

2023

Teachers' Experiences with Online Writing Instruction in Virtual Charter High Schools

Stacey Harrison
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Walden University

College of Education

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Stacey M. Harrison

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the review committee have been made.

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Walden University

2023

Abstract

Teachers' Experiences with Online Writing Instruction in Virtual Charter High Schools

by

Stacey M. Harrison

MA, Grand Valley State University, 2001

BS, Western Michigan University, 1991

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

April 2023

Abstract

With the increase in virtual education and online learning enrollments, there is a need to examine the quality of writing instructional approaches adapted for virtual classrooms. The problem was in two online charter high schools where students' English Language Arts standardized test writing scores remained low. The purpose of the project study was to research secondary teachers' instructional strategies for writing instruction and their classroom experiences as they implemented an online writing program and a supplementary 6+1 Traits of Writing program. This project study was framed by the constructivist approach to learning and the seminal research of Applebee and Langer on writing instruction in secondary schools. Using a basic qualitative research design, a purposive sampling of eight teacher participants from two online high schools were interviewed in a virtual setting. Data collected from the responses were coded, categorized, and then grouped into six themes that addressed the research questions. The six themes were the teachers' strategies such as templates, substantive feedback, and choices for writing, and their changing assumptions about writing proficiency, interactive lessons, and viewing students' writing more holistically. These six themes provided the foundation for a 3-day professional development plan to help teachers of all disciplines to incorporate writing instruction into their curriculum to help students to increase their writing proficiency. The findings of this study on teachers' strategies and experiences may provide information on improving the instructional designs of online writing programs in high schools and create positive social change by increasing the writing proficiency of students enrolled in these programs so they may be better prepared for success in vocational training, college, employment, and a career.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this project study to my parents and my children. My mom and dad have always supported me in every endeavor I have undertaken. A mere Thank You or dedication will never equal the encouragement, understanding, and love they have showered upon me over my lifetime. My three children have all been sources of encouragement as well as the impetuses for me to complete this journey. I could not have finished this ambitious dream without your faithful championing.

I would also be remiss in not thanking my chair, Dr. Hunter, for her tireless dedication to my degree completion. To Dr. Hunter and the other members of “Team Harrison,” I owe a great debt of gratitude for the many hours spent advising, editing, and encouraging me to cross the finish line.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the many people who have contributed to the completion of my doctoral degree. To my predoctoral educators who helped instill in me the passion for teaching and life-long learning, I thank you. To my Walden professors who have encouraged my degree completion, provided countless hours in helping me to get there, and encouraged me to be an agent for social change, I thank you. To my committee chair, Dr. Barbara Hunter, for her tireless encouragement, professionalism, and wisdom, I thank you. To my family and friends who have been my most avid cheerleaders, I thank you. Without all of you, I would not be the person I am today.

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Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

The problem in this study was the decline in writing proficiency as evidenced by the English grammar and composition section of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) given annually to 11th grade students attending two public charter online high schools. There was a need to determine the online writing instruction of their English Language Arts (ELA) teachers to discern possible reasons behind the low writing proficiency levels.

An online high school provides most of the content area classes to full-time students through a computer, tablet, or phone via the internet. The curriculum is housed in a web-based learning management system, which allows the students to access their courses at any time, provided they are connected to the internet. Lessons may be synchronous or asynchronous and may consist of videos, live chats, bulletin boards, or any other common means of communication, but the primary delivery method must be online (Woodworth et al., 2015). Online learning can occur in state-run schools or charter schools that are (a) part of a public school district and overseen by a state department of education; (b) overseen by a separate district in one state, or (c) overseen and managed by a corporation in multiple states, as is the situation in this study. For the purposes of this study, the responses of the teachers of writing in the ELA classes in online, public, high schools were documented.

In two online high schools, the sites for this study, the online writing program and method of instruction of ELA teachers may be less effective, as evidenced by a pattern of

students' languishing standardized writing achievement scores. Specifically, these scores, as showcased by the schools represented in this study, remained below expectations (in 2019) by an average of 21 points below the state's overall traditional public schools' test scores, and SAT reading and writing scores of 11th grade students attending these high schools have also been in decline (Annual Education Report, State Department of Education, 2019). Even though the decline in writing scores is evidence of the problem, teachers' strategies and experiences with online writing instruction for high school students enrolled in the online classrooms are unknown. In this study, I aimed to find what writing teachers attribute to the decline in writing scores, and how the decline may be a problem to be rectified during online writing instruction.

Rationale

This study was needed because high school students in the 11th grade, throughout the state, are performing below grade level. According to Figure 1, created from data from the state's Department of Education, the two schools represented in this study showed a pattern of decline on the evidence-based reading/writing portion of the SAT standardized test over a period of 3 years. This might suggest that the current online writing programs, writing strategies used, and/or the delivery of writing instruction in these high schools may not be improving students' writing proficiency.

The state-reported test scores for the evidence-based reading and the essay writing portions of the SAT are not desegregated. According to the College Board, the essay portion of the SAT was no longer required after June of 2021, as the test was revised to be given completely online. College Board explained that in dropping the SAT essay,

they hoped to reduce demands on students both now and in the future (as cited in Fitzsimons, 2021). However, states that require the essay as part of a graduation requirement may still administer the test.

Figure 1 indicates that prior to high school graduation, students do not acquire strong writing abilities and, consequently, do not meet the standards for college and career readiness, which can restrict opportunities for postsecondary education and employment. Therefore, students are not prepared for success in the workplace. Gallagher (2017) claimed, “When students' writing skills are limited, doors to opportunity are closed. Students who write well will have a leg up when it comes to finding and keeping a job” (p. 25).

Figure 1

SAT Evidence-Based Reading/Writing Scores: Study School Versus State Averages

	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
School 1	472.8	452.3	448.2
School 2		469.3	469
State AVG	509	511	507
State Benchmark	460	460	460
Points Possible	800	800	800

The National Commission on Writing reported information from National Assessment of Educational Progress Report (2018) that most elementary students (97%)

spend 3 hours or less on writing assignments each week as opposed to the 17 hours per week students spend using electronic devices for entertainment (U.S. Department of Education, NAEP Progress Report, January 2018, p. 33). In high school, only half of students reported being assigned a paper of three or more pages, once or twice a month, and about one third (39%) reported that they never, or hardly ever, have writing assignments, even though students who write 4 to 5 pages per week in their English classes score higher on the NAEP writing assessment, thus meeting or exceeding the state benchmarks (U.S. Department of Education, NAEP Progress Report, January 2018, p. 33). Therefore, it appears that students are graduating from high school without having met or exceeded the state benchmarks in writing.

Although seminal research on traditional writing instruction has been conducted for many years in "brick and mortar" high school classrooms (Graham & Hebert, 2011; Graves, 1983; Tierney, 1991), research on writing instruction in an online format is still relatively new. There are several online learning high schools in the state, though little research, as yet, has been conducted on the specific instructional strategies and delivery of writing instruction used by teachers of online writing instruction for these schools. The bulk of the research done on online instructional strategies for writing has been focused on postsecondary education, international studies, and English as a Second Language; thus, a gap in research regarding writing instruction at the high school level exists.

Significance of the Study

The findings from this study are significant to teachers, students, and administrators in the local settings of this study. Knowing how teachers instruct writing

online, both lessons and frequency of lessons, can be useful in understanding how to help writing teachers improve their pedagogy and possibly increase students' writing performance. Researchers have postulated that teachers' instructional strategies are influenced by their pedagogical beliefs. Teachers' "pedagogical beliefs refer specifically to the understandings, premises, or propositions about teaching and learning that we hold to be true" (Tondeur et al., 2017, p.1).

For this study, I investigated high school ELA teachers' experiences of their pedagogy and instructional strategies as they implemented online writing instruction. The implementation included both the main writing program and the supplementary writing program, 6+1 Writing Traits ©. The goal was to better understand how to increase students' writing proficiency. The data collected from the interviews may help teachers to seek out professional development (PD) opportunities, which may help them to improve the less effective writing instructional strategies in the classroom. The findings may also be useful for students enrolled in online ELA/writing courses, both for current as well as future opportunities. Online school administrators may also be able to use the findings from this study to create PD opportunities for their online teachers.

Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study focused on ELA teachers' reports of their instructional strategies and practices in their online setting. The findings of this study may provide information on improving the instructional designs of online writing programs and create positive social change by increasing the writing proficiency of students enrolled in these programs so they may become college and career ready.

Research Question (RQ)1: What are the instructional strategies high school English teachers use to teach writing in an online setting?

RQ2: What are the experiences of high school English teachers who teach writing in an online classroom?

Review of the Literature

In this review, I present the literature about writing instruction and writing curriculum in a secondary classroom, and the current literature related to the problem being discussed in the study. The literature review provides a framework for this study and focuses primarily on writing instruction and instructional strategies in online learning environments. The review is presented in two sections: the conceptual framework and the current literature related to the problem.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework underpinning this qualitative study was based on examining the phenomenon (teaching writing in an online environment) through the lens of constructivism. The use or construction of prior knowledge of a concept (like writing instruction) when linked to newly acquired knowledge assisted by a growth mindset (such as online learning) should result in the ability to apply the knowledge of writing to new and different writing genres if a positive change is to occur (Clark, 2018). Therefore, teachers can build new knowledge by making connections with prior knowledge for themselves and for their students.

In the theory of constructivism, the learner makes meaning in new learning situations by connecting/associating prior knowledge with the new material. Shah (2019)

discusses how this approach applies to educators when they reflect, evaluate, and perhaps change their instructional strategies and practices. Research in education, based on the tenets of constructivism, can enable educators to reflect on their own instructional practices and incorporate qualitative data such as students' and teachers' experiences with the lessons and the instructional material and improve those practices, thereby improving student performance. Effective teachers suspend making conclusions about a dilemma in order to gather information, study the problem, gain new knowledge, come to a sound decision, and then reflect on the whole process of problem solving. This deliberate contemplation brings about new learning (Carey, 2017).

Studies have shown that students create meaning and are able to learn new and more complex skills through metacognition – the foundation of constructivism (Shah, 2019). Through reflection on their own writing by applying metacognitive skills, students are able to compartmentalize their writing into stages of the writing process. Teachers of writing also employ the skills of metacognition when reflecting on their strategies of writing instruction and instructional practice (Rhem, 2013).

Applebee and Langer (2015) were able to address the concept of constructivism by connecting theory with actual class practice that they observed in landmark research on writing instruction in secondary schools. They found that even though teachers of writing knew how to instruct and author multiple genres of writing, they were not able to devote the time to the recursive and reflective processes involved in the process writing approach. This lack of time was due in part to the demand for writing preparation for high stakes standardized tests. Although Applebee and Langer discussed the process

writing approach with many teachers throughout their studies, the teachers' definitions of how process writing was implemented in their classrooms remained unclear.

In gaining a deeper understanding of the connection between writing instruction and constructivism, the data can be applied to gain a better understanding of online writing instruction as investigated in this study. This conceptual framework could inform future researchers to investigate the topic of online writing instruction in middle schools, elementary schools, or in other subject areas in which there is an existing problem with the instruction of a process approach.

Review of the Broader Problem

The information for this review of literature consists of various relevant peer-reviewed articles, online databases, research books, and articles obtained using ERIC, Google Scholar, Education Research Complete, JSTOR, EBSCO, Sage Premier, ProQuest, and Walden Library, with ERIC and Google Scholar as the primary doctoral sources for the project study. The information gathered contained topics on the history of writing instruction, definitions, research on writing instruction, writing instruction in an online classroom, the 6 Traits of Writing, online learning, student writing proficiencies, and standardized testing data. The searches for information, setting aside the seminal studies found, were limited to publications between 2016 and 2021. Key terms used in searching were *online learning*, *online instruction*, *online writing instruction*, *college and career readiness*, *process writing approach*, *landmark cases*, *seminal cases*, *6 Traits of Writing*, *SAT scores (2018-2021)*, *effective online instruction*, and *high school writing instruction*. Terms such as *TEFOL*, *ESL*, *postsecondary*, *college writing*, *elementary*, and

middle school were avoided to create a smaller more productive search. Due to the paucity of research about online writing instruction, the search was opened wider to see if there are other supplemental programs that offered the same process of writing approach. As of 2021, a search for programs to use in the online teaching of the process approach to writing did not result in any supportive or relevant research.

Obstacles to Effective Online Writing Instruction

There is a unique learning context for new students transferring from traditional brick and mortar classrooms to online high schools and, more specifically, their lack of familiarity with the schools' learning management systems and the programs for writing instruction. In his description of the components of effective instruction, Stronge (2018) described this situation as a dynamic interaction between learners' individual characteristics and the context in which the learning is to occur. Therefore, teachers in online high schools in this setting might attribute low writing achievement scores of incoming students to the students' individual and varied prior experiences with writing instruction coupled with the unique, sometimes challenging learning curve of their first experience at an online charter high school. Even among students who may be adept at technology in other media such as gaming may have trouble in online courses if they lack the course-specific technological skills to make full use of the course content (Barbour, 2017).

Stronge (2018) also described effective teachers' knowledge of the content of the curriculum, in their subject area (such as writing instruction in ELA), and their ability to reflect on that knowledge before, during, and after their online writing instruction. In an

online school, there is a plethora of information immediately available to teachers-- knowledge to be shared with colleagues and that can guide the development of curriculum and its content. Conversely, sometimes there may be inconsistency in the alignment of writing curriculum from grade to grade in elementary to secondary levels in many schools. The close alignment of curriculum and its content with instruction can improve the instructional effectiveness and possibly increase student proficiency by finding and filling in the gaps in the curriculum and providing teachers with feedback on the standards and skills that need to be covered as student progress through the grade levels.

