and confirmed by signing the statement of consent and sending it back to me through e-mail; the outcome was a sample of six participants. To ensure the quality of the study, I referred back to the volunteering roster to confirm all participants who consented had experienced the phenomenon under study. It was concluded that each participant met the criteria for sampling.

After the teachers confirmed their consent to participate in the study, within one week of their consent they were invited to suggest, discuss, and confirm a date and time that would fit into their schedules for participating in the focus group session. Once the procedures were set and acknowledged by the participants, I invited them to participate in the data collection process through a focus group session and two one-on-one interview sessions. All six participants confirmed their schedules and I gave the location.

To maintain each participant's confidentiality and uphold their ethical protection throughout the study, the correspondence to gain access to them for the focus group session was privately done through e-mail between each participants and me. Once there was access and confirmation of the focus group participants, I had availability of the participants to proceed with the study. The actual process for the focus group session will be explained in further detail in the data collection process.

After the focus group session occurred, I invited the participants to participate in a one-on-one interview within the next two weeks; I needed just two volunteers. All six

participants agreed to volunteer, so I asked the six participants to write their name, e-mail, and phone number on an index card, and these were placed in a covered box with a hole in the top. Before the participants left, and to remove bias of selection on the researcher's role, I randomly selected two volunteers from the box and 2 more names in the event someone might withdraw. I then wrote the teachers' names down on a participant roster and explained that they would receive an e-mail within the next day to discuss available times for the one-on-one interview. The following day I contacted the participants through e-mail to discuss date, time, and location for the one-on-one interviews. The scheduling was agreed upon by the two participants and the interviews were set up. Again, to maintain the participant's confidentiality and their ethical protection, all e-mails occurred through private correspondence between the individual participant and me. Gaining access to the participants for the interviews allowed for in-depth data collection which will be further discussed in the data collection process.

As each component to complete the study was set up, the entire process centered on me developing and maintaining a researcher-participant working relationship. The process included gaining access and permission to the host site and participants, inviting the participants to consent in participating in the study, and confirming participation for the focus group session and the two one-on-one interviews. As Merriam and Tidswell (2015) noted, true connections must be established or negative impacts will occur in the qualitative study. Likewise, a protective and positive relationship must be ensured, or the study may fail. Yin (2010) suggested also that, for a qualitative study to reap benefits, an appropriate working relationship must be made with each of the participants. I kept this

point in mind and took steps to maintaining the participants' desire to volunteer and to continue participating throughout the study by creating a working relationship with them and maintaining the relationship.

In carefully planning for this qualitative study, my goal was to establish a working relationship, with the first step being the private selection of responding volunteers through e-mail, so nobody would feel threatened to participate. Before beginning the study, participants were e-mailed an Informed Consent Form establishing the specific elements of the study, which they reviewed for confirmation of participation, and soliciting their e-signed consent. In building a relationship, I wanted the participants to understand how much their participation meant.

In the tenet of respect, I showed respect for the participants taking the time to volunteer, showed concern about their devoted time and their personal interest, and considered their ethical and personal needs at all times before, during, and after the study by explaining thoroughly the details within the study (Yin, 2010). In showing respect I organized all aspects of the study taking into account and documenting what had been done, and what needed to be accomplished for each step of the process. Through my organization, timely manner, and knowledge about the study, the participants were shown that time was taken to plan out the details, have the materials ready and prepared ahead of time, and each step was fully explained or clarified for them.

Building on that relationship between all those involved in the study, the participants could trust that I would maintain their ethical protection throughout the study. To do this, I followed the steps in obtaining approval from the IRB and signed

consents from the district, host school, and participants. Through the approvals and consents, I was able to carry out the study while ensuring the ethical protection of participants, their rights, and confidentiality as outlined in the Letter of Recruitment: Participants and the Informed Consent Form. This aim was accomplished by ‘masking’ the participants names with letters and numbers (i.e. participant 1A) as each teacher consented, and giving the host site a pseudonym (i.e. School E9). Privacy was protected also through the continuous, private correspondence with the participants through e-mail and in person for discussions, questions, or scheduling.

Each step was systematically accomplished upon completion of the timelines supported by the participants, and their confidence in the procedures that would take place. In considering the participants’ ethical protection, I stated how their participation was valued and reminded them that they have my respect, concern, and consideration throughout the entire study. The participants were told their participation and the study outcomes would be creating a ripple effect as other teachers learned about the outcomes through the dissemination process at School E9. In offering ethical protection to the participants, they, in turn, offered support and confirmation to proceed; therefore, the study was able to progress through the data collection process and data analysis.

Data Collection

To systematically study the world from a qualitative approach, the stage should be set for collecting data, including the selection of a meaningful site and participants, then collecting the data and establishing a way to record the data (Creswell, 2013). To

set boundaries, I began fieldwork in the selected site of School E9, with consenting, volunteering participants.

Once I received IRB approval to begin with data collection (Approval No. 05-02-14-0131549), the letters of cooperation were sent out. The letters of cooperation were sent to the host county on May 20, 2014, to the host school principal on May 26, 2014, and the replacing principal on July 31, 2014. Upon approval by all parties concerned, I used criterion sampling to choose specific participants for the study; the criterion were that the participants had to have taught writing for 5 consecutive years in the elementary grades, and had to be currently teaching writing. To recruit participants, an E-mail Letter of Recruitment: Participants, approved by the principal, was sent out to all faculty members on the June 25th explaining the study and inviting them to volunteer as participants. Six teachers volunteered and confirmed to participate through e-mail between June 30-July 13, 2014.

As outlined previously, I chose qualitative data collection methods that would best fit the study, such as establishing a focus group session and one-on-one interviewing. This approach provided me with deeper understandings of the process in gleaning input from the participants (Creswell, 2013). The focus group and interviews allowed me to interact with the participants on a different level and create a deeper and stronger relationship (MacDonald, 2012). While focus groups are known to promote brainstorming, one-on-one interviews can provide a different ‘conversational partnership’ (Rubin & Rubin, 2005), therefore both were chosen to make the participants feel comfortable to let down their guard and express themselves freely.

Focus Group

To gain initial insight into the volunteers' experiences with writing instruction, and how their experiences would relate to the problem, I decided to begin the data collection process with the focus group session. Once the signed Informed Consent Forms were received via e-mails from six volunteers, I had access to the participants for a focus group session. I confirmed the sample size of six and scheduled the session via e-mail. Based on the participants' chosen date and time, the session occurred two weeks after the participants' confirmed their availability during a free period in their morning pre-planning schedule. For the session, participants were in their natural setting, their home school, which offered an environment where they felt comfortable in sharing their experiences of planning and instructing writing within School E9. I was present at the host site on Thursday, July 31, and held the session in participant 3C's classroom at 9:08 a.m., the time in which the teachers had a free pre-planning schedule. To maintain ethical protection and privacy for participants, only the participants knew the names of each participant in the classroom. The classroom was prepared an hour ahead of time, with enough seats and refreshments for all participants.

Once the participants arrived, they filed into the classroom joining me as I sat at the round table. I set the tone for the focus group session by sharing the focus group protocol and asking if there were any questions about the study or the consent form. I allowed for participants to have a choice in continuing to volunteer. To assure that no harm would come to the participants, they were reminded they could remove themselves from the study at any time, and without any consequence, and their reason for withdrawal

would be completely confidential. To further protect confidentiality and remove harm, I protected participant confidentiality by discussing with the group that letters and numbers would be used to represent the individual participants (i.e. Participant 1A) and a pseudonym to represent the site (i.e. School E9). Once I obtained approval to move ahead from the volunteering teachers, the focus group session began as I went through the focus group topics of discussion (Appendix B), and the group brainstormed ideas and came up with comments of past and present experiences addressing the topics.

The topics posed within the focus group session began with a big idea: Struggling writers, and lead into four specific topics that generated the brainstorming and comments from the participants. The participants were allowed to ask questions and express their true standpoints of the topics in the focus group session. I gave them sufficient answer time, repeating questions if needed, or offering probes for further discussion (Lindlof & Taylor, 2010). The session lasted a little over an hour and concluded as I thanked each volunteer for participating. The focus groups transcriptions were for my benefit and not ‘member checked’ by the participants as the contributions were collective by nature.

I kept track of all data using handwritten field notes on the group question sheet about the discussions that occurred for each of the four topics. For recording the session, I used a hand-held audio recorder. The data collected were collected, transferred to a disc, and transcribed within the following month.

I also made observational notes, reflective notes, and my personal thoughts from the focus group session. The collection process also included demographic information, including the time, place, and date of the field setting where the focus group session took

place. Observational notes were made during the session, while reflective notes were made within two hours of the focus group session to safeguard their accuracy. Before leaving the site, I placed all notes, or pieces of paper that I or participants used, in the binder to make sure no evidence was left behind as part of the protection of data quality and participant privacy. Though the focus group provided ample data, the topics were broad and meant for brainstorming and group discussion of the topics. To further delve into the study's research question and problem, and create a deeper understanding of what the group was experiencing in the classroom, I outlined the need to have two participants share their individual experiences in a one-on-one interview.

Interviews

To recruit an interview sample, participants were invited to participate in a one-on-one interview within 2 weeks following the focus group session. As described earlier, the individual participants were randomly selected and placed on a participant roster for the one-on-one interview. Individuals were sent a private e-mail and given a phone call to confirm scheduling of when they could participate in an interview of approximately one hour in duration. The interviews occurred with each of the volunteering participants in their availability of time of day within the fourth month of the study, and within the amount of time the IRB approved for the data collection to take place. The participants were in the same natural setting, their home school, and had their own experiences of planning and instructing writing within School E9. I was present at the host site on August 4, 2014 for the first interview and on August 5, 2014 for the second interview. The interviews were held in each participant's classroom after school with the first

interview held at 2:47 p.m. and the second interview at 4:05 p.m. It was each participant's choice to hold the interview within their individual classrooms in School E9. For each interview, only the participant and I were in the room. The participants chose to do the interviews after school within a day of each other, and when each participant's classroom was available. This approach allowed for fewer disruptions from individuals or activities within the school.

Once the date, time, and location at the host site were identified, I arranged the room and materials one hour ahead of the interview. I set up an atmosphere where the participants' ideas could be expressed and not misconstrued, hoping their own classroom would give them a sense of security as they participated in the study. Each interview went as planned and, though the interviews occurred on different days, the scenario for the interviews was similar in the process. I was awaiting each of the participants to arrive in their classroom on the interview days, and when they arrived they sat across from me and I had a list of developed interview questions (Appendix C).

Each interview began with a discussion of the Interview Protocol whereby a series of questions would be asked, and the participant could choose, or not choose, to answer them. I asked if there were any questions about the study or the consent form, and then offered the participant a choice in continuing to volunteer or withdraw. I reminded the participant that, at any time, she or he may ask to be removed from the study without any negative consequences, and I noted that I would uphold the participant's confidentiality at all times. I thanked the participant for volunteering and continued with the

interviewing process. Each participant provided personal accounts around their experiences to each question, and each response was recorded on a hand held recorder.

While collecting data I reflected back to the study question: What are the writing instructional strategies of teachers at the elementary level? This question lead into 17 specific questions that generated responses of participant experiences. Participants were invited to ask questions and encouraged to give their stance or viewpoint to address the questions. As the interviewing process unfolded, I paused after each question to give the participant ample time to respond (Lindlof & Taylor, 2010). While interviewing, I stopped to repeat and restate questions when needed, and offered probes for further discussion and to motivate the interviewee to dig deeper into her or his experience on a specific question (Lindlof & Taylor, 2010). To build trust with the participant, I got the participants to feel comfortable by offering an informal approach in how the questions were asked (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Interview one lasted 50:46 and interview two lasted 1:03:22. After each interview session I thanked the interviewee for participating and explained that I would remain in contact to set up a 'member-check' session.

To keep track of the data, I brought a three-ring binder to both interviews, and included additional dividers to separate and organize the collected data. For recording purposes during the interviews I made handwritten observational and field notes, and audio recorded the conversation with a hand-held recorder. The data were then transferred to a disc and transcribed within the week following each interview. I made additional descriptive notes, which included the physical setting and accounts of the events that occurred; those notes, and all other forms of data, were included in the binder.

To ensure privacy and participant confidentiality, I made sure to collect all data and place it in the binder before leaving the school site. After the data were transcribed, I e-mailed the volunteers to set up a time, date, and location for a ‘member-check’ session with each one for validity purposes (Creswell, 2012), which is explained in the data analysis section.

In conducting the data collection I remembered the role of the researcher is to know the hardships these educators face, but it’s also important to acknowledge biases, values, and interest in the topic chosen to study. Based on my experience as a teacher of writing, I was aware of my biases, values, and personal interest in the topic. I was aware also of my own inquires and outward expressions, and kept a distance from the discussion by ‘stepping back’ during the focus group session and one-on-one interviews. I took this step to ensure I heard the experiences and discussions of participants without any influence of my views (Hatch, 2002). I maintained a desire to have a trusting relationship with the participants, and invited them to volunteer for the study because they were passionate about the topic; instead of feeling they were obligated. The desire for each teacher to participate was high, but I understood that everyone might not want, or have the time, to participate, so the pressure to join in was eliminated. To help ensure privacy, all data which related to the participants, the sites, and activities within the study, were ‘masked’ for confidentiality purposes with letters and numbers and pseudonyms within the study (Creswell, 2012).

My role in this qualitative study was to present the meanings of the input of others as in what the phenomenon meant to participants, and how they interpreted it, while

eliminating my biases by being committed to understanding the experiences that were being explored. To diminish the possibility of my bias in being a teacher myself and my personal interest in having an answer for creating successful student writers, for example, I sought to maintain the validity of the study through the member-checking method so the information presented by the participants was not altered, put in my own words, or swayed by my viewpoint of the problem.

As noted, the data were collected through paper and audio recordings, and transcribed and analyzed through a Microsoft Word software program. In consideration of the participants' rights and confidentiality, I ensured the data were safely secured at all times. All copies of hard and e-data were locked in a file cabinet in a secure area in my home, and will be for a period of five years. After five years the data will be privately purged by shredding any hard copies and deleting and emptying the 'Trash Bin' of e-files.

I aimed to collect data that was purposeful in building something for the teachers, from their perspectives with writing instruction that could be used in building a successful writing curriculum at School E9. After the data analysis was completed, I proceeded to build the outcomes for findings and conclusions, completed the doctoral report, and constructed the project curriculum guide. Upon completion and approval of the project study and the project by Walden University, I will send out a flyer (Appendix D) scheduling a time and date at School E9 for dissemination to present the study's results to the faculty, principal, superintendent, members of the Board of Education, and parents of students who would like to attend.

Data Analysis

The goal in a data analysis process for a qualitative study is to strive to gain meaning of the data collected in addressing the study problem and question. Creswell (2013) noted that the data must be ‘unpacked’ by using different analyses, and the researcher must understand and interpret the data. After organizing and preparing the data, I completed an analysis for the focus group session and both one-on-one interviews.

The focus group data analysis occurred within one week of the session in which I used the analysis to build a foundation for the study. The first step in analyzing the focus group session was to review all data gathered in the field notes and demographic information. This step was conducted to gain a ‘general sense’ of the data and reflect over the material by asking questions and making personal notes within the margins. As noted previously, the focus group transcriptions were for my benefit and not ‘member-checked’ by the participants as the group’s contributions were collective by nature. I began with the analysis of these data upon completion of transcribing the session.

I organized the transcript using Microsoft Word by transcribing the audio recording, typing out the field notes, and saving all the data to files and CDs. I completed a couple of reviews of the focus group transcript, and made notes on the transcript to gain a general sense of what the participants were expressing in their statements, and to identify repeating themes and commonalities within their responses. The focus group session transcript was not coded with categories or subcategories; instead, it was indexed and charted to indicate the emerging themes to the analysis. As Krueger and Casey (2000) and Merriam and Tisdell (2015) noted, using data to identify emerging themes

allows a foundation to be built for analysis and lead back to the concepts that drive further analysis from a qualitative stance. In following this advice, the themes were discovered through highlighting within the participants' statements on the transcript and then through a Microsoft Word Document to save the highlights created. The highlights on the transcript were the ideas of commonalities which were noted as being repeated through the participants' responses. These commonalities lead to themes that were expressed through the transcript of the focus group session. The information was placed in an index chart using a Microsoft Word Program to create a box to index each of the themes as a heading, and another box to place the transcribed material that had commonalities and matched under the specific theme.

I then went back to review the study question, problem, and focus group topics in relation to the participants' responses. I used the index chart with the emerging themes that were revealed to gain a sense of what the participants were expressing in relation to the topics, and to further identify relevant data. As the themes emerged, I continued to relate back to the focus group data analysis to tie into the overall understanding, but I knew there was a need for more in-depth data analysis from specific teacher's interviews. From here, I relied on just the interview transcripts to complete the data analysis because the focus group transcripts were collective by nature and used to enable the creation of the foundational themes as expressed by the participants as a whole.

I continued with the in-depth data analysis of interview transcriptions in which the analysis built further meaning and understanding for the study. The analysis occurred within one week of each interview, with both interviews being analyzed in the same

manner to ensure consistency. I began each analysis by listening to the audio-recordings several times, and making references to the field notes and demographic information. I was trying to gain a 'general sense' of the data and reflect over the material by asking questions and making personal notes on paper. I continued with the analysis by transcribing each of the interviews.

For each interview, I organized the transcripts using Microsoft Word by transcribing the audio recordings to documents, typing out the field notes, and saving all the data to files and CDs. I completed two reviews of the interview transcripts and made additional notes in the margins on each transcript to gain further knowledge of what each participant was expressing, and to identify concepts and main ideas from each participant's response. I created a summary of interpretations from the transcriptions and my notes to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon the participants were experiencing and how they experienced it, so I could use the summary for further analysis.

After the data were transcribed and the summary of interpretations was created, I e-mailed the volunteers to set up a time, date, and location for a 'member-check' session to review the interview transcripts with aim of making any changes and giving feedback on a summary of interpretations I developed for analysis (Creswell, 2012; Hays & Singh, 2012). As advised through the professional literature, this step was taken to confirm each participant's contributions; to validate, change or edit the relevant transcription; and, to offer their feedback on the summary of interpretations. The participants chose to do the 'member-check' session after school hours, within their own classrooms, and within a

day of each other; a process which lasted approximately one hour in duration. I began the session by reviewing the participant's rights and ensuring their ability to validate, make changes, or edits to their transcriptions. Each participant and I reviewed the relevant transcription and discussed each individual's contribution. When the participants completed this process, I asked if there were any changes or edits they would like to make. Neither participant made any changes or edits to the transcripts, and stated they supported the study and the summary of interpretations that I created for analysis. The participants validated their transcripts and the summary by signing a final copy for me. I finished by reminding the volunteers that they have, and will continue to have, my respect, concern, and consideration throughout the completion of the study. The member-checking method ensured the final reports were accurate and supported by the participants, and enhanced the accuracy of the overall qualitative study. Once the process of member-check was completed, and the transcriptions and summary validated, I continued with the analysis process.

Moving forward, I began with the coding process of the interview data. Rossman and Rallis (1998) stated that "coding is the process of organizing the material into 'chunks' before bringing meaning to those "chunks" (p. 171). To make the qualitative data understandable, I developed ways of reporting data that best suited the study. Coding the data in a systematical manner, I labeled the concepts, themes, events, and topical markers so they were easily retrieved and examined throughout the analysis (Merriam, 2009; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In considering and accomplishing this step, I

re-examined the interview data through an in-depth breakdown of the entire interview transcripts that were displayed through the use of a Microsoft Word document.

I reviewed the study question, problem, and interview questions. I started by reading through the interview transcripts to find the underlying concepts that were revealed. Recurring ideas were noted, and concepts that were revealed lead to themes or main categories that were expressed through the transcripts. After integrating the concepts and themes derived from the interviews, major thoughts and ideas began to emerge. As the thoughts and ideas emerged, using just the interview transcripts, they were organized into specific categories that related to each other. The categories were then represented by subcategories and allowed me to create a specific label for each category and subcategory.

As suggested by Merriam (2009), to distinguish the categories and subcategories, I coded them with brief labels to designate each one. This process allowed me to go back over the transcripts and identify exact elements that needed to be highlighted and placed under detailed codes for the data collected. Specifically, I took the information found in the interview transcripts and began ‘chunking’, or labeling, categories with a term (Creswell, 2012). To further distinguish the categories and subcategories, the ‘terms’ were coded by colors, as well as brief abbreviations. The Microsoft Word document was set up into two columns; on the left was the coding (a legend was provided in the document) and color, and on the right was the transcribed data. If the responses intertwined between subcategories, I further labeled the subcategories in the coding

column, then highlighted and color-coded the words to the specific coding color, which often created an overlapping code.

In identifying the codes, the transcripts were used to develop the concepts, rather than using codes that had been created prior to analyzing the transcript. Yin (2010) suggested that, when collecting interview data for qualitative studies, first read the interview transcripts to record main ideas and summarize them, and next look specifically for the patterns and relationships among the data that establish recurring themes. Using Yin's suggestions, I referred back to the coding and chunked the data together, and re-examined the transcripts to develop ideas and recurring themes about the information found in relation to the question and problem.

For a qualitative, phenomenological data analysis, the main points are taken from the transcripts to understand the experiences of the participants, while continuously referring back to the study question and problem through triangulation. There are steps that must be taken to complete phenomenological data analysis and, once the data were coded and analyzed, I could further develop groups with the use of 'horizontalization' which is the step labeled by Moustakas (1994), a psychological phenomenologist (Creswell, 2012, p. 82). Horizontalization was used to "go through the data and highlight "significant statements", sentences or quotes that provide understanding of how participants experienced the phenomenon" (p. 82). Completing the horizontalization after coding helped me make further connections among the interview transcriptions, and find in-depth understandings of experiences these teachers had when planning and instructing writing.

In developing the clusters of meanings to create themes for phenomenological data analysis, I was able to establish a narrative description of what each participant shared as her or his experiences and recommendations in writing instruction, such as a “textural description” (Creswell, 2012, p. 82). I also included a description of the setting as School E9 to indicate how it influenced the teachers’ experiences of the phenomenon, such as a “structural description” (p. 82), while also connecting to the phenomenon by including my role in the study as suggested by Creswell. From the textural and structural descriptions compiled to create a merged description where I presented the ‘essence’ of the phenomenon. This process illustrated the common experiences of the teachers, which lead me to an underlying “structure” (p. 82) for their experiences. All of this lead to further analysis of the data and allowed me to understand what it was like for the teachers’ to experience the teaching of writing instruction.

To further the process of analysis, I sorted through the data by creating a Microsoft Word document that highlighted main ideas. Quotes were cut and pasted that helped sort the ideas that were presented in chunking and horizontalization to rethink the information gathered. Having the information organized helped summarize some of the key points from the interview. Using this approach led me to establish re-occurring themes through patterns shown in the data and the common experiences discovered from the participants when completing phenomenological data analysis. Through this analysis I sought to discover if the teachers’ description of writing instruction, and essence of the experiences with writing instruction, could be a powerful tool for developing themes as a means for promoting collegial academic planning and learning for improving writing

instruction. As a professional and doctoral candidate, I kept at my forefront the desire to gain insight into teachers' lives about their desires and needs that would lead to a more effective and efficient writing curriculum that could produce independent student writers.

To protect the validity of the study, I used methods of quality control after and during data collection and analysis. The method of quality control used was ensuring each participant had reviewed and signed an informed consent, participants knew they could remove themselves from the study at any point, and a member-checking method for the interview transcriptions and summary of interpretations created by me were offered. The member-checking method was used to promote authenticity and credibility of the data collected, as well as the transcripts and summary of interpretations created to ensure the final reports were accurate and supported by the participants (Yin, 2010). I took the transcriptions and the summary of interpretations back to the host site and allowed the interview participants to complete the member-checking method. The 'member-check' session was held after I transcribed each interview transcription and had created a summary interpretation of each interviewee's transcript.

I invited the interview participants to complete the member-checking method after school on August 21, 2014. The reviews occurred at different times with interviewee #1 (I1) at 2:30 p.m., and with interviewee #2 (I2) at 4:00 p.m. The sessions lasted approximately an hour. The purpose was to make sure the participants supported what had been transcribed and interpreted by me from their experiences with writing instruction. After the review of their transcript and summary of interpretation, I asked if participants had any questions or concerns with the information presented, and reminded

them of their participant rights. Both participants completed the ‘member-check’ session and validated their transcripts and the summary of interpretations. This approach enhanced the accuracy of the overall data analysis.

To avoid discrepancies and to enhance design validity, an acknowledgement of the possibilities of things going wrong should be made, but I must also be able to control and validate discrepant cases that could occur within the study. As Creswell (2013) and Merriam and Tisdell (2015) suggested, qualitative studies will never be flawless and there will be negative cases or discrepancies. I actively searched for discrepant within the study and sought out patterns that might modify the patterns found in the data. To protect the validity and remove discrepancies, I gained support through literature searches within the data analysis; adhered specifically to the qualitative, phenomenological method; kept specific, accurate field notes using the specific and appropriate sampling with an identification of early signs of discrepancies; and, gathered more data to minimize these discrepancies (Creswell, 2013; Merriam 2009; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Focusing on discrepancies throughout the study, I was active in recording, analyzing, and reporting any cases that showed negativity towards, or in, the study. Without validity, data analysis would not be accurate, so I implemented the appropriate steps considering all aspects of the data analysis process, from organizing the data to validating the data and any discrepant cases.

After completing data analysis, I continued to develop the doctoral project report and set up a plan for disseminating the results and finalizing the project. As noted earlier, the community stakeholders that should hear about the results are the Principal of School

E9, all teachers at the school, Board members from the county's Board of Education, and parents of students at School E9. Upon approval of my project report by Walden University, I will schedule a time of approximately one hour to present the results at School E9. I will send an invitation to the stakeholders to illustrate what the purpose of the study was, the date, time, and location for the presentation, during which I will explain the project elements and how the project curriculum guide should be used within the school.

Data Analysis Findings

Data Analysis Generated, Gathered, and Recorded

A qualitative researcher seeks to capture how something is experienced by the participants, and to gather a deeper understanding of their experiences in relation to the topic. Following the qualitative methodology, I reviewed the problem that School E9 had (i.e. struggling writers), which motivated the topic and led me to develop the question: What are the writing instructional strategies of teachers at the elementary level? Creswell (2012) noted that, for qualitative research, data are generated, gathered, and recorded in a manner that is easily understood, and can be easily followed by readers. In order to accomplish the task, the study problem and question prompted the qualitative research where I gathered data for analysis, and established qualitative findings and drew conclusions, dependent on the teachers' perspectives with writing instruction, for this study using a focus group session and 2 one-on-one interviews.

To construct qualitative results, I used the data generated, gathered, and recorded from conducting a focus group session, with six volunteering teachers, and two one-on-

one interviews with two of the volunteering participants. To generate the data I posed the focus group topics and interview questions; to gather data I listened and collected the responses to the posed focus group topics and interview questions; and, to record the data I used handwritten notes and audio recordings transformed to saved Microsoft word documents. All hard copies of data, notes, and raw materials were separated and placed in a binder.

To specifically generate the data for the focus group session with the six volunteers, I led the discussion of the big idea, struggling writers, and then led the participants into the next four specific topics (Appendix B). I produced the data from the participants' responses to the topics. The data gathering occurred as participants expressed themselves through speaking individually, and as a group addressing the big idea, and the four topics. To each of the four topics, the participants collaboratively brainstormed ideas and came up with their own experiences within their classrooms and the experiences they had with teaching writing within School E9. I gathered the participant responses through an audio recording using a hand-held recorder during the focus group session. I also recorded data by making handwritten field notes upon a group topic sheet. Observational and field notes were recorded during the focus group session and reflective notes were recorded post-session as I wrote my personal thoughts and demographic information, including the time, place, and date of the session. I used qualitative data collection tools to generate, gather, and record the data and, through that process, completed a thorough data analysis for the focus group session.

I completed the focus group transcription by saving the recording to a disc and listening to the recording to transcribe the dialogue within a week. After creating the transcription, I began the data analysis within one week of the focus group session, and the analysis lasted approximately two months. To keep track of the transcription, I saved it as a file to be opened through Microsoft Word, printed a hard copy, and made notes using highlighting with multi colors. For further analysis, I transferred the note taking ideas by highlighting quotes and repeating ideas with differing colors (depicting commonalities and themes) from the raw transcript and saved the transcript on Microsoft Word.

The focus group transcript allowed me to keep track of the conversation, to index the data in a chart, and organize the data to find emerging understandings of the participants' experiences with writing instruction. As the process continued, I created a saved document to keep track of the data that represented the highlights of emerged themes from the focus group session.

The themes that emerged from the commonalities within the participant experiences were represented in a chart that included four boxes to note themes emerging from the transcript, which included specific highlighted quotes matching the theme in each box. Again, to keep track of the data generated, gathered, recorded, and to be analyzed, a three-ring binder was used to catalog, separate, and organize the data and raw materials from the focus group session. Included were the approval of the IRB, letters of cooperation, e-mail correspondence, participants' informed consents, focus group topics with and without personal notes, observational notes (as reflective notes), demographic

information, transcriptions, audio recordings transferred to a disc, the hard copy and Microsoft Word printed document. The binder allowed me to have easy access to all the data and raw materials throughout the development of this report.

For the focus group data I started by reviewing all the material to gain a ‘general sense’ of data and reflect over the transcript by asking questions and making personal notes within the margins. I note the focus group transcription was for my benefit to identify themes and commonalities, but were not coded for further analysis; rather, they were organized, charted, and indexed through Microsoft Word to contribute to the overall collected analysis. Once the focus group data analysis outcomes were organized, indexed and charted, and stored, I began to sift through the indexed and charted data to support the group experiences on the transcript topics. These topics gave rise to the boxes previously noted, with a main box illustrating the theme that emerged, and a box supporting the theme with the supporting participants’ quotes from the transcript underneath. Through this process, emerging themes were supported and provided me with confidence to continue with the analysis of more data I collected through the two interviews.

With the aim of deriving relevant data from one-on-one interviews I continued to use the qualitative data collection tools and completed two one-on-one interviews with two volunteers. For each interview I led the participant into the 17 interview questions and prompted the participant’s response to each question. In responses to each question the participants shared personal accounts of their experiences, giving me personal insight into the experiences they had with writing instruction within their own classroom and

school. As with the focus group, I made handwritten notes and observational and field notes on the question sheet and audio-recorded the responses using a hand-held recorder during the entire interview. Reflective notes were recorded within two hours of the interview, and included my personal thoughts and demographic information, including the time, place, and date of the session.

For both interviews, qualitative data collection tools were used to generate, gather, and record data which allowed me to complete the data analysis. Once my transcriptions were generated, I began an in-depth data analysis within one week of each interview with the analysis lasting approximately three months. To keep track of the transcribed data, I saved them on a file to be opened through Microsoft Word and printed them out as a hard copy for note taking and highlighting using multi colors. For further analysis, I transferred the note taking ideas by highlighting quotes and repeating ideas with differing colors (depicting categories and themes) from the raw transcript and recorded the data by saving the transcript on Microsoft Word.

The process of saving the transcripts as Microsoft Word documents allowed me to have easy access to the data, and to keep track of the steps being completed throughout the analysis. I used the transcripts to organize the data to find emerging understandings of the participant's personal experiences with writing instruction. In continuing with the process, and to keep track of the data that represented the coding for both interview transcripts, I created a saved document through Microsoft Word. The coding showed two columns with a legend to depict categories and subcategories.

As suggested by Rubin and Rubin (2005), to distinguish the categories and subcategories, I coded them with brief labels to designate each one. I highlighted and placed specific elements of the transcript under specific codes. I then coded the transcripts by colors and brief abbreviations to signify the categories and subcategories by placing the codes on the printed transcript, and creating a coded transcript document in Microsoft Word. The codes that were represented in four main categories with subcategories, were color coded and represented as: teacher planning writing instruction (tpwi) (tpwi:pa = planning alone; tpwi:pp = partner planning; tpwi:cgp = collegial-group planning; tpwi = planning across grade levels), classroom instruction for writing (ciw) (ciw:strfr = strategies and frameworks; ciw:tchiex = teacher's instruction expectations; ciw:sds = student data and samples), school-wide writing instruction (siw) (siw:wp = writing programs; siw:te = teachers' expectations; siw:se = school's expectations), and teacher teaching writing instruction (ttwi) (ttwi:awt = amount of writing time; ttwi:wir = writing instruction resources; and, ttwi:wig = writing instruction guides). Each category and subcategory represented with a coding is supported by the interview's transcript.

As with the focus group data, all data generated, gathered, recorded, and to be analyzed for the interviews were kept in a three-ring binder with dividers to catalog, separate, and organize the data and raw materials from each interview. Included was an additional copy of the approval of the IRB and letters of cooperation, e-mail correspondence between both participants and I, each participant's informed consent forms, interview question sheets with and without personal notes, observational notes (as

reflective notes), demographic information, transcriptions, audio recordings transferred to a disc, and the hard copy of the Microsoft word printed document. By using the three-ring binder to keep track of all data and materials, I had easy access, and availability, to all items and data needed throughout the development of the analysis.

I began the analysis of the interviews by reviewing all the material to gain a 'general sense' of data and reflect over the transcripts by asking questions and making personal notes within the margins. The interview transcripts were organized and stored through Microsoft Word. I then began to glean out the findings through coding of the transcripts with columns and a legend to depict categories and subcategories using differing colors. The left column indicated the codes, and the right column indicated the specific quotes from the transcripts; the colors often overlapped due to subcategories. Through this process, emerging themes were developed and a set of categories and subcategories were coded.

Generating, gathering, and recording data is a key step in progressing through data analysis in order to build findings based on the qualitative nature for the study. These essential key steps can help build a strong background for a qualitative study and, if the steps are done successfully, they will allow a discovery of true findings from the participants' voices (Creswell, 2013; MacDonald, 2012). I feel I did successfully complete the steps of generating, gathering, and recording the data for the study and, because of this, I was able to establish sound findings, using the teachers' perspectives and allowing their voices on the topic to drive meaning and understanding of their

viewpoints with writing instruction from the focus group session and one-on-one interviews.