Evolution of Writing Instruction and Assessment

Prior to the 1900s, writing instruction consisted mainly of penmanship lessons, grammar instruction in elementary schools, and assigned essays in secondary schools. Then, through the 1920s to 1940s, spelling became a larger focus in the classroom, until, eventually, writing instruction began to reflect the field of linguistics as it relates to written composition (Langer, 1984). Many grammar/writing aspects were taught in isolation, but not together as in the 6 Traits of Writing or the process approach to writing instruction.

With Murray's (1972) promotion of writing as a process, and with the founding of the National Writing Project (NWP) by Gray in 1974 (Gray, 2000), teachers began to turn their attention on what creates good writing and what influences a student's writing experience. The NWP was created from Gray's struggles in the secondary English classroom teaching reading and writing. Ultimately, Gray discovered that teachers had to

become readers and writers themselves and experience what their students experienced in order to become sensitive to their own teaching. This seemingly simple yet difficult and complex idea became the bedrock upon which The Writing Project was built (Lieberman & Wood, 2003, p. 6). The Writing Project later would become the NWP. One of the goals of the NWP is to improve the teaching of writing in schools by helping teachers to become better writers and therefore improve their instructional practices in the classroom.

Continued educational research on writing instruction followed with seminal research by Applebee (1981), Atwell (1987), and Graves (1983), conducting studies to determine the best instructional practices to increase students' writing proficiencies and assess students' writing. More specifically, Hillocks (1986) concluded that teaching grammar in isolation did not have any positive, measurable effects on students' writing performances.

For more than 30 years, from approximately 1974 to 2015, Applebee studied the development and reform of teaching English. He studied reading and writing instruction in grades kindergarten through 12th grade and changes in writing instruction and documented how much writing the students were asked to produce, what type of writing the students were creating, and the approaches to writing instruction used in the classroom. He found that over the course of 3 decades, despite all the previous advancements toward writing as a process approach, there were very few changes in writing instruction. Although 90% of the teachers felt they were using a process writing approach to writing instruction, Applebee's observations in the classroom and the student writing samples did not support those assumptions (as cited in Bazerman et al., 2017).

Instead, students were being asked to complete response writing, writing to a prompt, to prepare for "high stakes" assessments. As a result, teachers' typical writing assignments involved instruction on creating more formulaic writing than writing that followed the process approach.

Bazerman et al. (2017) studied Applebee's meta-analyses of research on writing instruction, seeking patterns in both writing instruction and student writing proficiencies. They discovered that along with the lack of student-driven writing, the typical writing tasks were based mostly on social studies as teachers continued to encourage formulaic writing, a highly structured and step-by-step way of teaching writing that focuses on the content, which was still being used for preparation for high stakes standardized assessments.

However, despite these findings, Graves's (1983) description of writing instruction as a 5-step process (topic selection, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) has remained the most recommended approach among many educators, as it provides teachers with structure, yet allows for teacher input with the lessons. This approach has also paved the way for the commercial development of the 6+1 Traits of Writing© as a supplementary program for teaching students to write, currently used as supplemental instruction to the main online writing program in the school sites for this study.

While there is research in various dimensions of writing instruction and development, there is an inadequate amount of research at the high school level. Longitudinal studies have been conducted for writing (Bazerman, 2018; Crossley, 2020); however, it has been difficult for researchers to follow an individual student's growth in

writing due to the difficulty in tracking an individual's progress over the course of 13 years of elementary and secondary schooling. Thus, educators have no coherent and cohesive, well-substantiated picture of what writing development from K-12 looks like, even in a few individual cases, let alone in a more comprehensive model sensitive to the varying social needs, opportunities, resources, and technologies of writers' times and places. Increasing the fundamental research on K-12 (and especially 9-12) writing performance might inform policy, curriculum, instruction, and assessment that would guide and support the full development of student writers from K-12 and beyond (Bazerman et al., 2017).

Challenges of Writing Assessment: National and State Policies

National, state, and local policies have influenced changes in the way that students are assessed during and after writing instruction. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) put more demands on teachers to increase students' reading and writing performance by holding teachers more accountable for their students' growth in writing proficiency. In 2003, the National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges unveiled a report that the level of writing in the United States is "still not what it should be" (p. 7). As a result, many school districts scrambled to put effective writing practices into place to correct the widespread writing problems in American high schools.

With the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), 2015 to present, expectations for student performances in writing remain high, although the ways in which student performances are assessed have changed (Darling-Hammond et al., 2016), moving from summative standardized assessments to more formative classroom writing assessments.

At least three factors have contributed to this: the changing nature of educational goals, the need for a closer alignment between the instruction and the assessment of writing, and the limitations of the current methods of recording and reporting on summative writing assessment (Marzano, 2017).

Standards that guide and align with curriculum, instruction, and assessment have also played a role in students' writing performance. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for ELA were created in 2009 with the goal of preparing students with the literacy skills needed for postsecondary training, jobs, college, careers, and lifelong learning. The CCSS for ELA have provided teachers in multiple states with a set of rigorous and somewhat challenging standards for writing that requires instruction to (a) cover various narrative and expository text types and purposes, (b) understand the production and distribution of writing, (c) research to build and present knowledge about writing, and (d) experience the range of writing (Pearson, 2013). These standards provide uniformity in the instruction and assessment of writing yet allow for teacher input within and throughout the lessons. While some states have elected not be part of the CCSS for ELA, other states have adopted the CCSS or have modified the CCSS to align with their own state standards. The state used for the site of this study adopted the CCSS, which is aligned with this state's current ELA standards that guide curriculum.

According to the NAEP, which is administered nationally every 4 years with occasional assessments in writing (2011, 2017), a student who is proficient in writing by Grade 12 can produce an effectively organized and fully developed response within the time allowed (15 to 50 minutes) that uses analytical, evaluative, or creative thinking. The

NAEP data also reveal extraneous factors that may affect the teaching of writing-- in particular, the implementation of high-stakes tests. Furthermore, the analyses of the NAEP data suggest that writing may be dropping from the attention of schools as more time is being spent on reading comprehension. The NAEP does not account for the political changes affecting the instructional practices in the classroom such as NCLB, CCSS, or ESSA.

Standardized tests are still required to be aligned with state standards (even though the CCSS have been adopted or adjusted by individual states) and are still required to be administered regularly. Federal requirements stipulate that state assessments must align with the full breadth and depth of state academic content standards and measure student achievement based on challenging college- and career-ready state academic achievement standards or based on alternate academic achievement standards (DuFour & Marzano, 2011). However, even though the ESSA replaced the NCLB with its emphasis on summative assessment, the ESSA only requires assessments in reading, science, and math for the formative assessment; hence, there is less testing of writing proficiency in states' standardized testing.

The increasing numbers of online enrollments each year indicate that educators must deliver effective online instruction. Martinez et al. (2019) observed the “best—or, more accurately, effective—practices in online writing instruction (OWI) have been a concern for writing studies for more than a decade, as evidenced by the work of the Committee for Effective Practices in Online Writing Instruction” (background section, para.2). This committee, although comprised of postsecondary online writing instructors,

compiled a list of strategies and practices that are applicable to all grade levels, including K-12 – not just postsecondary classrooms. Nevertheless, a gap exists between the amount of research in postsecondary effective online writing instruction and the amount of research in effective online writing instruction for high school/secondary students.

There is a need for more research and dissemination of that research on online writing practices "that work" so that administrators and teachers of secondary students can select the strategies that are most appropriate, whether for whole classrooms, small groups, or individual students (Graham & MacArthur, 2013). Studies have been conducted for postsecondary or higher education and the use of blogs, wikis, and discussion forums; however, very little information exists to show actual writing instruction given online in synchronous or asynchronous classrooms in middle or high schools, except for a landmark meta-analysis and review of online learning studies conducted by Means et al. (2009). This meta-analysis contrasted online and face-to-face learning conditions for K-12 students; however, considering this small corpus, caution is required in generalizing to the K-12 population because the results in the meta-analysis are derived, for the most part, from studies in other settings (e.g., medical training, higher education).

Therefore, this revelation of the paucity of, and need for, research on online writing instruction and effective instructional strategies relates to the current low writing scores that exist in this study because there is a lack of (a) an emphasis on the curriculum, instruction, and assessment of writing in high school (as compared to reading, math, and science); (b) research on writing instruction in secondary schools; and (c) offering online

writing instruction in secondary schools. Furthermore, the body of research has dramatically diminished because of the challenges of virtual teaching nationwide due to a global pandemic, in which teachers, students, and parents struggled to implement and continue with months (up to a year or longer in some districts) of virtual teaching and learning at all grade levels.

The Process Writing Approach in an Online Classroom and Its Effect on Students' Writing Performance

The need to create a program of effective writing instruction, which might reform writing instruction and increase student writing proficiencies, is vital for student success. Graham (2019) discussed the need for writing instruction reform, emphasizing that a reformation in writing instruction in the classroom would need to start with the assumption that there are not effective writing instructional practices that already exist for writing instruction and are being employed in the face-to-face classroom. Applebee and Langer (2009) also agreed that a reformation of writing instruction is in order after they found that the student achievement data showed almost no change in writing levels since 1969. This lack of student achievement in writing could be attributed to factors such as teachers thinking their instruction is process-oriented when it is not, or the lack of professional development and support to implement new instructional strategies in the classroom. Although there have been multiple studies dissecting writing instruction in the face-to-face classroom (Applebee & Langer, 2009, 2015; Black & William, 2018) there have not been any studies with findings that implicate the need for writing instruction reform in the online classroom.

While the teaching of writing as a process approach may be widely used, there is no universal definition for the steps within the process. However, it can be agreed upon by many researchers that certain steps are present in all process writing approaches regardless of delivery (face-to-face or online). These commonly understood steps engage the students in planning, drafting, and reviewing/revising their work. Graham (2019), when investigating face-to-face classroom writing instruction and strategies, found that the process approach also involves students' writing for real purposes and audiences, with some writing projects occurring over an extended period.

As stated earlier, there is a paucity of research on the writing strategies used for online writing instruction at the high school level; however, in 2013 the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) created principles of online writing instruction at the post-secondary level that are similar to the strategies used in online high school classrooms. Greer and Harris (2018), in describing principles, pedagogies and practices of online writing instruction, emphasized that technology should not become a focus because otherwise technology will be at odds with the content and students struggle with balancing both, “The best face-to-face principles, pedagogies, and practices are those that enhance the student's experience in the online space” (Greer & Harris, 2018, p. 18).

Additional Effective Instructional Practices for Writing Instruction in an Online Classroom

Because writing is a fundamental and integral part of students' success, both in their school careers as well as in their college and career readiness, there have been

studies that have sought an explanation for the lack of writing proficiency in students of all grade levels--but there is a paucity in the research of actual writing instruction. In their search for that explanation, Zumbrunn and Krause (2012) conducted a landmark study that sought to answer the question of what principles underlie effective writing instruction intended to improve students' writing. This landmark study has become an instructional support and is cited in research conducted by Zumbrunn and Krause (2017), DeVries, B. A. (2019), Scales et al. (2019), and others. Zumbrunn and Krause (2017) interviewed seven leading authorities in the field of writing and writing instruction. From the qualitative data collected, the researchers identified five themes of effective writing instruction, which are instruction that (a) begins with clear and deliberate planning, but is also flexible; (b) is practiced daily; (c) is scaffolded by teachers for their students; (d) allows for teachers to reflect and analyze their own writing beliefs, experiences, and practices; and (e) motivates students so that they remain engaged with the writing task.

These themes can be linked to online writing instruction; however, Zumbrunn and Krause and other researchers of writing instruction have focused on the face-to-face classroom and not online writing instruction. While their ideas and themes may be applicable in the online setting, a follow-up study, specific to online learning, to gather data has not been conducted. The principles created by Zumbrunn and Krause (2012) were influential in creating the instrument for the interview process of this study as the principles directly relate to the foundation of this study. Following is a description and analysis of each of the five principles of Zumbrunn and Krause (2012) that underlie effective face-to-face writing instruction intended to improve students' writing, and how

they can apply to online writing instruction, for the purposes of this study. These principles were cited in more current studies by Zumbrunn and Krause and other researchers, such as Scales et al. (2019) who seek data regarding the most effective practices for writing instruction.

First Principle of Effective Writing Instruction: Teachers' Beliefs, Experiences and Practices for Online Writing Instruction.

With online instruction still relatively new to the secondary education level, there is a paucity of research of online instruction with most of the research focused on writing instruction, online, in postsecondary education. Therefore, this first principle of effective writing instruction will focus on writing instruction in the face-to-face secondary classroom.

Sundeen (2015) concurred with the first principle of Zumbrunn and Krause (2012), which focused on the importance of teachers' awareness of their own writing proficiency. Graham et al. (2016) states that an element of effective writing instruction is seeking out sources through professional writers, through the teachers' own experiences, instructional practices in the classroom, and their beliefs about the writing process. However, teachers who are not confident in their own writing abilities may impede the writing confidence and growth of their students. "Teachers send implicit and explicit messages--intended or unintended about the importance of writing through their curricular and pedagogical choices" (Zumbrunn, 2016, p. 2). For example, Farmer (2008) examined the level of state scores in writing for students whose teachers expressed little confidence in their own writing abilities as opposed to those teachers who reported high

levels of confidence. The students' writing scores tended to be lower when taught by teachers with low levels of confidence in their own writing abilities. This supports the principle that effective teachers of writing need to be cognizant of the influence their beliefs, experiences, and practices have on their students' writing performance. Online writing teachers, additionally, need to be aware of the instructional strategies used in the online classroom and monitor student engagement with the lessons.