Findings and Interpretations

I was driven by the teachers' perspectives with writing instruction of their group experiences with the topics and individual experiences with the questions to produce findings for my study. I began with an alignment of data I had generated, gathered, and recorded to be able to base my findings from the teachers' voices as expressed through the focus group session and one-on-one interviews. I started with the data from the focus group session. The process began by comparing the study problem, question, and focus group transcripts to find the emerging themes. Guided by the problem that School E9 had struggling writers, I focused on using the teachers' experiences to bring to light the experiences the school was having as a whole. This task was accomplished by posing the study question to participants and identifying what effective writing strategies they saw in play in the whole school, or strategies teachers needed to employ, to enable struggling writers to find success. As the focus group analysis was collective by nature, the transcriptions offered a foundation for the teachers' experiences with writing instruction, and the practices upon what their ideas were based.

The concepts of writing instruction derived from the focus group data analysis had recurring concepts which were the ideas specific to the lack of planning, teaching, time, and resources devoted to writing instruction. Hatch (2002) and Creswell (2012) suggested that reoccurring concepts are the ideas found within the data and can help build the foundation for developing the main themes of analysis. Following Hatch and

Creswell's suggestion, the concepts discovered through the teachers' perspectives lead to emerging themes and main ideas expressed through the transcript of the focus group. I also made generalizations about the focus group input from the teachers and used these to discover the emerging themes. From the analysis, the teachers' experiences led to the development of five themes that were based on the teachers' perceptions of the entire school's writing curriculum, and what they thought effective writing instruction should look like within the school. The five themes represented what the teachers, as a part of the school and representing the writing teachers from the school, encountered and stated about writing instruction. The themes were:

1. School-wide writing for students;
2. School-wide writing instruction for teachers;
3. Planning for writing instruction;
4. Teaching writing instruction; and,
5. Curriculum for writing instruction.

Each of the five themes connected to one of the four concepts and were developed from the teachers' experiences. This outcome guided me into the findings from the focus group session. The concepts, themes, and findings were supported by quotes derived from the analysis of the six participants' experiences with writing instruction at School E9.

The first theme, school-wide writing for students, is connected to the concept of teaching and developed through analysis of the focus group transcript. Through analysis led by the teachers' experiences, as a whole, with writing instruction a conclusion was

drawn that the participants do recognize that students are struggling in writing and I noted that high expectations may be hindering students from progressing in writing. The findings supported the participants struggle with teaching students to meet the high expectations, and being able to teach writing instruction to the high expectations.

Participants viewed this factor as one that may be holding students back from improving their writing. A quote from P2B suggested the direction offered for school-wide writing for students through the statement,

I just, I mainly think that our students are struggling with writing because we are pushing them so hard that we are stopping them because of our expectations...they're running into the wall because they say, "I can't, I can't, I can't" and sometimes I think that with what our county and...and state expects, no wonder our students struggle in writing. By the time they get to second, third, fourth, fifth, then they're done. They can't do it...they don't want to practice it...The way they write is the way they talk...There's one of us and 25 of them, so it's hard for us to show them the correct way to write without squashing them or know which direction to take with them because sometimes we don't know how and to... what degree they are struggling because students are not assessed the same way on writing in each grade level. (Lines 150-160)

The second theme, school-wide writing instruction for teachers, is connected to the concepts of teaching, time, and resources devoted to writing instruction, helped build the findings for views of the school as shared through the perspectives of teachers at School E9. From the participants' view it was concluded that teaching writing has its

challenges and they expressed that, school-wide, there are challenges in knowing what direction to take while teaching writing. Additional challenges include knowing how much time to devote to instruction, the lack of preparation for those who teach the writing, and the time it takes to prepare teachers to teach writing. A quote from the focus group transcript that supports the direction represented by the theme for school-wide writing instruction for teachers is from P3C:

And to, the big...the biggest things I second guess myself for,...as I'm teaching writing is...the balance that you guys are bringing up the...like how much, I want them to write, but those thoughts seem to be coherent and have a certain...grammar to them to be in. To be able to be understood and then that brings up the...other big challenge, which is simply that it takes time to write...(Lines 225-229)... And lots of time we are not given and we're going to a place where...we're using writing in all subjects, which is great. But doing that we're taking time from the people who know how to teach writing the most to make sure everyone writes...(Lines 233-236)...and we are asking teachers who haven't been trained...maybe they've focused their whole career on math, but now we're having the math teacher teach writing and...So, we're having less experienced people in the sense of what they've learned in their life. (Line 240-243)

The third theme, planning for writing instruction, relates to the concepts of planning, time, and resources devoted to writing instruction. From the viewpoints that were expressed, it was concluded the teachers struggle with planning alone, at a grade

level or in groups within the school, because of a lack of resources to plan for writing instruction. An overarching factor is the amount of time they would have to devote to get the planning accomplished. Supporting the conclusions of the theme, P4D stated,

And we're asking people who are unqualified and I deem myself as unqualified to teach writing, but I'm being asked to do it all, every year so...I mean...I'm teaching what I know, but there's got to be a better way. There's got to be a curriculum out there somewhere that scaffolds better and tells you what to do first. I mean why do you think we don't plan for writing, it's because what are we planning...I plan a little but basically I just kind of combine it to whatever I am already teaching...I don't plan with others and no one has told us to...to get together and discuss what we are doing for our writing instruction, so honestly...I don't feel like anyone does unless you are being tested for it...it worries me that I know that I need to be taking the time to give me kids writing instruction that is well planned out, but where do I start...I don't feel like I'm the only one on this boat...because when some mentions writing...everyone kind of looks the other way and plans for what they think is best for their students. (Lines 602-612)

The fourth theme, teaching writing instruction, is connected to the concepts of teaching, planning, and resources devoted to writing instruction. Through analysis of the participants' views of teaching writing within School E9, their views indicated there was a lack of confidence in teaching writing instruction to students because their experiences indicated they were unsure of what strategies to employ for teaching writing. A

statement that supports a lack of confidence in teaching writing instruction would be P5E's statement,

I was never taught in college how to teach writing...as I believe others at this school have experienced...we had every other subject and writing was thrown in there with Language Arts and writing instruction was an all encompass thing and that never seemed to be the focus...(Lines 442-445)...the only thing I ever had at this school was this little program called Writing to Win...and it had like some writing prompts and stuff like that in it, and it had some different genres and stuff. But as far as the proper way to go from age five the progression of writing, from teaching kindergarten and first grade a number of years and having my own child, I know the hierarchy of how a child learns just from experience, but if I was just coming into a school I would not know...where to go or what to do next...(Lines 449-455)...As we have all kind of said...all of us I guess...yeah I think we would agree that we are all kind of out of touch with maybe how to teach writing or maybe ...where to begin. But with no unified instruction at the school...we are just grabbing at anything to teach writing and...I feel like I am so unsure about...what to do, and no one is either teaching writing the same because they are using their own stuff, which continues to cause more problems with our students. (Line 460-466)

To further support the conclusions for teaching writing instruction P5E continues by stating,

Me, as a teacher, I have no idea what to teach first, but the only thing I've seen since I've been here is making a list, seemed to be what worked for me, or a word web, and then going from there....(Lines 530-532)... I can teach anything as long as I see it modeled or if I have a good program to go by and it makes sense to me, then I'm good, but when someone throws something at me and says, "Teach your five year-old what a narrative or informational paragraph is and have them writing it by years end." And I don't really know what the process is, then that just seems to be a back burner skill for me and I'm working on the other stuff because I'm confused myself how to teach it, so it's not a big priority for me. (Lines 540-545)

The fifth theme, curriculum for writing instruction, is connected to the concepts of teaching and resources devoted to writing instruction gave the participants' perception of the curriculum that was present at the school, and how they viewed it in connection with the school's writing instruction and their student writing. The findings gave insights that supported the idea of a weakness in a unified school-wide writing instruction, which was viewed to be hindering student writing success. To support the stance of the findings drawn about the school's curriculum for writing instruction, P3C stated,

Our frameworks that we follow for English/Language Arts, it just seems like there's no real writing instruction being taught. It's okay, we just read this book and now we are going to write an informational piece. It doesn't spend...it does not allow time for us to teach what informational writing is and going over the different parts, or teach us how to teach it...(Lines 327-331)... I can see that my students learning has gaps in it...just because where do I stop and...and actually

teach how to do the specific type of writing that...I know all of my grade level follow this...so doesn't that prove our students, at least in my grade, aren't getting exactly what they need in writing. (Lines 335-338).

P5E continued to support an array in the curriculum through their experience as stated,

What I'm saying is it made sense to me that when teaching you go from something very small to something bigger, like what is a word...words make sentences...sentences make paragraphs...and then teach them specific types of writing...but and now the, the CCGPS's is supposed to be what we follow. We don't, well I guess we don't have a curriculum in place that tells, that lets teachers use it. (Lines 495-498)

P6F also supported weakness in a unified school-wide writing instruction by stating,

We're supposed to have 'em writing a narrative at the end of the year, but as far as the instructional process like where we start from the beginning to the end. We've seen a lot of different programs like we've been talking about, and we've even got...What was it?...Kid Writing or something that (specific teacher) had. Where writing in kindergarten could be a scribble line and then, you know, they're drawing a picture and they're dictating. Well, I mean dictation is that oral language development, but to actually get to that point that they're writing things down and putting a sentence together. How do you properly get from this point to this point and what's the expectation, the real expectation?...I know all this is jumbled up...pull this from here and teach it...pull that from there and teach it...is not making my kids better writers...so I know I need something to refer

to...my grade level needs something... and I'm not hesitant...to say our school needs it. (Lines 500-510)

My direction from the focus group themes allowed me to build an interpretation of the focus group's analysis findings. Graham, MacArthur, and Fitzgerald (2013) suggested that, if teachers lack the confidence to teach writing, they will not have the power to motivate student writers. A concept running through the focus group transcripts was the lack of a writing instruction school-wide, a factor which led to the findings based on the teachers' perspectives as a whole: no unified writing program school-wide, and little value placed on writing instruction by the school. Dean (2010) expressed that, when little is done to support writing instruction within the school, the students may not get worse, but they have no chance of getting better. These findings, built on the teachers' perceptions of writing instruction they have experienced, formed the conclusion that, if there is any chance for the struggling writers to get better at writing, the writing instruction would need to be supported.

In completing a further analysis of the problem teachers were experiencing, their perspectives established the conclusion that these unconstructive experiences were indicating what was causing students to struggle in writing at School E9. After the development of concepts and themes from the voices of the teachers' from the focus group session, the findings established from their voices gave answers to the problem. I decided to continue with an in-depth analysis of both interview transcripts to allow the teachers' individual experiences to create more findings.

To derive further findings from the one-on-one interviews, I began the process by comparing the study problem and question with the interview transcripts to find the underlying concepts and themes to reveal the themes that emerged. Once the participants reviewed their summary of interpretations created from the teacher's individual responses and perspectives from their transcripts, there was a foundation built for the findings from the teachers' perspectives and direction for continuing with the study. Guided by the problem, I focused on using the teachers' experiences to bring to light a meaning for why there was a problem with writing in the school, and what could be done to diminish the problem. To address the study question, I used the data to identify what experiences each participant had with effective writing strategies, as in what strategies they personally were using, had used, or, in their view, what needed to be used to enhance student writer success. The interview transcriptions offered valuable insights into the professional lives of the individual teachers, their experiences with writing instruction, and the perspectives from which they were coming.

In continuing with the process, I analyzed the interview transcriptions through the coding process and found more concepts and themes interconnected with the focus group's data. The concepts of writing instruction offered by the interview participants, for example, were specific to the emerging themes discovered in the focus group data regarding the teachers' experiences with the lack of planning, teaching time, lack of resources and guides, and student writing; all dealing with writing instruction. These emerging themes lead to more emerging themes, concepts, and main categories expressed through the interview transcripts. The themes discovered were not as broad in referring

to the school as a whole. For the interviews, the themes were more specific to the strengths and weaknesses experienced with writing instruction by an individual teacher's perspective 'in a classroom', versus 'the school'. The eight themes were specific to school-wide writing instruction, student writing, teacher preparation, planning individually, planning with colleagues, writing instruction time, curriculum guide materials, and writing instruction guides. After integrating the concepts and themes, I reorganized them by putting them in specific categories that would relate to each other. The categories and subcategories allowed me to create a specific label or code for each category and subcategory.

I used the coding process to produce the related patterns and relationships, and to create the codes and 'chunk' participant responses within the categories and subcategories. In chunking the quotes, the teacher's personal experiences expressed support for the development of the four main categories and subcategories to be coded in the interview transcripts as earlier noted. The personal responses given for the questions asked in the one-on-one interviews aided support for and development of the categories and subcategories. For the development of the category 'teacher planning writing instruction (tpwi)' and subcategory tpwi:pp = 'partner planning' Il's response stated,

Last year we planned the two reading and writing teachers were like planning and trying to figure it out together...and we helped each other. This year with the departmentalization, fifth grade at least, we all will try to do that with all the teachers...to give...what times their writing. Cause we don't want one teacher working on narrative while another is working on informational and it, that gets

confusing, we need to plan together, but often we don't and just take our on approach to planning the writing for our classrooms. (Lines 468-473)

To support the category 'classroom instruction for writing' (ciw), and an overlapping subcategory of ciw:strfr = 'strategies and frameworks', and ciw:tchiex = 'teacher's instruction expectations', I1 also stated,

One thing I've noticed moving up through the grade levels are differences in emphasis in writing in each grade level. Each grade has a curriculum map for the year...from the county like I said...yeah the county give us this, right, and sometimes you get examples for... how to teach a certain genre... but because I teach fifth grade and writing is tested I'm expected to teach the writing instruction so the kids will get it...right...when you teach the lower grades there's never a test until they get to third grade...(Lines 134-140)... last year was the first year that fifth grade did Write Score and that was great cause I could see more effectively and efficiently what the kids needed instruction on and I could base future instruction on that, but, well the entire school might need to be doing the same program or at least using the same techniques...(Lines 143-146)... But just from talking to other teachers, it sounds like...the how to teach writing is often left behind and how to teach it a certain way is left out also. I think, every one wishes there was more how to do this, to teach writing. (Lines 152-155)

To support the development of the 'school-wide writing instruction' (siw) category, and sub category siw:se = 'school's expectations', I2 stated

Yeah there is a curriculum map the county has ...on their website and we get one at the beginning of each year...there's...a couple of times a year that we're to give a writing assessment and we are to keep it and at the end of the year we're to give the child a score. Like a 1, 2, 3, or 4...(Lines 105-108)...what they deem most five year olds need to be doing, I've hardly ever in kindergarten seen that, not at this school and I could say that what we get for teaching writing is either confusing or not appropriate for our kids at their...you know level of ability...this makes it even more confusing as to what we as a school should be doing or focusing on for writing...if I asked anyone else, they would be saying that they find it hard...confusing to know what instruction they should follow because I feel what we do get does not match our students' levels of ability because there's little expectations put on writing at the school. (Lines 114-121).

To support the category 'teacher teaching writing instruction' (ttwi) and subcategory ttwi:awt = 'amount of writing time' I1 stated,

We are on this new schedule this year, and with the departmentalization, so and I'm still working that out but I'm trying to get maybe, I'm trying to work it in to where there's like 10-15 minutes where we're writing and doing, like we're doing explicit writing instruction and we have the kids writing something, also and I like do little tricks to get them to write throughout the day. (Lines 243-247)

I1 added,

It's just, that teaching writing is just something I'm trying to do. This is only day three of this year, so we are working on it, but we are trying, it's something, I just

believe like, as a teacher you get 180 days, I feel like every year I look at whatever's the most important and I just tell myself I'm going to do those things every single day and if, I think writing is one of those things. I think even some amount, they have to write every day to some extent could help them. (Lines 282-286)

The coding and supportive quotes offer evidence that the individual participants' were having challenging experiences in writing instruction at School E9. This analysis step paved the road for the findings that would emerge from the data analysis.

In continuing with the analysis process, I used "horizontalization" (Creswell, 2012) to pick out important statements supported by quotes and build summaries of the transcripts created from the teacher's individual responses and perspectives. I also used the coding process to help build support an understanding from the participants' experiences relative to the phenomenon that they were teachers who taught writing for five consecutive years in the elementary grades. For the focus group, each participant had taught from a range of eight years to 20 years, I1 had taught for 10 years, and I2 had taught for 19 years. Each participant had been teaching writing in the elementary grades, as well as other subjects. Relating this to the study, the participants' experiences were true to the phenomenon because they had real experiences with writing instruction and could relate to others who teach writing.

Taking the data analysis to the next step, I sorted through the data to allow the voices of the teachers to create the main ideas that were highlighted in the document. Re-organizing the data helped the teachers' true experiences with writing begin to form into

summaries, which developed into key points from the interviews in relation to the focus group. These steps allowed the teachers' perspective's to guide the establishment of re-occurring main ideas that were connected and developed from the eight themes to the key points that arose from the participants' experiences revealed in the findings. The key points being re-established through participants' responses, which supported themes, categories and subcategories, coding, and chunking and relate to the study question and problem, were: the struggles each participant faced with teaching writing, the desire to teach more writing individually and school-wide, the desire to improve their own writing instruction, the struggles the school is facing with developing writing instruction, ways they feel writing instruction could be improved within the school, discovering something is lacking in the school's and teacher's writing instruction of planning and time devoted to the desire to writing instruction, and the need to change writing instruction school-wide. These key points developed from the teachers' voices in the transcripts led to an understanding of the experiences of the participants' and the connection to the study question and the problem.

Each participant's response offered specific insight into their experiences and helped me address ways to relate the data analysis to the problem, and align it with the study question. After chunking and coding the information, patterns and relationships began to formulate that were present between and among the concepts, themes, codes, and key points from the transcripts' data. I took each key point and organized them in order to find support from the individual teacher's perspectives for each key point's development. To determine the findings and results from these avenues of data analysis,

all the information and developed clusters of meanings from the teachers' perspectives as a whole and individually began the development of a narrative description of what the participants shared as their experiences in writing instruction. These meanings expressed from their point of views summed up what the teachers experienced by using supportive quotes to establish the findings from the eight key points, in connection with the 8 themes, which intertwined within the key points for conclusions to be drawn.

Breaking the key points down to illustrate the findings, I began with the first key point of the struggles each participant faced with teaching writing, which connects with the theme of teacher preparation. This view established the conclusion that teachers do struggle with teaching writing instruction to their students on a daily basis because they felt they were not prepared for the task, and desired to express their struggles with others. Il's response suggested this conclusion,

The county gives us a curriculum, but do they prepare us for it and how to teach the writing. I struggle with this because I don't feel prepared and I don't think other teachers feel they are prepared enough to teach writing and I think this is why a lot of us struggle with it. I mean I want others to know teaching writing is difficult and...and teachers do struggle. I'm thinking about veteran teachers, like me, and I'm just thinking about new teachers, I mean...I have the ten years to pull on and I've actually had some training in writing, but I struggle daily with teaching writing to my students because writing is such a broad academic and I have trouble deciding what should be covered, how to cover it, and to what degree the students should master it. This is something I have struggled with each

semester and I'm a writing teacher, but I know in speaking with other teachers, they struggle with this also. If you're a first-year teacher you have nothing to go on, there's nothing. You are googling for help, and so I feel bad. That's again where that teacher preparation from some continuous training or program to use each semester would help with that, and teachers talking about the struggles they are having with the writing curriculum, and come up with ways to help solve these challenges. (Lines 375-389)

I2 also explained their struggles in teaching writing and felt their lack of preparation contributed to the struggles they face which added support to the conclusions by stating,

My experience has been... [I] haven't been prepared to teach writing; I don't have enough knowledge base as a teacher in how the writing process occurs to a young child. In knowing my own child who's in seventh grade he has a lot of gaps, so evidently I am not in a boat by myself. A lot of people must not know how to teach writing [sigh] because he wasn't ever even been taught how to write in cursive. (Lines 133-137)

I2 continues by stating,

So, my experience for writing, everything in me tells me that...whatever I am doing is wrong because I've got some kids in here who don't even know how to form letters because their motor skills are behind and yet I'm teaching them about an adjective, a noun, and an adverb [deep sigh] and how to put a sentence together and they don't even know how to write a letter. So therefore, it is very hard for

me to make the connection to them...this is my main area of concern and why I feel I struggle as a writing teacher. (Lines 142-148)

Further wrapping up the I2's discussion on the topic, which points to a clear direction of the struggles faced by the participant as stated,

I've not ever been taught how to actually teach writing, which makes me an unprepared writing teacher. All I'm pulling from is my own experience with my own child and the...the few years that I've taught kindergarten and first grade. (Lines 169-171)

The second key point was there is a need for more writing instruction school-wide and within each classroom as connected to the themes of 'school-wide writing instruction' and 'student writing'. From the participants' descriptions of their experiences a conclusion was developed that, for the teachers at School E9, to meet the needs of struggling writers there is a need for more writing instruction to be implemented school-wide and within each classroom. In supporting my findings, the key point that expresses a need to teach more writing individually and school-wide is I1's statement,

I wish there was more guidance in the sense of...how to get there...at another school I taught at, I was trained to use Writer's workshop and I tend to lean on that, but there is nothing at this school that unifies the teachers in their instruction, so many of them teach with what they have or may not be teaching writing at all....Again, I think they grab what they have and go from there which can be detrimental to our students and I don't think this is helping our students succeed in writing. Simply stating, I think there should be more writing instruction taught

within the school. I think when it is not taught, there are gaps in student learning from year to year, so student writing isn't improving as they progress through the grades. (Lines 94-102)

To further support the conclusion that there is a need for more writing instruction school-wide and within each classroom, I2 stated,

When I first came to this school there was a writing program called 'Writing to Win' and it was done by some guy, who I could not even tell you his name and he put out a little notebook and it had some writing prompts and it had...some materials telling you the different genres of writing and some ideas, but I don't think that I paid very much attention to it because it was not easy to go through the materials and writing was not a required subject at the school, so I put writing to the side as others did, so there was little writing instruction in my classroom as well as others. Do I think this hurts our students' future in writing? Yes! Do I think there should be more writing taught in our school? Yes! I feel everybody should be teaching writing, but I feel that if it was more of a requirement then and now, then someone needs to put some emphasis on writing in our school, so then other teachers and I would teach more writing. (Lines 66-76)

The third key point was found to be the desire to improve their own (each participant's) writing instruction, and this connects to themes of teacher preparation, planning individually, and planning with colleagues. From the participants' descriptions of their experiences with their own writing instruction, a conclusion was made that the teachers do desire to make improvements to their writing instruction because they self-

identified that something in their writing instruction is lacking. From the findings the key point to improve their own writing instruction was supported by I1's statement,

Especially when I'm not sure exactly how to do something or I haven't been prepared sufficiently...I'll look in that area of my past to help me... so what we'll do for my writing lesson is a lot of ...when we are doing explicit writing instruction we will do the short whole group lesson then we will go to the mini lesson I guess and then we will go to individual writing time, extended writing time and I'll be walking around the room helping the students as they need it...(Lines 106-111)...and the most basic rule I have for writing in my classroom is that we write every day, so from this I know there is much needed improvement I can make in my writing instruction and...I feel planning can help other teachers and myself...build a better writing plan for our students because I know I am missing something in my writing instruction and wish I knew what I am leaving out or what should be added for the best instruction to get them to write more and learn how to write. (Lines 115-121)

To further support the findings that the participants expressed a need for improving their own writing instruction is supported by I2's statement,

I mean I have a handful of good writing lessons where...(Line 180)...I thought that worked...and I go back to it but I know something is always missing from my teaching, like I didn't plan enough, or plan the right things because I go back to that same thing over and over again, but I don't know if I am sure I am covering what I need to...I know I have lots and lots of work I need to be doing to

make my writing instruction better, but I need someone to help me plan it and I would like to have something and or someone to go to everyday. (Lines 184-189)

Following along with the conclusions of writing instruction from the experiences of participants, the fourth key point illustrated the struggles the school is facing with developing writing instruction as connected to themes of school-wide writing instruction and writing instruction guides. Evidence suggest the school, as a whole, has a curriculum map produced by the county, but as participants expressed, the school puts little emphasis on having a school-wide writing instruction. With this reality, the participants' expressions concluded that there is a challenge with developing writing instruction that can improve student writing. These findings about struggles with developing writing instruction within the school are supported by Il's statement,

For as far as the whole school's concerned, I know there are curriculum maps we follow, so we are supposed to teach certain types of writing during certain times of the year and there's guidelines as far as when they're taught and then what is taught, but the 'how' is very open for teacher interpretation. I feel...like this causes confusion with how the school expects us to teach the writing and or what each of us are doing to get the curriculum taught...there's just not a developed plan or program for our school...to follow for teaching the curriculum planning by the county...(Lines 70-76)... it is a great curriculum map that we're given... what we are supposed to teach...there's just not enough information to help you create your own instruction...I wish there was more guidance in the sense of...how to get there. (Lines 92-94)

I2 also supports findings of the struggles of developing writing instruction within the school as stated,

But writing was not...on the forefront of what we were trying to accomplish as a school, because we were so far behind on our reading scores...(Lines 82-83)...it's just wherever the emphasis gets put. So right now there is not a school-wide writing curriculum plan except for the county's to use...currently in my classroom I use...ideas from other teachers...some of the...state of Georgia has adopted a frameworks type thing where you can look online and get ideas and it had a little booklet that can go along with it. I feel like we struggle as a school because we haven't developed something to help the teachers teach writing for each grade level....No emphasis...so no writing plan for any of the grades, but I think other teachers just use what they think will work. For the Georgia frameworks, most of it I find the writing exercises are too advanced for our clientele here at this school, in a kindergarten setting. Almost, you would have to be very higher level thinking skills to complete the writing that I've seen that the county and the state would like us to do. (Lines 86-96)

Moving into findings for improving writing instruction as expressed by the participants, the fifth key point states ways they feel writing instruction could be improved within the school. The key point relates to the themes of school-wide writing instruction, planning individually, planning with colleagues, curriculum guide materials, and writing instruction guides. The teacher's expressions built the conclusion that through their perceptions of what they have experienced with the writing instruction, that

if they had something to follow, or resources to use that were easy to implement for writing instruction and planning for writing instruction, then more writing instruction would take place school-wide and promote student success. To support the findings for improving writing instruction within the school, as based on the experiences of the participants, I1 stated,

I mean well to improve our writing instruction...we will need teachers to come together, through like learning communities...where, we have a notebook that we were able to...put ideas that worked into and then we could pull from them and as students or teachers had issues teaching a particular thing we could go to that resource and pull from, so this worked in there...but yes, I think, yeah anything would help. I think, yeah change in our writing instruction would help because well, right now there's a big gap between...that what we understand and where we are going, but we don't know how to get there. (Lines 797-804)

To give support for the findings of how writing instruction could be improved based on participant experiences, I2 stated,

To improve it, we need a set curriculum that everybody can follow and help each other plan. This is why I struggle with teaching writing and I feel this is why other teachers struggle with planning and teaching writing. Right now, there is no set curriculum, so we teach what we want, and some are probably not teaching it at all because we don't have anything to go...by and no one plans for it. When you plan with others...you see what they are doing and they can make sure we are on the same page and help each other teach the writing. We need ...a grading

system or rubric that gives everybody a chance. Where it's not...this writing good, this writing bad. [laughter] Yeah, I mean...we need something to easily put to work in our classrooms because...honestly right now, not a lot of teaching writing is happening right now. (Lines 440-449)

The sixth key point was discovering something is lacking in the school's and teacher's writing instruction of planning and time devoted to writing instruction, which correlates with the themes student writing, planning individually, planning with colleagues, writing instruction time, curriculum guide materials, and writing instruction guides. From these expressed teachers' experiences a conclusion was formed that the participants expressed there was a need to put planning for writing instruction in the forefront, and there needs to be more time devoted for writing instruction within each classroom as required school-wide. This conclusion is supported by I1's statement,

I think the biggest road block for me is just...the time...I feel like there's a time constraint. I don't know...if that's a fair answer cause, to give writing more time you have to pull from somewhere else and it's an impossible task. For me...I think there has to be a change made within how much writing is taught in our classrooms and putting the time in to teach...teaching writing, but having resources to actually teach the writing. But the having learning communities, and being able to work with peers and...other teachers who've done it and being able to pull from, that would be greatly beneficial as well. I think the combination of those two things would be the best...the putting in the time in each classroom, but

having something to help promote more teaching of writing and then...maybe we could see more students writing. (Lines 953-962)

I2 also supported the finding to have more planning among colleagues, and time devoted to writing instruction to minimize the gaps present in writing instruction in the statement,

To help the students at this school, have a set curriculum with easy resources to help teachers teach more writing, have the teachers plan and discuss what they are using, plan a set daily time...or even weekly time...(Lines 1333-1335)...If you want me to teach writing, you got to make me a better writing teacher...and...(Lines 1351-1358)...if you want these children to be better writers, we got to write. How do you get to be a better reader? Read...(Lines 1366-1367)...So, keep the students writing is what I would have to say would work for me and the other teachers, but have me something that I can use to help me teach it. I put it by the wayside because I don't feel like I'm very good at it...so to improve the students we need more teaching of writing...teachers planning and talking and using resources to teach the writing...at least that's what I think! (Lines 1368-1372)

There were final conclusions drawn from the seventh key point of the need to change writing instruction school-wide as related to the themes of school-wide writing instruction, writing instruction time, curriculum guide materials, and writing instruction.

The key point gave evidence of the participants' views as to why there needs to be a change in writing instruction at School E9 to promote future student writing success. The view about conclusions drawn from the perception of participants that there needs to be a

change in writing instruction at their school, support is shown in the statement given by I1's,

You know two brains are better than one, coming up with all the ways we can change our writing instruction as a group and...together...and also, just realizing that if we continue to do what we have been doing that there will not be any changes made to students' writing... in writing in everything...I feel like there does need to be a change and as teachers we all need to work to create a change in the school's writing instruction using student achievement, student work as the basis for where do...we go next and planning how to improve our students' writing...and discuss it and plan with effective resources to accomplish this goal.

(Lines 872-880)

To gain further support for the view that there needs to be a change in writing instruction at the school I2 stated,

Teachers need something... like a notebook that we are able to...put ideas that worked into and then we could pull from them and as students or teachers had issues teaching a particular thing we could go to that resource and pull from that, so this will work in there. (Lines 1358-1361)

I2 had recognized the problem within the school and the need to change instruction by also stating,

I know our school has a problem with writing instruction and I know that our students are suffering from this. I think there are things out there to help our school with writing instruction, but we have to...acknowledge something is

wrong with the writing instruction as a whole. I don't think anybody here thinks they're like, I already know how to teach writing, I'm not going to do this thing. I do not think that about anybody. I think that all of us would admit that probably writing is one of our weaknesses as a school, as a team...just is. And I would say, you could equally say that we need to do something different to help our students out, but make teaching writing easier on us as a school, as a team, and individually. (Lines 1146-1153)

In using the themes and key points along with the entire data analysis to develop conclusions which were supported by these main quotes of teachers' experiences with writing instruction, which guided the development of a project plan that would support the findings, while expressing the participant's experiences. For qualitative, phenomenological data analysis of the teachers' experiences with writing instruction, I discovered their experiences were a powerful tool for action in the school to promote a need for professional learning development aimed at helping improve writing instruction and enhance the success of their student writers.

To produce the evidence of quality for the transcriptions used in the data analysis, the qualitative method of quality control used was a 'member-check' session and uphold privacy of confidentiality. Though the focus group session was for my benefit and not 'member-checked,' I made sure the focus group participants signed informed consents, knew about their rights as a participant, and knew about all data analyzed and used in the study, which related to the participants, the sites, and activities within the study, were 'masked' for confidentiality purposes and to secure the quality of analysis. Through the

member-checking method, the interview participants validated and were allowed to change or edit their transcriptions or ask to revise the summary of interpretation. Each participant consented to supporting the accuracy of their transcript and summary of interpretation, and approved the qualitative analysis by signing a member-checking session form. I used the methods of quality control to protect the participants' rights and, ultimately, protected the integrity of the data and quality of the study.

Findings Conclusion

The key findings were guided by recurring themes present within the analysis of the teacher's experiences' with writing instruction at their school. The problem was that there were struggling writers, and the study question was designed to gather evidence that led to the development of effective writing strategies of teachers. The problem was addressed by soliciting teacher experiences to promote better writing outcomes within the school. The study question was explored through teacher-participant experiences with years of involvement in writing instruction, and knowing about different writing strategies, techniques, and programs. The findings were formed from the views' of the shared teachers experiences', which revealed that effective writing strategies are designed by using researched resources, following a guide, planning alone and with others, promoting more teaching of writing instruction, and the incorporation of more student writing throughout the school.

A conclusion was drawn from what was expressed from the teachers' experiences that the teachers knew they needed to use effective writing strategies and techniques to help their students succeed in writing, and through their perspectives it was also

expressed that this was not occurring at School E9. As a result, the teachers' views gave support that at School E9 there was a need for a guide that is filled with instruction, resources, discussion, and planning tools to help them develop their effective writing curriculum and promote student success in writing.

From the analysis process, the findings from the teachers' perspectives helped promote that the result of the project must be the development of a plan that would provide teachers at School E9 with a curriculum guide for effective writing instruction. The project would then positively affect student writing, encourage a united approach in developing strategies for writing instruction within the school, and help build unity of writing learning communities within the school focused on unified writing instruction for their writing curriculum.

From the teachers' experiences shared in the study, and based on their views the project of a curriculum guide was developed, which is designed to provide a 9-week curriculum plan with instruction and activities to guide writing teachers. The curriculum guide will be used to help improve writing success for teachers and students at School E9. The curriculum guide was chosen because the teachers' experiences expressed the need for the teachers at School E9 to be provided with 9-weeks of instruction and activities using resources for designing their writing instruction, a guide on how to instruct, and a way to build unity among the school and teachers through discussion and planning. The curriculum guide would promote the learning of teachers because it would set the tone for discussion and planning in pairs, in grade levels, and across the school for writing instruction. When deciding what type of project to choose to address the problem,

the teachers' experiences with writing instruction formed a need for a curriculum guide, which would be the beginning to promoting more writing instruction among teachers school-wide at School E9.

Summary

The qualitative tradition chosen to conduct research for this study was the phenomenological approach in that I sought to look at the teachers' perceptions of their experiences with writing instruction. To guide the qualitative process, the overarching study question was: What are the writing instructional strategies of teachers at the elementary level? In gathering data in response to the study question, participants included volunteering kindergarten-fifth grade teachers who taught writing at School E9 for more than five years. Through an open invitation to relevant school staff, six participants volunteered for the study. A value-added aspect was that they were in the same natural setting and shared experiences in teaching writing in the same school.