Second Principle of Effective Writing Instruction: Encouraging Student Motivation and Engagement in an Online Classroom

The second principle discussed by Zumbrunn and Krause (2012) was student motivation and engagement in the face-to-face classroom. The importance of motivation in the writing classroom was articulated by all of the seven authorities on effective writing instruction that were interviewed for this study by Zumbrunn and Krause (2012). The likelihood that many students might feel "alienated from the act of writing" was specifically emphasized (Zumbrunn & Krause, 2012, p. 349). Alienation can occur when students with writing problems frequently are unmotivated because they do not possess adequate writing skills and strategies, have repeatedly failed at writing tasks, and thus lack the confidence and will to expend effort to write (Wright et al., 2019). To support this notion about the influence of writers' motivation on their engagement, Russell (as cited in Graham et al, 2013) conceptualized a model for contextualizing writing development that focused on the social and contextual interactions that occur between the students and their teacher within the classroom--interactions that may influence the self-confidence and motivational levels of the students. Hays (as cited in Graham et al., 2013)

also contributed to the idea of social and contextual interactions through his cognitive/motivational view of writing, which specifies the mental operations and motivational resources writers draw on to carry out the act of composing (Graham et al., 2016). Hays stated that skilled writers are strategic, motivated, and knowledgeable about the craft of writing. The positive interaction between student and teacher, and the positive feedback on student writing throughout the stages of process writing, can influence both student confidence and student motivation towards writing.

Graham et al. (2013) states (as cited in Bruning & Kauffman, 2016) that effective writing teachers show enthusiasm for writing and create a positive environment, where students are encouraged to try hard; believe that the writing skills and strategies they are learning will permit them to write well; and attribute their success to their efforts and the tactics they are learning. The researchers also feel students should be kept engaged by involving them in thoughtful activities, such as planning their composition, versus activities which require less thoughtfulness, such as completing a workbook page that can be finished quickly, leaving many students disengaged. Authentic, applicable, and meaningful activities will engage students in the writing process and motivate them to continue writing. The motivation to teach writing and the motivation to learn writing skills can influence student success and effective writing instruction. It is through motivation that teachers can engage students in the lessons and improve student writing.

Student engagement enhances student motivation to learn and improves student performance in online courses, too (Martin & Bolliger, 2018). Martin and Bolliger (2018) found rapport and collaboration between online students and instructors are important for

student engagement resulting in learning success; therefore, student engagement and motivation is important in both face-to-face and online classrooms.

Third Principle of Effective Writing Instruction: Planning Writing Lessons for the Online Classroom

The third principle, that effective writing instruction begins with clear and deliberate but flexible planning, focuses on the need for specific learning objectives. What do teachers want to happen in their writing classes, and how do they make those things happen? Thomas Newkirk, one of the seven writing authorities, stated in his interview with Zumbrunn and Krause (2012):

Plan like crazy, and then wing it... Things come up in the classroom, and when they so, you stop whatever you are doing and take advantage of it ... Sometimes the best teaching you do is something you have not planned. It's spontaneous, and I think finding that balance is really the art of teaching. (p. 349)

Graham (2019) found that the available evidence in current studies clearly supported the importance of specific writing strategies, such as planning and revising, as well as the importance of writing skills, including handwriting, spelling, and sentence construction, in students' development as writers. Once again, this evidence supports writing instruction in the face-to-face classroom; there is still a gap in research relating and comparing face-to-face writing instruction with online instruction.

Just as reading teachers model good reading practices, writing teachers need to model good writing practices through their own planning and revising strategies.

Teachers need to reveal their own successes and teachable moments to show the students

that good writing is a process and writing pieces are not meant to be perfect the first time they are written. Graham et al. (2013) also found that teachers who indirectly (as opposed to directly) teach writing skills, strategies, and knowledge of writing of the writing process to their students have a positive influence on the students' writing proficiencies. Indirect instruction is more appropriate for high school instruction, while direct instruction is best for elementary because indirect instruction requires high school students to apply more complex, strategic, cognitive functions such as questioning, clarifying by creating mental models and metaphors, and forming inferences and predictions. However, for middle school students, a blend of both direct and indirect instruction would be most beneficial to offer a gradual release of independence and responsibility for their learning in their cognitive development.

The self-regulated strategy development model (SRSD) described by Harris et al. (2015) has shown to be very effective in improving students' writing. Students learn from the SRSD model to self monitor through the following methods: explicitly teaching the writing strategies for planning and revising, the knowledge needed to use the strategies, and procedures for regulating the strategies, the writing process, and their behavior. This model provides the students with teacher scaffolding (direct instruction) and encourages and supports student independence through the writing process. Previous researchers such as Graham and Perin (2007b), and Graham et al. (2016) reviewed Hillock's (1986) work, which discussed the five more successful treatments used to address students' writing deficiencies. These were instructions in the use of grammar, sentence combining, strategies, summarization, and text structure.

All these strategies, designed for the face-to-face classroom, can be implemented online during synchronous instruction time in an online classroom, using a shareable screen. Hillock's methods also included the determining factors for identifying effective writing instruction strategies, such as explicitly teaching the planning, revising, and editing steps of the writing process. Although the primary focus was always on teaching, planning, revising, and/or editing strategies, some studies, especially those involving the self-regulated strategy development model (SRSD), such as that of Harris et al. (2015), which also directly taught students the knowledge and skills needed to use these processes.

Fourth Principle of Effective Writing Instruction: Daily Online Writing Instruction and Practice

Although students write for all subjects each day in class, students need to also have more purposeful daily writing experiences. Consistent and purposeful writing time is essential for increasing the writing proficiencies of students at all academic levels. Experts recognize that with the high demands made on teachers to meet and/or exceed standards of performance using the current curriculum, writing can be pushed aside for other more pressing and more easily measurable subject areas. The purpose of writing instruction is to teach students to write skillfully. Graham (2019) contends that this can only be accomplished if students write frequently. This viewpoint is evident in the classrooms of effective literacy teachers where students write frequently, across the curriculum, and write for many different purposes.

While quantity may not be an indicator of success, there does seem to be an implied indication in the literature that frequency of writing instruction is also an important criterion. According to Bromley (2007) (as cited in Daffern & Mackenzie, 2015), “Classroom practices that give students plenty of opportunities for writing and self assessment at every grade level, both individually and together, are critical in developing strong writers” (p. 260).

The practice of assigning writing activities and then assessing those products without repeated process not only results in a product of less quality, but also results in a “premature evaluation that will short circuit the (writing) process and stall risk taking” (Newell, 2006, p. 236, as cited in Verlaan & Verlaan, 2016). This exemplifies the issue of the disconnection of the 6+1 Traits of Writing supplementary program with the online curriculum in this study. There is no assessment or repeated process that links the drafts created in 6+1 with the final drafts. The students are spending less time on the writing process due to this disconnection. Disturbingly, the National Commission on Writing reported information from NAEP Report (2018) that most elementary students (97%) spend three hours or less on writing assignments each week as opposed to the 17 hours per week students spend using electronic devices for entertainment (NAEP Progress Report, January, 2018). In high school, only half of the students report being assigned a paper of three or more pages, once or twice a month, and about one third (39%) report that they never, or hardly ever, have writing assignments. The report states that students who write 4 to 5 pages per week in their English classes score higher on the NAEP writing assessment. (NAEP Progress Report, January 2018, p. 33).

In face-to-face writing instruction for all grade levels, the workload for teachers is tremendous; teachers must read, review, provide substantive feedback, and return hundreds of drafts every week if daily writing is to take place. Technology assists in lessening the time spent on this workload in an online classroom. Online teachers can use spell check, grammar check, and applications such as Grammarly to allow more time for reading for content and providing feedback for revision. Other technology such as audio feedback and document tools (sticky notes, highlighters) can allow the teacher more time to provide in-depth feedback on each draft.

Fifth Principle of Effective Writing Instruction: Scaffolded Collaboration Between Teachers and Students in an Online Classroom

The final principle found to underlie effective writing instruction, according to the panel of writing experts, involves providing students with the skill set to improve their writing abilities. Sometimes students are asked to do something they are not given the tools to do. According to Harris (1996), it is like telling people to dig a gold mine and not giving them shovels or axes. "The gold is down there, but they can't get to it without tools" (p. 350).

All of the seven leading authorities who participated in the interviews for Zumbrunn and Krause's (2012) study agreed that teachers of face-to-face writing instruction needed to know the abilities, prerequisite skills, motivations, metacognitive abilities and needs of each of their students so that the teachers could then use this information to make individualized writing instruction for each student. However, the online learning environment makes customization and individualization of instruction

even more practical for teachers, once the information on students' writing and learning skill has been gathered, because with online writing instruction, teachers can more easily individualize instruction, based on student need.

In addition to teacher directed instruction in face-to-face and online writing instruction, teachers should provide just enough support so students can make progress or carry out writing tasks and processes, but also encourage students to act in a self-regulated fashion, doing as much as they can on their own. This concept is actualized in the self-regulated strategy development model (SRSD), referred to by Zumbrunn and Bruning (2012). The SRSD requires teachers to explicitly instruct students on writing strategies, the knowledge and skills needed to employ the strategies, and the procedures for regulating these strategies, the writing process, and their behavior (Graham, 2019). The SRSD also shifts the responsibility for using the writing strategies from the teacher to the student through the scaffolding process. Students are supported and fostered by teachers as they develop cognitively, and their learning moves from the concrete to the abstract or from the experiential to the logical argumentation (Vygotsky, 1978). In online writing instruction the SDSR helps the student to work and learn independently as they complete their asynchronous lessons in writing.

The well-known gradual release of responsibility (GRR) model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983), based on the work of Vygotsky (1962), is predicated on the premise that effective teachers provide scaffolded instruction, during which they give high support for students practicing new strategies and then slowly decrease that support to increase student ownership and self-sufficiency (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004, as cited in

Lapp et al., 2012). Vygotsky (2016) mirrored this way of learning for students with the constructivist theory stated in his sociocultural approach for teacher's professional development. The sociocultural approach for teacher's professional development uses collaborative learning and evaluation to increase knowledge and provide opportunities for independent learning and mastery.

Fisher and Frey (2008), and Graham et al (2014) suggested four key components that effective face-to-face writing teachers must employ during the GRR process: focus lessons, guided instruction, collaborative learning, and independent learning.

1. Focus lessons: Teachers establish purposes for learning and model strategies and cognitive processes.
2. Guided instruction: Teachers prompt, question, facilitate, or lead learners through tasks that increase understanding of a task or text.
3. Collaborative learning: Learners consolidate understanding of content and explore opportunities to problem solve, discuss, and think with their peers.
4. Independent learning: Learners practice applying skills and information in new ways by synthesizing information, transforming ideas, and solidifying their understanding Fisher and Frey (2014).

Similar components that need to be present for strong writing outcomes have also been identified by all these same researchers:

- explicit teacher modeling of the writing process and composing strategies
- peer collaboration and teacher conferencing to gain informative feedback

- use of procedural prompts (e.g., graphic organizers, mnemonics, outlines, checklists) to facilitate planning and revising
- limiting barriers produced by poor text transcription (e.g., dictating)
- self regulation (e.g., self statements and questions)

These face-to-face instructional strategies for writing can also be translated into online writing instruction through synchronous class time in the virtual classroom. For example, online teachers can provide direct instruction, scaffolding, collaborative learning opportunities in breakout rooms, and independent student practice during the virtual class time.

Background of the 6+1 Traits of Writing Program and Its Effectiveness in an Online Classroom

The inception of the method of writing instruction known as the 6+1 Traits of Writing took place in the 1980s to provide students and teachers with more structure in learning how to write effectively. Early pioneers of the method, such as Diederich (1966), Purves (1982), Hillocks (2008), and others incorporated elements of the process approach to writing to determine the emphasis of writing instruction and how to focus on the instruction and evaluation of writing to increase student writing achievement. The materials that became the foundation for the 6+1 Trait Writing model were developed by teachers in Oregon and Montana, based on work by Diederich (1966), who identified five characteristics of writing during his examination of detailed reviews of student writing. These materials were not placed under copyright; educators' and publishers' freedom to copy or adapt them led to a proliferation of "six-traits" materials that have since been

formally published or informally shared among educators (Coe et al., 2011, as cited in Graham et al. 2015b). There are other existing writing programs and curricula; however, they focus on reading comprehension and other facets of writing and not solely on the process approach to writing, as does the 6 +1 Traits of Writing.

6+1 Traits of Writing Parts Description

Based on the work of Diederich (1974), researchers looked at hundreds of thousands of papers to come up with the core elements that comprise good writing. “Six plus one” elements were identified:

- ideas—development of the message
- organization—internal structure of the piece
- voice—the way the writer brings the topic to life
- word choice—words the writer uses to convey meaning
- sentence fluency—the flow of words and phrases
- conventions—mechanical correctness of the piece

+1. presentation—the overall appearance of the work, before presentation and publication.

Instructional strategies and materials specific to each trait are available for teachers with differentiated activities to engage students in learning the traits. Teachers in both an online classroom and a face-to-face classroom can use the materials to provide direct instruction, scaffolded assistance and substantive feedback on the traits.

How the 6+1 Traits of Writing Benefits Writing Instruction

By focusing on the specific traits found in good writing, the 6+1 Traits of Writing model helps students improve their own writing (Education Northwest, 2016). In conjunction with the six elements, there is a gradual release of responsibility from the teacher to the student within a framework of process-based writing instruction.

Boardman, et al., (2017) discussed the gradual release in the following four steps:

1. Teachers should model the traits and strategies to use.
2. There should be guided practice with the traits and the strategies.
3. Students should practice to further learn the traits and strategies
4. There should be additional applications independently by the student to reinforce the traits and strategies.

The benefits of an analytic system for evaluating the quality of writing is that one can take the pieces apart, examine them, and then insert them back into the larger picture. It is impossible to look at one trait without feeling the impact that other traits have on the piece, and it can be very useful, for instructional purposes, to look at one, two, or even three traits in isolation as students are learning to recognize what can be seen in their work (Education Northwest, 2016).

The 6+1 Trait Writing program is flexible and can be modified by the teacher, can supplement an ongoing program, and can be used for writing in all subject areas. This program is not an alternative writing curriculum designed to replace existing writing programs in schools, but rather an additional, supplementary set of tools to aid in conceptualizing, assessing, and describing the qualities of writing. It is used in

conjunction with existing writing curricula to not only supplement the curricula but also to provide a framework for classroom writing instruction, feedback, and dialogue that is designed to improve the ability of k-12 teachers and students to plan, evaluate, discuss, and revise their writing (Culham, 2016a). Because this model is used in conjunction with existing curricula, teachers of all subject areas may use this model without adjusting or altering their other teaching materials. This also allows for teacher flexibility in the implementation of the model. A sizable minority of secondary teachers use the process writing approach exclusively when teaching writing, with most teachers combining process writing with other instructional procedures, such as more traditional writing skills instruction – not a stand-alone process writing curriculum such as the 6 Traits of Writing.

Higgins et al. (2006) also stated that incorporating the 6+1 Traits and modes of writing with the writing process and writing workshop is the best way to teach students to think and learn while practicing and perfecting the process of writing (p. 316). While advocates for the writing model encourage the use of the program to create common expectations and vocabulary, opponents argue that not all students are on the same page as their classmates and students respond differently to the same texts and the same prompts, based on their experiential knowledge, prior knowledge, attitudes, and their psychology.

Criticisms of 6+1 Traits of Writing

Not all research about the 6+1 Traits of Writing program has been favorable. Crank (2010) took a critical look at the program calling it a prepackaged, for-profit, oversimplification (or perhaps a misunderstanding) of process theories. She states that

although the program is better than some of the writing pedagogy that exists in schools today, the 6+1 Traits program enacts the same weaknesses as the 5-paragraph approach to writing: formulaic and easy to teach, easy to grade, and a monolith that stifles, rather than stimulates, writers (Crank, 2010). Crank also feels the program has a lack of rhetorical depth or oversimplifying the concepts to the point of “dumbing down” the material, which also creates mixed messages about the writing process and product. The author states that the 6+1 Traits of Writing program can work to teach writing if teachers have enough background knowledge and experience in the teaching of writing prior to using this program. Graham et al. (2015b) also stated that they did not find that teachers’ monitoring of students’ writing progress or implementation of the 6 + 1 Trait Writing model meaningfully enhanced students’ writing.

A meta-analysis of this model, conducted by Graham and Perin (Graham & Perin, 2007a, as cited in Graham et al., 2015a, p. 7), found evidence for core instructional strategies, which have been incorporated into the 6+1 Traits Writing model. In their meta-analysis report, Graham and Perin (2007a) discuss 11 strategies found to be essential for effective writing instruction with adolescents. These strategies are: (a) planning, revising, and editing; (b) summarizing texts; (c) collaborative writing; (d) creating specific writing goals for each writing assignment; (e) word processing; (f) sentence combining; (g) prewriting and brainstorming; (h) inquiry activities; (i) the process writing approach; (j) studying exemplar papers; and (k) writing for content learning (Graham & MacArthur, 2013). Some of these strategies can be found in the

learning activities, materials, and strategies for implementation of the 6+1 Trait Writing model.

In another meta-analysis of face-to-face classroom learning, Graham et al. (2015b) compiled data from true and quasi-experiments to determine if there is a causal relationship between the traditional, in-class writing instruction methods and the improvement or enhancement of students' writing quality. The researchers found that there was no causal relationship between teachers monitoring the students' writing through the 6+1 Traits of writing program, or the implementation of the program, and student writing improvement (Graham et al, 2015a). Since the analysis showed students' writing quality was not causally enhanced by the physical presence of the teacher, it can be theorized that the students learning independently online have the same opportunities for growth and improvement in writing as those in face-to-face classrooms.

Three Reasons Why 6+1 Traits of Writing Can Still Be Beneficial to Online Writing Instruction

But there are good reasons for implementing the 6+1 Traits of Writing approach. First, the 6+1 Traits fit naturally into the writing process, which makes teaching writing more focused and purposeful (Higgins et al., 2006). Secondly, Miller, et al. (2016) also cite the 6+1 Traits program as a best practice for writing instruction and that this type of process-oriented instruction encompasses the human act of composing and the human gesture of response, preparing students to write for any purpose they may encounter throughout their lives (p. 3). Finally, the analytic scoring system created and titled "6+1 Traits Writing" integrates with the main online writing program used on the site for this

study and is a conduit for effective writing instruction and learning the stages of the writing process.

This analytical scoring has been found in other educational settings as each state uses the materials in conjunction with their current standards and writing curriculum, and all states, to some degree, incorporate the 6+1 Traits of Writing into their writing standards and, therefore, their state assessments. To date, the largest and most definitive study about the 6+1 traits of writing was conducted by Education Northwest and published by the Federal Department of Education in December 2016. The goal of the five-year study was to provide empirical evidence of the effectiveness of the analytical trait-based model for increasing student achievement in writing and how the model gave teachers and students a common vocabulary for talking about writing across the disciplines to create consistent expectations for what good writing looks like (6 +1 Traits of Writing Overview, n.d., p. 1). As of the writing of this study, Education Northwest has not replicated this study.

6+1 Traits of Writing for Diverse Learners

Learner diversity is comprised of many characteristics including, but not limited to ethnicity, socioeconomic background, English as a second language, and special needs. The 6+1 Traits of Writing program has the potential to benefit diverse learners who need a common framework from which to understand the processes of writing. The 6+1 Traits of Writing has the common framework and a common vocabulary to aid in the understanding of each trait and the overall process writing approach. Diverse students can potentially increase his/her learning skills through the supplemental materials used by the

teacher in instructing the 6+1 Traits of Writing. The materials focus on one trait at a time allowing for scaffolding, practice, and mastery before moving to/adding on the next trait. The model offers teachers the autonomy to select literature, sequence their instruction, and decide how to best meet the needs of their students (Graham et al., 2015b).

Approaches for Struggling Writers in an Online High School Environment

Compared to the texts of their more accomplished peers, papers written by struggling writers are shorter, more poorly organized, and weaker in overall quality (Graham et al., 2016). In addition, these students' compositions typically contain more irrelevant information and more mechanical and grammatical errors that render their texts less readable (Graham et al., 2016). This is a problem that is prevalent in both traditional school settings and in the online educational settings. The evidence is shown in student papers, assessments, and other forms of student writing, such as emails.

Self efficacy, or perceived competence, has been found to play a powerful role in predicting writing outcomes, even when gender, grade level, prior writing performance, and measures of other motivation constructs (e.g., writing apprehension, perceived task value, goals) are included in statistical analyses (Pajares & Johnson, 1994 as cited in Sanders-Reio et al., 2014). The bottom line is that students who do not believe in their writing abilities, tend to produce writing that does not meet grade level standards, or is incomplete. Therefore, online writing instruction needs to not only engage students in the lesson both synchronously and asynchronously and teach students the strategies to create thought out and well-written writing assignments, but also encourage students' self efficacy as they write.

Implications

The goal for this study is to document teachers' interview responses about which instructional strategies are used for online writing instruction. Given the current gap in research in online writing instruction and the increase in virtual teaching and learning, additional knowledge gained through this study may aid in creating effective writing practices for online learning schools. Online learning can become the education “equalizer” that levels the learning playing field for all students, regardless of socioeconomic standing or access to educational opportunities, because it can be differentiated to fit needs of learners and modified for content areas, regardless of the delivery system. Improved professional development opportunities for online writing teachers have the potential to help students of all learning levels enrolled in online courses, both now and in the future.

Summary

Writing instruction, which began as basic penmanship lessons and evolved over many years into the process writing approach, has changed with the ways in which students learn and has accommodated for the ever-changing technological advances. Researchers Graves (1983) and Applebee (1981), and practitioner Atwell (1987) conducted multiple studies to determine the most effective instructional strategies for writing in the 1980s in face-to-face classrooms. These studies lead to the development of the 6+1 Traits of Writing as a supplementary approach to the process writing instruction in the classroom. This study goes one step further by documenting the instructional strategies used for high school students in an online classroom.

However, online writing instruction must be research-based. Zumbrunn and Kraus (2012), in a landmark study, also identified similar principles of effective writing instruction. These themes included instructors who reflect on and can analyze their own writing beliefs, experiences, and practice, students who are motivated and engaged with the writing task, instruction that begins with clear and deliberate planning, but is also flexible, instruction that is practiced every day, and instruction that is a scaffolded collaboration between teachers and students. Although the principles uncovered in the previous studies were for face-to-face classrooms, they can also be applied to the online environment. These principles help teachers to create more individualized writing instruction for each student, which is at the core of the flexibility of online learning and guides the design for the methodology of this study of online writing instruction.

For the purpose of this study, which was to understand why student writing proficiencies are below the state average for online high school students, it was important to gather teachers' instructional strategies for the implementation of the current online writing instruction and curriculum. There have been studies of teachers' perceptions of writing instruction for students in brick and mortar high schools, but little research has been done on teachers' strategies for and the implementation of writing instruction for students in online high schools. As high school students struggle to meet proficiency levels in writing, teachers working in face-to-face, blended learning, and fully virtual (online) educational settings seek writing instructional methods that would increase student writing proficiencies. This study attempted to create a clearer understanding of

current student writing proficiencies by gathering teachers' strategies for and implementation of online writing instruction.

Section 2: The Methodology

Research Design and Approach

The problem in this study was ineffective online writing instruction. There has been minimal understanding of the most effective approaches to teaching writing in online environments and a need for helping writing teachers to improve their pedagogy and possibly increase students' writing performance as well. The decline in writing proficiency has been evidenced by the SAT test given annually to 11th grade students.

I explored the problem using the traditional qualitative method of substantive interviews. The focus of a basic qualitative study was to examine practical problems in the study's setting and elicit and analyze the perceptions and experiences of the participants with the problem. According to Ravitch and Carl (2019), the key characteristics of qualitative research are (a) collaboration, which is engaging with colleagues, participants, advisors, peers, and mentors in deliberate ways to produce valid research; (b) criticality, which is researchers cultivating understandings of their active role in the research; (c) reflexivity, which is the researcher's systematic assessment of their identity, positionality, biases, assumptions, values, and subjectivities; and (d) rigor, which is the overall research quality and validity. These concepts of the characteristics of collaboration, criticality, reflexivity, and rigor are necessary to conducting ethical and valid qualitative research (Ravitch & Carl, 2019).

Qualitative research involves the iterative processes of interpretation, reflection, and making sense of the data that are collected and analyzed. Studying the instructional strategies of teachers who are practitioners within online classrooms is researching the

topic of writing instruction within its natural environment and involves the iterative processes of interpretation, reflecting, and sense-making. Justifying this choice of a qualitative design for this study as a logical one. I applied qualitative methodology to this study to understand the problem through open-ended questions in the interview process.

Traditional qualitative research refers to an approach in which researchers are simply interested in solving a problem, effecting a change, or identifying relevant themes rather than attempting to position their work in a particular epistemological or ontological paradigm (Mihas, 2019). A basic qualitative study requires connecting theory with the problem, the purpose, the research question(s), and the data collected (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Case studies require researchers to apply theoretical concepts from multiple data sets (Ridder, 2017); because I used only one data set gathered from interviews, case study methodology would not have been appropriate for this study.

Other qualitative research designs would have been even less effective than a case study in collecting and analyzing data and reporting findings. Ethnography requires a considerable amount of time as it requires the researcher to study participants, unobtrusively, in the environment chosen for the study. Ethnography looks for the different factors that influence the experience of the participant such as social factors, symbolic factors, and environmental factors (Ary et al., 2018), and would be seeking data that are irrelevant to the basis of this study. That approach would have been inappropriate for this study because the interviewing of teachers about their instructional strategies did not include social, symbolic, or environmental factors.

The phenomenological design seeks to find meaning, essence, and describe the experiences of the participants using a combination of methods, such as observing a particular phenomenon, conducting interviews, or reading documents of those who have had similar experiences (Alase, 2017). In this study, there were only interviews and not multiple methods of data collection. Multiple methods would not have been feasible under the circumstances of this setting, which was virtual, rather than face-to-face. Therefore, the phenomenological design would not have been appropriate for this study.