The study included a focus group session and two one-on-one interviews. The data gathered from the focus group session were transcribed and analyzed for significant contributions to the study question. Data from the focus group led to concepts and emerging themes coming from the teachers' experiences as a whole with writing instruction, which was the foundation to continue with further investigations to discover individual teacher experiences with writing instruction. Data from the one-on-one interviews were transcribed, member-checked, and analyzed with the use of horizontalization; significant statements and connections were made through the interview transcriptions. These outcomes were further used to develop clusters of meanings and

descriptions of participants' experiences. The method of quality control used was that I ensured there was a shared phenomenon, participants spent ample time in the field, identified bias and negativity throughout the study, used member-checking to ensure accuracy and participant support; all which helped to enhance the validity of the study.

In deciding on the methodology for the project study, a key priority was to find a way to improve writing success for elementary grade students based on teachers' perspectives. The study problem was based on statistics which indicated teachers often struggle with developing writing instruction that enhances students writing success, and they are often unable to create real change with the writing techniques used with daily classroom instruction. While teachers often struggle with developing writing instruction, it is the teacher's responsibility to meet with others to research, refine, and implement the most efficient writing tools that promote writing success for students within the 21st century.

It was my job as a doctoral candidate to use the process and outcomes of this study to produce a project that supports development needs of teachers of writing based on the teachers' voices which were derived through analysis of their experiences with writing instruction. In that aim, the study sought the expertise of the participants in what needed to be included in a project, such as the curriculum guide for educators; one that is designed to enhance curriculum approaches and outcomes so teachers design and deliver better instruction and students achieve success in writing.

In Section 3, I present the project overview and an introduction which maps out the section components. Next, there is a description of the project itself, an outline of the

project goals, a rationale that supports the project genre, and a review of literature connecting to the themes from Section 1. The section continues with an implementation for the project outcome of the curriculum guide for teachers, while also addressing the potential resources and existing supports, potential barriers, proposal for implementation and timetable, and roles and responsibilities of teachers and others. The project evaluation plan describes what worked and what did not work in the project, and implications for social change at the local school and beyond are presented.

In Section 4, I address reflections and conclusions for the final study by explaining the project strengths and recommendations for remediation of limitations. I explain what was learned from the development of the project through scholarship, project development and evaluation, and leadership and change. I also explain what I learned about myself in developing the project through the analysis of self as scholar, analysis of self as practitioner, and analysis of self as project developer describes. The section continues with the project's potential impact on social change and implications, applications, and directions for future research.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

For this study I identified a problem; there were struggling writers at School E9. In building a study question to explore this problem I was led to investigate teachers' experiences with writing instruction as a means to identify strategies that would help teachers in the design and delivery of their writing curriculum. The goal was for teachers to be better prepared in helping struggling writers at School E9. The project consists of a 9-week Curriculum Writing Guide for K-5 Teachers (curriculum guide), which is outlined following in Section 3.

In this section, I cover the following topics:

1. A detailed description of the project, including how it addresses the problem and its direct goals.
2. The reasoning for choosing the curriculum project and genre, how that project was developed from the data analysis, if the problem was addressed by the project, and how the project offers a solution.
3. A review of literature to indicate the connection between analyses of theory and relevant data, used to guide the development of the project and progression of the curriculum guide.
4. An implementation plan for the project, including the potential resources and existing supports, potential barriers, proposal for implementation and timetable, and roles and responsibilities of teachers and others.

5. A project evaluation plan giving an overview of whether the elements that make up curriculum guide actually can work, what is not going to work and why, and how to sustain the use of the curriculum guide.
6. The project's importance to the local community and its connection to a larger network.

Description and Goals of the Project

After the data collection and analysis, I reviewed the findings and created a plan that would address the problem and answer the study question. With this information, I developed a curriculum guide (Appendix A) to assist teachers with improving struggling writers.

The curriculum guide contains six sections: introduction, informative, 9-week curriculum writing guide (purpose and use), nine weeks of curriculum adjustable to each grade level (kindergarten through fifth grade), extended learning, and teacher discussion. The six sections were then grouped into three categories, and are represented in the folder as the labels Getting Started, Curriculum, and Learn On.

The first category, Getting Started, includes the Introduction and Informative sections. The Introduction contains a statement from me, addressing the audience and purpose of the project, and also includes quotes from professional literature supporting writing instruction. Provided, for teachers, is an explanation of why the project was created, for whom the project is meant, and gives teachers an opportunity to see how reliable sources view the importance of including writing instruction in the classroom.

The Informative Section has general components needed for the entire school, kindergarten through fifth grade, including time for writing, a curriculum map, standards set as expectations, the writing process, 6+1 traits, three types of writing, and genre explanations. The section illustrates the importance of having an amount of time available needed to teach writing in the classroom representing by the identified amount of time needed for incorporating writing in a teacher's schedule. This section also contains a researched curriculum map for the year per grade level as provided by the school's county; standards set as expectations to be accomplished for each grade level by the end of the year provided by the school's county; guidelines for the writing process, with a teacher explanation and student copy; guidelines for the 6+1 traits with a teacher explanation and student copy; researched explanations of the three types of writing for common core (opinion and argumentative, informative and explanatory, and narrative); and, researched explanations of each of the six genres most commonly used in elementary school (narrative, persuasive, descriptive, expository, journals and letters, and poetry). The Getting Started section will give teachers a set of tools to pace their writing instruction, and become more knowledgeable about what they need to accomplish for the year relative to other grade levels.

The second category, Curriculum, is the core of the project and has two sections. The first section includes the 9-week curriculum writing guide, its purpose and use, to illustrate the purpose behind the curriculum guide, and its role to inform teachers about how to use the curriculum guide. The second section includes the 9-week curriculum writing guide, with weeks 1 through 9 listed in sequence and labeled Week 1 through

Week 9. For this section, the weeks 1 through 9 are divided into components that address the scope by stating what should be completed each week. The components for each week are listed as the goals, objectives, instruction and activities, assessment and rubric, resources and materials. These components are meant to be manipulated or adjusted to suit each grade level, kindergarten through fifth grade. The components can be revisited throughout the nine weeks, and repeated each week with an emphasis on a different task, such as the 3 different types of writing and/or the writing genres.

Weeks 1-9 are sequenced as Week 1: building a community of writers and establishing daily writing time; Week 2: identifying the structure of writing (any piece, specific to type of writing or genre); Week 3 and Week 4: teaching students the writing process (I decided to spread out the Writing Process over Week 3 and Week 4 so teachers have 2 weeks to teach the Writing Process to ensure students are given sufficient time to gain the information presented); Week 5: allowing students to work through the writing process; Week 6 and Week 7: teaching students the 6+1 traits of writing (I decided to spread out the 6+1 Traits over Week 6 and Week 7, so teachers have 2 weeks to teach the 6+1 traits to ensure students are given sufficient time to gain the information presented.); Week 8: allowing students to work through the 6+1 traits; and Week 9: finalizing: having a focused title and addressing the audience.

To conclude each week, there is a note on how to use that week's components within later 9-week semesters using types of writing genres. Each week is planned to build on the previous week in a sequence to establish a routine for teaching writing instruction, increasing the students' writing abilities, and establishing a community of

learners within the classroom and school by having teachers use a unified writing curriculum. The motivation for creating the 9-week curriculum plan, and sequencing it in this manner, is to give the teachers a foundation for implementing writing on a daily and weekly basis with any writing skills. This approach will give students a chance to develop in their foundational writing skills that can be successful used with any piece of writing.

The third category, Learn On, includes an Extended Learning Section and a Teacher Discussion Section. The Extending Learning Section gives teachers a list of additional researched programs and websites they can use for further development of their writing instruction.

The Teacher Discussion Section provides teachers with a place to jot notes for each week of the curriculum guide. In the notes, teachers can discuss what they liked, or what they would change about the week's components. The section also provides teachers with a place to write about with whom they planned, and what they planned for the week. By providing the Learn On category sections, teachers will have components that encourage them to continue enhancing their writing instruction skills, and continue to learn through the reflective process and interactions through discussions about writing instruction.

The project's six sections and three categories were compiled into one folder, which created a complete copy of the curriculum guide. A copy of the guide was made for each grade level, kindergarten through fifth grade, with enough copies of the teacher discussion area for grade levels and individual teachers. Each copy can be used by all

teachers in the school because it is not designated for specific grade levels; instead, the materials and resources can be manipulated or adjusted to suit each grade level as the teachers are encouraged to look at any of the other grade levels present in the guide. Each copy of the curriculum guide will be held in the Instructional Coach's office. To foster grade-level discussions, all teachers will have access to the folders to get ideas that enhance or simplify writing instruction.

This project report was developed from the analysis of the teachers' perceptions of their experiences with writing instruction at School E9. To make connections between the problem of the study and the project, I reflected back to the development of the study and how I discovered there were struggling writers at School E9. The indicators, from local school documentation, were that the third graders and fifth graders were performing at the lowest percentages on basic writing standards in the county during the 2006-2007 school year (Kingery, 2007). More current data indicated the third and fifth grade students continued with low percentages for the county during the 2013-2014 school year (Local School, 2014-2015). I identified this as a problem for the entire school, not just third and fifth grade. This situation led me to seek answers for School E9 teachers and students in kindergarten through fifth grade. As explained earlier, I met with teachers to gather their experiences with writing instruction and, from that discussion I found a need to develop a project to help the struggling writers using the teachers' experiences with writing instruction. To meet that need the project offers a curriculum guide to encourage teachers to incorporate more effective writing strategies into their classroom instruction. The overarching aim is that, by including it in the

School's Writing Plan, teachers will use the curriculum guide within a 9-week semester. I feel that, by using the curriculum guide as a resource in 9-week semesters, the teachers will incorporate more writing instruction into each classroom, as well as adopt collegial planning in discussing and developing writing instruction.

The project outcome has the components of a curriculum guide by providing plans for nine weeks to guide the development of writing instruction within a teacher's classroom. The curriculum guide is designed to provide teachers with a tool from which they can begin their 9-week writing instruction by providing them with resources from which they can pull information, or add information when needed. Examples include the curriculum map, standards, types of writing examples, genre examples, and suggested programs and websites that can be easily incorporated into their writing instruction. The curriculum guide is designed to jump-start writing instruction into teachers' classrooms by providing weeks 1-9 goals, objectives, instruction and activities, and assessment and rubrics. The guide is also designed for teachers to think about their writing instruction because it has a component that allows teachers to gather further writing resources, and to reflect on each week's writing instruction by considering what they completed, if they want to change anything, who they planned with, and what they planned. The development of the curriculum guide will provide the school with a school-wide Writing Curriculum Plan, and the teachers with a curriculum guide for writing instruction that seeks to incorporate effective writing instruction and promote improved student practices on a daily and weekly basis.

The curriculum guide is for veteran and new teachers alike who teach writing; teachers who desire to jumpstart or enhance their writing instruction, and/or want to enhance student writing success. The purpose of the guide is to relate specifically to the teachers and create an ease of implementation and incorporation of writing instruction into their classroom. Relating to the purpose, there are three detailed goals: the curriculum guide is doable, usable, and addresses the teachers' need of producing more writing instruction school-wide by building unity through progressive informal learning communities.

The first goal, to be doable, is that teachers can accomplish the implementation of the curriculum guide into their 9-week semester writing instruction on a daily or weekly basis that links to the weeks 1 through 9 instruction and activities. The second goal, to be usable, is that teachers can actually use all nine weeks of instruction and activities, assessments and rubrics, and resources and materials available to build a stronger writing instruction with ease and confidence. For the third goal, addresses need, the curriculum guide will address the needs of participants and other teachers at School E9 by offering a product that promotes more effective writing instruction from teachers. Through this project it is hoped also that the participant-teachers can help other teachers with whom they have unity on staff.

If all three of these goals are met they will help fulfil the purpose of the project. The project was designed to encourage teachers to incorporate more writing instruction in the classroom, expose students to more writing instruction, and establish informal learning communities built around the unity of writing instruction. If this is

accomplished, School E9's teachers will have a greater chance to enhance students' ability to write successfully.

Rationale

For this study, I began with a problem and the development of a study question, and this step led into an investigation into School E9. The problem and question provided a basis for development of the project outcome, which is the curriculum guide. In School E9 there were struggling writers and, to address the problem, I had to provide teachers with an easy way to incorporate effective writing instruction for their students. As suggested by Hattie (2012), to have gains in student success in any subject, a teacher must be the driving force in offering effective instruction that creates that success. To allow teachers to be the driving force for writing instruction at School E9, I identified with the teachers' experiences with writing instruction in building the curriculum guide.

To begin, I used the qualitative approach to investigate the teachers' experiences with writing instruction by including teachers who taught the struggling writers at School E9. Creswell (2012) noted that, for qualitative research, data must be reported in a manner that is easily understood, can be followed by readers and other investigators and, most importantly, relates and interprets the qualitative data analysis into a usable source. Following this advice, I conducted a focus group session with 6 volunteering teachers, and held one-on-one interviews with 2 of the participants to develop data for the study. As noted in a previous section, through my qualitative process I laid the foundation for the project, the curriculum guide. From the analysis I discovered concepts, themes, key points, and findings which served as a basis for the development

of a product aligned to the needs of School E9's teachers and students and, ultimately, administrators and parents through improved student outcomes. Through the analysis, the concepts that lead into themes were derived from the focus group session transcript and each interview transcript. The concepts derived from the focus group were specific to the lack of planning, teaching, time, and resources devoted to writing instruction. As noted earlier, this stream of analysis led to five themes: school-wide writing for students, school-wide writing instruction for teachers, planning for writing instruction, teaching writing instruction, and curriculum for writing instruction.

The concepts of writing instruction derived from the interviews' concepts, and which were specific to the teachers' experiences, focused on the lack of planning, teaching time, lack of resources or guides, and student writing, all dealing with writing instruction. This stream of analysis then led into the following themes: school-wide writing instruction, student writing, teacher preparation, planning individually, planning with colleagues, writing instruction time, curriculum guide materials, and writing instruction guides.

The concepts and themes developed from the teachers' experiences allowed me to discover that there were weaknesses in the writing instruction within the teachers' classrooms. The teachers addressed these key areas in our conversations, and their experiences were revealed in the analysis of data. This stage of the analysis led into the coding process that was represented in the following four main categories, supported by subcategories: teacher planning writing instruction (tpwi), classroom instruction for writing (ciw), school-wide writing instruction (siw), and teacher teaching writing

instruction (ttwi). As these categories were gleaned from the interview transcripts, and chunks were made for horizontalization, I began to develop a clearer understanding of which direction the project might need to go. I could see the patterns and relationships expressed through the concepts, themes, coding, chunking and horizontalization, which lead to the key points derived from transcripts' data. The key points were:

- The struggles each participant faced with teaching writing;
- The desire to teach more writing individually and school-wide;
- The desire to improve their own writing instruction;
- The struggles the school is facing with developing writing instruction;
- Ways they feel writing instruction could be improved within the school;
- Discovering something is lacking in the school's and teacher's writing instruction of planning and time devoted to writing;
- Ways they feel writing instruction could be improved within the school;
- The desire to have something to follow for writing instruction; and,
- They felt there is a need to change and implement writing instruction school-wide.

The data analysis specifically indicated the teachers needed a project outcome that would help them design and deliver writing instruction more effectively, which was the overarching key point of the study.

Identifying the overarching key point allowed me to conclude that the study outcome needed to be in the form of a project, a curriculum guide, which would provide teachers at School E9 with a resource on the use of effective writing strategies. The

guide would also give the teachers a chance to develop their own effective writing strategies to produce better writing instruction and student outcomes overall. I concluded that, if the project outcomes promote effective writing strategies, they will promote student success in writing.

Another anticipated indirect outcome is that the curriculum guide would build unity among the teachers' writing instruction at the school. In addition, the guide would provide an avenue for the development of informal learning communities focused on discussion and planning of a unified writing instruction for the school. Another anticipated indirect outcome is that the guide would enhance classroom instruction as outlined in the teacher discussion section for Weeks 1-9 via the Learn On category. This category is meant for teachers to interact with the curriculum guide by discussing and noting the likes and changes they would make through weeks 1-9.

The informal learning communities would not be forced, formal, or planned out; rather, they would emerge by teachers discussing, planning, and learning from and with each other, and developing their community through the unity of designing writing instruction. The informal learning communities would develop casually as the curriculum guide is implemented into classrooms. Implementation would take place by developing a need for discussion and planning in pairs, in grade levels, and across the school to keep the curriculum guide working to create change. The ultimate contribution of the data analysis is that the project would promote improved writing instruction school-wide. I believe the creation of the curriculum guide will provide

teachers with effective writing practices that are useful and practical; therefore, the use of the curriculum guide would produce more writing instruction at School E9.

To employ the creation of a design that would support the data analysis, and the category the curriculum guide would fall under, I determined that the project genre for this study would be based on a Curriculum Plan, with the emphasis on creating a curriculum guide. Creswell (2012) suggested that, for qualitative methodology, the qualitative data analysis is interpreted into a usable source or product. To create a usable product for School E9, there needed to be an emphasis based on the project genre of a Curriculum Plan as the data analysis indicated a need to adjust the instructional approach and place more emphasis on the writing curriculum. Following a curriculum plan format, the curriculum guide would offer materials and support for writing instruction resources, and provide teachers with a guide to instruct writing more effectively in their classrooms.

From the examination of teachers' experiences, I developed the curriculum guide based on the need for teachers to have access to guide on how to improve instructional practices. I concluded that a curriculum guide would provide teachers with assistance in encouraging them to teach writing on a regular basis, as prompted by the Weeks 1-9 in the curriculum guide (Graham, MacArthur, & Fitzgerald, 2013). I deemed also that a curriculum guide would provide support through a source of materials (e.g. instruction and activities, assessments and rubrics, and resources and materials) the teachers would have access to in order to promote more effective writing instruction (Hill & Ekey, 2010). For the project, the curriculum guide is designed so the teacher will be guided to enhanced writing instruction by offering jump-start points for goals, objectives, and

instruction and activities. The guide is also designed to provide teachers with a selection and format of activities with resources to use, adapt, or change with their writing instruction, and to meet their grade level's needs.

When deciding what type of project to choose in addressing the problem, I felt the curriculum guide would enhance instruction, encourage unity in planning, and, over time, lead to a commitment to improved writing instruction within informal, naturally created learning communities of teachers at School E9. These informal 'communities' would also help provide teachers with an easy 'go-to' place for incorporating more effective writing into their classrooms.

Review of the Literature

In completing the analysis of data I took the study problem, question, and qualitative stance of the study to drive the direction of the project, the curriculum guide. Toma (2011) suggested that, when approaching a qualitative stance for your study, be prepared to apply the qualitative approach in a way that produces exemplary inquiry about a problem, is theoretically based, and excels in producing an efficient outcome based on the qualitative nature. In considering this advice, I took my problem at School E9 and journeyed down the qualitative path to investigate the teachers' experiences with writing instruction. Seeking a solution through the analysis of data, I identified findings which laid the path for what direction the study would take, and would potentially lead to further enquiry and academic study. Taking these factors into consideration, and based on the literature reviewed for genre, theory, and academic study, I formulated the literature review.

I began with the interpretations and conclusions from the teachers' experiences, which supported what they expressed in order to have successful student writers at School E9. From the shared experiences, three needs emerged through the findings:

1. That teachers at School E9 needed to implement more writing instruction into their classroom;
2. Teachers need tools to effectively implement writing strategies; and,
3. Teachers need to discuss, plan, and teach together with the same types of writing instruction.

These needs were supported with strong statements about needing to reform. An example is a statement from interview #1; "I think, yeah change in our writing instruction would help because well, right now there's a big gap between...that what we understand and where we are going, but we don't know how to get there" (Lines 802-804). This comment revealed a major idea, which was that the school's writing curriculum needed to be reformed through the use of teacher buy-in and collaboration.

When a problem is seen within the writing curriculum in the elementary years, and educators choose not to reform, the teachers will continue to present the writing in a manner that is not successful for students, and their chances of achieving the foundational writing skills within the elementary years are marginal (Mason, Reid, & Hagaman, 2012; Parr & Limbrick, 2010; Graham, Hebert, & Harris, 2011). If reform is not taken into consideration by the schools where the problem exists, educators will continue to hinder students' writing success for the future, and further the gap for United States school students (Graham et al., 2011). As noted by the National Center for Educational

Statistics (2012), students will continue to score at the basic level, or below, on National Writing Assessments by obtaining only partial mastery of the needed skills for their grade levels. From here, drawing support to address the problem of struggling writers present at School E9 became one of the key areas explored in the literature. I began to search topics that would ensure the teachers at the school would begin reforming the current writing curriculum by providing them with a project that would meet their needs, and address the needs and ideas expressed in the interviews.

To help the teachers make the big change of reforming the writing curriculum, I went back to the three needs and began to focus on resources used in teaching effective writing, as well as easy-to-manipulate guides used to implement writing instruction in the classroom. The goal was to reach clarity into what the teachers needed to help students become successful writers. Bignell (2012), DeFauw (2011, 2013), Gillespie, Olinghouse, and Graham (2013), and Graham, McKeown, Kihara, and Harris (2012), all suggested that, first, we must meet teachers needs in building a successful writing instruction, one that works for them. This instruction is built for them and has effective tools, such as resources and strategies to follow, and as guides to diminish regression of students' success. The teacher is the sole source in creating the change for students and, without the knowledge of how to get students writing successfully, teachers are working with a blank canvas and students will continue to not succeed (Ben-Peretz, 2011, Bignell, 2012; DeFauw, 2011, 2013; Gillespie et al., 2013; Graham et al., 2012). The examinations gathered, interpretations made, and conclusions drawn moved me towards a specific type

of genre to address the problem of the study; a Curriculum Plan-based genre as a means to reforming the writing instruction through my project for School E9.

In choosing the genre and criteria for curriculum reform, I examined and researched the Curriculum Plan-based genre in structuring the development of the project. Looking at the pieces that needed to be implemented to address the problem of struggling writers, and the needs and major idea derived from the teachers' experiences, I turned to the concept of what a curriculum plan was, and how this genre would be appropriate for the project. I had to determine what reforming the curriculum would entail, and the process to be taken to get this aim accomplished through a project. Through my literature search I discovered Lunenburg (2011) who suggested, no matter what you are planning for a successful curriculum plan, there are three goals to base the plan on: one, representing the content; second, the learning experiences; and, third, the objectives to be met. Lunenburg supported the view that, if the curriculum has been chosen for the school, then the plan, such as the instruction to getting the curriculum achieved, is what must be adapted and connected to the objects, content, and learning experiences. In becoming a curriculum planner by reforming and developing the three parts, an individual would look at the content to determine what should be the subject matter taught, the learning experiences regarding how should the subject matter be taught, objectives that provide the details of where the curriculum is going, and how it will get there in the implementation process (Lunenburg, 2011).

In supporting Lunenburg's position, Kaschman (2011), Liberman (2011), and Ovens (2011) suggested that seeking change in creating a curriculum plan is a process of

using the curriculum that is set forth, unless you have the luxury to change the curriculum entirely and plan the things that will accomplish the curriculum through adjustment of instruction. In choosing the curriculum plan-based genre, I developed the curriculum guide to use the writing curriculum set forth by the policy makers of the host county, but to adjust the instructional practice and inquiry within the instruction being developed. In doing this, I pondered the use of a curriculum-based plan to enhance and reform the writing curriculum through what is being taught currently. A second consideration was to focus on the use of the curriculum guide based on the original writing curriculum chosen by the county for the school, instead of making an entire change to the writing curriculum standards chosen for the county and state.

The curriculum guide would be constructed to offer resources and guidance, rather the 'how to' for teaching the writing curriculum at School E9. This stance is supported by Fisher (2012), and Limbrick, Buchanan, and Goodwin (2010), who suggested that, in teaching literacy, as in writing, the process should be shaped and planned around the curriculum chosen for the school. However, if there is an uncommon understanding of the curriculum, or need for reform of the curriculum, then the instruction must be adapted to the individual's understandings, as in the teachers' understandings. These understandings can then shape the changes within the curriculum, not necessarily the curriculum itself, by forming a new instruction through the understanding of how to accomplish literacy learning goals (Fisher, 2012; Limbrick et al., 2010).

To construct the curriculum guide, I borrowed ideas from the literature review and referred to the concepts and frameworks that supported the need for a guide with resources. This process was necessary to ensure the project would meet the study's aims of creating teacher understanding of the writing curriculum, and offer ways to improve their writing instruction through a 9-week curriculum guide. A quote from interviewee #2 supported the need for a curriculum guide at School E9,

Teachers need something...I mean like a notebook that we are able to...put ideas that worked into and then I mean we could pull from them and as students or teachers had issues teaching a particular thing we could go to that like resource and like pull from like that, so this will work in there. (Lines 1358-1361)

The curriculum guide would be taking on the criteria that it must have elements the teachers can pull from in order to teach. Most importantly, however, it would be a tool the teachers could contribute to and rely on to guide them into a better understanding of the writing curriculum and what is expected of their students, while giving them direction of where to go with their writing instruction.

If the criteria is met through the curriculum guide elements, from the participants' viewpoints the project would be meeting two needs of the educators and the school; 1. the implementation of more writing instruction into their classroom; and, 2. teachers would be given tools to implement the writing effectively. Gilbert and Graham (2010) and McMaster, Paker, and Jung (2012) suggested that, in constructing writing instruction for the best results, the lesson plans, rubrics, examples for teachers and students, and expectations and standards must be the key ingredients to giving teachers knowledge of

how to teach writing instruction. The activity must be easy to use so teachers applying the materials can be effective in having students succeed in writing. If the teachers are unprepared educators of writing instruction, whether they are new teachers coming into practice or veterans, without the understanding of the content their accountability to teaching high-quality writing, instruction cannot be held against the teachers (Gilbert & Graham, 2010; McMaster et al., 2012).

Gilbert and Graham (2010), and McCann, Jones, and Aronoff (2012) posited that educators must be prompted to focus on improving writing instruction and changing the process of how students write by transforming the components of instruction and promoting knowledge to educators. The instruction will then have a chance to be challenging, yet clear and engaging for teachers and students; an outcome which can ensure change. Troia, Shankland, and Heintz (2010) suggested there should be a push in education to have more writing inquiry pertaining to teachers because they are the practitioners who will put the writing instruction into practice. The idea is that, if teachers are learning how to teach better, they will produce better instruction.

These were the hallmarks in creating the components of a 9-week curriculum guide. The components include the amount of time to teach writing, a curriculum map, expectations and standards, the writing process, 6+1 traits, types of writing, genre explanations, key instruction and activities, assessments and rubrics, resources and materials, and researched programs and websites within the curriculum guide folder.

In addition to the two needs derived from the experiences of teachers' lives, there is a need for discussion, planning, and teaching together with the same types of writing

instruction. I connected theory and data to help develop the remaining need of teachers as expressed by the participants. Linking back to social learning theory, theorists (e.g. Bandura, 1977; Blackmore, 2010; Marriam & Bierema, 2014; Hafler, 2011) note there are strong connections between the new age of the educational forum learning and instructing according to this theoretical school of thought. There is a view that the social learning theory is derived from the learning systems created within communities and practice, and the learning created within these communities (Bandura, 1977; Blackmore, 2010; Marriam & Bierema, 2014; Hafler, 2011). Blackmore (2010), Merriam and Bierema (2014), and Hafler (2011) suggested that, in an educational setting, there should be a foundational basis of social learning theory connecting theory to practice by developing the learning of educators in communities of practice, and through meanings developed within the communities of practice.

In learning communities, whether in the educational process or other workplace fashions, formal or informal, the participants are creating relationships, building trust, addressing issues, and constructing activities and tasks while connecting all back to the workplace (Blackmore, 2010; Marriam & Bierema, 2014; Hafler, 2011). These aspects are central in incorporating social learning theory to any framework. In considering the use of the social learning theory in regards to the development of the curriculum guide, I would connect the elements of developing a project that incorporates a unity of writing instruction school-wide, and within grade levels, to encourage informal learning communities between and among pairs and grade levels, or across grade levels.

Connecting theory and data to the project, social learning theory promotes the use of others interrelating to act upon and interact effectively on a common ground to produce change. Creating a form of this relationship could be accomplished through the use of informal learning communities. Hord and Roy (2014), MacKenzie et al. (2010), and Pella (2011) noted that the sole purpose of a learning community is to learn, in that participants will learn from others through their engagement and social interactions with other participants. It is within an educational learning community where educators enhance their own learning and, consequently, enhance the learning of their students (Hord & Roy, 2014; MacKenzie et al., 2010; Pella, 2011). This approach can be applied to any school for any reason, as the ultimate goal is for the students to reap the benefits (Hord & Roy, 2014; MacKenzie et al., 2010; Pella, 2011). I discovered that the goal for the learning community is to promote the social engagement through interactions with others, while benefiting the participants (i.e. the teachers), and considering with whom the participants are connected, the students in this instance. In developing the curriculum guide I also considered what elements would encourage the teachers to become socially engaged with the curriculum guide, and enable them to find a common ground for discussion, planning, and teaching writing instruction.

Considering the factor of promoting informal learning communities, I went back to the focus of integrating unity of writing instruction among the educators and the school. For the curriculum guide I added the component of the Teacher Discussion Section in the Learn On category, the area where teachers can interact and discuss any changes or additions they would make to the guide. The Teacher Discussion area is also

meant to reach further by having teachers discuss who they planned with, and what they planned. By unifying the educators and the school through use of curriculum guide and the Teacher Discussion Section, the teachers would begin to find common ground with co-teachers, within grade levels, and within the school. Kaser et al. (2013), and Parr and Campbell (2012), state that, for a learning community to produce change, educators must lead others by being in full participation and merging the practices and knowledge of others to create success for student achievement. Parr and Campbell suggested that, as teachers learn from other teachers, they will be engaged in their students' learning and acknowledge the growing need to enhance literacy development, such as writing skills, within the emerging years of education. With the availability of learning communities, educators can come together to maximize student success through developing ways to be reflective and revise what is done in the classroom and the school (Parr & Campbell, 2012).

With knowledge of the research, I confronted the issue of integrating the curriculum guide with ways to promote the development of unity within School E9. I decided to connect the unity of writing instruction that would be established within the curriculum guide with the hope communities of practices would emerge as informal learning communities. The goal is for the teachers to use the guide for discussion by incorporating the resources, lesson planning, developing writing examples, and in teaching to the school's expectations of grade levels. In building unity through use of the guide, the teachers will be offered resources to encourage them to incorporate writing instruction into their classrooms that result in student success.

All knowledge gained through the literature review helped build support for the project development, and allowed me to formulate a basis for its creation and what elements should be incorporated to address the problem of the study. The literature reviewed and studied, theory chosen as supportive, genre chosen, and supportive interpretations and conclusions drawn from the data analysis were specific in developing the curriculum guide. In developing the literature review, I used specific Booleans to find recently published and related, peer-reviewed articles, journals, and text through online libraries and library databases such as Walden Library, ERIC, SAGE, and Google Scholar. The researched Booleans used to find the literature were search terms including: writing, writing elementary, writing instruction, writing strategies, writing process, writing skills of students, learning communities, social learning theory, communities of practice, learning communities writing, students writing, teaching writing, teaching writing elementary, effective writing instruction, students struggling writing, student achievement writing, instructional intervention writing, writing research, writing practices, writing learning, writing teaching, teacher knowledge writing, teacher accountability writing, writing support, writing resources, and curriculum guides. The goal to find the appropriate literature was to justify and support the development of the curriculum guide for teachers at School E9.

Implementation

After Walden University's approval of the curriculum guide and the project study, the next step will see the implementation process underway whereby I will present the project and its results to School E9 staff. Next, I will meet with the principal and

teachers at a faculty meeting to explain in-depth the elements of the project, and how the project should be implemented into the school's Writing Plan for 9-weeks of writing instruction. I will emphasize that the original curriculum guide will be located in the Instructional Coach's office. Copies will be made for all teachers, for each grade level Chair. As teachers integrate the curriculum guide to meet the needs of their students, it is my hope it will begin to promote the creation of informal communities and, with more interaction, they will progress into informal learning communities of pairs, grade levels, and across grade levels.

To start the dissemination process I will invite the community stakeholders to an information session to present the study and its results, the elements of the project, the benefits of implementing the project, and answer any questions that arise. I will schedule a time and date after school, and a flyer will be sent out to the target groups, illustrating the purpose of the study, the date, time, and location for their presentations. Following that session, I will embark on a dissemination journey to share my work beyond School E9. As a starting point, my plan is to make the guide available in the host county schools. Following that activity, I will seek to share the study at conferences and write an article for publication.

Potential Resources and Existing Supports

In my implementation process teachers will be informed about the general components of the curriculum guide, including the amount of time to teach writing, a curriculum map, standards, the writing process, the 6+1 traits, types of writing, genre explanations, key instruction and activities, assessments and rubrics, resources and

materials, and researched programs and websites. The group will be advised that the component of each section is separated by dividers in a three-ring binder, and is suitable for each grade level. I will advise the group that I had to search different areas on the Internet, the county website, the state website, books, magazines, guidebooks, and resource books, to accumulate the necessary content that is appropriate for the curriculum guide. I will invite them to do a similar search if they wish to enhance the content, or to offer opinion on what could be removed from the guide and replaced.

As noted in Walden's Ed.D. Project Study Rubric, the following information will be shared with teachers at School E9. A curriculum map for the year, per grade level, was found on the county website, as well as standards of what is expected to be accomplished for each grade level at the end of the year, including for the grade above and the grade below. The guidelines for the writing process with a teacher explanation and student copy were referenced through a book. The guidelines for the 6+1 traits, with a teacher explanation and student copy, were also referenced through a book. Simple explanations of the three types of writing (opinion and argumentative, informative and explanatory, and narrative) the school is expected to teach for the common core were found and referenced through a common core website. Simple explanations of each of the 6 genres that are the most common to teach in the elementary years (narrative, persuasive, descriptive, expository, journals and letters, and poetry) were found and referenced through books and resource guides.