The historical approach examines past events to predict future occurrences. This approach is mired in research of past events or techniques that might explain the current situation (Ary et al., 2018). However, in this study, I sought descriptive data on how to improve online writing instruction in the future. Other qualitative methodologies such as narrative, which involves collecting stories from individuals and documents (Adler et al., 2017), and grounded theory, in which a theory is developed that is grounded in field data collected from a larger sample size (Glaser & Strauss, 2017), would have been even less effective than the basic qualitative design for this study.

Selection, Justification, and Protection of Participants

For this study, I used purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a nonprobability method designed to produce a sample that can be a logical representative of the larger population (Bhardwaj, 2019). This can be achieved by using specific, expert criteria to nonrandomly select participants who represent a cross-section of the population (Sharma, 2017), so the most appropriate participants in the most appropriate context were selected for answering the research question. The objective for using this sampling method was to

gather information that may illustrate the participants' online writing instructional strategies and experiences in an online high school setting from expert participants who are currently teaching. These teachers are more likely to be “rich” with data or insight than others, and, therefore, more relevant and useful in achieving the research purpose and answering the question at hand (Ravitch & Carl, 2019).

Criteria for Selection of Participants

Participants were selected based on their roles as certified (highly qualified) high school ELA teachers within the chosen online educational settings. They must have been teaching, or had taught within the past 2 years, at least one course of 11th grade English language arts (ELA), in this online setting. None of the potential participants were my current colleagues.

Number of Participants in Sample Group

To determine the sample size for a study, researchers need to consider the end goal, what is being studied, what is credible and useful, and how to conduct the study using the resources available (Saunders & Townsend, 2018). Qualitative researchers use a small number of participants who are knowledgeable of the phenomenon (Babbie, 2014; Burkholder et al., 2020). When a small number of participants are used in a basic qualitative study, purposeful sampling is used to select the participants.

The smaller participant number is justified by the type of research methodology being used in this study; therefore, a sample size of approximately eight participants was selected for this basic qualitative study. This number was sufficient to conduct in-depth

interviews, answer the RQs, and provide data about online writing instruction (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2019).

Procedure for Gaining Access to Participants

The administration at the participants' schools were contacted via email (see Appendix B) to secure permission for teachers to participate in the study, and administrators' responses regarding permission were sent via email. An application seeking approval for this study was submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Walden University, and once permission was granted by the IRB, the study was conducted.

The participants' email addresses are public information in this district, so they were obtained from the school's website. After the initial email contact, potential participants were asked if they would rather use a personal email for correspondence or continue to use their professional email. Potential participants were sent an email describing the study; explaining the purpose of the study; describing my obligations as the researcher; explaining the rules and guidelines for before, during, and after the data collection and analysis for this study; and asking for their participation. Participants were asked to respond to the email invitation within 7 to 10 business days to the included contact information. Participants could reply to the email to accept or decline the study invitation. If they accepted, they were to send "I accept" in an email to accept their participation in the study.

Once participants accepted the invitation to participate in the study, separate invitations to scheduled 60-minute interviews via Zoom were emailed to them. They could decide to choose a more convenient date and time, if necessary.

Methods of Establishing a Working Relationship

A trusting and professional researcher-participant working relationship both prior to and during the interview process is very important. To establish a participant-researcher rapport, an informal, initial warm-up conversation involved asking the participants how the school year has been going, how their families were doing, and if they anticipated teaching summer school. Then, the interview process was explained and included my responsibilities as the researcher and those of the participants. Finally, the participants were thanked for helping to complete the data collection phase of the study.

The participants were told that the interview questions would be asked one at a time, leaving time for the reflection and response by the participant. They could ask questions at any point during the interview, decline to answer any question, or stop the interview at any time. They were also told that their interview answers would remain securely with me and not be shared with anyone outside of the study. Participants were also reminded that their responses would not contain their names, but they were referred to by an alphanumeric code (P1, P2, and so forth) to ensure confidentiality. I transcribed the participants' responses, checked the transcripts for accuracy against the audio recording of the interview, and shared this procedure with the participants.

Burkholder et al. (2020) stressed the importance of preparing for the scheduled administration of each interview. All interviews via Zoom were scheduled at a time that was convenient for each participant. Due to the importance during the interview that both

myself and my interviewee were not interrupted, the interview was scheduled deliberately at times when there were no disruptions.

Protection of Participants' Rights

Before data were collected from participants, I contacted them and acquired their consent to participate in my study. This is known as informed consent (Burkholder et al., 2020). The purpose of informed consent is to outline ethical treatment of participants. They were informed that their participation was voluntary, and they could decline participation at any time during the study without reprisal. I contacted them via email which contained a transparent description of the study along with my contact information should they have had any questions about their participation. Once participants received the participation email, they had 7 to 10 business days to reply "I accept" to participate in the study.

As the researcher, I am to protect my participants from harm; therefore, I considered the risks and benefits of this study. I reviewed Walden University's code of ethics, regulations, and the university's guidelines for ethics (see Burkholder et al., 2020). I considered potential risks that might occur during the interview process. If, for any reason, participants had experienced anxiety during the interviews, I would have stopped the interview and would have offered to conduct the interview at a later date.

Another part of participant protection is confidentiality (Burkholder et al., 2020). When reporting the findings, especially when using transcript excerpts, I did not use real participant names but used an alphanumeric code, such as P1, P2, P3, and so forth, to

represent the participant. I shared this procedure with the participants as part of informed consent.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher, in relation to the participants and settings of the study, is one of observer. I previously worked at one research site for 5 years and the other site for 3 years. Some participants were previous colleagues of mine; however, others were hired after I left employment at the sites. I did not have any current professional ties, including supervisory positions to the setting, in either high school. I have been a writing instructor for over 20 years, and 14 of those years have been as an online instructor of ELA, including writing. During that time, I had extensive experience in teaching writing as a process approach, teaching students to write using the current online curriculum, and experienced moving between the two different platforms that are used by the current ELA program for writing instruction. As a current and experienced writing instructor, I understood these biases and sought information only through the data collected, not allowing the biases to influence the data analysis. I used the method of bracketing – creating a running journal or notes on my personal beliefs or feelings that might impact the interview or data analysis. Bracketing is a strategy that can be used to minimize researcher bias by illuminating and bringing implicit beliefs to the forefront, making them explicit throughout the study (Wadams & Park, 2018).

Data Collection

I used a basic qualitative research design to conduct participant interviews. It is important to provide as much detail as possible to ready the data for analysis and the

possibility of replication in future studies. The data collection phase contained a plan of action and clear and specific steps that could be revisited and replicated in any scientific research.

Description and Justification of Collected Data

Qualitative researchers ensure that the data collection method be aligned with the research design and RQs (Burkholder et al., 2020). Participants' responses to questions from in-depth interviews, audio recordings of the interviews, researcher's notes, and interview transcripts were the data collection methods in this study and were appropriate for this basic qualitative approach (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2019). Interviews were appropriate for this traditional qualitative study. The qualitative interview was key to data collection and the most important component of the qualitative interview was for the responses to be authentic (see Adhabi & Anozie, 2017).

Description and Source of the Instrument

I designed the questions for the interviews to elicit responses that related to the problem of online writing instruction in these two high schools, based on the related literature, the conceptual framework of Applebee and Langer (1987), and alignment with the RQs. In this semistructured instrument, there were a total of 16 interview questions with follow-up or probing questions added as necessary (see Babbie, 2014; Burkholder et al., 2020; Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

The interview questions were aligned with the RQs and written to explore participants' experiences with the phenomenon. Based on the RQs, the interview questions sought to answer the following: What are the instructional strategies high

school English teachers use to teach writing in an online setting? What are the experiences of high school English teachers who teach writing in an online classroom?

The protocol was a researcher-created instrument (see Appendix C), which was reviewed by teachers not involved with the study before the study was conducted. The teacher-reviewers examined the interview questions for relevancy, structure, clarity, and organization (logical sequencing). I took notes during the Zoom meeting with the content experts. These notes contained suggestions from the experts. Those suggestions were incorporated in the interview questions to ensure completeness and clarity of each question

Generation, Gathering, and Recording of Data

I used the semistructured interview method to collect data from participants. This method was a less rigid interview style; however, it allowed me to target the specific phenomenon being studied while incorporating conversational aspects to the interview. The comprehensive list of questions used with a semistructured interview method allowed for gathering the data needed and decreased the need for follow-up interviews. The conversational aspect of this method provided an opportunity to probe the participants for more details, where needed. The reliability of the data was ensured through the consistent adherence to the detailed procedures for data collection and data analysis.

Due to the constraints caused by the current pandemic and time constraints of classroom teachers, a Zoom call of approximately 45 to 60 minutes was the best option for meeting synchronously with the experts. The questions for the interview and the

responses to questions were recorded for audio (not video) to aid in confidentiality.

Materials to be used in the interview process were the interview protocol and interview questions (see Appendix C), audio recording method, and my notes. As data collection began, a record was kept in a journal of the interview schedules and Zoom URL links for the interviews.

Once the schedule for the dates and times for the interviews were confirmed, there were checks for the quality of internet service for the participants and the researcher. Participants were also asked to test the internet service and audio equipment. Once these tests were completed, there were a review with the participants of the procedures and a reminder that the interview were recorded. A backup recording device, such as a cell phone were available in case of a problem with audio.

The interview began by thanking the participant for taking the time to help with the study. Each interview question was asked one at a time, allowing time for the participant to think of their answer, respond to the question, and ask for clarification on each interview question. Questions were repeated as necessary. As a critical listener, I omitted questions the participant had already answered in an earlier response. I was aware of body language and posture and voice tone (Burkholder et al., 2020) to avoid influencing participants' responses or communicate judgment. Notes during the interviews were taken and were used as prompts for follow-up questions or points for analysis.

If difficulties had arisen with technology, internet connection, or interview interruptions, I would have noted exactly where in the interview we stopped and where to

continue, prior to the issue. If the participant wished to conclude the interview before all questions are asked and answered, I planned to thank them for their time and discontinue the Zoom call. If the participant needed to reschedule and continue the interview later, a new day and time could be scheduled, and I planned to note where to begin the second session in the interview. Even though plans for these discrepancies were made, none of these discrepancies occurred during the interview process with any of the participants.

The interviews were recorded through the application used for the interviews (Zoom) and transcribed by the application. Transcription took place within 24 to 48 hours of each interview. In addition to the recordings of the interviews, I also took notes during the interview that were used during data analysis. After printing out the interview transcriptions from the audio recordings, I checked the transcription accuracy against the audio recordings.

At the conclusion of the interview, I thanked the participants for their time, asked if the participants have any questions, and turned off the recording. The raw data were saved to a secure file on my password-protected computer and backed up for security using a Google back up and sync program.

To ensure the study's validity, I used narrative accuracy checks (member checking) with the interviewees, both during and after the interviews, as well as addressing and clarifying the biases I may have had that could influence the interpretation of the data. The previous online writing instructional experiences I have, along with the experience teaching the process writing approach, were two aspects to keep from influencing the data analysis. Since researcher reflexivity, which is essentially a

researcher's insight into their own biases and rationale for decision making as the study progresses is critical to rigor (Johnson et al., 2020), I acknowledged and reflected on the frustration the participants might have had overusing two platforms to teach writing online, as well as their students not using teacher feedback to improve their writing, which could influence the analysis of the data.

Data Analysis

Ravindran (2019) stated that there are four main steps in preparing to analyze qualitative data. They are (a) preparation of data, which involves transcription of the interview recordings and checking the accuracy of the transcription; (b) reading and reflecting the interview transcripts and taking notes; (c) coding and categorizing like items from within the data; and (d) developing themes/conceptual models or theory based on the clusters of similar information found through the coding process. The first two steps: preparation of data and the checking of the validity of the transcripts and notes have been described in the previous sections. The next two steps, coding and categorizing data and then determining themes to address the RQs, are described below.

I used a two-cycle coding process with initial and focused coding strategies (Saldana, 2016). Descriptive coding was appropriate for this basic qualitative study. During this first-cycle coding process, I searched for words, phrases, or concepts that were related to each other and labeled these groups with a meaningful term (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The second cycle of coding used the words of the respondents, or NVIVO, to continue to narrow down the data. NVIVO can provide a deeper insight into the responses as it records the thoughts of the participants in the verbiage they use versus a

researcher-created set of terms. I continued to analyze the responses to refine and revise the repeatedly occurring words into codes. After noting the codes, I continued the revision and created a small number (3 to 8) of major themes to address the RQs for the study (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018).

Coding Procedure

Upon completion of all interviews and transcription and after the interview transcripts were compared with the recordings for accuracy, the questions and the responses from each participant were organized sequentially to coordinate with the two RQs. These were completed manually on a matrix. As seen in Appendix C, Questions 1 to 8 addressed RQ1 and Questions 9 to 16 addressed RQ2. On the matrix, Column 1 contains the 2 RQs and the related 16 interview questions (each separated by several rows), and the next 8 columns were designated for key words, phrases, or concepts from each of the participants' responses for each of the 16 questions. Once the key words, phrases, or concepts from each participant for each question were manually entered in the columns, I identified, organized, and color coded the key words, phrases, or concepts by similarity and frequency so that clusters were determined. Next, the clusters were labeled as categories, which were then displayed on an Excel spreadsheet with columns for the 16 questions, still separated into the two RQs. I examined the Excel spreadsheet to determine commonalities throughout the categories to determine patterns and then themes (Miles et al., 2020). I then took notes about decision making/points and observations before, during and after the coding process, for coding the raw data to clusters and

categories, and then to patterns and themes, so that notes could be used for reflection and possible replication of the study.

Thematic analysis (TA) is a method of “identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). It is a descriptive method that funnels down the data gathered in a study for analysis. This method of analysis is used with studies due to the wide range and variety of RQs that can be addressed with this method. TA of open-ended responses from transcribed interviews can “explore the context of teaching and learning at a level of depth that quantitative analysis lacks while allowing flexibility and interpretation when analyzing the data” (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Once the data is gathered, it is taken apart, studied, and used to create groupings of like meaning. The groupings are created through coding. Coding is “the process by which raw data are gradually converted into usable data through the identification of themes, concepts, or ideas that have some connection with each other” (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). NVIVO coding uses verbatim words or phrases from the participants’ responses to interview questions to describe the chunks data. The codes are then grouped together to create themes. Themes are the patterns found in the codes. The themes add the similar codes together to create a larger view or picture of the topic. Castleberry and Nolen (2018) state that it isn’t about the number of times a code is repeated, but the importance of the relationship between the codes, themes, and the RQs. This study used descriptive coding method to do the first-cycle coding (descriptive data) and second cycle NVIVO coding (categorization), from which the themes emerged.

Using an Excel spreadsheet for the data, the interview questions were placed at the top and the participants were on the left. I put the excerpts from the transcripts onto the spreadsheet next to the respondent and under the interview question. I also reviewed my researcher journal I used during the interview process and inserted relevant information next to the responses to specific questions. Phrases from the individual responses were entered into the spreadsheet. Common words and phrases from the responses were entered into a column for potential first-round codes. The first round provided me with key words and phrases for the next phase. The first round of coding included codes such as “chunking writing assignments,” “providing templates and graphic organizers,” and “immediate feedback on each writing step.”

I conducted the second round of coding by combining similar codes or codes that had a similar meaning from the first round. The second-round coding was placed on to a pivot table (See Table 1) with the codes on the left, verbatim responses in the center column, and a final column that includes possible themes on the right. The themes that emerged aided in answering the two guiding RQs regarding participants’ perspectives about online writing instruction. The second coding phase established the key categories of the participants’ perspectives on strategies and experiences of online writing instruction. I summarized the findings of this study and adjoined them with the research problem and purpose of the study.

I followed the aforementioned coding steps, as described below:

1. I transcribed interviews using the transcription element embedded in the Zoom application and notes taken in my researcher’s reflective journal.

2. I compared the transcriptions for each participant to the audio recordings to check for accuracy.
3. Once adjustments were made to the transcripts (minor grammar and usage errors were corrected), I read through them several times to find similar patterns or frequently repeated words/phrases.
4. I placed the data into an Excel spreadsheet to better visualize the information.
5. I created codes from the responses to identify the themes which emerged from the data.
6. The themes were created from the patterns which were based on the responses to the interview questions and the guiding RQs.
7. I included direct quotes from the participants' interview responses to further support the created themes. The data from the individual interview responses began to repeat, which indicated data saturation was achieved.

Table 1*Pivot Table for 2nd Round of Coding*

Second round coding	Patterns
<p>Chunking writing assignments/using specific writing models/ use of graphic organizers creating opportunities to write together/using outlines – sometimes as the final product/strategies do not exist within the current curriculum/prompts provided by teacher as modification/breaking assignments down into manageable pieces/used writing models and steps brought in by teacher/ no “How to write” within the curriculum Provided templates or graphic organizers/used acronym models such as R.A.C.E./use of Nearpod, EdPuzzle, Quill</p>	<p>Chunking, templates, outlines, and graphic organizers</p> <p>Writing opportunities</p> <p>Use of specific writing models</p> <p>Use of outside website resources</p>
<p>Gave students choice of final products or topics/provided lists of differentiated assignments or products for students/reduction of length/used outlines for final products</p>	<p>Modified final products</p> <p>Differentiated assignments</p> <p>Adjustment/reduction of product lengths</p>
<p>Provided immediate feedback/encouraged peer editing and review/planned small-group revisions/ graded content over grammar and punctuation/use of rubrics for each step in the writing process/</p>	<p>Providing immediate teacher or peer feedback</p> <p>Peer editing, small group revisions</p> <p>Holistic grading/rubrics</p>
<p>Lesson focus is more interactive/focus is on content, less on grammar and punctuation/lessons are more visual – sharing screens/lessons are planned to be more intentional about getting kids to participate/</p>	<p>More interactive and visual lessons</p> <p>Content over grammar</p> <p>Intentional planning for student engagement</p>

Second round coding	Patterns
Teachers need to provide more basic knowledge of writing/start small and expand with mastery/write daily/make time for writing/use exemplars of the students/write often and in stages/encourage writing of all kinds – even emails	Underestimated the amount of reteaching needed Using exemplars in writing instruction Encouraging writing daily and all types of writing
Focus on the content not the little things/ students can use spell check and grammar check through Word/provide rubrics for each writing phase/	Content over small errors Providing rubrics for all writing phases More holistic rubrics over all errors

Evidence of Quality

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is the counterpart of quantitative concepts of reliability and validity (Burkholder et al., 2020). Qualitative researchers cannot validate the findings using an instrument as in quantitative research, but determine findings as credible, dependable, confirmable, and transferable. For this basic qualitative study, I used credibility and confirmability to confirm trustworthiness.

Once I completed analyzing my data and themes were determined, I sent a summary of the findings to participants via email. They were instructed to check the summary for accuracy of their data and return their check to me in 7-10 business days. If they found no discrepancies, they informed me that the summary was accurate. If they found discrepancies, they specified what they were, and I adjusted the themes.

The second component for trustworthiness is confirmability, which pertains to objectivity (Burkholder et al., 2020). This element is important to guarantee that the

findings reflect the participants' meaning and not that of the researcher. I noted my biases in my description in the role of the researcher. I used a journal to note my biases during data collection and analysis and ensured that my findings were strictly based on the responses from the participants. I referred to my journal throughout data analysis and reported the findings to check that my biases were not included.

Procedure for Discrepant Cases

Discrepant information is defined as any data transcribed from the interviews that is not directly related to the RQ. Participants provided data based on their experiences and knowledge. Once data were analyzed and themes emerge, it was possible that data would not support the theme or contradict the theme (discrepant data). These data are never discarded or treated as unimportant. Researchers need to look for discrepant information that may run in opposition to themes discovered in the research. Further, they should seek alternative explanations for the ways in which their research frames and understands the phenomenon (Rose & Johnson, 2020). By using both data and discrepant data, which are related to the study's theme, researchers increase their study's validity.

Data Analysis Results

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate secondary ELA teachers' perspectives regarding the instruction of writing at two online high schools. I used semistructured interviews to collect data from eight ELA teachers from the study sites. The conceptual framework for this study was based on the tenets of constructivism through which educators reflect on their own instructional practices and incorporate qualitative data such as students' and teachers' experiences with the lessons and the

instructional material and improve those practices, thereby improving student performance. This study focused on finding teachers' perspectives regarding the strategies used to teach writing in the online classroom, and their perspectives on their experiences in the online writing classroom. The findings of this study reflected the perspectives of the participants gathered from one-on-one online interviews. The following two RQs were used for this study; what are the instructional strategies high school English teachers use to teach writing in an online setting, and what are the experiences of high school English teachers who teach writing in an online classroom? After analyzing, reviewing, and coding the data from the participant interview, six total themes emerged from the data from the RQs (see Figure 2).

Figure 2*Emergent Themes From the Research Questions*

Results for the RQs

The RQs of the study addressed online writing teachers' perspectives of the strategies and experiences of teaching writing in an online setting. During the first half of the interviews, teachers were asked to describe their perspectives of the strategies they used to teach writing in an online setting. Three themes emerged, as shown in Figure 1. During the second half of the interviews, teachers were asked to describe their experiences with writing instruction within the online classroom. Three additional themes emerged from the second half of the interviews as also shown in Figure 1. In the next section, I discuss both RQs and their themes.

RQ1: Instructional Strategies High School English Teachers Use to Teach Writing in an Online Setting

Theme 1: Teachers Use "Chunking," Templates, and Graphic Organizers for Assignments as Strategies for Teaching Writing Online

The participants in this study discussed different strategies they employ to teach writing. "Chunking" assignments is the breaking of assignments, projects, or lessons into smaller, more manageable parts, which makes the information easier for students to process. Examples of chunking used by the participants are dividing reading material into smaller pieces for the students to read and summarize, breaking up informative papers into several stages allowing for immediate feedback and revision before moving on to the final product, using the stages of the writing process as individual chunks to help students keep their focus on one particular task at a time, and creating "To Do" lists for

assignments so the students can work on one concept at a time while still seeing progress as they check off items on the list. All the teachers who stated they use the chunking strategy stated that this approach has been successful with general education, special education, and English Language learners alike.

Seven of the eight participants stated they provide a template or appropriate graphic organizer (appropriate to the writing genre). The templates and graphic organizers help to create opportunities for whole class instruction and provide a scaffolded approach to the writing genre. Two of the participants noted they sometimes allow for the template or organizer to be filled out completely and submitted as a replacement to the entire essay or paper. This approach also helps the accommodated students to complete the writing on time, but also to better understand the concepts of summarization and plot progression. Three of the participating teachers mentioned using strategies for process writing with the acronyms of RAFT (role, audience, format, and topic); RACE (restate, answer, cite evidence, explain) and PLAN (pay attention to the prompt, list the main ideas, add supporting details, number the major ideas or reasons). The RAFT strategy allows the students to show their understanding of the concepts taught by writing from a different point of view, for a specific audience, and through various formats. The RACE strategy is used to help students craft answers in creating constructed responses to a prompt. Participants stated that this strategy is good for use when studying information text and preparing for standardized testing assessment responses. The PLAN strategy is also used to teach writing constructed responses as well as expository essays.

Theme 2: Teachers Believe Giving Students a Choice/Agency Over Their Writing Assignments Is a Strategy for Engagement with the Writing Process

Participating teachers agreed that writing, over all the other aspects of teaching English, is the one task students avoid the most. A participant stated that students feel overwhelmed by writing either because they have had bad experiences with writing in school before, it takes too much time for them to do, or the topics just do not interest them. It is the “lack of confidence and related writing anxiety” (Conard, 2018. p. 17) that contributes to the negative attitudes towards writing as children progress through the schooling system. “Students who view themselves as incompetent writers are less willing to engage fully in writing tasks” (p. 17). The participants noted that giving students some level of choice over their writing helps to make it more meaningful for them. Students are sometimes allowed ownership of writing topics while the teachers provide the assignment parameters and genre. In combination with ownership, teachers discussed writing with students as they draft so they can see the thought processes behind the writing, use one-on-one sessions to support direct writing instruction, provide immediate feedback on the writing, and allow for the social aspect of writing. The social aspect is addressed by allowing students to work together to brainstorm and to conference on their writing.

Theme 3: Teachers Provide Substantive and Immediate Feedback to Guide Students Through the Writing Process

The participating teachers all mentioned that substantive, relevant, and immediate feedback was key to increasing student writing performance and engagement in their writing. One participant discussed the scaffolding of students who are below grade-level

proficiency in writing. This participant stated that students who see incremental success as they are writing seem to want to complete the writing assignment more so than students who may not see early progress.

The use of rubrics for students as they write can help the teacher provide substantive feedback during each phase of the writing process. If a teacher chunks the assignment, rubrics for each phase can be effective and timesaving in providing quick feedback for the student. “The significance of feedback in promoting student learning is often highlighted in research” (Black & William, 2018).

RQ2: The Experiences of High School English Teachers Who Teach Writing in an Online Classroom

Theme 1: Teachers Have Changed Their Lessons to Be More Interactive and Visual Than in a Brick-and-Mortar Setting

Six of the teacher participants discussed having made changes to their writing instruction to be more interactive and visual for the online delivery system. They discussed the sharing of their screens, including video elements originally created through Screencastify or downloaded through other websites, and creating more aesthetically interesting powerpoint presentations. The sharing of a teachers’ screen allows the students to see the processes a teacher uses when prewriting, writing, and researching. This process can also be reversed, and the student can share his/her screen. Teachers are then able to see what the student is drafting and make suggestions and give immediate feedback, thus not requiring the student to submit work before obtaining feedback on his/her work. Teachers explained how not all feedback needs to be written.

Participants discussed how they use a program called Screencastify to record their computer screen as they grade the students' papers. This program allows the teacher to provide the recording to the student to show the places within the paper that need revision. The student can watch and listen to the recorded feedback multiple times if needed, and there is less risk of misunderstanding the feedback as sometimes happens with the written feedback.

The participants also reported using outside websites for interactive writing instruction. One of these websites allow for real-time instruction and feedback and working with peers. This website, Nearpod, allows teachers to watch the students as they engage with the content in a variety of methods. Other websites such as Quill and YouTube are less interactive, but more engaging, and teachers use these for the video and audio engagement with the content.