For each week 1-9, I came up with goals and objectives that would best suit the needs of the teachers for writing instruction, but I ultimately created goals and objectives

that would help students build upon their writing skills. Weeks 1-9 curriculum builds upon itself to allow teachers to see a progression in their instruction and students' writing skills. For the contents of weeks 1-9, the developed instruction and activities are intended for the development of writing instruction for teachers, but focus on building an atmosphere of writing from which students can build. The instruction and activity structure was gathered from supportive Internet sites and resources guides, but I developed and constructed the activities from the findings, and how I felt the instruction and activity should progress throughout each week. The example assessments and rubrics and resources and materials that are available for each week of the curriculum were developed by me. The structure for applying these types of assessments and rubrics and resources and materials to each week were gathered through the state website, manuals, books, and Internet sources.

The list of researched programs and websites teachers can use for further development of writing instruction was found on Internet sites, the state website, books, and magazine articles. The teacher discussion area was developed because the findings indicated a need for discussion and planning among the teachers, so I created an area that would meet this need by creating a reflective and response area for discussing and planning for weeks 1-9.

To get support for the construction of the curriculum guide, I sought the approval of Walden University's Institutional Review Board to provide the principal and teachers with the appropriate documentation. I made sure each Internet site, website, printable documents, book, magazine, guide, resource and manual was supported by referencing

and documenting the use of a source when appropriate. Though I used sources for the construction of the curriculum guide, I am the author and only used selected sources, and findings derived through the analysis process to provide School E9 with a curriculum guide that is specific to addressing their problem. A complete copy of the curriculum guide (Appendix A), with copies printed for each grade level, will be located in the school for all teachers to have access. The curriculum guide is meant to achieve three things: 1. to promote more writing instruction; 2. to promote the gathering of teachers for planning and discussions that will enhance and simplify writing instruction; and, 3. to enhance student writing success.

Potential Barriers

The curriculum guide was constructed for the purpose of creating change in one school's approach to writing instruction, and to promote the development of informal learning communities to discuss elements of writing. While this curriculum guide is reliant upon its usage by teachers, some barriers might arise through the implementation process; for example, teachers will have access to the guide, but they are not mandated to use it. This factor may serve in preventing the guide from reaching its full potential. Another barrier that might arise is that the teachers might consider not using the curriculum guide because, if a teacher is not mandated by the county or the principal to use a particular source, some teachers might not consider the value of the resource. A barrier could be that the teachers might not use the curriculum guide as a planning and discussion tool for collegial learning, and not share or discuss the tool with others.

Even though the curriculum guide will be located in the Instructional Coach's office, and be intended for planning and discussing, some teachers might lose their copy and not bother to replace it. Another barrier could be that the teachers do not support the elements in the curriculum guide because it was produced by a doctoral candidate. Occasionally, teachers can be critical in the sources they use and rely only on authors they acknowledge as reputable. These barriers, and others I may not have considered, have the potential to weaken the project and its overall purpose.

To conquer these barriers I would address them during the implementation meeting with the principal and faculty via dissemination of the curriculum guide. I would ensure the teachers understand the overall importance of implementing the curriculum guide. I would point out that, even though it is not mandated that they incorporate the curriculum guide into their classrooms, it was developed through the advice of their colleagues. This approach should serve as an impetus for teacher uptake as the school needed something like this to enhance student success in writing. If the school is to see enhanced student success in writing, without changing something, nothing is going to change!

I will share that the curriculum guide is intended to create unity of writing instruction school-wide by using it as a planning and discussion tool for everyone. Its purpose is to encourage teacher collaboration in meeting the needs of teachers and students, and not to be used only by one teacher of each grade level. I will also explain that the personal developed pieces of the curriculum guide, Internet sites, websites, printable documents, books, magazine articles, guides, resources and manuals are all

reputable sources that have been referenced. As well, all documents and the project were approved by Walden before the production of the project. These noted barriers have to be taken into account, but I will make sure to address each barrier before the issues arise.

Proposal for Implementation Timetable

As noted earlier in this section, after the dissemination process, to implement the project I will schedule a date and time to meet with the principal and teachers during a faculty meeting after school. A similar approach will be used for other school stakeholders, except it will be an invitation for a specific time and place.

The curriculum guide would be implemented into the school after the project has been approved by Walden. Once approved, I will seek to implement the project within the fourth month of the Fall, 2015, semester, so School E9 will be receiving the curriculum guide during their last weeks of their second term. This timeframe will allow teachers to implement the 9-weeks of curriculum into the beginning weeks of their third term. I will begin the orientation by outlining the process of implementation, explaining the specific elements of the project, and noting how the project should be implemented into the school's Writing Plan. To be addressed also is the issue of potential barriers.

The aim is that the project will be implemented into the school's Writing Plan in the third term as a curriculum guide to help teachers teach more writing instruction effectively throughout the rest of the year. Through the use of the curriculum guide, I feel School E9 will have access to items that can readily be retrieved for use and for adding more tools and a guide for teaching, planning, and discussing writing instruction. It is anticipated the project will be implemented within two weeks of the implementation

session, and be accessible to each grade level and teacher in the form of a three-ring binder.

By implementing the curriculum guide in this manner, I have the potential to be face-to-face with teachers who will be using it, and can answer any questions about the project by modeling the use of the project for the teachers while there. In the process of handing a final project off to the teachers, it is my desire that the teachers will continue to use the curriculum guide, implement it into the school's Writing Plan, and build upon it for future 9-week terms.

Roles and Responsibilities of Teachers and Others

The curriculum guide was constructed by the doctoral student candidate. It was understood throughout the study that the doctoral student must be aware of the role of a researcher and to uphold all ethical protection to the participants. The doctoral candidate has to adhere to privacy, lend respect, and protect confidentiality for the host site, and the principal and faculty who represent it. It is also my responsibility to carry through a project of high-quality materials, considering the host site and the teachers it will represent. It is my responsibility as a doctoral candidate to use reputable references and documentation of sources throughout the study, and in the construction of the project. Most importantly, it is my responsibility to offer encouragement to the potential participants to take part in the study by exercising their roles and responsibilities to inform the study, and to incorporate the project accurately and effectively in their writing instruction practice.

The project's main purpose is that it be directly used by teachers as it was created to initiate change for student writing success with more writing instruction, and promoting the creation of informal learning communities of teachers. Keeping this idea in mind for the curriculum guide, I desire for the participants, in particular, to take on the role of an implementer of the project, and for each one to become a more effective teacher. The aim is that teachers will take on the role of using the curriculum guide to help them create informal learning communities as pairs, in grade levels, and across grade levels where they plan, teach, and discuss challenges and achievements through the use of the project elements. The guide is designed to be used as is; however, through the ongoing process of re-construction and re-implementation, I desire that it becomes something the teachers use, manipulate, and strengthen as they go forward. This approach will ensure the content will grow, change, and adapt as the teachers use and manipulate the resource to fit their future needs. It is the responsibility of teachers to implement the curriculum guide into their own writing instruction so there is more writing instruction being taught school-wide. This approach would give students a greater chance to experience writing success.

If the teachers uphold their roles and responsibilities, the project will have an opportunity to make an impact on School E9, the school-wide Writing Plan, and the students writing success. The role and responsibility of the teachers will be to see that the students practice writing more frequently on a daily or weekly basis, and be responsible for what they have written with the knowledge that effective writing instruction resulted from the teacher using the curriculum guide.

Project Evaluation

I will be going to School E9 to present and implement the curriculum guide to the teachers and administration during one of their afternoon faculty meetings, and demonstrate how to use it. It is anticipated the teachers will begin using the guide following my presentation, and will have ongoing access to copies of the curriculum guides housed in the Instructional Coach's room.

I have pondered that, if the curriculum guide were implemented the day it is presented at the faculty meeting, placed in the Instructional Coach's room, and the teachers have access to it, how would I know if the curriculum guide has the elements to work, or doesn't have elements to work? This question is grounded in the thought that I would need to complete an evaluation of the curriculum guide when I am at the host site. I refer back to what I have created as the project; a curriculum guide to provide teachers with a resource to enhance teaching by adding to, and pulling from, the project elements that are intended to be a 9-week curriculum guide. This guide is intended to help the teachers jump-start their teaching by guiding them through 9-weeks of activities with the project elements.

Taking the curriculum guide into consideration, I decided a goals-based evaluation design, with a formative approach, would be the best design for evaluating the curriculum guide while I am at the host site. I can have the teachers and administrators evaluate the project, and complete an evaluation after the teachers have begun using the curriculum guide. With this plan for evaluation, I will be able to determine if the elements that make up curriculum guide actually do work, what is not

going to work, and how to create a continual use of the curriculum guide by getting teacher and administrative input at the beginning of implementation, and during the usage of the curriculum guide.

To begin a thorough goals-based evaluation, I had to create goals I intend to be achieved by the curriculum guide. The four main goals developed are for the curriculum guide to promote:

1. More writing instruction with effective strategies school-wide;
2. Learning communities of teachers planning, teaching, and discussing writing instruction;
3. More student writing school-wide; and,
4. Student writing success.

In developing these goals I referred to what House (1980) stated, “It takes the goals of the program as stated and then collects evidence as to whether it has achieved those goals” (p. 26). As suggested by House and supported by Vedung (1997), I will use the goals as the criteria for the project, and the teachers and administrators as the evaluators to determine if the guide achieves the goals, and determine if the project is a success. In my opinion, the evaluators should be the teachers and administrators because, after the presentation and implementation of the curriculum guide, they will have gained a familiarization of the project by going through the complete curriculum guide, and an understanding of how the curriculum guide should be used in their classrooms and the school.

To complete the evaluation, after the distribution and presentation of the curriculum guide to the grade level chairs and administration on implementation day, I will present the four goals to the teachers and administrators as evaluators. Once I have completed the presentation, each group of evaluators will receive a copy of a Project Evaluation Form (Appendix A). This form will have the four evaluation goals listed with boxes beside them, a blank line below each goal, and a discussion area at the bottom for evaluators to have three comment sections.

In completing the evaluation form, the evaluators will be asked to begin their assessment of the curriculum guide by going through it with their group of evaluators. While going through the guide, the evaluators will determine if the project meets the four evaluation goals by checking, or not checking, the box by each goal. If they did not check the box indicating the goal achievement, they will write on the lines below the goal to explain why they felt the project did not meet the specific evaluation goal. Continuing with the evaluation, for the discussion area the evaluators will make three comments: 1. what could be added or left out of the curriculum guide; 2. why they felt the goals were met or not met by the curriculum guide; and, 3. why they felt the project was a success or failed to meet the needs of the school.

The project itself was driven by my goals to solve the problem and address the study question by using the experiences of teachers at School E9. The goals-based evaluation was selected to support this aspect of the project as I want to determine the outcome of the project, as compared to the goals developed to evaluate the project by the teachers and administrators. In developing the goals through the goals-based method of

evaluation, I will be able to determine the relative success of the curriculum guide with its constructed elements, and determine what could be changed or adjusted to help achieve the goals of the project.

The factor guiding the selection of this approach to evaluation was to ensure validity that the project has the potential to meet the goals set for the curriculum guide. After the implementation of the guide, and it has been evaluated using the goals-based evaluation method by teachers and administration, I will offer teachers an opportunity to begin using the curriculum guide. After three and a half weeks of teachers using the curriculum guide in their classrooms, I will use the formative approach to gain further insight after implementation. I will ask the participating teachers from the focus group, which have been using the curriculum guide in their classrooms, to have a conference call with me. We will look back over the curriculum guide they have been using, and discuss what they found has been helpful, what needs to be removed, and what needs to be added to the curriculum guide to ensure they will continue to use it. Through this formative approach, I will be positioned to validate the project and ensure the goals are continuing to be achieved and are addressing the problem areas.

By using the goals-based method and the formative approach, a goal for the next step in the project would be the implementation of the curriculum guide into the School's Writing Plan for the second term and next 9-week semester. If this step is adopted by teachers, the writing curriculum at the school would be more unified and offer teachers a foundation for each 9-week semester. The curriculum guide would offer

the opportunity to enhance writing instruction so teachers can deliver instruction with confidence and support, and students can achieve success and support in writing.

I created this curriculum guide for School E9 to help create change in their writing instruction, to have teachers succeed in their writing instruction, and students achieve success in their writing. By taking the appropriate steps to evaluate the project, and ensure the school accomplished the evaluation goals, the school will have been provided with a quality project that can be supported and implemented to create change for teachers and students. As I accomplish this goal, I feel the reputation of the curriculum guide will be upheld and could promote further strengthening of the school's core instruction in other areas. If these goals are accomplished, I feel the project will have reputable status and will gain support from the study's stakeholders (i.e. the teachers, principal, faculty, parents' of students, the board of education, and the superintendent).

Implications: Community and Social Change

Local Community

In making a contribution to social change at the local level I created the curriculum guide to make a difference in the writing instruction and student success at School E9. The project addresses the needs of the local school community by offering support for teachers and struggling writers, and producing a resource to help them battle this problem and continue to enhance writing. Focusing on School E9, I found a problem and wanted to help. This thought led to a study question that would produce a solution to the problem. The challenge prompted the investigation of the teachers' experiences to

get their point of view of what is needed to enhance both their practice and student success. The creation of the curriculum guide was designed to support the study findings and, ultimately, impact writing instruction at the school. This process ensures I am creating value for the writing curriculum, and the need to further help struggling writers realize success because these are the needs of learners in a local context.

Following a qualitative approach, each step taken within the process led me to the final product, which is connected to participants and the phenomenon they have experienced within the local setting. The process allowed me to relate each participant's experiences and create a project that meets the need of the school and its learners. As to the importance of helping struggling writers was the impetus for the study, it allowed for the production of a curriculum guide focused on the notion that helping learners affects students themselves as learners, their families, their teachers, their administrators, and their county board members. This project is important to the learners because it offers them the support needed to realize success in writing, and that success flows through the school and cascades into homes and the community.

In terms of a broader contribution to social change, the project is important to the study's stakeholders; learners, families, teachers, administration, and the board members because it offers opportunity for overall improvement in instruction and student scores. Inherent in the support of students, it is important for families to support their child's learning, the teachers who must teach writing instruction to support them, the administration that must offer teachers the materials to support student writing, and the

board members to support students by ensuring they are provided an education with quality writing instruction and learning

Far-Reaching

The study started from a local problem, leading to a discovery that it exists in other counties and states on a national level. This factor was the impetus for me as an investigation was needed to explore this problem. My experience with the project demonstrated there is a need to further investigate teachers' experiences and their views on what could, and should, be done to improve academic success for learners within their schools. In terms of social change, this project has identified a growing need to make connections between the experiences of teachers and student success; therefore, it is important for others to pick up this stream of inquiry and advance what has been discovered through this project. As education develops, changes, and grows, it depends on the evolution of new and renewed theories around writing instruction for new ideas and approaches to emerge. My experience with this project has served to highlight its importance to the field of education; it highlights the need for teachers to have formal input into their school curriculum and approaches to teaching as key to enhancing teacher and student success.

Conclusion

Findings derived from the data analysis were used to design the project outcome of the curriculum guide. The curriculum guide has an outline and sequence of content, with an explanation of the sections, and a list of the elements and components of which it is composed. A description of the curriculum guide is depicted through the elements of

the curriculum guide, and why it should be used as a 9-week guide for writing instruction. The established goals are designed to be doable and usable for teachers, and to address the needs of School E9.

In the rationale, I gave reasons for choosing the development of a curriculum guide as the study's project, and offered support for its implementation and use through the contributions of teacher-participants. The overarching aim is that the problem of struggling writers can be solved by the implementation of the curriculum guide to generate effective writing instruction, a process which would lead to more writing exposure for students and offer a greater chance for them to succeed. Literature was reviewed to gain insight into the chosen project of a curriculum guide and the chosen genre of a Curriculum Plan design. The design outlined how the project was developed, and how the content and details were composed through investigation and theory of social learning. For the process of implementation there are four key areas outlined.

1. That resources would be used to create the content, and documented and referenced to support accuracy.
2. That barriers may exist of teachers not taking the initiative to use the curriculum guide, so ways to deal with barriers are presented.
3. The place and time for implementing, and how to implement the project to ensure the best usage is established.
4. How I will facilitate the implementation process by acknowledging teachers' workload and students' work ethic after implementation is addressed.

A goals-based evaluation design and formative approach were chosen to monitor the project implementation and ensure four main evaluation goals are upheld by the curriculum guide. Implications for the community and social change bring awareness of the local community that was raised through this study's project and the change the project could create beyond local borders.

Section 3 outlined how the curriculum guide was created, how the elements were constructed, how the implementation process would unfold, how the project would be evaluated, and the implications of the project. From this process, I began to reflect on and draw conclusions on what Section 4 should capture re: what the curriculum guide will produce.

In Section 4 following, I provide an overview of what is to be presented. I discuss the project strengths as to how the curriculum guide addressed the problem of struggling writers. I address limitations the project encountered in addressing the problem, and offer recommendations to remediate those limitations. I discuss the project's potential impact on social change, and speculate on how the project will impact and produce change at the local level, and beyond. The implications, applications, and direction for future research that are addressed allowed me to discuss the importance of the completed work, what can be applied to the educational field, and reflections on what I anticipate doing for further research. Section 4 will be the conclusion for the project report.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

Section 4 covers the following topics: project strengths, recommendations for remediation of limitations, scholarship, project development and evaluation, leadership and change, analysis of self as scholar, analysis of self as practitioner, analysis of self as project developer, the project's impact on social change, and implications, applications, and directions for future research.

I will discuss the project strengths in addressing the problem at School E9, point out the project's limitations in addressing the problem, and give recommendations for what remediation should be made to correct the limitations. I will offer alternate scenarios of how the problem could be addressed differently from what this study proposed. An explanation will be given of what I learned throughout this experience about scholarship, project development and evaluation, and leadership and change. Included also is what I learned about myself through the analysis of self as a scholar, analysis of self as practitioner, and analysis of self as project developer.

The project's potential impact on social change will be discussed, including the overall reflection of the importance of the work completed, what was learned from this work relative to its social aspect, and the contribution to social change. Reflections on the importance of the work within the study, what was learned due to the work connecting to me and the project study, and ideas and applications for future research based on the project will be included in the implications, applications, and directions for future research. Lastly, critical aspects of the study as perceived by me will be summarized.

Project Strengths

Interpreting the understandings from analysis, I discovered that, if the project outcome is to help students succeed in writing, the teachers needed a guide to help them develop writing instruction, deliver writing instruction, and evaluate, discuss and plan writing instruction. After analysis, I reflected back to the study's problem and the study question to decide that the project outcome should be a curriculum guide. The curriculum guide was specifically guided by the problem (Hill & Ekey, 2010) and supported through data analysis outcomes that were embodied to develop the curriculum guide. The strengths of the curriculum guide come directly from the elements of the curriculum guide and how it is supposed to be used.

A project's strength would be in the curriculum guide's elements because they address the problem of struggling writers. Elements such as a curriculum map, standards, types of writing, and genre examples, offer accountability so teachers get the appropriate researched knowledge of what their students need to accomplish, what they should have accomplished, and what will be expected of them in the coming years. The curriculum guide, with elements such as the 9-week of instruction and activities, assessments and rubrics, and resources and materials with an extended learning section, included suggested programs and websites that offer teachers the how-to in teaching writing instruction to meet the needs of their students. Dean (2010), and Graham, MacArthur, and Fitzgerald (2013) suggested that elements of a product must be usable, and the user can see change in themselves or others when using the product. Considering this point, building a strategy to address the problem through development of the guide produced a

project that aims to incorporate writing through its elements to improve student writing success.

Another project's strength is that it gave 'voice' to the teacher participants and provided opportunity for them to contribute to the development of a new professional development resource for them, their colleagues, and the school. Overarching this strength is that student success lies at the forefront. Another project strength is that the teachers have choices in how they use the curriculum guide from the resources contained in the instructions and activities. The teachers will have a variety of resources to use as a way of encouraging them to incorporate more writing instruction into their classrooms, while also implementing the 9-weeks of curriculum. A product for writing, such as the curriculum guide, must include the instructional needs of the students to be strong in creating a difference in their writing (Dudley-Marling & Paugh, 2009); so, if teachers use the curriculum guide to create more writing instruction and student activities, the students will be doing more writing and have a greater chance to succeed.

Overall, if teachers use the curriculum guide to develop, discuss, and teach writing instruction, and build unity within the school that is focused on their students learning needs, the project has strength within its elements.

Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations

In considering the limitations for the curriculum guide in addressing the problem of School E9 having struggling writers, I focused on what purpose the project is intended to serve. With the foundation for project content hanging on the teachers' experiences with writing instruction, I found some limitations. One limitation that looms large is that,

although the goal is to promote student writing success, by building the project through the experiences of the teachers I may have created a project that is teacher-focused instead of student-focused. Considering this limitation, the teachers may enhance their writing instruction; however, there is a chance that, because the curriculum guide is not directly focused on the students' experiences with writing instruction, it may not produce the desirable outcome I expected.

Another limitation is that the project is not a writing program to be adopted by the school as it is based on elements that were integrated into a 9-week curriculum guide, a guide built from teachers' perspectives of what students need to achieve writing success. While the elements may be helpful in offering a curriculum guide overviewing 9-weeks of instruction and activities and assessments and resources for 'how-to' teach writing instruction, it is not a day-by-day writing program to be used as a comprehensive guide to writing instruction for the entire year. In considering the limitations that are present, I am offering recommendations for the remediation of the limitations.

I recommend that, to remediate the limitation of focusing directly on teachers' experiences to build the project, I could remediate the investigation by gathering data on students' experiences with writing instruction through a student focus group and one-on-one interviews with a few students. By remediating in this manner, I could get more broadly informed interpretations of what is needed in the school's writing instruction, and then use horizontalization to build a project from the perspectives of student experiences with writing as a subject.

After the analysis of data and interpretation of outcomes, I found that a curriculum guide was needed. Despite this finding, I can acknowledge there could be some remediation to the project as I could have asked the school to choose a specific writing program. While the curriculum guide offers opportunity for unity around school-wide writing instruction, it can be limited in its impact by being a ‘jumping-off point’ for writing instruction to begin at the school. If the school wanted to build more unity, the administration would need to consider employing the curriculum guide as a ‘message’ that teachers need more school-wide consistency within their writing instruction. This approach would enhance the likelihood that the project would be adopted as the basis for the school’s writing program. The focus and elements within the project show there are some weaknesses within it, but through these weaknesses one can begin to see there was a starting point and there are ways to improve the project with usage over time.

In revealing weaknesses in the curriculum guide, I began to acknowledge ways to address the problem differently; for example, through a quantitative process. In this case, the problem was that it was known, through statistics, that School E9 had struggling writers; however, I chose to investigate if the teachers could help discover a way in creating successful writers through their own experiences with writing instruction. The key point made here is that this problem can and should be looked at differently.

In proving the school had struggling writers, I could have taken a quantitative approach and chosen a writing program, such as Writer’s Workshop, to implement with a control and experimental group of students and teachers. I could have chosen a fifth grade group of students in two different classes and teachers, and viewed the students’

scores from the year before and after implementation to the control and experimental groups. I would have the control group continue with their teacher's current writing instruction and not disturbed by the independent variable of the writing program. The experimental group's teacher would be given the writing program and asked to begin teaching with it when the study began; as such, the group would be affected by the independent variable of the writing program.

In this process I would also complete observations and make recordings of the two groups during the implementation of the writing program process. After collection of the students' scores from the year before, and the students' scores on the same writing test after implementation to the control and experimental groups, the data and findings would be compared to show results. This process could provide me with quantifiable data showing results of the level of success shown from the students' performances proving, or not proving, the hypothesis that implementing effective writing instruction could create success for students. If there was enough success, the school could be provided with the results illustrating that the specific writing program, such as Writer's Workshop, was conducive in helping students succeed in writing. I acknowledge that taking a quantitative approach to the problem changes the focus and direction of the study, but there are advantages and disadvantages to pursuing either quantitative or qualitative; therefore, the approach chosen should best suit the interpretation made of the problem at the time.

In seeing the problem differently, as to implementing a specific writing program to observe any direct impact on student success, I began to consider that there are

alternatives in addressing the problem of struggling writers. All alternatives were considered in creating success for struggling writers and seeking different solutions to the problem. As an example, I considered developing a professional learning community as an alternate solution to the problem. The professional learning community would include one teacher from each grade level, and the 'community' would meet twice a month throughout the study to discuss, implement, and plan for writing instruction. The teachers would then carry their instructional strategies back to their grade levels and compare the overall students' scores from the beginning of the year to the end to see if there was success among their students as a whole.

Another alternative would be going to the parents of the struggling writers. I would have students take home a Writing Knowledge Folder, such as a writing portfolio, to educate their parents about what writing they were doing in school, give examples of what they were doing, and have the parents and teachers work as a unit to build upon their Writing Knowledge Folder. The parents would be positioned to observe the students' writing and their performance, and the teachers would have proof of the students' success as they progressed through the year.

Looking into these two alternatives for a solution to the problem gives me a chance to expand on the range of projects that could have been created. In doing this, I was given a chance to step back to see there are many different routes that can be considered through alternatives. From this standpoint, I understand, to complete a study I have to choose the best route for the problem at the time, carry through, and always acknowledge that alternate routes could have been taken.

In constructing the curriculum guide, I was seeking a solution to the problem of struggling writers at School E9. The project was developed to help teachers at the school educate struggling students by constructing a project that was based on the teachers' experiences with writing instruction. While I constructed the curriculum guide so it had strengths that could be applied in addressing the problem, there are always limitations that can be expected in ways to address any problem. On that view, alternatives must be considered to project studies, such as the focus of the project, the constructed elements of the project, the qualitative stance, and the manner in which I derived the solution to the problem. It was my sole purpose to find a problem that needs to be addressed, develop a study question that serves to explore the problem, and, after considering different approaches, chose a path that lead to the best solution for the problem. I would then interrelate all aspects of the process in building the best success for the project. Success could range from seeing more achieving student writers, to the impact on the local level, and beyond the educational forum.

Scholarship

I went through this doctoral process of a project study to expand my view of the world, my profession, and gain higher-level learning. Each step of the process has guided me through a different phase in learning and achievement of a higher-level. Being guided through the development of my project I have completed investigations using the qualitative stance, and sought answers which have helped me acquire knowledge that has built my understanding of what constitutes scholarship.

I understand scholarship to be that which is attained by the scholar through the process she or he completed while doing the scholarly work of completing a higher degree of learning. To appreciate my learning of what scholarship is, I see that the process I had to undertake was my way of gaining understanding. To me, taking the steps to complete the process has made me a more enlightened educator and informed learner.

The learner I have become is an ‘active learner’, one who seeks academic study, such as scholarship, using their cognitive abilities to complete a stance on a topic (Rutherford, 2012). The study process took me through actively learning about the topic, but not passively going through the details. Through active learning, I became an active thinker putting my learning to the test by challenging myself to take the topic to the next level by following the process of researching and data collection, absorbing and deriving information, doing and gaining the knowledge through analysis, interacting and producing the product, and reflecting and achieving wisdom (Bean, 2011). While becoming an active thinker, this process has allowed me to signify that I have been through many phases as an active learner to build my understanding of scholarship.

As a researcher, I started with a problem of struggling writers at School E9, a factor which allowed me to develop a study question focused on the discovery of effective writing strategies. From this point I designed a process and pursued a solution and answers through investigating, gathering data, interpreting data, and concluding a project study with an artifact, a curriculum guide. The final steps lead me to defend my project and reflect on my stance as a higher-level learner. While viewing the steps I can

see that I have gained much knowledge through the study, and by so doing I have gained a truer sense of the steps and journey one must complete to achieve scholarship.

Project Development and Evaluation

The project of the curriculum guide is an outcome meant to help struggling writers gain success in their writing by having their teachers adopt the guide in their instructional and curriculum design, and implement new ideas in the classroom. In developing the project I learned that all project elements must relate to the data analysis, be geared to solve the problem posed, and provide an answer to the study question. I also learned that, after the development process, there has to be a way to provide proof that the project helped obtain the goals, an outcome that is determined through a project evaluation. Both of these steps offered me a purpose for completing the investigation and reinforced my observation regarding how everything has relied on the project evolution and evaluation so others can refer to, use, or replicate this study.

I learned that project development is often a daunting task in following the process of designing and carrying out the data analysis, interpreting the outcomes, and applying them in constructing the project. I began the development of the curriculum guide after the data were gathered and analyzed. I then used the findings to incorporate elements into the curriculum guide. I learned firsthand that the elements must align with what the teachers needed to confirm the project outcomes which emerged through their experiences with writing instruction.

Through project development I learned how to incorporate what the teachers' experiences were exposing, and they were expressing, to find ways to come up with a

solution to the study problem. I learned to listen to exactly what the participants needed to help them incorporate more writing into their classrooms through the application of effective strategies outlined in a curriculum guide, and to build unity within the school's writing instruction. In developing the project, I learned to choose the most important resources while developing the nine weeks of goals, objectives, instruction and activities, and assessment and rubrics derived from a wide variety of sources that would promote student success and get teachers to incorporate more writing time into their class schedules. Most importantly, I learned that the project has to be user-friendly, while concurrently accomplishing the goal of producing successful student writers at School E9.

After the project development was completed I needed to confirm it would accomplish the goals, so an evaluation was formulated to ensure the project had accomplished what it set out to do. I learned that, for the project to be finalized there must be a planned evaluation put into play to ensure its outcomes. The plan was to use a goals-based evaluation for this project, including a formative assessment to keep check on the goals. In building the goals I learned they must be specific to the project, and intertwined with the problem and study question. The goals were specifically worded to check the implementation and progress of the curriculum guide through the evaluation form completed by the teachers and administrators. The process included a formal aspect by having the teachers offer input on how to improve the project through their continuous use and a conference call with a group of colleagues. From this process, I learned that

the evaluation was to serve as a lens to check the project's success and to encourage future growth and implementation.

I learned that project development and evaluation are meaningful parts of a project study. I learned that, with these two elements, the project study has a way of drawing important conclusions from the data, fostering a connection between the project and its relation to teachers' experiences, and in finding a solution for helping struggling writers. I learned also that, by taking time to accomplish these goals, the project gains credibility and relatability for the audience, and provides closure to the study.

Leadership and Change

I have learned that leadership and change go hand in hand. Leadership in any arena, educational or business, involves leading a group in some direction, a process which creates change from an original position or practice. I have learned that leadership is comprised of the qualities a leader possesses in order to create change through social influencing toward a determined outcome.

I learned that the qualities of leadership come from the 'know how', or competency, that is gained from stepping forward, or 'out of the crowd', to determine if there is a need for change, and making the choice to be in charge of leading others to find the solution. Marquet (2012) suggested that, in any situation, leadership should not merely be taking control over a crowd and pushing them to be followers of particular direction; rather, it is the process of sharing or giving control and helping others to become leaders by helping them find solutions. Following this suggestion, and in completing this doctoral journey, I have learned that leadership involves taking a risk in

uncovering a problem and finding a solution, and having the ability to convince others to look at themselves as the leaders in solving issues. This is the approach I employed in this study by using the participants' experiences to solve the study's problem in a way that incorporated their opinions to create change.

To exhibit leadership one must maximize the determination of others to move them towards accomplishing a goal, a process of creating a positive change from the original format. I feel I learned to use leadership skills by maximizing the teachers' effort in moving towards more effective writing instruction through the curriculum guide. Going forward, my leadership role will be to motivate teachers to use their skills in implementing the curriculum guide and create real, needed change in their students' writing success.

Analysis of Self as a Scholar

By being a doctoral candidate, I have learned how to become a scholar by embracing the process it took me to be successful in getting through my program and project study. As a scholar, I was completing a higher level of study in a specific field, and I feel that first discovering the problem of struggling writers at School E9, and having the desire to create change in this school and other schools, began my journey of higher level learning. I began to study theories, literature, and other scholars' work on my topic, but I also took the time to relate theories to my practice as a teacher. I found that social learning theory could build strong unity through socialization among teachers of writing instruction, and through planning and discussing together. These are the overarching aims my curriculum guide promotes.

I used my advance developmental work to build the foundation of my study and to lead me into my data collection and analysis. I diligently went through more literature and data to relate meanings back to the findings discovered through analysis, and to develop a project and identify back to the study. This process has allowed me to become a scholar in many areas of writing instruction in the educational field, and in employing differing ways to help promote success for struggling writers. I will continue to push myself and broaden my knowledge in this area and others, as I continue to be a lifelong learner.

Analysis of Self as a Practitioner

As the researcher of this project study, I completed many steps to conclude the journey. The first critical step was beginning with myself as a teacher who undertook this journey, a step which allowed me to ‘see myself’ as a practitioner. Kara (2012) suggested that a practitioner is one who feels it is their responsibility to complete academic investigations related to the practitioner’s role, and it is this impetus that pushed me to complete this study. I learned that, for myself as a practitioner, I saw a problem and a weakness in the educational system, and I wanted to seek answers within the field I serve.

While becoming more knowledgeable about the problem of struggling writers and the topic of writing instruction, I have also found that, by doing this in the field of education, I have become a much stronger practitioner in the teaching field, especially in the academic design of writing for students within the elementary grades. As a practitioner in a particular work setting or field of study, one seeks to do three things

related to the work or field of study; solve a specific problem, contribute to the learning, and influence (Kara, 2012). In taking each step to complete the process of this study, I have done as Kara discussed in that, as a practitioner, I have learned how to discover a problem to address, and solve it by completing a project study and creating the curriculum guide.

I have contributed to learning within the field of writing instruction, and offer a way to enhance student success through the experiences of teachers. I hope I will influence other teachers and audiences in the field of education by presenting a different way to solve the problem of struggling writers, a way that allows practitioners to examine their own writing instruction and identify a need for change.

As a practitioner, most importantly I have learned that your work and field of study are interconnected such that, as you begin to work through your inquiries, it becomes connected to the things you begin to produce related to that field of study. I note this point because I am a teacher who searched for a problem that would offer a tangible outcome with the potential to influence other educators, and this factor inspired the desire to complete this study.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

In being the project developer for this project study, I learned I had to hone my skills of a leader by pinpointing where I wanted to be with the project, and deciding how I would get the project accomplished. Being the leader, I learned I was becoming a project developer in that I planned for the construction of a curriculum guide to be a solution to the study's problem. This aim was achieved by delineating the teachers'

experiences with writing instruction, and capitalizing on the data analysis and findings to draw conclusions for the project outcome.

As the developer, I used the curriculum guide to complete the project's objective of having teachers produce successful student writers, while incorporating the necessary researched resources and guides to help them consistently implement more writing instruction. I learned how to interpret and use the qualitative process to move my project towards completion. In doing this, I connected all the data points gathered through analysis and came up with elements to include in the curriculum guide that would create success for the project, and promote future growth and use of the curriculum guide.