Theme 2: Teachers Perceived Their Initial Assumptions on Students' Prior Knowledge of Writing Were Incorrect

Participants were asked if they had any other ideas to express at the end of the interview. Prior knowledge of the writing process, and of writing in general, was a concept mentioned as a possible barrier to writing instruction. The participating online writing instructors expect that by the time a student has reached a certain grade level, he/she will have acquired and mastered the previous grades' levels of proficiencies in writing. Some students come to the grade level or to the school without basal writing knowledge. The participants speculated at the reasons behind the lack of basal writing knowledge. They supposed (a) the transient nature of some students cause them to miss

important lessons; (b) chronic absenteeism can cause students to miss content; (c) deficient funding to provide remedial instruction in previous grade levels and conversely, (d) deficient funding to administer formative tests to detect below grade level knowledge in the writing process. The participants expressed the need to reteach or to teach missing basic skills in writing, in order to bring up the level of writing proficiency before new writing instruction can begin.

Theme 3: Teachers Have Changed Their Instructional Focus to a More Holistic View

The teacher participants discussed using rubrics for each stage of the writing process no matter the genre being taught. By assessing each phase of the writing process individually, the teachers reported that the students can see progress incrementally, versus waiting until a final product is submitted.

Since the students all have school-issued computers, they have access to the spell check and grammar check functions. The access to these functions, although they do not make learning those skills obsolete, grants the teachers time to focus on the quality of the content of the writing. The teachers stated the grammar and spelling lessons are still taught during the editing phase of the writing process.

This study focused on finding teachers' perspectives regarding the strategies used to teach writing in the online classroom, and their perspectives on their experiences in the online writing classroom. The overall findings of this study indicated six themes related to the strategies participants used to teach writing online and the experiences they have had teaching writing in the online classroom. The data for this study were gathered through interviews with eight online writing teachers from two online high schools.

Through data analysis, the information was categorized whereby six themes became apparent. The six themes that emerged from the two RQs yielded data which helped me to create a 3-day project study professional development plan to help teachers of all disciplines to incorporate writing instruction into their curriculum to help students to increase their writing proficiency. This professional development plan has the potential to create social change through increasing teacher knowledge of writing instruction and through making better writers and communicators of our students.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

In this study, I investigated the perceptions of online high school ELA teachers' instructional strategies and classroom experiences. The findings of this study may help administrators and teachers to better understand how to increase students' writing proficiency. The data collected from the interviews may also help teachers to seek out professional development opportunities, which may help them to improve the less effective writing instructional strategies in the classroom. The findings may also be useful for students enrolled in online ELA/writing courses, both for current as well as future opportunities. Online school administrators may also be able to use the findings from this study to create professional development opportunities for their online teachers. Participants stated that professional development opportunities that allow time for collaboration with peers, provide best practices in writing across the curriculum, and provide practical and sustainable changes to instructional strategies would be beneficial. Teachers' professional learning needs to be more engaging, practical, and effective for teachers to impact student outcomes (Molway, 2019). Based on the study findings, I designed a 3-day professional development plan to help the online writing teachers improve their writing instruction strategies to help improve student writing performance.

The 3-day plan will provide a better understanding of how to implement writing instructional strategies in the classroom to support students' writing at all proficiency levels and the research behind them. Teachers will also create a collaborative community with which to continue best practices in writing instruction throughout the school year.

Professional development is more effective when it is an ongoing and sustainable process (Love et al., 2020; Smith & Williams, 2020).

In this section, I discuss the description and goals of the 3-day professional development plan (Appendix A) and the rationale behind it. This section includes a literature review that focuses on writing instructional strategies, writing teachers' experiences in the classroom, and professional development implementations that can positively affect teacher knowledge and practices to support an improvement in student writing proficiency. I also discuss the evaluation process for the professional development plan and the possible social implications.

Rationale

The rationale for this 3-day professional development is to increase teachers' understanding of the need for regular and often writing instruction; provide effective writing instruction methods to meet the needs of diverse learners, learn about the strategies to use when implementing writing into daily classroom instruction; and create a collaborative, safe space for teachers to reflect, plan, and assess student writing. Based on the data analysis from the interviews, teacher participants were aware of the importance of daily writing instruction; however, creating lessons that were designed for the online classroom to improve students' writing skills and providing help to other subject area teachers for cross-curricular writing is difficult due to the lack of time in their schedules. The strategies they used for writing instruction included (a) "chunking" assignments, (b) templates and graphic organizers, (c) outside supplemental writing websites, (d) student choice on assignments, and (e) substantive and immediate feedback on written work.

However, barriers such as insufficient time to collaborate, learn, and implement strategies in the instructional time allocated; incorrect assumptions of students' prior knowledge of the writing process; students' lack of technological knowledge; and various students' needs, and accommodations make it difficult for teachers to implement increased opportunities for writing in the classroom. Particularly important to changing classroom writing practices is to enhance teachers', principals', and policymakers' knowledge about writing (Graham, 2019).

Review of the Literature

The literature review includes peer-reviewed articles about effective professional development implementation and perceptions of practical writing instructional strategies addressing the themes from the data collected in the study. The keywords used in the search included *professional development in education*, *online writing instruction*, *writing process*, and *practical writing instructional strategies*.

Quality teaching is critical to student learning, and PD for teachers is viewed as one of the most promising interventions for addressing teacher quality (Darling-Hammond et al., 2016). Studies have documented that after participating in PD programs, teachers improved their classroom performance as their teaching became more communicative, organized, attentive to students' needs, and principles (Lin et al., 2015). Student achievement has been linked to teacher practice; therefore, it can be proposed that student achievement in writing is directly affected by the quality of the teaching of writing (Cohen & Goldhaber, 2016).

Matherson and Windle (2017) stated that teachers want PD learning opportunities that provide practical ways to deliver content in the classroom. PD is more successful when it is explicitly tied to classroom lessons (Desimone & Garet, 2015). Teachers want PD they can implement right away in the classroom that helps them address individual student needs, tailor differentiated learning for their students, and improve student performance. Teachers also want concrete and practical ideas that directly relate to their day-today situations in their classrooms (Svendsen, 2020).

Powell and Bodur (2019) found that there are six tenets of online teacher PD design and implementation: relevancy, usefulness, interaction and collaboration, authentic tasks and activities, reflection, and the intersectionality of technology, content, pedagogy, and learners. Relevancy refers to determining and addressing the individual learning needs of the teachers to help them solve real problems occurring in the classroom. Usefulness refers to the value of the PD by its ability to meet the needs of the teachers or solve the problems they are having with their instructional methods or student learning. The third tenet, interaction and collaboration, refers to the social aspect of learning. Teachers value time spent in collaboration and interaction with their peers to promote their own engagement in the PD experience. Authentic tasks and activities refer to the context of the PD being more effective when it relates directly to the real-world classroom realities of the teacher. Teachers want to be able to readily transfer newly acquired strategies and practices to their classrooms. Reflection helps teachers to intentionally examine their instructional strategies and practice and relate the new information gained through the PD to improving their teaching and improving student

outcomes. The final tenet, intersectionality of technology, content, pedagogy, and learners, is the center of the online PD. Therefore, the three main components of the PD project for this study were (a) practical writing strategies for all subject area classrooms; (b) effective writing instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners; and (c) creating a sustainable, collaborative space for teachers to plan, grade, and reflect upon student writing.

Practical Writing Strategies for All Subject Area Classrooms

New online learning opportunities and options allow teachers to focus more on individual learner needs and successes and create individualized educational experiences. These varying levels of student writing proficiency need to be accounted for in planning writing activities for any classroom. Graham (2009) created seven recommendations for teaching writing: (a) Dedicate time to writing, with writing occurring across the curriculum, and involve students in various forms of writing, over time; (b) increase students' knowledge about writing; (c) foster students' interest, enjoyment, and motivation to write; (d) help students become strategic writers; (e) teach basic writing skills to mastery; (f) take advantage of technological writing tools; and (g) use assessment to gauge students' progress and needs.

Students need to be given many opportunities to write throughout the school day, and that includes writing in subjects other than English. Graham and Perin (2007a) outlined a variety of purposes for which students can write in all subject areas:

- communicating with others (e.g., personal letters, business letters, notes, cards, email)

- informing others (e.g., writing reports; explaining how to do something; describing an event, object, or place)
- persuading others (e.g., expressing an opinion about a controversial topic)
- learning content material (e.g., summarizing, learning logs, journal entries)
- entertaining others (e.g., writing stories, plays, poems)
- reflecting about self (e.g., writing about personal events, autobiography)
- responding to literature (e.g., book evaluations, analyzing authors' intentions)
- demonstrating knowledge (e.g., traditional classroom tests, high-stakes tests involving writing)

Strategies for Teaching Writing in Disciplines Other Than English

Proponents of disciplinary literacy approaches have asserted that each discipline requires a specialized set of cognitive frameworks as well as discipline-specific ways of reading, writing, and thinking (Brozo & Crain, 2018). When students are actively engaging in the knowledge construction through their writing, they significantly increase their problem-solving abilities (Cross, 2009). Math teachers have been reticent to employ writing/literacy instruction into their courses previously, as the connection between math and writing has been mired in literacy and not seen as an expansion on mathematical concepts or problem solving. However, providing a template for students to document their problem-solving processes, collaborate with others, and reflect on their thought processes not only meets literacy goals but also provides a future template for students with different needs levels. Furthermore, this type of discipline-specific literacy practice is more likely to be attempted math teachers because it more closely resembles how the

math processes that explain, justify, and extend their understanding of problem-solving strategies (Brozo & Crain, 2018).

Writing in the science and social studies disciplines can be used to construct new knowledge and document research through writing prompts for diagnoses, note taking, and analyzing information. Graphic organizers and journals are some of the most effective visual learning strategies for students and can be applied across the curriculum to enhance learning and understanding of subject matter content (Djudin, 2018).

Effective Writing Instruction to Meet the Needs of Diverse Learners

The most recent writing test administered by the NAEP (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2017) showed that only two thirds of students in Grades 8 and 12 scored at or below the basic grade-level proficiency in writing performance. Many factors influence writing development and mastery in students. While these factors such as socioeconomic status, genetics, or geographical region may impact a student's abilities, many students may not receive the writing instruction at school that they deserve and/or need (Graham, 2019). According to Graham (2019), most teachers are familiar with a wide variety of instructional methods and activities for writing and possible adaptations for struggling writers; however, the typical teacher does not have enough time to devote to writing and writing instruction (Graham, 2019, p. 278). All learners do not have the same learning speed rate; therefore "the model of differentiated orientation requires that instructors are flexible in their approach towards teaching and adapt their syllabus and teaching to learners, and not adjust learners to the syllabus" (Ismajli & Imami-Morina, 2018, p. 208).

Project Description

This PD plan will consist of 3 days of activities. The intended audience for the PD is high school teachers and administrators. The daily sessions will consist of three main goals: (a) provide effective writing instruction methods to meet the needs of diverse learners; (b) provide the strategies in which to implement writing into daily classroom instruction; and (c) provide time to create a collaborative, safe space for teachers to reflect, plan, assess student writing, and participate in sustained PD.

I will employ multiple delivery methods such as Google Slides; PowerPoint Presentation; (see Appendix A), Padlet, and Slido for interactive participant engagement and to support discussions. Padlet is a web-based, interactive platform used for collaborative learning (Shuker & Burton, 2021). Slido is an add on application for Google slides to create word clouds and conduct live polls with links embedded within the presentation slides. The necessary resources for this PD are teachers' laptops and a reliable Wi-Fi connection.

PD on writing instruction in all disciplines is an appropriate approach to addressing the problem of languishing writing scores of high school students. The PD will allow me to present possible solutions to teachers and administrators that they can use to address the problems through their instructional practices. This project is designed to embody an effective PD approach while addressing the areas of concern in student writing proficiencies. This 3-day PD may be used as the template for future PD initiatives.

This project will provide teachers with a 3-day PD plan that presents writing instruction strategies for all disciplines, differentiated writing strategies for use with diverse learners, and opportunities for collaboration and teacher feedback. The goals for the PD plan and its implementation are based on the themes that emerged from the study findings. I have three main goals:

- Goal 1: Secondary English teachers and teachers in other high school disciplines will develop an understanding of writing instructional strategies to implement in their classrooms to promote students' writing achievement.
- Goal 2: Secondary English teachers and teachers in other high school disciplines will demonstrate an understanding of differentiated instructional strategies to promote writing in their disciplines for diverse learners.
- Goal 3: Secondary English teachers and teachers in other high school disciplines will create a teacher collaborative network to address sustained PD after the PD sessions.

Potential Resources and Existing Support

The resources for this PD include existing personnel such as secondary English teachers and special education teachers. They understand the necessary writing instructional strategies required to promote student writing achievement. Other PD materials needed include teacher laptops, access to the internet, projector and screen, PD handouts, note taking materials, and a room large enough to accommodate the number of participants.

Potential Barriers and Solutions

Implementing change in the classroom like the change proposed in this doctoral project study requires cooperation of the stakeholders. Teachers are not always amenable to change and often prefer to hold fast to accustomed pedagogy and instructional practices. Educational leaders who organize PD opportunities for teachers do so on the premise that PD experiences improve teachers' knowledge and skills and motivate teachers to translate new ideas into their classroom practice with the result of inducing positive changes in student outcomes (Osman & Warner, 2020). Teachers' motivation, experience, and time are three important variables and challenges for the implementation of effective PD programs. These challenges can be seen as barriers to the proposal of any new initiative.