The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change

In looking over my entire project, I reflect on the importance of the work that was completed for my study. I began this project because I discovered there were struggling writers in a local elementary school. Concurrent with this discovery I found statistics indicating students were struggling also on a national level. To seek answers I began to study the topic of struggling writers and writing instruction. This approach gave me direction for the focus of my study and developed a level of importance and commitment for me to complete the project study.

In my academic study I found the importance of students having literacy development experiences, and the need to develop functioning literacy skills within their elementary years of schooling. Starting with pre-school, and leading into the regular system, I found that writing is an essential part of literacy development and, if an individual's writing skills are poor, future progress in other subjects will be hindered. If

poor writing continues through progressive grades, student opportunities to advance in high school, or to access colleges and universities, will be hindered. Additionally, poor writing skills flow over into homes, careers, and in teaching one's own children.

This knowledge led to the development of my study within this area, and to the investigation of writing instruction via the voices of teachers. I wanted to get the true experiences teachers were having with writing instruction, and find if there were correlations between what I found and struggling writers. Through the investigation of the teacher's experiences with writing instruction I learned that the desire to diminish the school challenge was desired by me and others. As the teachers in this study expressed the need for more effective writing instruction to be implemented school-wide in School E9, I learned the teachers needed to unite in their teaching of writing instruction, and in their planning and discussion. If change did not occur within School E9, the students will continue to struggle and have poor success in writing.

I learned, ultimately, that the completion of my project is important because it stresses the need to enhance student learning by promoting success for student writing, and to enhance literacy development in the elementary years. In acknowledging this importance, I conclude that, for the local level, this project study will impact educators within School E9 by making them aware of student writing needs. As well, the weaknesses in teachers' writing instruction serve to illustrate why change is necessary.

The curriculum guide has the potential to promote local, in-school socialization among teachers by promoting the teaching of writing instruction, planning, and discussion with partners, groups, or grade levels. The anticipated outcome is that the

groups will construct a writing plan for the school to further enhance students' writing. In reaching further avenues, the curriculum guide has the potential to be adapted to meet the needs of other schools to promote success in student writing.

A localized contribution to social change is that the project has the potential to impact any school because teachers can use the guide as is, or manipulate its resources by adding to, or pulling from it, to make a difference in their own instruction. The likely outcome would be a positive change in their students' writing success.

Because it was derived from a problem that educators must conquer, the guide has the potential to make a difference in social change beyond localized change. It is also a project that enhances participation of its users to make a difference on a significant issue through its utilization and incorporation into a school's writing curriculum. If the participants are implementing the curriculum guide as intended they will be working together to help students succeed. This study has the potential to help motivate more practitioners to look upon the experiences of teachers to fuel success in student writing outcomes. The study offers an opportunity for social change through the realization that enriched teachers' experiences, through the design and delivery of more effective instruction, can create local-to-global change in student success.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

The purpose of the study was to find a solution to the problem of struggling writers at School E9. The study became important to me because the data indicated there were students on local and national levels that were lacking basic writing skills and not succeeding in writing. With this information, I, supported by Tompkins (2013),

suggested these students may have trouble being successful in society. From the academic study for the project, I learned that, to enhance student success in any academic area, one must turn first to the instruction they are being given. Who gives this instruction to the students? The teachers! This is why I decided to investigate the teachers' experiences with writing instruction to ascertain the nature of instruction being delivered in School E9's classrooms.

To be able to enhance students' writing success, I learned one would need to first enhance the teachers' writing instruction. Using the qualitative approach, and constructing a project from the analysis of the teachers' experiences, led to the conclusion that the curriculum guide had a strong foundation in changing writing instruction. This outcome is achievable by offering teachers a 9-week curriculum guide to use and resources to manipulate. It is implied that, from the work that was completed, I now identify that the experiences of educators provided informative details of gaps and weaknesses in current writing instruction.

There are strong advances that can be made by applying this project in the educational milieu. In discovering the gaps and weaknesses in current writing instruction in the site of this study, other schools can relate to this same situation. On that view, the study has the potential to inform others how to develop a similar curriculum guide to enhance the development of successful writing for elementary students. This study offers knowledge that can be applied through investigations of teachers' experiences. A key outcome would be that teachers can be confident in knowing what writing is, what it should be, and how to create a difference for

themselves and their students. Most importantly, this project may be applied as a way to make connections among all educators involved in curriculum and writing instructional design and delivery, thereby enhancing student success in the school and beyond.

From the implications and applications created from the project study, future research could include using participating teachers to inform others of what needs to be included in a project to enhance the writing process for all involved. In following this approach, I can conclude that, for future research, this type of study could be used for initiating change in other academic subjects in which students are unsuccessful. The study process could include the same methodology, or any of the others I outlined.

Emerging from this study I advocate for more investigations to be carried out in strengthening teaching skills, and in creating informal learning communities to enhance teacher and student success. An intention is for the curriculum guide to promote the creation of informal learning communities for writing instruction through the planning, sharing, and discussion by teachers. I also desire for the curriculum guide to further promote more research in the sustainability of learning communities, and building more unity in the school that leads to an appropriate writing curriculum for the school.

Conclusion

Section 4 is based on my reflections and conclusions drawn in completing this study while continuously referring back to its purpose, the problem and question, the summarized qualitative methodology that was employed, and the project outcome to address the headings and subsections. I have gained a thorough awareness of myself as a

researcher through the journey this doctoral process has taken me on, and what message I want this project to make through the reflections made and conclusions drawn.

In considering my journey, the problem that began the study is that there were struggling student writers at a rural elementary school. This problem ignited a desire to find out if other schools had struggling writers, or to find out why the students were struggling with writing in this particular school. Doing my own investigations allowed me to create a broader understanding of the problem and developing knowledge about data that was available for the problem on the local and national levels. I was finding the work of differing scholars in the same field I was searching, and gathering an abundance of professional literature that offered support, comparisons, and new ideas.

In building the research question to explore this problem, I wanted to investigate teachers' experiences with writing instruction and turn this investigation into something that could improve instruction that came from the true source. The idea was to be able to identify strategies that would help teachers in the design and delivery of their writing curriculum. Using a qualitative methodology for data collection, and orchestrating a thorough data analysis and completing the analysis findings, I was able to develop a project outcome that truly came from the analysis of the teachers' experiences with writing instruction.

The curriculum guide addresses the problem and was developed from the perspectives that were expressed in regards to the study question gathered from the data analysis. The project was built into a curriculum plan with guiding components to build strength within its usability and accountability. The plan is meant to be a starting point to

create change and create an awareness of the need for more writing instruction. In seeing the problem through my lens, there is justification from the qualitative standpoint that a curriculum guide was best suited for my study purpose, and can fulfill the requirement helping struggling writers and improving writing instruction for teachers.

In completing this project study, and creating this project outcome of a curriculum guide, I entered different phases of learning and achievement of a higher-level order of learning. Through project development and construction of evaluation I understand the importance of making sure you are achieving goals you create because the outcome of the project is based on its implementation. I have learned that if you desire change, one must rely on the skills and efforts of colleagues to initiate and create the change, as happened by soliciting teachers' experiences in this particular study. Without my contributing participants, I would have not succeeded in accomplishing this goal, so there was a desire for change and this study helped produce that change for those contributing participants and the host site.

I know there is urgency for teachers to become aware of the need to have writing instruction for the betterment of all students' future success. Therefore, through the implementation of a project, such as my curriculum guide, educators will be honing their craft and creating change for students, change which can be expanded into other schools to address similar challenges. The main point of the study was to seek a solution to a problem, and what was learned is that there is a connection between teachers' experiences in writing instruction and the success of students' in writing. It is evident

that more research should be done on this ‘connection’ as the application of outcomes to the educational milieu would be significant.

Being that I am in the educational field helped promote the seed for studying weaknesses in this field. This perspective led to a desire to find answers for these weaknesses by researching, studying, and completing the study. Completing this process and gaining depth of knowledge, I learned how to develop an artifact to be used as a solution to a problem. The aim of this study was for teachers to be better prepared in helping struggling student writers at School E9. On a global view, however, this study can bring societal awareness that students do struggle with writing, and a difference can be made by listening to teachers’ experiences and developing a product they can use to make a difference in their instruction and student learning.

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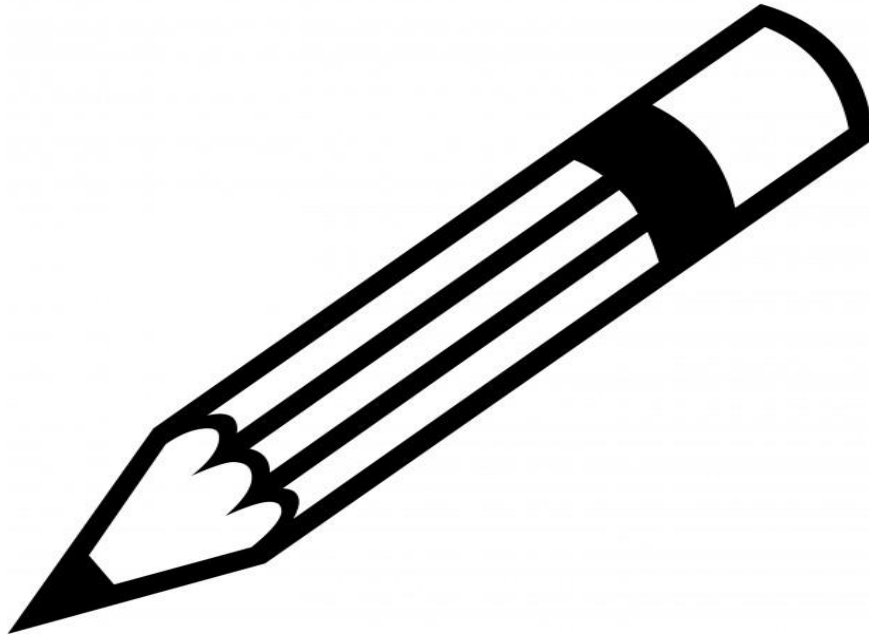
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Appendix A: Project-Curriculum Writing Guide for K-5 Teachers & Evaluation Plan

**Curriculum Writing Guide
for
K-5 Teachers
9-week curriculum guide for writing instruction**



By: Lundie Gray

Table of Contents:

Category	Section	Page
Getting Started (1)	Introduction	2
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Curriculum (29)	9-week Curriculum Writing Guide: Purpose & Use	30
	9-week Curriculum Writing Guide: Weeks 1-9	31
Learn On (77)	Extended Learning	78
	Teacher Discussion	81

~1~

Getting Started:

Introduction section includes:

- a statement from the researcher addressing the audience and purpose of the project
- quotes from professional literature supporting writing instruction

Informative section includes general components for K-5 teachers:

- researched times for writing instruction
- county curriculum maps (K-5)
- county standards (K-5)
- Writing Process (Teacher Explanation/Student Copy)
- 6+1 Traits (Teacher Explanation/Student Copy)
- Three Types of Writing for Common Core (Narrative, Informational/Explanatory, Opinion)
- Writing Genres (Narrative, Persuasive, Descriptive, Expository, Journals/Letters, Poetry)

~2~

Introduction:

-**Researcher Statement & Purpose of Project:** a statement from the researcher addressing the audience and purpose of the project

-**Quotes from Professional Literature:** quotes from professional literature supporting writing instruction

~3~

Researcher Statement & Purpose of Project:

My study, *An Investigation of Elementary Teachers' Experiences in Writing Instruction*, identified that School E9 had struggling writers. In order to improve student writing success for the entire school, I met with teachers to gather their experiences with writing instruction as a means to identify strategies that would help teachers in the design and delivery of their writing curriculum. Through the analysis of data gathered from the teachers' experiences with writing instruction, I found a need to develop a project. As an outcome, I developed the Curriculum Writing Guide for K-5 Teachers to help teachers build stronger writing instruction in order to help struggling writers succeed.

The curriculum guide is for veteran and new teachers alike who teach writing, as well teachers who desire to jumpstart or enhance their writing instruction, and/or want to enhance student writing success. The purpose of the curriculum guide is to relate specifically to the teachers and create an ease of implementation and incorporation of writing instruction into their classroom.

The curriculum guide is designed to provide teachers with a tool from which they can begin their 9-week writing instruction by providing them with resources from which they can pull information, or add information when needed, such as the curriculum maps, standards, types of writing, genre examples, and suggested programs and websites that can be easily incorporated into their writing instruction. It is designed to jumpstart writing instruction into teachers' classrooms by providing weeks 1-9 goals, objectives, instruction and activities, assessment and rubrics, and resources and materials. It is also designed with components that allow teachers to gather further writing resources, and to reflect on each week's writing instruction. The curriculum guide will provide the school with a unified school-wide Writing Plan, and the teachers with a guide for writing instruction that seeks to incorporate effective writing instruction and promote improved student practices on a daily or weekly basis.

~4~

Quotes from Professional Literature:

Teaching writing instruction in elementary school is important...

- “Students who develop strong writing skills at an early age acquire a valuable tool for learning, communication, and self-expression. Such skills can be developed through effective writing instruction practices that provide adequate time for students to write.” (Graham, Bollinger, Booth Olson, D’Aoust, MacArthur, McCutchen, & Olinghouse, 2012, p.6)
- “Students will use writing in countless ways: to communicate, express, question, persuade, synthesize, teach...students who learn to write will truly have one of the most powerful tools imaginable. And it is something that no one can take away from them.” (Fletcher & Portalupi, 2001, p. 1)
- Tompkins (2009) suggested that primary age students would best benefit from writing instruction that was carefully planned out and based on what they need to know next about writing and not just given something to write about.
- As a student acquires the ability to write, she or he will begin to develop in other academic areas such as reading, mathematics, social studies, and science (Tompkins, 2013).
- Writing, though it poses many challenges for educators and students due to its complex nature, is essential for students to be fully literate within society (Graham, Bollinger, Booth Olson, et al., 2012).
- Today, there is an urgency to reconsider the relationship of writing to learning, as well as the place of writing in our schools as we make every effort to meet our students’ needs in the information age and prepare them to become informed and active citizens in the twenty-first century (National Writing Project and Nagin, 2006, p. x).
- As writing is a necessity for success inside and outside the school, teachers should provide instruction where children can experience writing on a daily basis through meaningful, functional, and genuine experiences (Cunningham & Cunningham, 2010).
- Tompkins (2010) suggested the ability to write is the essence of success in one’s life, and it is vital to all academic and lifelong learning.

~5~

Quotes from Professional Literature:

References

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~6~

Informative:

- Researched Times for Writing
- County Curriculum Maps (K-5)
- County Standards (K-5)
- Steps of the Writing Process (Teacher Explanation/Student Copy)
- 6+1 Traits of Writing (Teacher Explanation/Student Copy)
- Three Types of Writing for Common Core (Narrative, Informational/Explanatory, Opinion)
- Writing Genres (Narrative, Persuasive, Descriptive, Expository, Journals/Letters, Poetry)

~7~

Researched Times for Writing:

Incorporating the 9 week Curriculum Writing Guide for K-5 Teachers into writing instruction

Calkins (1994, 2008a, 2008b), Fletcher and Portalupi (2001), and Tompkins (2013) are some of the pioneers in the writing curriculum field. Calkins and Fletcher and Portalupi specialize in Writer's Workshop, and Tompkins specializes in creating effective literacy for the 21st century. After reviewing their work, one can see these scholars agree that writing is an essential tool to literacy development for all students, and should have a place in the daily curriculum.

*These are suggested times and outlines for incorporating the 9-week curriculum guide into writing instruction for Primary Grades (Kindergarten-2nd) and Intermediate Grades (3rd-5th), guided by these scholars.

Primary Grades (kindergarten-2nd): 35-45 minutes of writing instruction

5 minutes (Open)	Introductory Activity/skill/standard -a mini-lesson on a specific skill or standard -introduce writing skill, convention, genre, or model
5 - 10 minutes (Together)	Collaborative/Shared Writing -teacher and students work together to use the introduction activity/skill/standard
15 - 20 minutes (Independent)	Work/Write Time -student independent work time (brainstorm, write, revise, or edit with self, peer, or teacher) -teacher connects with students
10 minutes (Review)	Discuss/Share Time -students and teacher can share work, discuss skills, discuss revisions, and/or knowledge gained

Intermediate Grades (3rd-5th): 40-55 minutes of writing instruction

5 – 10 minutes (Open)	Introductory Activity/skill/standard -a mini-lesson on a specific skill -introduce writing skill, convention, genre, or model
5 - 10 minutes (Together)	Collaborative/Shared Writing -collaboration of teacher and student discussion of introduction activity/skill
20 - 25 minutes (Independent)	Work/Write Time -student work time (brainstorm, write, revise, or edit with self, peer, or teacher) -teacher connects with students
10 minutes (Review)	Discuss/Share Time -students and teacher can share work, discuss skills, discuss revisions, and/or knowledge gained

NOTE for Researched Times for Writing: The schedules that were created above, for outlining writing instruction for students were based on the author's recommendation of essential elements of writing instruction that can be modified to fit many formats of writing instruction. The author's recommendation was guided by the work of Calkins (1994, 2008a, 2008b), Fletcher and Portalupi (2001), and Tompkins (2013), and are not solely based on Writer's Workshop.

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~9~

County Curriculum Maps for K-5 2015-2016 School Year:

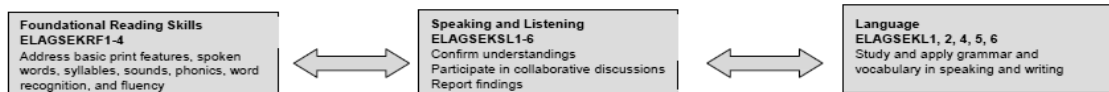
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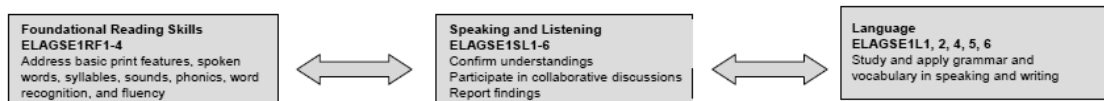
GEORGIA STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM MAP								
First Nine Weeks		Second Nine Weeks		Third Nine Weeks		Fourth Nine Weeks		
Reading		Reading		Reading		Reading		
Literary ELAGSEKRL1-10	Informational ELAGSEKRI1-10	Literary ELAGSEKRL1-10	Informational ELAGSEKRI1-10	Literary ELAGSEKRL1-10	Informational ELAGSEKRI1-10	Literary ELAGSEKRL1-10	Informational ELAGSEKRI1-10	
1 Extended Literary Text 2-3 short text connections	1 Extended Informational Text 2-3 short text connections	1 Extended Literary Text 2-3 short text connections	1 Extended Informational Text 2-3 short text connections	1 Extended Literary Text 2-3 short text connections	1 Extended Informational Text 2-3 short text connections	1 Extended Literary Text 2-3 short text connections	1 Extended Informational Text 2-3 short text connections	
Writing		Writing		Writing		Writing		
Narrative ELAGSEKW3		Informative/Explanatory ELAGSEKW2		Opinion ELAGSEKW1		Narrative ELAGSEKW3	Info. ELAGSEKW2	Opinion ELAGSEKW1
1-2 short research connections (may be shared research on a topic or theme connected to the unit) ELAGSEKW7		1-2 short research connections (may be shared research on a topic or theme connected to the unit) ELAGSEKW7		1-2 short research connections (may be shared research on a topic or theme connected to the unit) ELAGSEKW7		1-2 short research connections (may be shared research on a topic or theme connected to the unit) ELAGSEKW7		
Routine writing (summaries, writing-to-learn tasks, response to a short text or an open-ended question) ELAGSEKW5, 6, 8		Routine writing (summaries, writing-to-learn tasks, response to a short text or an open-ended question) ELAGSEKW5, 6, 8		Routine writing (summaries, writing-to-learn tasks, response to a short text or an open-ended question) ELAGSEKW5, 6, 8		Routine writing (summaries, writing-to-learn tasks, response to a short text or an open-ended question) ELAGSEKW5, 6, 8		



GEORGIA STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

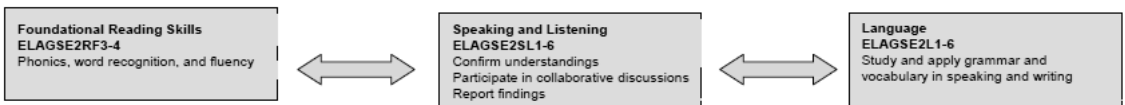
FIRST GRADE CURRICULUM MAP								
First Nine Weeks		Second Nine Weeks		Third Nine Weeks		Fourth Nine Weeks		
Reading		Reading		Reading		Reading		
Literary ELAGSE1RL1-10	Informational ELAGSE1RI1-10	Literary ELAGSE1RL1-10	Informational ELAGSE1RI1-10	Literary ELAGSE1RL1-10	Informational ELAGSE1RI1-10	Literary ELAGSE1RL1-10	Informational ELAGSE1RI1-10	
1 Extended Literary Text 2-3 short text connections	1 Extended Informational Text 2-3 short text connections	1 Extended Literary Text 2-3 short text connections	1 Extended Informational Text 2-3 short text connections	1 Extended Literary Text 2-3 short text connections	1 Extended Informational Text 2-3 short text connections	1 Extended Literary Text 2-3 short text connections	1 Extended Informational Text 2-3 short text connections	
Writing		Writing		Writing		Writing		
Narrative ELAGSE1W3		Informative/Explanatory ELAGSE1W2		Opinion ELAGSE1W1		Narrative ELAGSE1W3	Info. ELAGSE1W2	Opinion ELAGSE1W1
1-2 short research connections (may be shared research on a topic or theme connected to the unit) ELAGSE1W7		1-2 short research connections (may be shared research on a topic or theme connected to the unit) ELAGSE1W7		1-2 short research connections (may be shared research on a topic or theme connected to the unit) ELAGSE1W7		1-2 short research connections (may be shared research on a topic or theme connected to the unit) ELAGSE1W7		
Routine writing (summaries, writing-to-learn tasks, response to a short text or an open-ended question) ELAGSE1W5, 6, 8		Routine writing (summaries, writing-to-learn tasks, response to a short text or an open-ended question) ELAGSE1W5, 6, 8		Routine writing (summaries, writing-to-learn tasks, response to a short text or an open-ended question) ELAGSE1W5, 6, 8		Routine writing (summaries, writing-to-learn tasks, response to a short text or an open-ended question) ELAGSE1W5, 6, 8		





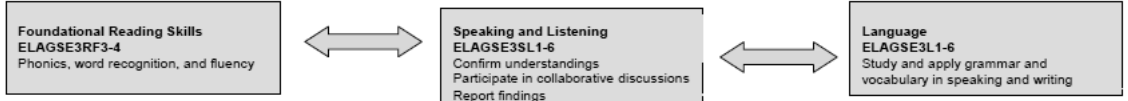
GEORGIA STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

SECOND GRADE CURRICULUM MAP								
First Nine Weeks		Second Nine Weeks		Third Nine Weeks		Fourth Nine Weeks		
Reading		Reading		Reading		Reading		
Literary ELAGSE2RL1-10	Informational ELAGSE2RI1-10	Literary ELAGSEK1L1-10	Informational ELAGSE2RI1-10	Literary ELAGSE2RL1-10	Informational ELAGSE2RI1-10	Literary ELAGSE2RL1-10	Informational ELAGSE2RI1-10	
1 Extended Literary Text 3-4 short text connections	1 Extended Informational Text 3-4 short text connections	1 Extended Literary Text 3-4 short text connections	1 Extended Informational Text 3-4 short text connections	1 Extended Literary Text 3-4 short text connections	1 Extended Informational Text 3-4 short text connections	1 Extended Literary Text 3-4 short text connections	1 Extended Informational Text 3-4 short text connections	
Writing		Writing		Writing		Writing		
Narrative ELAGSE2W3		Informative/Explanatory ELAGSE2W2		Opinion ELAGSE2W1		Narrative ELAGSE2W3	Info/Expl. ELAGSE2W2	Opinion ELAGSE2W1
2-3 short research connections (may be shared research on a topic or theme connected to the unit) ELAGSE2W7		2-3 short research connections (may be shared research on a topic or theme connected to the unit) ELAGSE2W7		2-3 short research connections (may be shared research on a topic or theme connected to the unit) ELAGSE2W7		2-3 short research connections (may be shared research on a topic or theme connected to the unit) ELAGSE2W7		
Routine writing (summaries, writing-to-learn tasks, response to a short text or an open-ended question) ELAGSE2W5, 6, 8		Routine writing (summaries, writing-to-learn tasks, response to a short text or an open-ended question) ELAGSE2W5, 6, 8		Routine writing (summaries, writing-to-learn tasks, response to a short text or an open-ended question) ELAGSE2W5, 6, 8		Routine writing (summaries, writing-to-learn tasks, response to a short text or an open-ended question) ELAGSE2W5, 6, 8		



GEORGIA STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

THIRD GRADE CURRICULUM MAP			
First Nine Weeks	Second Nine Weeks	Third Nine Weeks	Fourth Nine Weeks
Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading
Primary Focus: Literary Text ELAGSE3RL1-10 Secondary Focus: Informational Text ELAGSE3RI1-10	Primary Focus: Informational Text ELAGSE3RI1-10 Secondary Focus: Literary Text ELAGSE3RL1-10	Primary Focus: Literary Text ELAGSE3RL1-10 Secondary Focus: Informational Text ELAGSE3RI1-10	Primary Focus: Informational Text ELAGSE3RI1-10 Secondary Focus: Literary Text ELAGSE3RL1-10
1 extended literary text 4 thematically connected short texts	1 extended informational text 4 thematically connected short texts	1 extended literary text 4 thematically connected short texts	1 extended informational text 4 thematically connected short texts
Writing	Writing	Writing	Writing
Focus: Opinion ELAGSE3W1	Focus: Informative/Explanatory ELAGSE3W2	Focus: Informative/Explanatory ELAGSE3W2	Focus: Opinion ELAGSE3W1
2 opinion pieces supporting a position ELAGSE3W1, 4, 5, 6, 10	2 informative/explanatory pieces examining a topic and conveying ideas ELAGSE3W2, 4, 5, 6, 10	2 informative/explanatory pieces examining a topic and conveying ideas ELAGSE3W2, 4, 5, 6, 10	2 opinion pieces supporting a position ELAGSE3W1, 4, 5, 6, 10
1-2 short research connections (may be shared research on a topic or theme connected to the unit) ELAGSE3W7, 8, 10	1-2 short research connections (may be shared research on a topic or theme connected to the unit) ELAGSE3W7, 8, 10	1-2 short research connections (may be shared research on a topic or theme connected to the unit) ELAGSE3W7, 8, 10	1-2 short research connections (may be shared research on a topic or theme connected to the unit) ELAGSE3W7, 8, 10
1-2 narratives detailing a real or imagined experience ELAGSE3W3, 4, 5, 6, 10	1-2 narratives detailing a real or imagined experience ELAGSE3W3, 4, 5, 6, 10	1-2 narratives detailing a real or imagined experience ELAGSE3W3, 4, 5, 6, 10	1-2 narratives detailing a real or imagined experience ELAGSE3W3, 4, 5, 6, 10
Routine writing (summaries, writing-to-learn tasks, response to a short text or an open-ended question) ELAGSE3W1, 2, 3, 9, 10	Routine writing (summaries, writing-to-learn tasks, response to a short text or an open-ended question) ELAGSE3W1, 2, 3, 9, 10	Routine writing (summaries, writing-to-learn tasks, response to a short text or an open-ended question) ELAGSE3W1, 2, 3, 9, 10	Routine writing (summaries, writing-to-learn tasks, response to a short text or an open-ended question) ELAGSE3W1, 2, 3, 9, 10





GEORGIA STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

FOURTH GRADE CURRICULUM MAP			
First Nine Weeks	Second Nine Weeks	Third Nine Weeks	Fourth Nine Weeks
Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading
Primary Focus: Informational Text ELAGSE4RI1-10 Secondary Focus: Literary Text ELAGSE4RL1-10	Primary Focus: Literary Text ELAGSE4RL1-10 Secondary Focus: Informational Text ELAGSE4RI1-10	Primary Focus: Informational Text ELAGSE4RI1-10 Secondary Focus: Literary Text ELAGSE4RL1-10	Primary Focus: Literary Text ELAGSE4RL1-10 Secondary Focus: Informational Text ELAGSE4RI1-10
1 extended informational text 5 thematically connected short texts	1 extended literary text 5 thematically connected short texts	1 extended informational text 5 thematically connected short texts	1 extended literary text 5 thematically connected short texts
Writing	Writing	Writing	Writing
Focus: Informative/Explanatory ELAGSE4W2	Focus: Opinion ELAGSE4W1	Focus: Opinion ELAGSE4W1	Focus: Informative/Explanatory ELAGSE4W2
2-informative/explanatory pieces examining a topic and conveying ideas ELAGSE4W2, 4, 5, 6, 10	2 opinion pieces supporting a position ELAGSE4W1, 4, 5, 6, 10	2 opinion pieces supporting a position ELAGSE4W1, 4, 5, 6, 10	2-informative/explanatory pieces examining a topic and conveying ideas ELAGSE4W2, 4, 5, 6, 10
1-2 short research connections (may be shared research on a topic or theme connected to the unit) ELAGSE4W7, 8, 10	1-2 short research connections (may be shared research on a topic or theme connected to the unit) ELAGSE4W7, 8, 10	1-2 short research connections (may be shared research on a topic or theme connected to the unit) ELAGSE4W7, 8, 10	1-2 short research connections (may be shared research on a topic or theme connected to the unit) ELAGSE4W7, 8, 10
1-2 narratives detailing a real or imagined experience ELAGSE4W3, 4, 5, 6, 10	1-2 narratives detailing a real or imagined experience ELAGSE4W3, 4, 5, 6, 10	1-2 narratives detailing a real or imagined experience ELAGSE4W3, 4, 5, 6, 10	1-2 narratives detailing a real or imagined experience ELAGSE4W3, 4, 5, 6, 10
Routine writing (summaries, writing-to-learn tasks, response to a short text or an open-ended question) ELAGSE4W1, 2, 3, 9, 10	Routine writing (summaries, writing-to-learn tasks, response to a short text or an open-ended question) ELAGSE4W1, 2, 3, 9, 10	Routine writing (summaries, writing-to-learn tasks, response to a short text or an open-ended question) ELAGSE4W1, 2, 3, 9, 10	Routine writing (summaries, writing-to-learn tasks, response to a short text or an open-ended question) ELAGSE4W1, 2, 3, 9, 10
Foundational Reading Skills ELAGSE4RF3-4 Phonics, word recognition, and fluency	Speaking and Listening ELAGSE4SL1-6 Confirm understandings Participate in collaborative discussions Report findings	Language ELAGSE4L1-6 Study and apply grammar and vocabulary in speaking and writing	



GEORGIA STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

FIFTH GRADE CURRICULUM MAP			
First Nine Weeks	Second Nine Weeks	Third Nine Weeks	Fourth Nine Weeks
Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading
Primary Focus: Literary Text ELAGSE5RL1-10 Secondary Focus: Informational Text ELAGSE5RI1-10	Primary Focus: Informational Text ELAGSE5RI1-10 Secondary Focus: Literary Text ELAGSE5RL1-10	Primary Focus: Literary Text ELAGSE5RL1-10 Secondary Focus: Informational Text ELAGSE5RI1-10	Primary Focus: Informational Text ELAGSE5RI1-10 Secondary Focus: Literary Text ELAGSE5RL1-10
1 extended literary text 5 thematically connected short texts	1 extended informational text 5 thematically connected short texts	1 extended literary text 5 thematically connected short texts	1 extended informational text 5 thematically connected short texts
Writing	Writing	Writing	Writing
Focus: Opinion ELAGSE5W1	Focus: Informative/Explanatory ELAGSE5W2	Focus: Informative/Explanatory ELAGSE5W2	Focus: Opinion ELAGSE5W1
3 opinion pieces supporting a position ELAGSE5W1, 4, 5, 6, 10	3 informative/explanatory pieces examining a topic and conveying ideas ELAGSE5W2, 4, 5, 6, 10	3 informative/explanatory pieces examining a topic and conveying ideas ELAGSE5W2, 4, 5, 6, 10	3 opinion pieces supporting a position ELAGSE5W1, 4, 5, 6, 10
2-3 short research connections (may be shared research on a topic or theme connected to the unit) ELAGSE5W7, 8, 10	2-3 short research connections (may be shared research on a topic or theme connected to the unit) ELAGSE5W7, 8, 10	2-3 short research connections (may be shared research on a topic or theme connected to the unit) ELAGSE5W7, 8, 10	2-3 short research connections (may be shared research on a topic or theme connected to the unit) ELAGSE5W7, 8, 10
1-2 narratives detailing a real or imagined experience ELAGSE5W3, 4, 5, 6, 10	1-2 narratives detailing a real or imagined experience ELAGSE5W3, 4, 5, 6, 10	1-2 narratives detailing a real or imagined experience ELAGSE5W3, 4, 5, 6, 10	1-2 narratives detailing a real or imagined experience ELAGSE5W3, 4, 5, 6, 10
Routine writing (summaries, writing-to-learn tasks, response to a short text or an open-ended question) ELAGSE5W1, 2, 3, 9, 10	Routine writing (summaries, writing-to-learn tasks, response to a short text or an open-ended question) ELAGSE5W1, 2, 3, 9, 10	Routine writing (summaries, writing-to-learn tasks, response to a short text or an open-ended question) ELAGSE5W1, 2, 3, 9, 10	Routine writing (summaries, writing-to-learn tasks, response to a short text or an open-ended question) ELAGSE5W1, 2, 3, 9, 10
Foundational Reading Skills ELAGSE5RF3-4 Phonics, word recognition, and fluency	Speaking and Listening ELAGSE5SL1-6 Confirm understandings Participate in collaborative discussions Report findings	Language ELAGSE5L1-6 Study and apply grammar and vocabulary in speaking and writing	

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County Standards for K-5
2015-2016 School Year:

Georgia Department of Education (2015): georgiastandards.org

**Kindergarten English Language Arts Common Core Georgia Performance Standards
(ELA CCGPS)**

WRITING (W)

Text Types and Purposes

ELACCKW1: Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose opinion pieces in which they tell a reader the topic or the name of the book they are “writing” about and state an opinion or preference about the topic or book (e.g., *My favorite book is...*).

ELACCKW2: Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.

ELACCKW3: Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened.

Production and Distribution of Writing

ELACCKW4: (*Begins in grade 3*)

ELACCKW5: With guidance and support from adults, respond to questions and suggestions from peers and add details to strengthen writing as needed.

ELACCKW6: With guidance and support from adults, explore a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

ELACCKW7: Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., explore a number of books by a favorite author and express opinions about them).

ELACCKW8: With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

ELACCKW9: (*Begins in grade 4*)

Range of Writing

ELACCKW10: (*Begins in grade 3*)

**1st Grade English Language Arts Common Core Georgia Performance Standards
(ELACCGPS)**

WRITING (W)

Text Types and Purposes

ELACC1W1: Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or the name of the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion, and provide some sense of closure.

ELACC1W2: Write informative/ explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure.

ELACC1W3: Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure.

Production and Distribution of Writing

ELACC1W4: *(Begins in grade 3)*

ELACC1W5: With guidance and support from adults, focus on a topic, respond to questions and suggestions from peers, and add details to strengthen writing as needed.

a. May include oral or written prewriting (graphic organizers).

ELACC1W6: With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

ELACC1W7: Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., exploring a number of “how-to” books on a given topic and use them to write a sequence of instructions).

ELACC1W8: With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

ELACC1W9: *(Begins in grade 4)*

Range of Writing

ELACC1W10: *(Begins in grade 3)*

**2nd Grade English Language Arts Common Core Georgia Performance Standards
(ELACCGPS)**

WRITING (W)

□ Text Types and Purposes

ELACC2W1: Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., because, and, also) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.

ELACC2W2: Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.

ELACC2W3: Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.

□ Production and Distribution of Writing

ELACC2W4: *(Begins in grade 3)*

ELACC2W5: With guidance and support from adults and peers, focus on a topic and strengthen writing as needed by revising and editing.

a. May include prewriting.

ELACC2W6: With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.

□ Research to Build and Present Knowledge

ELACC2W7: Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., read a number of books on a single topic to produce a report; record science observations).

ELACC2W8: Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

ELACC2W9: *(Begins in grade 4)*

□ Range of Writing

ELACC2W10: *(Begins in grade 3)*

**3rd Grade English Language Arts Common Core Georgia Performance Standards
(ELACCGPS)**

WRITING (W)

Text Types and Purposes

ELACC3W1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.

- a. Introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons.
- b. Provide reasons that support the opinion.
- c. Use linking words and phrases (e.g., because, therefore, since, for example) to connect opinion and reasons.
- d. Provide a concluding statement or section.

ELACC3W2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

- a. Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension.
- b. Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details.
- c. Use linking words and phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to connect ideas within categories of information.
- d. Provide a concluding statement or section.

ELACC3W3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

- a. Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
- b. Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.
- c. Use temporal words and phrases to signal event order.
- d. Provide a sense of closure.

Production and Distribution of Writing

ELACC3W4: With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

ELACC3W5: With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grade 3.)

ELACC3W6: With guidance and support from adults, use technology to produce and publish writing (using keyboarding skills) as well as to interact and collaborate with others.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

ELACC3W7: Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.

ELACC3W8: Recall information from experience or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.

ELACC3W9: (*Begins in grade 4*)

Range of Writing

ELACC3W10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

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**4th Grade English Language Arts Common Core Georgia Performance Standards
(ELACCGPS)**

WRITING (W)

□Text Types and Purposes

ELACC4W1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.

- a. Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer’s purpose.
- b. Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details.
- c. Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., for instance, in order to, in addition).
- d. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.

ELACC4W2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

- a. Introduce a topic clearly and group related information in paragraphs and sections; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
- b. Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.
- c. Link ideas within categories of information using words and phrases. (e.g., another, for example, also, because).
- d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
- e. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.

ELACC4W3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

- a. Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
- b. Use dialogue and description to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.
- c. Use a variety of transitional words and phrases to manage the sequence of events.
- d. Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.
- e. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

□Production and Distribution of Writing

ELACC4W4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in Standards 1–3 above.)

ELACC4W5: With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to

and including grade 4.)

ELACC4W6: With some guidance and support from adults, use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of one page in a single sitting.

□ **Research to Build and Present Knowledge**

ELACC4W7: Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

ELACC4W8: Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; take notes and categorize information, and provide a list of sources.

ELACC4W9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

- a. Apply grade 4 Reading standards to literature (e.g., “Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text [e.g., a character’s thoughts, words, or actions].”).
- b. Apply grade 4 Reading standards to informational texts (e.g., “Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text”).

□ **Range of Writing**

ELACC4W10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

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**5th Grade English Language Arts Common Core Georgia Performance Standards
(ELACCGPS)**

FIFTH GRADE WRITING (W)

□ Text Types and Purposes

ELACC5W1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.

- a. Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which ideas are logically grouped to support the writer's purpose.
- b. Provide logically ordered reasons that are supported by facts and details.
- c. Link opinion and reasons using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., *consequently*, *specifically*).
- d. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.

ELACC5W2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

- a. Introduce a topic clearly, provide a general observation and focus, and group related information logically; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
- b. Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.
- c. Link ideas within and across categories of information using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., *in contrast*, *especially*).
- d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
- e. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.

ELACC5W3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

- a. Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
- b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, and pacing, to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.
- c. Use a variety of transitional words, phrases, and clauses to manage the sequence of events.
- d. Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.
- e. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

□ Production and Distribution of Writing

ELACC5W4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in Standards 1–3 above.)

ELACC5W5: With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language Standards 1–3 up to and including grade 5.)

ELACC5W6: With some guidance and support from adults, use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of two pages in a single sitting.

□ Research to Build and Present Knowledge

ELACC5W7: Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

ELACC5W8: Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, and provide a list of sources.

ELACC5W9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

a. Apply grade 5 Reading Standards to literature (e.g., “Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or a drama, drawing on specific details in the text [e.g., how characters interact]”).

b. Apply *grade 5 Reading Standards* to informational texts (e.g., Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence supports which point[s]).

□ Range of Writing

ELACC5W10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

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Steps of the Writing Process:
Teacher Explanation (Rog & Kropp, 2004)

Pre-writing: Getting Started

- Decide what you're going to write about, why you're going to write it, what form it's going to take, and who's going to read it.
- Use planning tools such as webs, charts and organizers to get your thoughts organized.
- Take time to think and talk to others.

Drafting: Getting It Down

- Think of drafting as putting your thoughts on the page.
- Compose as quickly as possible to get all your ideas down on paper.
- Write on one side of the paper, and leave a space between each line.

Revising: Getting It Good

- Make sure your writing makes sense, that everything is in the right order, and all the important details are in place.
- Make sure you've used the best and most interesting words and phrases.
- Make sure you have a good beginning and ending.
- Make additions, deletions and changes for clarity and punch.

Editing: Getting It Right

- Check punctuation and capitalization.
- Check grammar and usage.
- Use a dictionary or spell-checker to correct spelling.
- Check for everything the computer won't catch – read your work out loud!

Publishing: Getting It Out

- Rewrite or print for display.
- Read your writing to an audience.
- Submit it to a publication or contest.

*In a writing classroom, the writing process should be an ongoing process that continues to move within a cycle as the students pass through prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Once students learn the steps of the writing process they can move freely through the steps at their own rate, while also revisiting stages. The steps will give students the skills to produce an efficient writing piece in any genre (Rog & Kropp, 2004)

Reference:

Rog, L. J. & Kropp, P. (2004). *The write genre: Classroom activities and mini-lessons*

that promote writing with clarity, style, and clashes of brilliance. Portland, ME:
Pembroke Publishers.

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Steps of the Writing Process:
Student Copy (Rog & Kropp, 2004)

Pre-writing: Getting Started

- Think

Drafting: Getting It Down

- Write

Revising: Getting It Good

- Make it better

Editing: Getting It Right

- Make it correct

Publishing: Getting It Out

- Share the finished product

Reference:

Rog, L. J. & Kropp, P. (2004). *The write genre: Classroom activities and mini-lessons that promote writing with clarity, style, and clashes of brilliance*. Portland, ME: Pembroke Publishers.

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6+1 Traits of Writing:
Teacher Explanation (Culham, 2009)

The traits of writing provide the language we use to describe what writers do as they draft, revise, and edit. As such, we can use them to drive assessment, instruction, and classroom talk (Culham, 2010, p. 5).

Ideas: The pieces content – its central message and details that support that message.

Organization: The internal structure of the piece – the thread of logic, the pattern of meaning.

Voice: The tone and tenor of the piece – the personal stamp of the writer, which is achieved through a strong understanding of purpose and audience.

Word Choice: The specific vocabulary the writer uses to convey meaning and enlighten the reader.

Sentence Fluency: The way words and phrases flow through the piece. It is auditory trait because it's "read" with the ear as much as the eye.

Conventions: The mechanical correctness of the piece. Correct use of conventions (i.e. spelling, capitalization, punctuation, paragraphing, grammar and usage) guides the reader through the text easily.

Presentation: The physical appearance of the piece. A visually appealing text provides a welcome mat. It invites the reader in.

Reference:

Culham, R. (2009). *Using benchmark papers to teach writing with the traits: Grades 3-5: Student writing samples with scores and explanations, model lessons, and teaching revisions and editing skills (teaching resources)*. New York, NY: Scholastic Inc.

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6+1 Traits of Writing:
Student Copy (Culham, 2009)

Ideas: Be Crystal Clear

- present a clear message and focused topic

Organization: Stick to the Path

- tie it all together

Voice: Be Yourself

- have involvement and feelings

Word Choice: Words Create Pictures

- specific vocabulary the writer uses to show meaning/feelings

Sentence Fluency: Make it Sound Smooth

- how words and phrases flow through the piece of writing (as someone reads it)

Conventions: Check Your Work

- mechanics and correct use of: spelling, capitalization, punctuation, paragraphing, and grammar

Presentation: Make it Yours

- how the piece looks for sharing

Reference: Culham, R. (2009). *Using benchmark papers to teach writing with the traits: Grades 3-5: Student writing samples with scores and explanations, model lessons, and teaching revisions and editing skills (teaching resources)*. New York, NY: Scholastic Inc.

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Three Types of Writing for Common Core:
Teacher explanations

weareteachers.com (2013) and pearsonschoools.com:

Free Posters and Infographic: Teaching the Three Types of Writing

WHAT ARE THE THREE TYPES OF WRITING?

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE AND BEYOND:

1 **OPINION/ARGUMENTATIVE** writing takes a position on a topic and defends that position using evidence.

Examples: editorials, speeches, letters

(GRADES K–2: A Pig Parade Is a Terrible Idea by Michael Ian Black)

(GRADES 3–5: Should We Have Pets? by Sylvia Lollis)

2 **INFORMATIVE/EXPLANATORY** writing gives the reader information on a topic and is rooted in facts.

Examples: news stories, science lab reports, online encyclopedias, manuals.

(GRADES K–2: Apples by Gail Gibbons)

(GRADES 3–5: The Elephant Scientist by Caitlin O'Connell)

3 **NARRATIVE** writing tells a story; it recounts an event, adventure or experience.

Examples: drama, novels, narrative nonfiction, memoirs.

(GRADES K–2: Knuffle Bunny by Mo Willems)

(GRADES 3–5: Toys Go Out by Emily Jenkins)

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Writing Genres:

In *Teaching Elementary School Student to Be Effective Writers: A Practice Guide*, Graham, Bollinger, Olson, D'Aoust, MacArthur, McCutchen, Olinghouse (2012), discussed the importance of teachers teaching students how to write effectively for different purposes, such as the writing genres. These authors suggested that students be familiar with each genre and how to establish an effective piece for each genre using techniques that enable the student to intertwine the use of the genres within skillful writing.

Reference: Graham, S., Bollinger, A., Olson, C. B., D'Aoust, C., MacArthur, C., McCutchen, D., & Olinghouse, N. (2012). *Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers: A Practice Guide*. NCEE 2012-4058. *What Works Clearinghouse*.

Examples of 6 most commonly used genres in elementary school:

Genre (Fictional/ Nonfictional)	Example Activities	Examples Teacher Explanation
Narrative Writing (Barone & Taylor, 2006; McCarthy, 1998c)	personal narratives, original short stories, retelling of stories, sequels to stories, scripts	Students can retell stories; develop sequels to stories/movies; write stories their own lives; and, create original stories with a beginning, middle, and end, including story elements (e.g. plot, characters)
Persuasive Writing (McCarthy, 1998d)	advertisements, book reviews, movie reviews, letters to editors, persuasive essays, persuasive letters	Students can write to clearly present their position/viewpoint on a topic by giving examples and evidence using emotional ties to persuade someone to their stance.
Descriptive Writing (McCarthy, 1998a)	character sketches, comparisons, descriptive essays, descriptive sentences	Students can write about what is thoroughly observed using precise vocabulary, such as using details (sensory) and comparisons (metaphors/similes).
Expository Writing (McCarthy, 1998b)	alphabet books, autobiographies, directions, essays, posters, reports,	Students can objectively write reports, directions, a sequence of steps, comparing

	summaries	things, illustrate cause and effect, and address problems and solutions. (collect and produce information)
Journals and Letters (Henry, 1999; McMackin & Witherell, 2005)	original journal entries, double-entry journals, learning logs, e-mail messages, business letters, courtesy letters, friendly letters	Students can write to themselves or others in informal works to share news, tell about an event, record notes, explore ideas/things, and learn to create letter/envelope writing.
Poetry Writing (Heard, 2013)	poems: original, acrostic, color, free verse (Haiku), or any poem type studied	Students can use poetic language to create poems that are original, have rhyme, word play, shape, pictures, and powerful vocabulary (stylistic devices)

NOTE: The chart above was created by referencing the sources from their work, and was not solely based on the author's personal creation. It is the author's recommendations for teachers to use the researched activities and explanations of the genres to help guide writing instruction that can be modified to fit many formats of writing instruction.

Chart References:

- Barone, D. M., & Taylor, J. (2006). *Improving students' writing, k-8: From meaning-making to high-stakes*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Heard, G. (2013). *Poetry lessons to meet the common core state standards (grades K-5)*. New York, NY: Scholastic Inc.
- Henry, J. (1999). *Fresh takes on using journals to teach beginning writers (grades 1-2)*. New York, NY: Scholastic Inc.
- McCarthy, T. (1998a). *Descriptive writing (grades 4-8): Mini-lessons, strategies, activities*. New York, NY: Scholastic Inc.
- McCarthy, T. (1998b). *Expository writing (grades 4-8): Mini-lessons, strategies, activities*. New York, NY: Scholastic Inc.

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Curriculum:

9-week Curriculum Writing Guide: Purpose & Use section includes:

-the purpose for creating the writing guide, how to use the writing guide, and gives the author's recommendations on the use of the curriculum guide.

9-week Curriculum Writing Guide: Weeks 1-9 section includes:

-Weeks 1-9 curriculum guide consisting of goals, objectives, instruction and activities, assessment and rubric, and resource and materials.

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9-week Curriculum Writing Guide: Purpose & Use

-The 9-week curriculum writing guide is the core of the project. Each week is planned to build on the previous week in a sequence to establish routine for teaching writing instruction, increasing the students' writing abilities, and establishing informal community of learners within the classroom and school.

-The author designed the curriculum guide to establish a foundation for writing instruction that could be used to teach the elements of the writing process and 6+1 traits, while covering the three types of writing for the Common Core Standards, and adjusted to any of the writing genres. The instruction and activities are meant for K-5 writing instruction, and to be manipulated and adjusted so each grade level can meet its needs of writing instruction.

-Weeks 1-9 are listed in a sequence and divided into components that address the scope of the curriculum guide by stating what should be done for each week. Components consist of the goals, objectives, instruction and activities, assessment and rubrics, and resources and materials. It is the author's recommendation that, after each week or throughout each week, users refer to the Teacher Discussion section to reflect over the week's curriculum and planning.

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9-week Curriculum Writing Guide: Weeks 1-9

The curriculum weeks can be used by any grade level, be revisited throughout the 9-weeks, and repeated each nine weeks with an emphasis on different task, such as the three different types of writing and/or the writing genres.

Weeks 1-9 are sequenced to build a community of writers and establish daily writing time, teaching the structure of writing (any piece, specific to type of writing genres), teaching students the writing process, allowing students to work through the writing process, teaching students the 6+1 traits of writing, allowing students to work through the 6+1 traits, and finalizing a piece of writing (i.e. building titles and addressing audience to make a piece of writing others want to read). Each week also includes a note of how to use that week's components within future 9 week semesters using any types of writing genres.

Week 1: Build a Community of Writers & Writing Time

Goal: To establish a community of writers in your classroom and daily writing time.

Objective: For students to gain a sense of writing time and build a community of writers by getting familiar with classmates and asking questions, writing, and sharing by speaking clearly and listening to each other.

Instruction/Activity:

-Set the tone: Establish a literacy-gearred environment with posters/books that promote differing pieces of writing, displaying student writing work, and have writing essentials available (pencils, paper, dictionaries, thesaurus, computers, writing areas, etc.).

-Student writing folders: Give students writing folders to keep all their work, copies, and examples for referring to during writing time.

-Establish routines and expectations for writing time: Explain to students that each day they will be doing some type of writing to strengthen their writing skills, and they will need to have their writing folders and writing materials accessible during this time.

-Establish the Community of Writers: Read your favorite short book and explain to the class that the author/s used writing principles to create the book; however, before the author/s wrote the book they had to understand the topic they were writing about to be able to write the book.

-Explain to the students that they will be building a caring community by getting to know each other better as writers, and using what they learn about each other to start writing, such as an author would do to write a book about any topic or idea.

-Teach Interacting Rules: Interact with other students by using polite words (e.g. please and thank you), speak one person at a time, look at the speaker, adjust voice level to the surrounding, and make sure everyone shares.

-Model: Ask questions about the class, and have the class answer by describing them as a whole. (e.g. (T) What grade are you all in? (S) We are all in the __ grade.) Write the

answers on the board and share the writing by reading what you learned about the class. Discuss how you used writing to create a piece of work that now describes the class (hang this up in the room).

-Students create a set of unique questions to ask a partner (adjust number of questions to grade level and/or modify to groups of partners with a helper or visual pictures to color for questions for lower grades). (e.g. Attached)

-**Work:** Students will need to get a partner, and both will ask their questions and take each other's responses.

-Partners will share the things they learned about each other.

-Throughout the week continue to discuss as a class **3 things:** What did you learn about your partner? Did both partners share? Did you listen carefully and show your partner respect while s/he was sharing? (Explain that being a good listener, and respecting our partners during their sharing are very important in building the community.)

- **Review:** Discuss that, through questioning, listening, talking, and writing with classmates students will learn things about their classmates in building a community of writers and show their classmates that sharing their writing is important.

Assessment/Rubric: Teacher observation during activity (sharing). Have students place their questions and partner's responses in their student writing folder for the teacher to observe.

Resources/Materials:

- posters/books (differing pieces of writing)
- student writing work
- writing essentials (pencils, paper, dictionaries, thesaurus, computers, writing areas, etc.).
- Student writing folder (entire class)
- Teacher's favorite short book
- Student question sheet (see copy following)

NOTE: To use this week's components for another 9-week semester with one of the types of writing/genres you will need to:

- have posters/books available on your topic;
- create a specific label in the students writing folder for the week and refer back to building a community of writers but specifying the type of writing/genre;
- pick out a specific type of book to share and how the author built that type of writing, discuss the elements of the book and model a simple piece; and,
- have the students a set of questions prepared that refer to that type of writing/genre and let them partner up, respond, and share (e.g. narrative/ What is your favorite color?).

For this week you will be building a foundation for the skill you are emphasizing, but also re-establishing why a community of writers is important.

Student Question Sheet: Upper grades

Name _____

Partner's name _____

Write unique questions to ask your partner. Take their response on the line.
*Remember the Interaction Rules!

(e.g. How many teeth have you lost?)

1. Question: _____

Response: _____

2. Question: _____

Response: _____

3. Question: _____

Response: _____

4. Question: _____

Response: _____

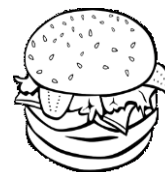
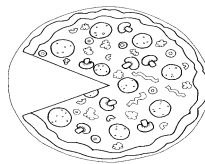
Student Question Sheet: primary grades (circle your favorite and tell your partner why)

Name _____

Partner's name _____



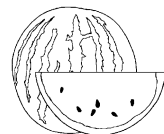
3.



4.



2.



Week 2: Structure of Writing: Introduction, Body, Conclusion & Other pieces

Goal: To build an understanding of the structure of writing (what a paper should look like.)

Objective: For students to understand and be able to create a sample of how a piece of writing for their grade level should be structured, and why a piece of writing needs structure using name, date, title, and introduction, body, and conclusion.

Instruction/Activity:

-Structure: Have students write a couple of things on paper (it can be words or sentences). Ask students to throw their paper on the floor in a pile and mix them up. Pick the papers up and begin the process of trying to pass the student papers back to their owner.

-Understanding/Questioning: When you begin to have trouble, ask the students why they think you are struggling with passing their papers back to them. Make a list on the board of the things they comment: No name, No date....

-Ask why they think these things are important. Explain that, when a paper doesn't have an author, it becomes anonymous and doesn't belong to anyone. Discuss that, if there is not a date, you do not know when it was written. Explain these are elements needed to identify a piece of writing.

-Extending Understanding: Have the students look at some of the papers that were written and mixed up on the floor, and ask them if they notice something else out of structure.

-Have pre-made posters of pieces of work (on students grade level) that are not structured (e.g. words/sentences scattered on a paper, sentences/paragraphs upside down, sentences/paragraphs not complete or matching) hung on up. Have students consider if some of their papers may look like the posters. (For lower grades, you could put a picture with labels/words in the wrong places or not connected to the picture.)

-Ask students what they think is wrong with the example posters you have presented (no name, no date, jumbled up sentences, can't read it, doesn't look right).

-Ask what they think should be done to the piece of writing and why. Allow students to conclude that, to be able to read the piece of writing, it must have order (structure) and be put in some format such as having a beginning, middle, and end.

-Once students have concluded that pieces of writing must have some structure, turn over the unstructured poster examples to show the correct structure for the poster on the back. The correct version includes labels for name, date, title, indention, Introduction, Body, and Conclusion. (This will give students an example of unstructured vs. structured pieces of writing).

- List and discuss the comments students point out about the structured writing (on students' grade level). Comments may include that the writing has a name, date, title, indentions for paragraphs, writing is between the red lines on a paper, sentences that flow one after another, it has an introduction, body, and a conclusion, etc. Make comparisons between unstructured and structured pieces of writing.

-Explain to students that a name, date, and title are important elements to student writing because it helps identify their writing and when they created it.

-Point out that the structured writing also has an Introduction, Body, and Conclusion. Writing in a variety of genres and types of writing would need an Introduction, Body, and a Conclusion.

-**Structure writing: (This step can be taught more in-depth as the week goes along, by referring back to this step many times during the week, depending on the grade level and teacher judgement) (Lower Grades)** Discuss that a paragraph consist of an **introduction** sentence that grabs the reader and introduces your topic, has a **body** with 2-3 sentences built to support the introduction sentence, and has a **conclusion** sentence to wrap the paragraph up restating what you introduced in different words (have this illustrated on a poster). (**Upper Grades**)

-**Discuss:** For a piece of writing with multiple paragraphs you should have an introduction paragraph to introduce your topic to the reader, a body paragraph with sentences supporting your topic, and a conclusion paragraph which restates what you have said in the introduction using different words, and end your writing (Have this illustrated on a poster).

-**Model Structure:** Read an assigned number of pages in a book emphasizing a prediction (e.g. If You Give a Mouse a Cookie by Laura Numeroff - it can be more/less challenging). Write a name, date, title, and a couple of sentences that would match a good prediction for the book on separate sentence strips that present an introduction, body, and a conclusion. Have students work together in groups to create a structured piece of work using their own sheet of paper out of the sentence strips you have placed on the board. As a class, have one person from each group to come and put a piece of the writing in its correct structure placing the name, date, title, and the sentences for the introduction, body, conclusion. (If they get it correct on the first time, mix it up and discuss why the structure isn't right, and make sure to pinpoint that the introduction goes first, then body, and then the conclusion).

-Have students discuss the importance of structuring the piece of writing. Explain that, no matter what is written, there must be some structure to the piece of writing for it to be readable.

-**Work:** Throughout the week have students draw topics from a topic box and begin creating a structured piece of writing until they can complete it with **all components of a name, date, title, introduction, body, and conclusion and share**. Also, give students unstructured pieces of writing (on grade level) throughout the week and ask them to partner up to correct the pieces, and proof and share (this can be done individually, partners, groups with and without the teacher). (Structured/Unstructured templates attached). Don't forget to take time to conference with the students during their work time.

-**Review:** Recurring throughout the week, continue to have students make comparisons between unstructured and structured pieces of writing (showing additional grade level pieces). Discuss what structure is, and why you need it.

Assessment/Rubric: Throughout the week the teacher will observe and conference with students as they create their own structured pieces of writing (on grade level) and as they share ideas which will be placed in their student writing folder. At the end of the week give all students the same unstructured piece of writing (on grade level) and ask them to structure it correctly from what they have learned by using all the components.

Resources/Materials:

- Pre-made Posters of unstructured pieces of work (on grade level)
- Pre-made Posters of structured pieces of work (on grade level)
- Pre-made Poster: Introduction, Body, & Conclusion components (Lower/Upper grade level)
- Prediction book
- separate sentence strips of structured prediction
- sheets of topics/topic box
- unstructured pieces of writing (on grade level)
- assessment unstructured piece of writing

NOTE: To use this week's components for another 9-week semester with one of the types of writing/genres you need to have: unstructured and structured pieces of writing specific to the type of writing/genre, and refer back to what a structured piece of writing should look like, but using it with a specific type of writing/genre. Pick out a specific type/genre of examples to share, and explain how the piece of writing is built using structure to create the piece, discuss the elements in the piece, and model a piece with the class referring to the comparisons between unstructured and structured pieces of writing. Have the students create a structured piece that relates to that type of writing/genre, and let them partner up to proof and share (the unstructured pieces could be on strips of paper in baggies and the students will have to structure them and write them down). For this week, you will be building a foundation for the skill you are emphasizing, but also re-establishing why having structure is important to writing.

Structured Pieces of Writing: Upper Grades

Name _____ Date _____

Title _____



Introduction: Introduce topic
Body: Support Topic
Conclusion: Restate topic differently (end it)

Structured Pieces of Writing: Lower Grades

Name _____ Date _____
Title _____

Introduction:

Give Topic

Body:

Tell about
Topic

Conclusion:

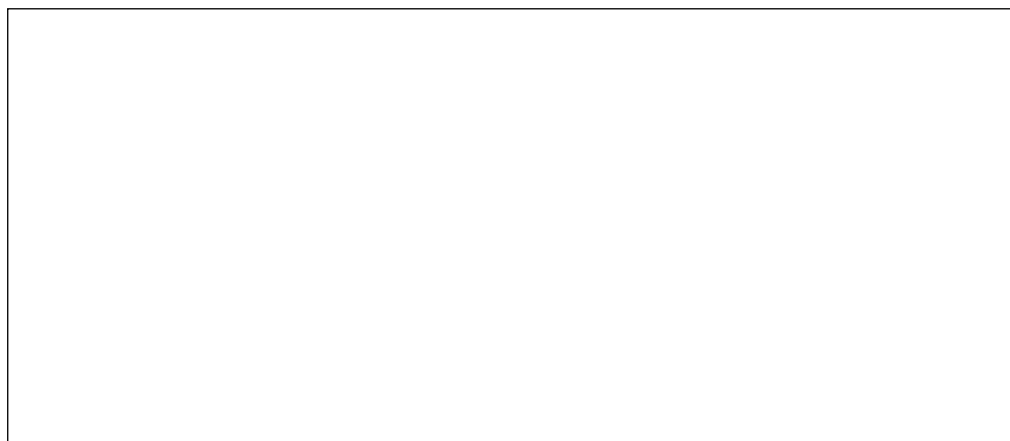
Repeat Topic
differently
(end it)

Unstructured Pieces of Writing: Lower Grades

Name _____

Date _____

Title _____



Week 3 and Week 4: Writing Process (Teach): It is suggested that you spread out the Writing Process over Week 3 and Week 4 so you have 2 weeks to teach the Writing Process. This approach will help ensure students are given sufficient time to gain the information presented.

Goal: To have students understand the components of the writing process and why they are important in writing.

Objective: To teach students the writing process, including the different steps to be taken to accomplish a completed/published piece of writing using the writing process.

Instruction/Activity:

-Warm up: Have students discuss what elements they need to have to create a piece of writing (they may refer back to the structure elements taught the week before). Discuss that the structure elements they learned are important in creating a piece of writing, and comment that at this point their piece needs structure, and there is more to creating a piece of writing.

-Dig deeper by asking students what they can do to come up with a piece of writing, and how they begin and carry through. List the students' comments on the board (e.g. (S) decide what I want to write about, try to remember what I know about it, start writing, reread it etc.) Use the students' comments to explain that they are giving you ways of creating a piece of work starting from scratch and moving into their writing, which are steps that can be taken to build a piece of writing.

- Explain that, to create a good piece of writing, there is a process students can use when creating any of their pieces of writing. The process will take them through the practice of writing the piece, which is called the Writing Process.

-Writing Process: Alter a pre-made poster through the Writing Process and with the steps of prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing listed. Give each student a copy of the Student Copy of the Writing Process provided in the Curriculum guide. Go through each of the stages with the students, and have them discuss what they would do in that stage. Then have some students write their comment on sticky notes and place them on the poster (e.g. (S) For prewriting, I would make a list of things I wanted to write about and then pick one).

-Explain that over 2 weeks they will be learning the process together and building a piece of writing as a group while practicing the steps and learning activities to do for each step in the writing process.

-Steps: The teacher will pass out a Writing Process Fill-in chart (attached) that has the 5 steps of the writing process listed with a blank column for description and a blank column for activities. - Explain that, throughout the week, the students will be filling in the chart to give a description and activities of each step of the writing process as it is covered, and once it is completed they will place it in their student writing folder.

***(It is suggested that you take 2 weeks to spread out the teaching of the Writing Process to ensure students are given sufficient time to process the information presented.)**

-The teacher will have a pre-made poster of the Writing Process chart to fill in as the students complete theirs.

-Prewriting: Call a couple of students to the board and ask them a couple of questions and explain, while the students are writing on the board, that the class should jot their answers down also (e.g. Where is your favorite place to go? How many siblings do you have? What do you do for a hobby afterschool?). Have all the students look at their answers, and ask them to circle one they feel is the most interesting and could give you more details about. Explain that, when they answered these questions and chose one from the group of answers, they were answering the questions with things they could write about, and then chose one they would write about. The questions are to serve as a brainstorming activity to get topics for writing.

-Discuss that **Prewriting is simply brainstorming** and, in this step, you would be picking your topic and gathering your thoughts about the topic you chose to write about (Have them write the description in their chart and write it on the poster: modify to meet your grade level needs). Ask the students what activities would be good for brainstorming and list them on the board (e.g. make a list, web, picture, tree, etc.. Have them write the activities on their chart and write it on the poster). On a sheet of chart paper, use one of the Prewriting activities to brainstorm with the class and pick a topic to write about (e.g. favorite fieldtrip the class had taken: zoo). Once their topic is chosen, begin brainstorming things about the topic with the class and write them down on the class pre-writing chart paper. Explain to the students that, they will carry this topic through the writing process.

-Drafting: Take some of the brainstormed ideas of the topic that was chosen and have pre-made sentences on different pieces of chart paper. Give groups of students the different sheets of chart paper and ask them to start writing sentences to support the sentence that was at the top of their chart paper. Have the students come back together and present what they have written to the class. Ask the students what do they think you were having them do? (e.g. (S) write)

-Explain that, you were having them write more specifically about the topic that was chosen using the brainstormed ideas discussed to write about the topic.

-Discuss that **Drafting is writing** and, in this step, you gather thoughts you came up with about the topic and write about those thoughts, but there is no revising or editing it (Have them write the description in their chart and write it on the poster: modify to meet your grade level needs). Ask the students what activities would be good for drafting (e.g. write without worries). (Have them write the activities on their chart and on the poster).

-As a class, take the charts that were written and choose some of the sentences to write down on the class draft chart paper; then have everyone agree on the draft that was created.

-Revising: Give groups of students a chart paper with sentences on it about the class topic. There are four chart versions. Explain that each group will have to work together to determine how to make their sentences better. Explain that, as writers, they will need to make decisions of whether to rearrange words or sentences, add or delete, replace words, and make sure the writing is fluent, fits the topic, and makes sense. The students will

rewrite their version and share their before-and-after versions of the work completed and discuss what they did to make the sentences better.

-Ask students what task they were completing in doing this activity (e.g. (S) We were working together to make the writing better by reading it and doing something different).

-Discuss that **Revising is making the writing better** and, in this step, you read over what you have written in your draft and decide what you can do to make it better so it flows (Have them write the description in their chart and write it on the poster: modify to meet your grade level needs). Ask the students what activities they did during the task that would be good for revising (e.g. reread, add/delete/replace words, use a thesaurus, rewrite sentences, let others read it). (Have them write the activities on their chart and write it on the poster.)

-As a class work through the draft to rewrite a new piece of writing by making it better with the classes discussion and approval, and write it down for the revised writing on the class revised chart paper.

-Editing: Give groups of students a chart paper with sentences on it from the revised class chart paper. There are four chart versions with differing grammatical errors, spelling errors, and punctuation errors on them. Explain that each group will have to work together to determine how to make corrections to the version they received. Explain that, as writers, they will need to make decisions on how to correct the spelling, grammar, and punctuation throughout their version. The students will rewrite their version and share their completed before-and-after work and discuss what they did to make corrections to the spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

-Ask students what task they were completing in doing this activity (e.g. (S) we were correcting the errors within the piece of writing).

-Discuss that **Editing is correcting it** and, in this step, you make corrections to the piece of writing that was revised to correct errors of spelling, grammar, and punctuation (Have them write the description in their chart and write it on the poster: modify to meet your grade level needs). Ask the students what activities they did during the task that would be considered editing (e.g. have each other check the work, use a dictionary for spelling words, check capitals and ending punctuations, complete sentences). (Have them write the activities on their chart and on the poster.)

-As a class work through the revised chart paper to rewrite a new edited piece of writing by correcting all spelling, grammatical, and punctuation errors found, and rewrite it on the class edited chart paper.

-Publishing: Give each student a paper of the edited version of the class piece of writing. Have each student write a neat copy of the edited version and give an illustration for the piece of writing. Once they have finished, they can share their neatly written and illustrated pieces of work with the class. The teacher will gather the students work and bind them together in a book called "Our Class followed the Writing Process."

-Ask students what task they were completing in doing this activity (e.g. (S) We were making our work look nice and ready for someone to read it).

-Discuss that **Publishing is creating a final draft and sharing** and in this step you rewrite a nice clean draft and publish it by sharing what you have done with others (Have

them write the description in their chart and write it on the poster: modify to meet your grade levels needs). Ask the students what activities they did during the task that would be publishing (e.g. rewriting neatly, making a picture for it, share it with others, reading it to others, making it a book) (Have them write the activities on their chart and write it on the poster).

-As a class, work together to rewrite the edited class version into a nice and clean piece of writing on the class published chart paper. Have all students sign their name under authors, and hang it in the hall sharing their work with fellow classes in the school.

-Each student should have a completed Writing Process Fill-in Chart filled out with the 5 steps and descriptions and activities for each of the 5 steps, which should be located in their student writing folder for review of the teacher.

-Students will take a quick Writing Process Match It assessment (attached) to match the Writing Process step to the short description of the step to check for understanding.

Assessment/Rubric: Throughout the week the teacher will observe and conference with students as they work through the writing process and filling in the Writing Process Fill-in Chart (as modified to their grade level), which will be placed in their student writing folder. At the end of the week, give all students a Writing Process Match It assessment sheet (attached) for them to match the Writing Process step to the short description of the step to check for understanding.

Resources/Materials:

-Pre-made poster of the Writing Process with 5 steps listed (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing)

-Student Copy of the Writing Process (Curriculum guide p. 23: Rog & Kropp, 2004)

-Writing Process Fill-in Chart (attached)

-Pre-made poster of the Writing Process Fill-in Chart (used during all activities)

-Chart Paper for each Writing Process Step to use with class: Prewriting, Drafting, Revising, Editing, and Publishing

-Chart Paper for versions to use for activities: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, publishing

-Class copies of the edited class version

-Book Bind

-Writing Process Match It assessment (attached)

NOTE: For use of this week's components for repeated 9-week semesters, make Week 3, Week 4, and Week 5 student independent writing and teacher conference time by going through the writing process to create a piece of writing and using the Writing process rubric (attached: week 5). For these weeks, incorporate student independent writing of the specific type of writing/genre using what has been previously taught and learned for the steps of the Writing Process. Practicing and using these skills will continue to strengthen the foundation students have created for the steps of the Writing Process, and re-establish why using the Writing Process is important to writing. Incorporating teacher conference

time will also allow you to gauge student work and make adjustments to instruction as needed.

Name _____

The Writing Process Fill-in Chart		
Steps	Description	Activities
Prewriting		
Drafting		
Revising		
Editing		
Publishing		

Writing Process Match It

Name _____

Date _____

Draw a line from the Writing Process Step to the description.

Step:

Description:

Prewriting**correct spelling, grammar,
and punctuation****Drafting****brainstorm****Revising****nicely rewrite and share****Editing****make it flow and clear,
add/delete/replace words****Publishing****write it down, make no changes**

Week 5: Writing Process (Students Work through)

Goal: To have students use the components of the writing process.

Objective: For students to go through the writing process with guided help, including the different steps to accomplish a simple version of a completed/published piece of writing using the writing process.

Instruction/Activity:

-Get Prepared: Hang up the Writing Process Poster with listed steps, the Writing Process Fill-in Chart completed with the class, and the chart paper for each of the writing process steps that were completed during Week 3/4's activities. Have the students pull out their Writing Process Fill-in charts they completed with the class, and the student copy of the Writing Process found in their student writing folder.

-Activate: Write the word "writing" on the board, ask the students what they know about writing, and have them write it on the board (e.g. (S) writing is fun, writing takes time). Ask the students what they just did (Prewriting). Review prewriting and refer back to their poster, work, and charts. Then continue with the rest of the steps.

-Think Out Loud: (Play in to each step) Begin writing down sentences on sentence strips about writing with no revisions and ask them to tell you what you are doing (Drafting). Review drafting referring back to their poster, work, and charts. Put the sentence strips in order on the board, add/delete/replace words to make it better, and ask if anyone knows what you are doing (Revising). Review revising by referring back to their poster, work, and charts. Take the revision and begin critiquing it by pointing out errors (punctuations, misspellings, etc.) and rewriting it. Ask what they think you are doing (editing). Review editing by referring back to their poster, work, and charts. Get a clean sheet of chart paper and rewrite the edited piece of writing, and then begin to read it to the class and ask them what they think you did (Publish). Review drafting by referring back to their poster, work, and charts.

-After the review, tell the students they will be using the writing process through your guided help to produce a simple version of a published piece of work.

-Writing Process Rubric: Pass out a Writing Process rubric (attached) and go through it with the students. Introduce the simple version of a writing process rubric, with the 5 steps of the writing process and a description of steps. (The rubric is an 'exceeds/meets/does not meet' rubric for determining if the students accomplished the steps as they progress through the steps.) Explain each measurement of the rubric: **exceeds** would be a student going above and beyond what is asked, **meets** would be a student getting the job done but not doing anything extra, **does not meet** would be a student not trying to accomplish the goal.

-Explain that each of the Writing Process steps will be graded by a partner as they complete the steps during the activities, and then by the teacher during conferencing. (It is suggested you take one step a day to ensure students are given sufficient time to accomplish and gain a strong understanding of the writing process.)

NOTE: If students are having trouble meeting the requirements of the rubric, the teacher should use the conferencing time to revisit the step with the student and help them gain a better understanding of how to meet the requirements for each step.

***5 STEPS:** (Each of the steps can be modified to meet the grade level needs) While students will be working in groups for guided assistance from peers and teacher, each one will be producing their own work to be assessed by the rubric. The goal is to get the students to use, practice, and gain a better understanding of the steps by completing each one with a simple task (this is not meant to overload the student).

- Students must have all writing process materials to refer to the steps for each activity. You will need to have all materials reviewed for the writing process and Each of the Steps chart paper the class created together. Review what was done for each step before starting each step's activity.

-Prewriting: Give each group of students a question to motivate brainstorming from the students (e.g. What are things that make you happy? What are your favorite things about school?, etc.). Students can use the question for help or come up with things on their own, but they have to use an activity from their Writing chart to brainstorm. Students must brainstorm at least 10 things to write about (the number of things students brainstorm will depend on the grade level and for lower grades they may have to draw pictures). Students have to discuss their brainstorming activity with a partner in their group and, using the rubric, their partner will grade their Prewriting task and sign their name. The teacher will revolve around the room conferencing with students to complete their rubrics. Student work and rubric will be placed in their student writing folder. Teacher and students will review the step they completed and discuss why prewriting is important.

-Drafting: While in groups, students will discuss what drafting is and how they will accomplish it. Students will pick one of their topics from their brainstorming activity and write a couple of sentences about the topic (The number of sentences to complete the task for drafting needs to be modified for grade level needs e.g. K-1 would need to begin with picture and labeling) (students may leave group to write independently or stay in the group). Have the students discuss that they are writing about the topic, but not going back to edit it. They will share the couple of sentences with a partner in their group. Using the rubric, their partner will grade their drafting task to determine if they accomplished the goal, and sign their name. The teacher will revolve around the room conferencing with students to complete their rubrics. Student work and rubric will be placed in their student writing folder. Teacher and students will review the step they completed and discuss why drafting is important.

-Revising: Have 3 simple sentences on the board and have students rewrite them to make each sentence better by adding and replacing words to emphasize, checking for an introduction, body, conclusion and reviewing the skill. In their groups, have students discuss how revising is not editing (e.g. for revising you are making it better not correcting the errors) and the different activities you use for revising. Have students take out their first draft and begin to revise it by making it better (adding/deleting/replacing words, sentences, and/or ideas to make it clearer). They must work with a partner from

their group to complete the revising and establish a clear introduction, body, and conclusion (it could be only a 3 sentence paragraph, but depends on grade level). Once both partners have revised their work, each student will get another partner in the group to grade their revised task by using the rubric and signing their name. The teacher will revolve around the room conferencing with students to complete their rubrics. Student work and rubric will be placed in their student writing folder. Teacher and students will review the step they completed and discuss why revising is important.

-Editing: Write a sentence on the board with grammatical errors and have the students discuss what needs to happen in order to correct the sentence. In groups, students will discuss what editing is and how you complete editing on a piece of writing (check spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors, look for complete sentences). Students will begin the editing process by using their revised work, and they must go through it with a partner to help with editing. Each partner must help edit one another's work. Once edited, the students will find another partner in the group to grade their editing task by using the rubric and signing their name. The teacher will revolve around the room conferencing with students to complete their rubrics. Student work and rubric will be placed in their student writing folder. Teacher and students will review the step they completed and discuss why editing is important.

-Publishing: Have two examples of pieces of work on the board with one example neatly written and ready to present and the other example sloppily written with editing marks still present. Ask the students if you were going to present one of these pieces of writing to the principal, which one would be best to present and have them explain why (e.g. the neat one looks like you took the time to rewrite it and make it look better). Have the students join their groups and discuss what publishing is and how you publish a piece of writing (neatly rewrite the entire piece on a clean sheet of paper and share it). While in their groups, each student will begin the publishing process by cleaning up and rewriting the edited version of their work. Students are allowed to draw a picture if desired, but they must have the written portion of their work completed first. Once they have neatly rewritten their work on a clean sheet of paper, they will each share their published writing in their group. Each student will then get a partner to grade their publishing task by using the rubric and signing their name. The teacher will revolve around the room conferencing with students to complete their rubrics. Make time for several students to share with the entire class. Published pieces may be placed in the hall/classroom. Teacher and students will review the step they completed and discuss why publishing is important.

-Close: Explain to the students that they completed a quick version of the writing process so they could use and practice the 5 steps of the writing process. Discuss that the writing process is an ongoing cycle and, now that they know the steps, they can use these skills to conquer any writing task. Explain that some steps may take them longer than others and while going through the writing process they may have to revisit earlier steps in the cycle to accomplish their writing goals.

Assessment/Rubric: The teacher will observe and conference with each of the students throughout each step of the writing process. The students will be assessed by peers and

the teacher using the Writing Process rubric (attached). The outcome should be a completed rubric and a published piece of writing for each student.

Resources/Materials:

- Pre-made poster of the Writing Process with 5 steps listed (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing)
- Student Copy of the Writing Process (Curriculum guide p. 23: Rog & Kropp, 2004)
- Student Copy of the Writing Process Fill-in Chart
- Pre-made poster of the Writing Process Fill-in Chart (used during all activities)
- Chart Paper for each Writing Process Step completed in Week 3: Prewriting, Drafting, Revising, Editing, and Publishing
- Chart Paper for versions to use for activities: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing
- Sentence Strips
- Writing Process Rubric (attached)

NOTE: For use of this week's components for repeated 9-week semesters, make Week 3, Week 4, and Week 5 student independent writing and teacher conference time by going through the writing process to create a piece of writing and using the Writing process rubric (attached: week 5). For these weeks, incorporate student independent writing of the specific type of writing/genre using what has been previously taught and learned for the steps of the Writing Process. Practicing and using these skills will continue to strengthen the foundation students have created for the steps of the Writing Process, and re-establish why using the Writing Process is important to writing. Incorporating teacher conference time will also allow you to gauge student work and make adjustments to instruction as needed.

Name _____

Writing Process Rubric		
Step & Description	Partner	Teacher
Prewriting: Brainstorm by coming up with topics to write about (must have ___ topics).	___ Exceeds (went above) ___ Meets (completed it) ___ Does not meet (didn't try)	___ Exceeds (went above) ___ Meets (completed it) ___ Does not meet (didn't try)
Drafting: Pick the topic to write about and write ___ sentences about the topic. No revising or editing.	___ Exceeds (went above) ___ Meets (completed it) ___ Does not meet (didn't try)	___ Exceeds (went above) ___ Meets (completed it) ___ Does not meet (didn't try)
Revising: Make the writing better by adding/deleting/replacing words, sentence, and ideas.	___ Exceeds (went above) ___ Meets (completed it) ___ Does not meet (didn't try)	___ Exceeds (went above) ___ Meets (completed it) ___ Does not meet (didn't try)
Editing: Correct the writing by fixing the spelling, grammatical, and punctuation errors.	___ Exceeds (went above) ___ Meets (completed it) ___ Does not meet (didn't try)	___ Exceeds (went above) ___ Meets (completed it) ___ Does not meet (didn't try)
Publishing: Neatly rewrite your work on a clean piece of paper and share it with the group.	___ Exceeds (went above) ___ Meets (completed it) ___ Does not meet (didn't try)	___ Exceeds (went above) ___ Meets (completed it) ___ Does not meet (didn't try)

Week 6 and Week 7: 6+1 Traits (Teach): It is suggested you spread out the 6+1 Traits over Week 6 and Week 7 so you have 2 weeks to teach the 6+1 traits to ensure students are given sufficient time to gain the information presented.

Goal: To have students understand the components of the 6+1 Traits and why they are important in writing.

Objective: To teach students the 6+1 Traits, including the different traits needed to be addressed to accomplish a completed/published piece of writing using the traits.

The structure of the activities for this week are similar to the writing process activities in Week 3 and Week 4 to help students find similarities between the 6+1 traits and the 5 steps of the writing process, and to establish routines in writing.

Instruction/Activity:

-Warm up: Ask the students what is needed to have a good piece of writing, no matter what type of writing it is. List student comments on the board (e.g. (S) You need structure, like a beginning, middle, and end, it needs to be edited like in the writing process, etc.). Comment: Yes, you do need structure, and you do need to go through the writing process, but there is more you can do to create a good piece of writing, which relates and ties back to the things which we have learned and practiced for structure and the writing process. Explain that throughout the week they will be going through the traits of writing that will help them make their writing even better than before, and they can use the traits with any variety of writing.

-Dig deeper: Ask students about different pieces of writing they have read (e.g. ask: Have you ever read a comic? Have you ever read a story in the newspaper? Have you ever read a fairytale?). From these pieces of writing, ask what they thought made it a good piece of writing and discuss what they found so the piece would have an idea to present, be interesting, be written neat and well, be organized, use good word choices, etc. (modify to your grade level: don't complicate the discussion).

-Explain that, to make a better piece of writing, there are traits they can use when creating any of their pieces of writing that will take them from a bland piece of writing to a great piece of writing, which are called the 6+1 Traits.

-6+1 Traits: Turn a pre-made poster over with the 6+1 Traits that list ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation. Give each student a copy of the Student Copy of the 6+1 Traits provided in the Curriculum guide. Some of the traits will be familiar to the students, so go through each of the traits with them and discuss what they think the trait is, and have some of the students write their comments on sticky notes and place them on the poster (e.g. (S) For conventions this would be using correct spelling).

-As the students go through each trait, explain that some of the traits may be unfamiliar and they may not know exactly what the trait is and how it will be used in writing (e.g. voice). Explain that over 2 weeks they will be learning the traits together, while practicing the traits as a group and learning activities to do for each of the traits.

***(It is suggested that you take 2 weeks to spread out the teaching of the 6+1 traits to ensure students are given sufficient time to process the information presented.)**

-Traits: The teacher will pass out a 6+1 Traits Fill-in Chart (attached) that has the Traits listed in a blank box to add descriptions. Explain that, throughout the week, they will be filling in the chart to give a description of each trait as it is covered and, once it is completed, they will place it in their student writing folder. (It is suggested you split the traits up among the five days by combining a few more familiar traits, and spending a day on a few unfamiliar traits to ensure students are given sufficient time to process the information presented.)

- As the students complete theirs, the teacher will have a pre-made poster of the 6+1 Traits Fill-in Chart to complete as a class.

-Ideas: Show the students three individual pictures/paintings by taping the pictures on the board (e.g. farm scene with a farmer painting his barn, kid playing soccer, child feeding a cat). For each picture that is shown give them a few minutes to observe the picture. Have the students number their papers with picture 1, 2, 3 and write a title, phrase, or sentence to describe what they see for each picture. After students have completed each picture, begin to discuss and share what they put on their papers. Explain that what they were writing was describing what they saw in the picture, and that the students had differing ideas for the picture; however, each one, though different, relates to a similar topic for each picture. Discuss that, although each student may be given similar topics to write about, their ideas would be different, and this is what they were doing by creating ideas with the pictures, which is similar to prewriting.

-Discuss that for the **Ideas trait a writer would 1. have a main idea or topic, 2. use details that describe and relate to the topic, and 3. use sentences that are focused and specific to the topic** (Have them write the 3 descriptions in their chart and write it on the poster: modify to meet your grade level needs). Discuss that, for this trait, you would be picking your topic and using your thoughts to create details that would describe the topic you chose to write about. Make sure the details are focused and specific to your topic. Ask the students what activities would be good for doing the Ideas trait, and list them on the board (e.g. making a web, brainstorming list etc.)

-On a sheet of chart paper, use one of the pictures shown to the students to illustrate how the Ideas trait relates to writing. Using the chosen picture, for which a topic was chosen, now make a web. For the web, put a topic in the middle and draw lines extending out from the middle to add describing details. Have the students share some of the things they wrote down (e.g. (topic) child feeding a cat: (details) the cat was hungry, the cat is the child's pet). Using the web, create a piece of writing with the students that gives the topic chosen and has the describing details that are focused on the topic. Write everything down on the class Ideas Trait chart paper. Have the students go back and check to see if the piece of writing followed the traits rules, and review that you can check this trait in many types of other writing and use it to help you create ideas for their own writing.

-Organization: Have a set of pictures with an identifiable sequence, but placed out of order on the board (e.g. the sequence of pictures: getting out of bed, brushing teeth in

pajamas, getting dressed in school clothes, eating breakfast in school clothes, and getting on the bus).

-Explain to the students that you have a set of pictures, but you want them to observe them for a few minutes and then tell you what is going on in each picture. You would write a sentence about the picture below it. After the students discuss each picture, ask them how they would create a piece of writing for these pictures, and lead them into concluding that the pictures need to be in order or put into a sequence to create a piece of writing from them. Discuss that, for writing, this trait is similar to drafting and revising, which is to write and check it to make it better.

-Discuss that, for the **Organization Trait, a writer: 1. grabs the reader's attention with an introduction; 2. puts the details into the best order; and, 3. makes an ending that wraps the story up** (Have them write the 3 descriptions in their chart and write it on the poster: modify to meet your grade level needs). For this trait you would be creating the sequence of the writing having your introduction, body, and conclusion using the best order possible for the piece of writing. Ask the students what activities would be good for helping you do this trait (e.g. using transitional words to move through your piece of writing).

-As a class, use the sentences created under the picture to write down, on chart paper, a piece of writing from the picture to give a sequence of the events that are occurring, while making it interesting and going back to check the elements of the Organization Trait.

-Voice: Have students listen to one song that is sung by two different singers (e.g. The Star Spangled Banner). Ask students what they heard and lead them into understanding that, although they did hear the same song, they heard it from two different people who gave their personal twist on it. Discuss that, just like the two singers who use their own style to sing the same song, authors have their own styles when creating a writing piece. Explain that, for this trait, you would present the idea through your own personality in your writing. Place students in groups and have a couple of lines on a chart paper from two different well-known authors (such as Dr. Seuss and Laura Numeroff). Have the students read the writing, determine some of the differences, and discuss it with the class. Identify that the writing pieces of the two authors have a distinct style that personalizes their writing to them. Presenting the books from the two authors may help create a deeper understanding. Discuss that, for writing, this trait is similar to drafting and revising, which is to write and check it to make it better.

-Discuss that, for the **Voice Trait, a writer is: 1. making the writing original and unique; 2. putting feeling into the writing; and, 3. making the tone match the purpose** (Have them write the description in their chart and write it on the poster: modify to meet your grade level needs). For this trait you have to put your own style into the writing, but also make sure your writing tone matches the purpose for your writing (e.g. if I am writing to describe a funny event, I don't need to make the reader feel like they want to start crying)

-As a class, come up with something that was fun and in which everyone participated (e.g. we had ice cream Sundays for achieving a goal). Every person in the class, including

the teacher, will write about this fun event and share it with the class. Review that you can check this trait by doing this activity because everyone had to use the same topic, yet put their own style into it. As well, everyone had to stick to the same purpose of telling about the fun event, so in writing they must stay true to their unique style, while sticking to the purpose of their writing.

-Word Choice: Have students sit and listen to a part of a book through audio (tape/CD) that gives good use of word choice (e.g. *A Bad Case of Stripes* by David Shannon) and do not show them the book or pictures. Ask the students to draw a picture in their mind as they listen to the part of the book. Have the students discuss what they heard and what they created in their mind as they listened. Explain that writers use their words to create a piece of writing that catch's the reader's mind and adds meaning to their piece. They are choosing the words carefully to help the reader paint pictures in their minds.

-Write two sentences, with one being straight to the point and boring, and the other using vivid words that has strong verbs, adjectives, and figurative language. Have the students come up to the board and choose which sentence they would rather read by putting a check under the sentence. Have students discuss why more or all students picked the sentence that used vivid word choices. Explain that, when a writer uses good word choice they are making their writing interesting to the reader, and the writing does not just sit flat on the paper. Discuss that, for writing, this trait is similar to drafting and revising, which is to write and check it to make it better.

-Discuss that, for the **Word Choice Trait, a writer: 1. uses words that create pictures for the reader; 2. uses a variety of words without repeating; and, 3. uses words that they can understand** (Have students write the description in their chart and on the poster: modify to meet your grade level needs). For this trait you would choose the best words possible to create a piece of writing that gets your reader to want to continue reading your writing.

-Create a list of writing topics on the board. Place students in partners and have them pick one of the topics and, together, they have to create two pieces with only 3-4 sentences. The first piece should be straight to the point and have bland writing, and the second piece should have a creative use of words that interest the reader. Have the students share both pieces of writing and discuss the differences between the two. Review that a great way to help build a better word choice is to expand vocabulary using a thesaurus, use strong verbs and adjectives, and use a variety of words and building a class word wall. Explain this will take the class time and practice, as they go along in their writing journey.

-Sentence Fluency: To the class, read aloud a piece of writing you created. Make sure it doesn't follow the rules of sentence fluency as you identifiably struggle to read the writing (e.g. it has the same sentence lengths, every sentence begins with the same thing, and it doesn't flow nicely). Ask the students what they thought about your piece of writing and how they think you could do better. List their comments on the board. Present the piece of writing on a chart paper and explain that, sometimes, you have to work to create fluency of the sentences you make in your writing so others can read and understand what you have written. Go through the piece of writing with the students and

let them help you create a better piece by choosing different lengths of sentences, creating new beginnings for sentences, and making sure the sentences flow and go together when read aloud. Discuss that, in doing this, they are using the sentence fluency trait, which is similar to revising which is to make it better.

-Discuss that, for the **Sentence Fluency Trait, a writer: 1. uses a variety of lengths of sentences; 2. starts sentences with different beginnings; and, 3. makes their writing flow when read aloud** (Have them write the description in their chart and on the poster: modify to meet your grade level needs). For this trait you would need to read through your writing and get a partner to read through your writing to check for fluency of your sentences. Revise and rewrite as needed to make your writing better.

- Place students in groups and give them chart paper with a couple of sentences at the top (adjust this to your grade level needs). Have the students read the sentences aloud to each other in their group. As a group, have the students determine what is wrong with the sentences and list the mistakes (e.g. all sentences start the same, sentences are choppy when read, all sentences are the same length). Have the students share what they have determined is wrong with the sentence fluency of their piece. Once they have shared, ask the students to go back and revise the sentences on another piece of chart paper to create a piece that has sentence fluency, and share these pieces with the class. Review that, when a piece of writing has sentence fluency, the writing is a pleasure to read because the reader can understand what the author is writing about.

-Conventions: (This activity is similar to the editing activity to show similarity between the editing step and the conventions trait). Create an interesting piece of writing that has differing grammatical errors, lack of subject-verb agreement, capitalization errors, spelling errors, misspellings, and punctuation errors on it and place it on the board. Give the students time to read through the piece and determine what's wrong with it. Discuss that, although the piece might have all the elements of an interesting piece of writing, it needs some work before it is ready for others to read it. Have the students point out different things that need fixing within the piece. Discuss that, for writing, this trait is similar to editing, which is correcting the errors in your writing. Pass out a School-Wide Editing Symbols (attached: created at the Local School) sheet to each student. Go through the Editing Symbols sheet and discuss the symbol, purpose, and example given. Have the students go through the Editing Symbols sheet with you while going through the piece of writing. Explain that the editing symbols help remind you of what to look for and, if you put the symbol over what needs correcting, when you go back to rewrite it you will know what to correct and how to correct it. Have the students help you use the editing symbols to make all the needed corrections and mark them on the class Conventions chart paper.

-Discuss that, for the **Conventions Trait, a writer: 1. uses correct capitalization; 2. uses correct punctuation; 3. spells their words correctly; and, 4. uses correct grammar rules** (Have them write the description in their chart and write it on the poster: modify to meet your grade level needs). For this trait you make sure to use correct capitalization, spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

-Give groups of students four chart versions with differing grammatical errors, lack of subject-verb agreement, capitalization errors, spelling errors, misspellings, and

punctuation errors on them. Using their Editing Symbols sheet to help them check and mark all the errors, explain that each group will have to work together to determine how to make corrections to the version they received. Explain that, as writers, they will need to make decisions on how to make corrections. After checking conventions and marking them using the Editing Symbols sheet, the students will rewrite their version and share their before (marked-up version) and after version of the work that will be completed, and, using the editing symbols, discuss what they did to make corrections. They will place the Editing Symbols sheet in their student writing folder. Explain to students that checking conventions is a trait that is an important step in preparing the piece of writing for the reader.

-Presentation: (This activity is similar to the publishing activity to show similarity between the publishing step and the presentation trait). Give each student a paper of the Conventions Chart paper created with the class, with the editing symbol markings on the piece of writing. Using their Editing Symbols sheet, have each student write a neat copy of the piece of writing by interpreting what the symbol is asking them to do for the correction. Once they have finished, they can share their neatly written and illustrated pieces of work with the class. The teacher will gather the students work and bind them together in a book called “We can Present our Writing.”

-Ask students what task they were completing in doing this activity (e.g. (S) we were cleaning up our work so it is ready for someone to read it). Discuss that, when they are getting a piece of writing in a presentable format, they are using the presentation trait which is similar to the publishing step.

-Discuss that for the **Presentation Trait a writer 1. cleans up any necessary corrections/revisions, 2. rewrites to create a final draft, and 3. presents their work to others** (Have them write the description in their chart and write it on the poster: modify to meet your grade level needs). For this trait you rewrite a nice clean draft and present it by sharing what you have done with others.

-As a class, work together to rewrite the Conventions Chart paper class version into a nice and clean piece of writing on the class Presentation chart paper. Have all students sign their name under authors, and hang it in the hall to share their work with fellow classes in the school.

-Each student should have a completed 6+1 Traits Fill-in Chart filled out with the traits and descriptions listed, which should be located in their student writing folder for review by the teacher.

-Students will take a quick 6+1 Traits Match It assessment (attached) to match the 6+1 Traits to the short description of the trait to check for understanding.

Assessment/Rubric: Throughout the week the teacher will observe and conference with students as they work through the 6+1 traits and filling in the 6+1 Traits Fill-in Chart (as modified to their grade level), which will be placed in their student writing folder. At the end of the week, give all students a 6+1 Traits Match It assessment sheet (attached) for them to match the 6+1 Traits to the short description of the trait to check for understanding.

Resources/Materials:









- Pre-made poster of the 6+1 Traits listed (ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation)
- Student Copy of the 6+1 Traits (Curriculum guide p. 25: Culham, 2010)
- Sticky notes
- 6+1 Traits Fill-in Chart (attached)
- Pre-made poster of the 6+1 Traits Fill-in Chart (used during all activities)
- Chart Paper for each 6+1 Traits to use with class instruction: ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation
- Chart Paper for versions to use for activities: ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation
- 3 pictures/paintings (Ideas Trait)
- Set of Sequencing Pictures (Organization Trait)
- Audio version of a Song: sung by two singers (Voice Trait) (e.g. The Star Spangled Banner)
- 2 books differing in tone (Voice Trait) (e.g. Dr. Seuss/Laura Numeroff)
- Audio version of a book (Tape/CD) (Word Choice Trait) (e.g. A Bad Case of Stripes by David Shannon)
- School-Wide Editing Symbols (attached: created by Local School)
- Book Bind
- 6+1 Match It assessment (attached)

NOTE: For use of this week's components for repeated 9-week semesters, make Week 6, Week 7, and Week 8 student independent writing and teacher conference time by going through the 6+1 traits to create a piece of writing and using the 6+1 traits rubric (attached: week 8). For these weeks, incorporate student independent writing of the specific type of writing/genre using what has been previously taught and learned for the 6+1 Traits. Practicing and using these skills will continue to strengthen the foundation students have created for the traits, and re-establish why using the 6+1 Traits is important to writing. Incorporating teacher conference time will also allow you to gauge student work and make adjustments to instruction as needed.

Name _____

6+1 Traits Fill-in Chart	
<p><u>Ideas</u></p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>	<p><u>Organization</u></p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>
<p><u>Voice</u></p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>	<p><u>Word Choice</u></p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>
<p><u>Sentence Fluency</u></p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>	<p><u>Conventions</u></p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>
<p><u>Presentation</u></p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>	

**Elementary School
School-Wide Editing Symbols**

Symbol	Purpose	Example
	Delete letter, word, sentence, line, or punctuation mark.	It was really cold.
	Add or insert letter, word, or sentence.	He ran ^{quickly} home.
	Change this lowercase letter to a capital letter.	Happy [≡] thanksgiving.
	Change this capital letter to a lowercase letter.	It's time for P inner.
	Combine these two words or parts of words.	To ⁽ day is Thursday.
	Put a space between two words.	Vanilla ice [#] cream is my favorite.
	Correct spelling.	I'm a great ^{sp} frnd.
	Add a period.	I'm a good writer ^o .

6+1 Traits Match It

Name _____

Date _____

Draw a line from the 6+1 Traits to the description

Trait:

Description:

Ideas**use words to create pictures****Organizing****focused topic or main idea****Voice****stick to an order or
sequence****Word Choice****make it flow and sound
smooth****Sentence Fluency****use your own style of
writing and be yourself****Conventions****make the piece look
presentable****Presentation****check your work for errors**

Week 8: 6+1 Traits (Students Work through)

Goal: To have students use the components of the 6+1 Traits.

Objective: For students to go through each of the 6+1 Traits with guided help, including each trait, to accomplish a simple version of a completed/published piece of writing using the 6+1 Traits.

-The structure of the activities for this week are similar to the writing process activities in Week 5 to help students find similarities between the 6+1 traits and the 5 steps of the writing , and to establish routines in writing.

Instruction/Activity:

-Get Prepared: Hang up the 6+1 Traits Poster with listed steps, the 6+1 Traits Fill-in Chart completed with the class, and the chart paper for each of the traits that were completed during Week 6/7's activities. Have the students pull out their 6+1 Traits Fill-in charts they completed with the class and student copy of the 6+1 Traits found in their student writing folder.

-Activate: Start by asking students, "What do teachers look for in a good piece of writing?" List the student comments on the board (e.g. neat handwriting, making sure we spelled everything correctly, make sure it has punctuation). Though other comments will be made, point out that the students mostly commented on conventions, and it would seem that conventions would be what teachers look at when they review their writing. Explain to the students that conventions are a big part into getting a piece of work where it needs to be for it to be read; however, as they have learned over the past two weeks, it is not the most important in building a good piece of writing. The students will help you review each of the 6+1 traits while referring back to their poster, work, and charts as you give them examples of each. Then continue with the rest of the Traits.

-Think Out Loud: (Put drama in each trait) Pass out white boards and markers and explain to the students that, you are going to do an activity using one of the 6+1 traits, and they will have to decide which trait you are performing by writing it on the board. After each performance the students will write their guess on their dry erase board, and the class will review and discuss the trait and why it is a specific trait by referring back to their poster, work, and charts.

-Begin the activity by listing things on the board with a topic in the middle and then create detail sentences on lines coming from the topic (Ideas Trait: students guess, review, and discuss). Put the detail sentences in order on the board, read it back through to check for a sequence, and state that you think there is an introduction, body, and conclusion (Organization Trait: students guess, review, and discuss). Begin to revise the work to make sure you are questioning if you have put your personal tone on the sentences (Voice Trait: students guess, review, and discuss). Go back to the piece of writing and begin stating that you are going to have to use different words to help the reader really picture what they are reading (Word Choice Trait: students guess, review, and discuss). Using the same piece of writing, discuss how you have used the same beginning for all the sentence and need to have a variety of beginnings to the sentences

(Sentence Fluency Trait: students guess, review, and discuss). Take the piece and begin critiquing it by marking the errors (punctuations, misspellings, etc.) using the editing symbols saying them out loud (Conventions Trait: students guess, review, and discuss). Get a clean sheet and rewrite the piece of writing fixing the conventions of the piece of writing and then begin to read it to the class (Presentation Trait: students guess, review, and discuss).

-After the review, tell the students that, with guided help from you, they will be using the 6+1 Traits to produce a simple version of a completed piece of work that they can present.

-6+1 Traits Rubric: Pass out a 6+1 Traits rubric (attached) and go through it with the students. Introduce the simple version of a 6+1 Traits rubric, with the traits and each trait's description. (The rubric is an 'exceeds/meets/does not meet' rubric for determining if the student accomplished each trait as they progress through the completion of the trait.) Explain each measurement of the rubric: **exceeds** would be a student going above and beyond what is asked, **meets** would be a student getting the job done but not doing anything extra, and **does not meet** would be a student not trying to accomplish the goal.

-Explain that each of the traits will be graded by a partner as they complete the trait during the activities, and then by the teacher during conferencing. (It is suggested you take one-two traits a day (depending on the familiarity of the trait) to ensure students are given sufficient time to accomplish and gain a strong understanding of the traits within a week.)

NOTE: If students are having trouble meeting the requirements of the rubric, the teacher should use the conferencing time to revisit the trait with the student and help them gain a better understanding of how to meet the requirements for each trait.

***Traits:** (Each of the traits activities and explanations can be modified to meet the grade level needs)

Students will be working in groups for guided assistance from peers and the teacher, but each student will be producing their own work to be assessed by the rubric. The goal is to get the students to use, practice, and gain a better understanding of the traits by completing each one with a simple task (this is not meant to overload the student).

- Students must have out all 6+1 traits materials to refer to each of the traits, and you have displayed all materials reviewed for the 6+1 traits and the traits chart paper to review what was done within Week's 6/7's trait activities.

-Ideas: Give each group of students a set of pictures to motivate brainstorming of main ideas and details from the students (e.g. boy washing a dog, girl playing with a friend, etc.). Remind students that the Ideas Trait is similar to the Prewriting step. Students can use the pictures for help or come up with a topic on their own. They must use the web (attached) to pick a topic/main idea and write at least 5 details (sentences) focused on the topic (the number of details students are asked to develop will depend on the grade level and for lower grades they may have to draw pictures or use words instead of sentences). The student will need to have a topic/main idea, use details that are focused to the topic, and write sentence that connect to the topic. They have to introduce their topic/main idea

to a partner in their group, and discuss their brainstorming and developing of details for the topic. Their partner will grade their Ideas task by using the rubric and signing their name. The teacher will revolve around the room conferencing with students to complete their rubrics. Student work and rubric will be placed in their student writing folder. Teacher and students will review the trait they completed and discuss why the Ideas trait is important.

-Organization: Read a mixed up short story that you created and have the students tell you what is wrong with the story (e.g. (S) the sentences are out of order). Discuss the importance of using the organization trait. Remind students that the Organization Trait is similar to the Drafting step. Explain that, they would be creating order to the sentences they created when brainstorming ideas from the pictures. While in their groups, students will take the detail sentences about the topic from their web and create some sort of sequence by putting the details in the best order with an introduction, body, and conclusion (to complete the task of creating sentence sequence the task may be modified for grade level needs, e.g. K-1 may need to tell a story to be dictated or draw a sequence of pictures) (students may leave group to write independently or stay in the group). The student will need to grab the reader's attention with the introduction, have a body with detail sentences in the best order, and have a conclusion that completes the writing. Have the students discuss that they are writing about the topic, but making sure to create a beginning, middle, and end using the detail sentences. The students will share the order of their sentences with a partner in their group. Their partner will grade their organization task using the rubric to determine if they accomplished the goal and sign their name. The teacher will revolve around the room conferencing with students to complete their rubrics. Student work and rubric will be placed in their student writing folder. Teacher and students will review the step they completed and discuss why the Organization trait is important.

-Voice: Have one piece of writing on the board that is meant to be for a particular purpose, such as authoritative. Read the piece of writing with an authoritative tone, and then reread the piece of writing with a non-authoritative, silly tone. Ask the students which tone best suited the piece of writing? Discuss that the Voice trait can be as simple as creating sentences that are meant to set the tone of the piece of writing. To further illustrate the Voice trait, read poetry written by two different types of authors (sad poems, silly poems) and discuss that, even though both writers wrote poetry, the authors used their own styles to create work that was original to them. --Discuss with students that they will be going back to the sentences they created for the organization trait to make sure those sentences have a tone that matches the purpose, that it communicates a message to the reader, and puts their own style into the writing. Remind students that the Voice Trait is similar to the drafting and revising steps, so they may have to go back and rewrite sentences to address Voice. In their groups, have students discuss how to add Voice to their writing (e.g. make sure I have a tone that matches the purpose of my writing and I am using my own style). The students will need to make their writing original and unique, put feeling into their writing to give a message, and make sure the tone matches the purpose of the writing. Have students take out their Organization drafts

and begin to check and/or revise to add voice to their writing piece by making it better (make it have a clear message using the tone of their words). They must work with a partner from their group to go back and add voice or check for voice and establish a clear tone, style, and message. Once both partners have checked and revised their work for Voice, each student will get another partner in the group to grade their voice task by using the rubric and signing their name. The teacher will revolve around the room conferencing with students to complete their rubrics. Student work and rubric will be placed in their student writing folder. Teacher and students will review the trait they completed and discuss why the Voice trait is important.

-Word Choice: Read aloud a piece of writing you create that has incorrect use of word choice to the class. It needs to be bland, repetitive, and have words that are too challenging. Show it to the students and ask what they feel is wrong with it, and what could be done with it to fix it. Lead the students into understanding that the piece is boring and doesn't create a clear picture because the words are too challenging and need to be revised by changing some of the word choices that were made. Remind students that the Word Choice Trait is similar to the revising steps because you are using words to make it a better piece of writing. In their groups, students will discuss why Word Choice is important to making their writing more interesting to the reader, and discuss how to revise for Word Choice in their writing (e.g. use words to create pictures for the reader, use a variety of words without repeating, and use words they can understand). Have students take out their draft they have been working through, and begin to check and/or revise for word choice in their writing piece by making it better (make it interesting to the reader). They must work with a partner from their group to go back and add different words and check for word choice. Once both partners have checked and revised their work for Word Choice, each student will get another partner in the group to grade their word choice task by using the rubric and signing their name. The teacher will revolve around the room conferencing with students to complete their rubrics. Student work and rubric will be placed in their student writing folder. Teacher and students will review the trait they completed and discuss why the Word Choice trait is important.

-Sentence Fluency: Read aloud a piece of writing you create that has incorrect use of sentence fluency to the class; it needs to be choppy and have sentences that do not differ in length or beginnings. Show it to the students what they feel is wrong with it, and what could be done with it to fix it. Lead the students into understanding that the piece doesn't have a variety of sentence lengths, different sentence starters, and does not flow when read aloud. Remind students that the Sentence Fluency Trait is similar to the revising steps because you are using the sentences to make it a better piece of writing. In their groups, have students discuss how to revise for sentence fluency in their writing (e.g. use a variety of sentence lengths, start sentences with different beginnings, and the writing flows when read aloud). Have students take out their draft they have been working through and begin to check and/or revise for sentence fluency in their writing piece by making it better (make it readable for the reader). They must work with a partner from their group to go back and change sentences and check for sentence fluency. Once both partners have checked and revised their work for Sentence Fluency, each student will get

another partner in the group to grade their sentence fluency task by using the rubric and signing their name. The teacher will revolve around the room conferencing with students to complete their rubrics. Student work and rubric will be placed in their student writing folder. Teacher and students will review the trait they completed and discuss why the Sentence Fluency trait is important.

-Conventions: Have a piece of writing on the board with editing markings to point out the convention errors: grammatical errors, misspellings, capitalization errors, punctuation errors, etc. and have the students discuss what needs to happen in order to correct the piece of writing. Remind students that the Conventions Trait is similar to the editing step. Make sure students have their Editing Symbols sheet. In groups, students will discuss what the conventions trait is and how to correctly use the editing symbols on a piece of writing (check spelling, capitalization, grammar, and punctuation errors). The students will need to check for correct use of capitalization, punctuation, spelling of words, and if grammar makes sense. Students will begin checking the conventions of their piece of writing by using their Editing Symbols sheet and must go through it with a partner to help with corrections with a red pencil. Each partner must help check for corrections of one another's work by using the editing marks and the red pencil. Once editing marks are placed on the students writing piece they will find another partner in the group to grade their Conventions task by using the rubric and signing their name. The teacher will revolve around the room conferencing with students to complete their rubrics. Student work and rubric will be placed in their student writing folder. Teacher and students will review the trait they completed and discuss why the Conventions trait is important.

-Presentation: Have a sloppily written piece of writing on the board with editing marks still present. Tell the students that you want to present the piece of writing to another teacher, but you don't know what to do to get that accomplished because the editing marks are confusing. Ask: What should you do? Lead the students into understanding that learning the editing symbols can help them know what to do to correct the conventions of their work and get it ready to be rewritten so they can present it. Remind students that the Presentation Trait is similar to the Publishing step. Have the students join their groups and discuss what the Presentation trait is, and what task they have to complete to get the writing to be presentable (e.g. clean up all the corrections, neatly rewrite the entire piece on a clean sheet of paper, and present it). While in their groups, each student will begin getting their piece of writing presentable by cleaning up and rewriting their work. They are allowed to draw a picture if desired, but they must have the written portion of their work completed first. Once they have neatly rewritten their work on a clean sheet of paper, each student will present their writing to their group. Each student will then get a partner and grade the Presentation task by using the rubric and signing their name. The teacher will revolve around the room conferencing with students to complete their rubrics. Make time for several students to present with the entire class. Their Presentation pieces may be placed in the hall/classroom. Teacher and students will review the trait they completed and discuss why the Presentation trait is important.

-Close: Explain to the students that they completed a quick version of the 6+1 Traits so they could use and practice the traits while creating a piece of writing. Discuss that the 6+1 Traits is an ongoing cycle and, now that they know what the traits are and how they relate to their writing and the Writing Process Steps, they can use these skills to conquer any writing task. Explain that some of the traits may take them longer than others and, while going through the traits, they may have to revisit different traits to accomplish their writing goals and to get better at using the traits in their writing.

Assessment/Rubric: The teacher will observe and conference with each of the students throughout the activities of each trait. The students will be assessed by peers and the teacher using the 6+1 Traits rubric (attached). The outcome should be a completed rubric and a presentable piece of writing for each student.

Resources/Materials:

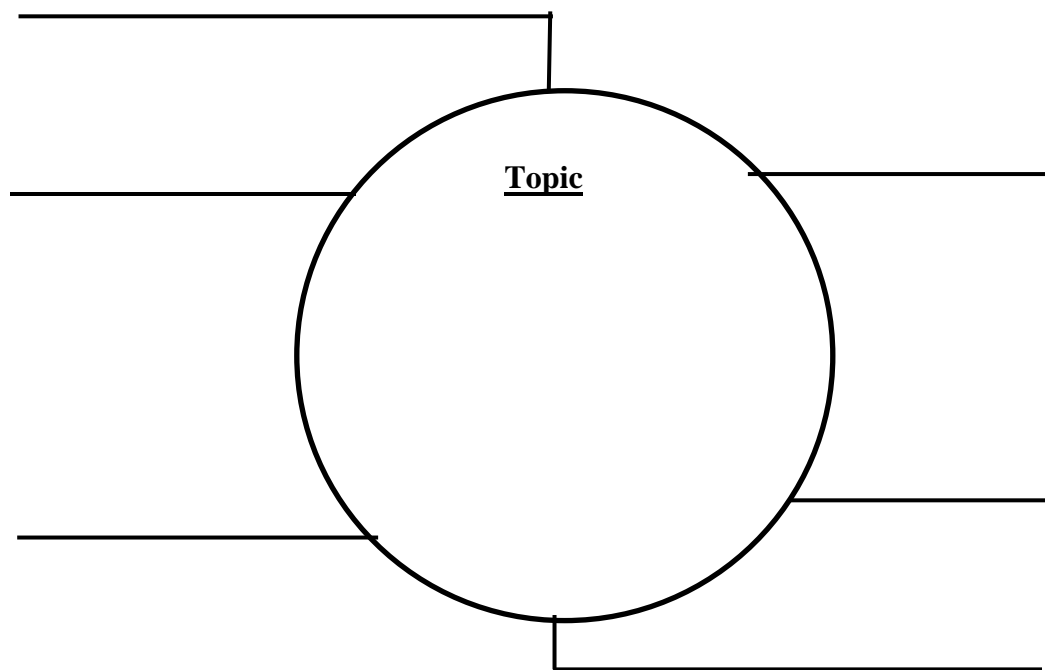
- Pre-made poster of the 6+1 Traits listed (ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation)
- Student Copy of the 6+1 Traits (Curriculum guide p. 25; Culham, 2010)
- Student Copy of the 6+1 Traits Fill-in Chart
- Pre-made poster of the 6+1 Traits Fill-in Chart (used during all activities)
- Chart Paper for each 6+1 Traits completed in Week 6/7
- Whiteboards and Markers (class set: Review activity)
- Chart Paper to use for all activities: (ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation)
- Pictures: a set for each group (Ideas trait)
- 2 pieces of poetry by two different authors (Voice trait)
- School-Wide Editing Symbol Sheet (attached: week 6/7 - class set)
- red pencils: class set (Conventions trait)
- 6+1 Traits Rubric (attached)

NOTE: For use of this week's components for repeated 9-week semesters, make Week 6, Week 7, and Week 8 student independent writing and teacher conference time by going through the 6+1 traits to create a piece of writing and using the 6+1 traits rubric (attached: week 8). For these weeks, incorporate student independent writing of the specific type of writing/genre using what has been previously taught and learned for the 6+1 Traits. Practicing and using these skills will continue to strengthen the foundation students have created for the traits and re-establish why using the 6+1 Traits is important to writing. Incorporating teacher conference time will also allow you to gauge student work and make adjustments to instruction as needed.

Name _____

Ideas Trait: Web

Pick your topic and main idea and place it in the middle. Write the details that are focused on the topic on the lines.



Name _____

6+1 Traits Rubric		
Trait & Description	Partner	Teacher
<p><u>Ideas:</u> 1. has a topic sentence 2. uses details that are focused on the topic 3. wrote ___ details</p>	<p>___ Exceeds (went above) ___ Meets (completed it) ___ Does not meet (didn't try)</p>	<p>___ Exceeds (went above) ___ Meets (completed it) ___ Does not meet (didn't try)</p>
<p><u>Organization:</u> 1. has an introduction that grabs the reader 2. has a body with details that are in the best order (sequence) 3. has a conclusion that ends the writing</p>	<p>___ Exceeds (went above) ___ Meets (completed it) ___ Does not meet (didn't try)</p>	<p>___ Exceeds (went above) ___ Meets (completed it) ___ Does not meet (didn't try)</p>
<p><u>Voice:</u> 1. makes their writing original and unique 2. puts feeling into the writing to give a message 3. the tone of the writing matches the purpose</p>	<p>___ Exceeds (went above) ___ Meets (completed it) ___ Does not meet (didn't try)</p>	<p>___ Exceeds (went above) ___ Meets (completed it) ___ Does not meet (didn't try)</p>
<p><u>Word Choice:</u> 1. uses words that create pictures for the reader 2. uses a variety of words without repeating 3. uses words the writer understands</p>	<p>___ Exceeds (went above) ___ Meets (completed it) ___ Does not meet (didn't try)</p>	<p>___ Exceeds (went above) ___ Meets (completed it) ___ Does not meet (didn't try)</p>
<p><u>Sentence Fluency:</u> 1. uses a variety of sentence lengths 2. starts sentences</p>	<p>___ Exceeds (went above) ___ Meets (completed it)</p>	<p>___ Exceeds (went above) ___ Meets (completed it)</p>

with different beginnings 3. the writing flows when read aloud	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet (didn't try)	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet (didn't try)
<u>Conventions:</u> 1. checks for correct use of capitalization 2. checks for correct use of punctuation 3. checks for correct use of spelled words 4. makes sure grammar makes sense	<input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds (went above) <input type="checkbox"/> Meets (completed it) <input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet (didn't try)	<input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds (went above) <input type="checkbox"/> Meets (completed it) <input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet (didn't try)
<u>Presentation:</u> 1. cleans up all the corrections 2. neatly rewrites the entire piece 3. presents the piece of writing	<input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds (went above) <input type="checkbox"/> Meets (completed it) <input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet (didn't try)	<input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds (went above) <input type="checkbox"/> Meets (completed it) <input type="checkbox"/> Does not meet (didn't try)

Week 9: Finalizing: Building a Title & Addressing Audience

Goal: To finalize a piece of writing by establishing focus through building a title and addressing the audience.

Objective: For students to gain an understanding of why an accomplished piece of writing needs to maintain focus through building a strong title and addressing the audience through style and purpose.

Instruction/Activity:

-Set the tone: Have many different pieces of writing (short stories and a variety of types of writing/genres) hung up around the room. Explain that over the past couple of weeks the class has been building their very own community of writers by: becoming writers that can produce pieces of writing as they see on the walls; establishing a writing time to complete writings such as these; learning that their writing needs structure as they see in these writings; and, learning that they can use the writing process and the 6+1 traits to complete writing such as the writing on the wall. Explain that learning these skills has given them a tool kit for being able to produce solid pieces of writing; however, there is still more to finalizing their writing, and this week they will be discovering this idea by using the pieces on the wall for an activity.

-Model: Put two pieces of writing on the board that you created. One that has a simplistic title (one word), no focus, lists too many unfocused details, not interesting and trails off, straight to the point with no added voice or word choice, and, especially, has no clear purpose or audience for whom it is meant. Have another piece of writing that is the complete opposite, which has a focused topic, has no focused details, is interesting, keeps the reader on task, has voice or established word choice, and has a clear purpose and audience (e.g. # 1 Trip - no focus/not a clear audience; # 2 The Scariest Trip I ever took - clear focus/audience: a friend interested in the scary trip you took). Go through each of the pieces of writing with the students and have them point out differences between them. Lead them into a discussion about the importance of having a focused title and a clear audience. Ask the students which piece of writing they would rather read, and have them discuss why (e.g. # 2 because it has an interesting title and continues telling the reader about the scary trip the writer took). Explain that, without a focused title and an established audience to read your writing, you may begin to write like the first writer; however, with a focused title, and an established audience, your writing will have purpose and organization for the reader like the second writer.

-Dig Deeper: Explain that creating a title is a work in progress and most authors have a working title to begin with, which is often their topic. Then they create the focus of their paper and, once they have finished their writing, they create their title. Discuss that the audience is deciding who will be the reader of your writing, what you want to present to the reader, and what purpose/message you are trying to deliver to the reader. So, to finalize a piece of writing the students have to make sure they have a focused title and addressed the audience of their paper, which is what they will be practicing this week.

-Understanding Activity (Practice it together): Explain that the pieces of writing on the walls are there because they will be going on a scavenger hunt to discover things

about the writings, and scavenge for titles and audiences for the pieces of writing. The task is to read the writings and decide two things: 1. what the title should be; and, 2. for whom the writing is meant. The writings are numbered, and the students have to complete the task on 2-4 pieces of writing hung in the classroom. The students will be in partners, and with clipboards and a Scavenger Hunt sheet (attached), they will fill it in with the writing piece number they read, what they think the title should be, and for whom who they think the writing is meant (Audience) (e.g. Writing piece # 3, Tommy Turtle’s Day at the Pond, a person that is reading for fun). After the students have completed the task, go through each of the writings and have the students share what they have come up with for the titles and the audience for each piece of writing. Review the importance of creating a focused title and addressing the audience within their writing to finalize a piece of writing.

-Work (Practice in Partners): (This work session will have to be modified to meet your grade level’s needs for level of ability: K-1 may consider having pictures and discussing what would be a good title for the picture and who would want to read about the picture with guided assistance) Give students a list of topics on the board to write about and explain that, they can also come up with a list of topics with their partner. Pass out a Developing Title and Audience Web (attached) to the students. Have students work in partners to fill in their Developing Title and Audience Web by listing their topic in the middle, the focus of their paper, and who their audience is meant to be. They will fill in three-four circles with detailed sentences that will go along with the topic/focus/audience. They will begin writing their paper together by remembering and referring back to all the skills they have learned over the past couple of weeks; however, because we are practicing titles and audience, they will be guided through this task and reminded they are practicing and using the skill. The class will be given a chance to revisit this piece of writing throughout the week. Once students have created a piece of writing, they will need to create a focused title that draws the reader into their writing and have addressed the audience they suggested on their Developing Title and Audience Web.

-After the students have completed their pieces of writing, and have developed a focused title and addressed the audience of their piece of writing, they will share their work with the class and have the class guess who the audience would be and discuss with the class why they chose the type of audience for their writing. The pieces of writing should be hung in the room.

-Close/Review: Once the students have shared their writing, review the skills they have learned, and explain that, in learning these skills, they have learned how to finalize their piece of writing to be ready for a reader to enjoy, which is often the point of creating a piece of writing – “For others to read it!” Discuss that, as they move forward on their writing journey, they can take all the skills they have learned throughout these past weeks to create any piece of writing they desire.

Assessment/Rubric: Teacher observation/guidance during activities (Scavenger Hunt/Partner work session). Have students place their Scavenger Hunt Sheets (attached)

in their student writing folder for the teacher to observe. The teacher will also review the students Developing Title and Audience Web (attached) and piece of writing developed with a partner.

Resources/Materials:

- Pieces of writing (differing pieces of writing/genres: short pieces)
- 2 Examples of pieces of writing (focused title/audience and unfocused title/audience)
- clip boards (class set)
- Scavenger Hunt sheet (attached)
- Developing Title and Audience Web (attached)

NOTE: To use this week's components for another 9-week semester with one of the types of writing/genres have: pieces of writing available on your topic, have the students go on a scavenger hunt for the specific writing/genre while also considering titles and the audience for the type of writing/genre chosen for the semester. Have the students practice developing focused titles and addressing different types of audiences for the specific type of writing, discuss the elements that need to be met to finalize a piece of writing for the semester's type of writing/genre. For this week, you will be building a foundation for the skill you are emphasizing and re-establishing why focused titles and addressing the audience help finalize a piece of writing for the specific writing/genre.

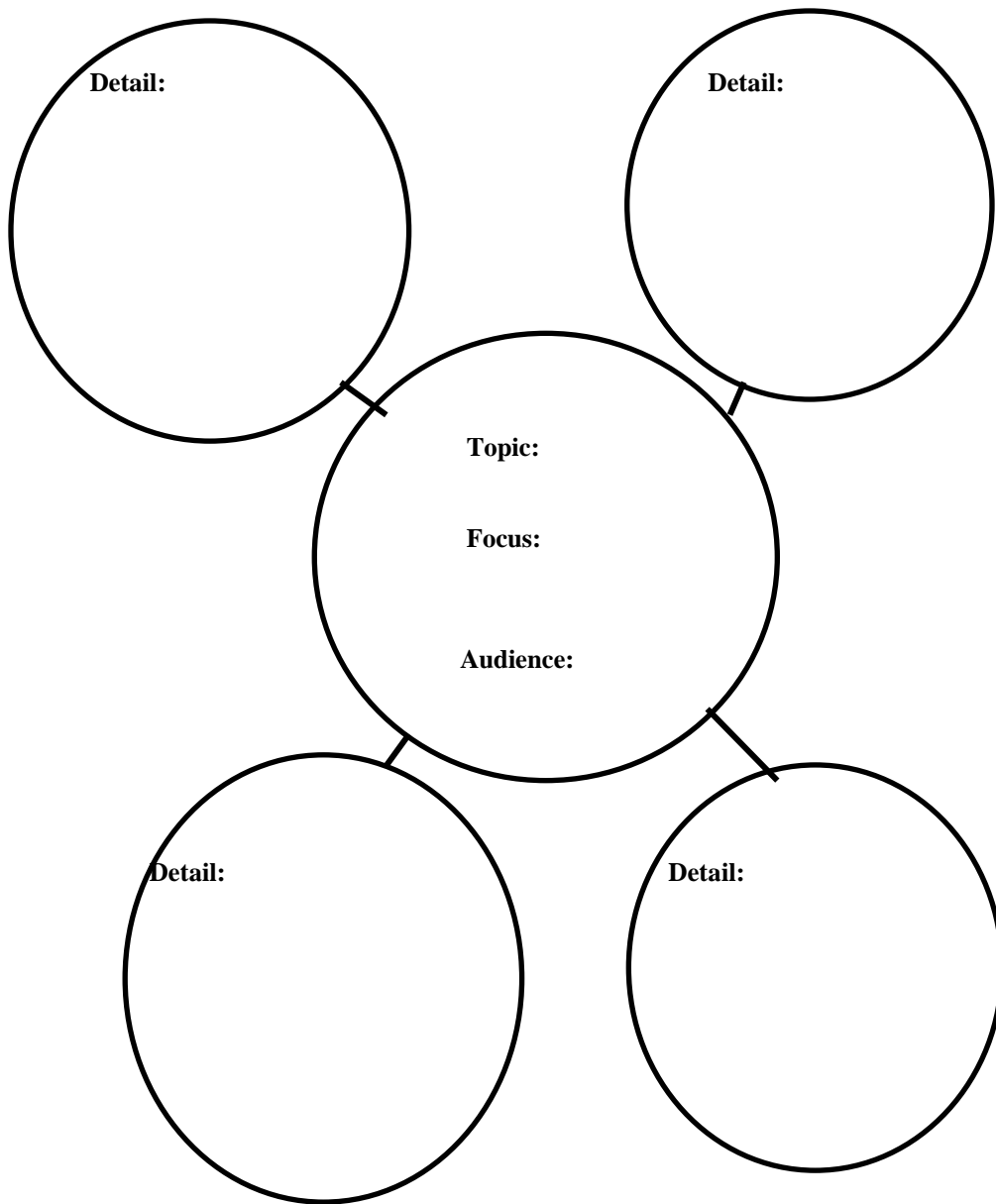
Name _____

Scavenger Hunt

Writing Piece Number	Title: What should it be?	Audience: Who will read this story?

Name _____

Developing Title and Audience Web



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Learn On:

Extended Learning section includes:

-a list of additional writing resources of researched programs and websites for further development of writing instruction

Teacher Discussion section includes:

- a note sheet for each of the weeks, Weeks 1-9, of the curriculum guide to discuss the week's components (likes or changes needed)
- a planning sheet for each of the weeks, Weeks 1-9, of the curriculum guide to discuss who planned and what was planned

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Extended Learning:

-Extra Writing Resources and Programs: A list of additional writing resources of researched programs and websites for further development of writing instruction

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Extra Writing Resources and Programs:

Resources:

-Book: **Project-Based Writing Grade 3, Grade 4, Grade 5: Support Common Core Standards**

By: Heather Wolpert-Gawron, 2014: Teacher Center Resources

-Book: **50 Writing Lessons That Work!: Motivating Prompts and Easy Activities That Develop the Essentials of Strong Writing (Grades 4-8)**

By: Carol Rawlings Miller, 1999

-Book: **Don't Forget to Write for the Elementary Grades: 50 Enthralling and Effective Writing Lessons (Ages 5-12)**

By: 826 National, 2011

-Book: **Fun-Size Academic Writing for Serious Learning: 101 Lessons & Mentor Texts—Narrative, Opinion/Argument, & Informative/Explanatory, Grades 4-9**

By: Gretchen S. Bernabei and Judith Reimer, 2013

-Book: **No More "I'm Done!": Fostering Independent Writers in the Primary Grades.**

By: Jennifer Jacobson, 2010

-Software: **Odyssey Writer**

Time4Learning's built-in online customizable writing program for elementary and middle-school students is called Odyssey Writer. Odyssey Writer can guide students through the entire writing process. Developed, maintained and owned by CompassLearning. Copyright © 2015 Time4Learning.com. All Rights Reserved (Retrieved from <https://www.time4learning.com/writing-software.shtml>)

-Book: **The Daily 5 (2nd ed): Fostering Literacy Independence in the Elementary Grades.**

By: Gail Boushey and Joan Moser, 2014

-Website: **Storybird** at <http://www.storybird.com>

Students can write stories, collaborate on stories, and read each other's work. Grades K-12.

-Website: **ABC Ya!** at <http://www.abcya.com/>

Used to improve students' reading and writing skills Grades K-5 (excellent for ELL and intervention with older students)

Programs:

-Wright Bright (2009): A powerful, comprehensive **writing curriculum** for teachers of grades K-6. **Copyright © 2009 Swaine Learning Systems, Inc. All Rights Reserved** (Retrieved from <http://www.writebrightstation.com/>)

-WriteRefelctions (2011): K-5 Writing Curriculum Aligned to the Common Core Standards. Copyright 2011 WriteReflections, all rights reserved. (Retrieved from <http://www.writereflections4u.com/>)

-WriteSteps: Make Every Step the Write Step (2013): K-5 Common Core Writing and Grammar Program. (Retrieved from <http://www.writestepswriting.com/>)

-Being a Writer (2nd Ed.) (2014): Provides a writing-process approach to teaching writing that interweaves academic and social-emotional learning for K–6 students and professional development for teachers into daily instruction. Center for Collaborative Classroom © Center for the Collaborative Classroom (Retrieved from <https://www.collaborativeclassroom.org/product/bw-cpk6-rev>)

-Educators Practice Guide (2012): Teaching Elementary Students to be Effective Writers (What Works Clearinghouse) Institute of Education Sciences(ies): National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance: Steve Graham, Alisha Bollinger, Carol Booth Olson, Catherine D’Aoust, Charles MacArthur, Deborah McCutchen, and Natalie Olinghouse

-Success for All Foundation (2012): The Writing Process: Plan. © 2012 Success for All Foundation (Retrieved from http://www.successforall.org/Home/Partner-Schools/Videos/Video-Pages/Writing_Plan/)

-Lucy Calkins: Units of Study in Opinion/Argument, Information, and Narrative Writing - A Common Core Workshop Curriculum, Grades K–8
Lucy Calkins & Colleagues: From the teachers College Reading and Writing Project, Copyright© 2015 Heinemann. A division of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. All Rights Reserved. (Retrieved from <http://www.unitsofstudy.com/writing-grade-by-grade/default.asp>)

-Ruth Culham: Traits Writing- The Complete K-8 Writing Program (a revolutionary new grade-specific writing program) TM ® & © 2015 Scholastic Inc. All Rights Reserved. (Retrieved from <http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/ruth-culham-writing-program/#.VZDUcHnbIUA>)

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Teacher Discussion:

-**Discussion of Curriculum:** A note sheet for each of the weeks, Weeks 1-9, of the curriculum guide to discuss the week's components (likes or changes needed)

-**Planning of Curriculum:** A planning sheet for each of the weeks, Weeks 1-9, of the curriculum guide to discuss who planned and what was planned

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Discussion of Curriculum:

After each week's writing instruction, or throughout the week's writing instruction, take time to write down some notes about the week. The author recommends that you discuss what you liked or what you would change about the week's components. In discussing, you will be reflecting over the week's writing instruction and continuing to improve your writing instruction.

Week 1:

Likes: _____

Changes needed: _____

Week 2:

Likes: _____

Changes needed: _____

Week 3:

Likes: _____

Changes needed: _____

Week 4:

Likes: _____

Changes needed: _____

Week 5:

Likes: _____

Changes needed: _____

Week 6:

Likes: _____

Changes needed: _____

Week 7:

Likes: _____

Changes needed: _____

Week 8:

Likes: _____

Changes needed: _____

Week 9:

Likes: _____

Changes needed: _____

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Planning of Curriculum:

After each week’s writing instruction, or throughout the week’s writing instruction, take time to write down how you planned for the week. The author recommends that you discuss who you planned with (individually, pairs, grade level, and/or cross-grade levels) and what you planned for each week. In discussing, you will be reflecting over your planning process for writing instruction, while learning through interactions with others about the writing instruction occurring.

Week 1:

Planned with: _____

Planned what: _____

Week 2:

Planned with: _____

Planned what: _____

Week 3:

Planned with: _____

Planned what: _____

Week 4:

Planned with: _____

Planned what: _____

Week 5:

Planned with: _____

Planned what: _____

Week 6:

Planned with: _____

Planned what: _____

Week 7:

Planned with: _____

Planned what: _____

Week 8:
Planned with: _____

Planned what: _____

Week 9:
Planned with: _____

Planned what: _____

Evaluation Plan:

In completing the evaluation form, as the evaluators you will be asked to begin the evaluation of the curriculum guide by going through it with your group of evaluators to evaluate the curriculum guide and indicate goal achievement.

To evaluate: Determine if the project meets the four evaluation goals by checking, or not checking, the box by each goal. If you check the box for the goal, you are indicating the project met the evaluation goal. If you do not check the box for the goal, write on the lines below the goal to explain why you felt the project did not meet the specific evaluation goal.

The curriculum guide promotes...

1. more writing instruction with effective strategies school-wide

2. learning communities of teachers planning, teaching, and discussing writing instruction

3. more student writing school-wide

4. student writing success

Discussion: Give your response on the 3 questions as pertaining to the curriculum guide.

1. What could be added or left out of the curriculum guide?

2. Why did you feel the goals were met, or not met, by the curriculum guide?

3. Why did you feel the project was a success, or failed, to meet the needs of the school?

Appendix B: Focus Group Topics of Discussion

Big Idea: Struggling writers

1. Challenges of implementing writing into the classroom
2. What we need to do to develop teachers' skills in writing
3. What are the gaps in the writing curriculum
4. What best practices can we use in developing student writing skills

Appendix C: Interview Questions

- Is there a current writing program used throughout the school kindergarten through fifth grade? (If there is.) Describe it for me. (If there is not.) What do you currently use in your classroom or grade level and could you describe it for me?
- What has been your experience with the current writing strategy used in your classroom, which you have just spoken of?
- In your opinion, are there gaps within the current writing instruction you are using? Why or why not? What would be the gaps?
- Do you feel as if students are successful writers with the current writing instruction you are using? Why, or why not?
- What are your suggestions for improving the current writing instruction at your school?
- Describe how much time you allot to writing instruction within your daily schedule and explain why.
- Do you feel that there should be more time spent on writing instruction within a daily schedule? Why or why not?
- How do you plan for typical daily/weekly/monthly writing lessons using the current writing strategy?
- Do you plan individually or in a group for writing instruction? Why?
- Describe what happens when you plan for writing instruction with other teachers within your grade level.
- Describe how you think planning writing instruction with other teachers within the school could enhance or discourage collegial planning and efficient writing instruction.
- What similarities would you foresee in your writing instruction after planning with other teachers? Why?

- What differences would you foresee in your writing instruction after planning with other teachers? Why?
- What comes to mind when you think about a professional learning community focused on writing instruction?
- Do you think the implementation of a professional learning community focused on writing could have an impact on the teachers' writing instruction at your school?
- Do you think collegial planning for writing instruction could improve student success in writing? Why?
- From your years of experiences with teaching writing, what do you feel could improve the current success of your student writers within your classroom and school?

Appendix D: Flyer Presentation of Results

Writing Success

A presentation on a study by

Lundie S. Gray

Walden Doctoral Student

on the recent results of the conducted study

of

Enhancing Teachers' Skills and Students' Success in Writing using Elementary Teachers'
Experiences in Writing Instruction

To attend: Principal, Faculty, Parents of students of [REDACTED], and
[REDACTED] Board of Education Members.

Date/Time: _____, _____, 2015

4:30 pm – 5:30 pm

Location: [REDACTED]