Implementation and Timetable

This 3-day PD plan has been designed for high school teachers in all disciplines. The PD plan were presented to the administration and with their approval, the PD were scheduled on the school calendar for the beginning of the school year PD. Each day of the PD begins with an agenda and learning outcomes, and end with a recap and evaluation of the day's activities. Day 1 focuses on the research behind getting students to write in any classroom, using exemplars for instruction, and practical writing instructional strategies teachers can implement in their classrooms. Day 2 focuses on differentiated instruction, writing accommodations for diverse learners, and a deep dive into the current curriculum to find areas in which to insert writing lessons and/or practices. Teachers will have the opportunities to work with others within their

disciplines as they work within the curriculum. Day 3 focuses on the applying the writing instructional knowledge learned from the previous two days with the activity of writing a lesson plan together and creating a collaborative network for teachers to have a sustainable place to continue the PD knowledge and practices throughout the school year. My role is to present the findings of the study, seek the permission of the school administration, and present the PD to the teachers. The PD for the 3 days is intended to begin at 9:00 am and conclude at 4:00pm with an hour for lunch and two fifteen-minute breaks each day. The school will provide a lunch, coffee, and snacks each day. Table 2 shows a proposed schedule for each day.

Table 2*Implementation Timetable*

Day	Topic	Activities
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Study findings * What is a successful PD *Strategies to get students to write 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Ice breaker *Padlet *Writing practice activity
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Writing rubrics for all disciplines *Curriculum deep dive *Differentiated writing for diverse learners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Padlet *Creating rubrics and lessons by discipline *Slido poll
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Using exemplars *Creating subject-specific writing lessons *Create webpage of PD and writing resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Padlet *Creating writing lessons *Creating Webpage *Blooket game review *Slido poll

Roles and Responsibilities

This PD opportunity has been designed to help teachers become knowledgeable about writing instruction strategies and skills needed to support students in increasing their writing proficiency. My role and responsibilities include presenting the 3-day PD, providing support during all breakout collaborative sessions, and providing information and support in creating a sustainable site to house information and research for writing

instruction and PD session in the future. I designed this training to be given as a face-to-face opportunity; however, this may be provided as a face-to-face session, virtual session, or combination of the two.

This project requires the participation of all attendees and administration. The English Department was responsible for providing facilitation and for the breakout sessions. The facilitators oversee the groups' understanding and participation in the sessions. The teachers' roles were that of active learners and participators in the sessions. They are expected to continue using the strategies presented in the PD sessions and continue to collaborate with one another to sustain the knowledge learned in the sessions.

Project Evaluation Plan

The evaluation component of a PD program is important to assess the training, barriers, and follow up. In this project, Guskey's Five Levels of Professional Development Evaluation is used to guide the planning, efficacy, and sustainability of the PD sessions (Guskey, 2002). The five levels are (a) participants' reactions, (b) participants' learning, (c) organization support and change, (d) participants' use of new knowledge and skills, and (e) student learning outcomes (Guskey, 2002). The five levels helped to generate questions asked of participants at the end of each daily session with a more comprehensive set of questions on the final day of the PD.

The information gathered from the participants' evaluations will help with revisions of the PD plan for future sessions. After the sessions on each day of PD, the participants will be given an evaluation form. This evaluation is part of each day's agenda. The form will collect feedback on the efficacy of the PD sessions and the areas

of need or topics for future writing PD sessions. The evaluation form gives the participants an opportunity to express their ideas regarding the different aspects of the sessions and leave ideas and/or ideas for revision for future learning opportunities. At the end of the 3 days, an overall evaluation form will be distributed to the participants. The questions on the overall evaluation form will ask participants' opinions on whether the goals of the PD were met and to evaluate the efficacy of the PD.

The three goals guided the PD sessions were evaluated by the participants at the end of each session using a Google form (See Appendix A). The evaluation form for each session has two parts; one section calls for the participants to rate their experience based on a Likert Scale, and the other section asks for any questions or suggestions in short answer form. The responses from the Google form are collected on a linked spreadsheet and used to revise/modify the presentation to address the participants' comments and concerns and inform the administrators regarding the need for future training opportunities. The final day evaluation form also includes space for the participants to list topics they would like to see in future writing PD, and topics they would like to see on the writing website created during the PD. By using the information gathered through the evaluation forms, the secondary writing teachers can aide in addressing teachers' concerns, build ELA teacher expertise, and support the teachers from the other disciplines to make additions to their instruction and curriculum to support students' writing engagement and achievement.

Project Implications

This proposed PD project was created to address the data found in Section 2 of this research project. The data analysis in Section 2 highlighted the strategies and experiences online writing teachers employ in their classrooms. The participants discussed the need for students to write frequently and in all subject-area classrooms. By acknowledging the ideas and concerns brought up in the data gathering interviews, a 3-day PD opportunity may possibly give teachers in other curriculum disciplines the knowledge and confidence they need to begin creating and implementing subject-specific writing lessons in their classrooms to ultimately support student writing proficiencies.

Understanding the perspectives, needs, and fears of writing of teachers in disciplines other than ELA, and creating ways to address those aspects in a PD session, is key to the success or failure of the PD. By creating a PD opportunity inspired by the data from this study, I can assist teachers in all academic disciplines with implementing strategies to bridge the gap in writing instructional practices and students' writing proficiency levels. Therefore, designing PD that is needs-based with teacher input can assist all staff members in addressing teacher concerns and strengthening teachers' writing instruction skills, thereby possibly increasing students' writing proficiency levels (Augustine, 2020). The study findings presented in this paper and the proposed 3-day PD plan can benefit all stakeholders and have the potential for positive social change. The instructional strategies and confidence of teachers, administrators, and students will be positively influenced by the outcome of the proposed PD practice. An additional benefit of the proposed PD is that it can be far reaching as it can be extended outside the school

site. The target schools are two of the many online educational sites which have continued to open in the past two decades. The outcome of this PD project could benefit other online schools where student writing performance is languishing. The proposed PD could make positive social change by initiating discussions and collaborations between ELA teachers and teachers of other disciplines within online schools which will ultimately benefit all students.

Conclusion

In Section 3, I discussed the project goals and rationale for creating a 3-day PD. I presented a literature review related to the six themes which emerged from the data analysis of the participant interviews. I specified how the PD would be implemented and the process that were taken if the proposed PD project is accepted. I have created a plan for the presentation of a 3-day PD based on teacher identified needs. I will ensure the PD follows a model with proven efficacy, conduct follow up sessions with teachers, and finally, provide a website with writing instructional strategies and information to be able to sustain and extend the learning for the participants of the PD. I included a description of the goals, project description, project evaluation, and project implications.

In Section 4, I discuss the project's strengths in building teacher expertise and confidence in writing instructional strategies for teachers of all academic disciplines to influence change in the writing proficiency levels of high school students. I reflect on the development of the proposed project and how my knowledge has developed through the process of executing the study and creating the project. I also reflect upon what I have learned about writing instruction and social change through my doctoral journey.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

In this section, I outline the project strengths and limitations, and I present recommendations for alternative approaches. I also reflect on how I grew as a scholar, and what I learned from my project development, evaluation, leadership, and change. I analyze the importance of the work I did through reflecting on the process I experienced in completing a doctoral study. I conclude this section by discussing the implications of my study, the applications, and directions for future research.

The purpose of this study was to investigate teacher perspectives of online writing instruction strategies and experiences. I conducted virtual interviews with current online writing teachers. I analyzed the data collected and determined that a 3-day PD would help to address the themes and concerns that emerged from the data. The 3-day PD is entitled "Writing for All."

Project Strengths and Limitations

One of the strengths of this project begins with the research that supports this project. Even though I was able to reach saturation in the research of online writing instruction, there has been a recent increase in the publication of newer articles about online instruction due to the increase in online instruction caused by the recent pandemic. The limitation with the research supporting this project is that a large percentage of the current articles are focused on postsecondary levels of education or the use of technology to teach writing.

The information gathered from the participants' interviews was another strength of this resulting project. The responses were detailed and specific enough to answer each

of the RQs. Another strength of this study is that the resulting data, once analyzed, guided the creation of a practical and relevant plan for PD for the site of this study. Through this 3-day PD opportunity, the participants can increase their knowledge of teaching research-based online writing instructional strategies in their subject-area classrooms. Through the PD sessions, teachers will be able to implement subject-specific writing instruction in their classrooms, collaborate with colleagues on writing, use a website for writing instruction strategies, create rubrics for writing, differentiate writing assignments, and increase student engagement with writing. The PD will benefit stakeholders, administrators, and teachers in online classrooms as well as brick and mortar classrooms.

Another strength of the project is the format used to present the 3-day PD. The flexible and dynamic format allows for the participants to constantly explore, learn, collaborate, plan, and modify their own lessons. Writing for All will provide a forum for the teachers to work with their peers and plan to implement writing assignments into their curriculum. The teachers will be able to take a collection of strategies learned through the PD directly into their classrooms for implementation. They will also have a collaborative online space to help sustain the learning from the PD throughout the remainder of the school year and beyond. This project will help to fill the gap in writing instructional practices by advocating for the availability of formative and sustainable PD opportunities and materials throughout the school year. Sustained focus over time is a hallmark of effective PD and should be considered in terms of weeks, months, and years. However, many teachers experience PD in terms of hours, often fewer than 8 hours (Bates & Morgan, 2018; Wei et al., 2010), which contrasts sharply from effective models that

include time to meet and discuss content, implement ideas in the classroom, and return to share and reflect upon classroom experiences.

In this project, Guskey's Five Levels of Professional Development Evaluation was used to guide the planning, efficacy, and sustainability of the PD sessions. Each PD session ends with the completion of a Google Forms survey by each participant. The responses gathered from the surveys at the end of each session will provide immediate feedback to the stakeholders and administrators, allowing them to make modifications as needed for the remaining days of the PD or to modify and improve future PD training.

One limitation of this project could be whether the teachers implement the knowledge gained from the PD in their classrooms with efficacy. If the teachers choose not to implement the strategies learned from the PD with continuity and efficacy, the result could be continuing languishing student writing proficiency. Furthermore, skills and knowledge on research-based online writing instructional strategies would not be addressed, and the results from the state and local assessments may not improve.

Another limitation could be the minimal fidelity with which the teachers collaborate and use the website as a resource for writing instruction. If the teachers and stakeholders do not see the benefits of implementing change to their instruction to include more writing and are unable to consider the proposed changes as beneficial to their efforts, then the PD training would not be successful.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

An alternative approach to the PD session would be small group mentoring or focus groups. The teachers could have smaller sessions, mentored by myself or another

ELA expert to work on inserting more opportunities for writing into their curriculum. The small groups could be comprised of a mix of teachers from various subject areas, or it could be a homogenous grouping of the same subject area. The mentoring would allow for modeling of strategies, practice in the classroom, and follow up after implementation.

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership, and Change

Pursuing my doctoral degree in Reading and Literacy Leadership has challenged my beliefs in my abilities and has given me opportunities to think about myself as a scholar and a reflective practitioner. In becoming a scholar and more reflective researcher and practitioner, I have sharpened my writing instructional skills and increased my content knowledge of teaching writing in an online classroom. I am an agent of change, and it is up to me to initiate changes in my classroom to see the results flourish outside of the classroom and into the community. I began this journey 8 years ago. Slow and steady wins the race! I appreciate that every interaction with my classmates, professors, coworkers, and students had a purpose and helped to shape the person I have become as a result. Through my research, it has become apparent that teachers need to participate in engaging, sustainable, and continuous PD to be equipped with the knowledge and strategies to address the writing needs of our students.

The project that emerged from this study is a 3-day PD plan geared towards addressing languishing student writing proficiency. The PD has three goals, which are all centered around the addressing the six themes that emerged from the data gathered through participant interviews. The themes are as follows: (a) Teachers use "chunking," templates, and graphic organizers for assignments as strategies for teaching writing

online; (b) teachers believe giving students a choice/agency over their writing assignments is a strategy for engagement with the writing process; (c) teachers provide substantive and immediate feedback to guide students through the writing process; (d) teachers have changed their lessons to be more interactive and visual than in a brick-and-mortar setting; (e) teachers perceived their initial assumptions on students' prior knowledge of writing were incorrect; and (f) teachers have changed their instructional focus to a more holistic view. The conceptual framework that guided the study was constructivism and the project follows Vygotsky's sociocultural approach for teacher's professional development and Guskey's Five Levels of Professional Development Evaluation.

I decided on a 3-day PD project because it allowed me to present a model for PD implementation that can be adopted to address the overall concerns from the participants. Furthermore, some of the data that emerged from the teacher interviews were related to teacher collaboration and the time needed to do so. The activities proposed in the PD are focused on addressing the teachers' needs and have the potential to build teacher expertise and strengthen students' writing proficiency levels. The project evaluation will be both formative and summative. Each day's PD session are evaluated using a Google Form (see Appendix A) that has two parts; the first part asks the participants to rate the sessions using a Likert scale, and the second part asks the participants to provide ideas for modifications on the next day's sessions, provide ideas for future PD, and ask questions or provide concerns.

The research conducted for this PD, the knowledge gained, and the execution of the PD with sustained follow up opportunities throughout the school year demonstrate my burgeoning leadership in the field of education and my desire to create positive change in my community.

Reflection on Importance of the Work

My work in this study is important to provide insight into current, practical implementation of writing instructional strategies in online classrooms. An additional value is to highlight strategies that can be used in all academic disciplines to increase student writing proficiency. Online education is constantly changing and adapting to meet the needs of students where they currently stand academically. Therefore, it is increasingly vital for teachers to continuously reflect on what we are doing in the classroom to adjust to students' needs and changes. The work I have poured into my study is just the beginning of what can hopefully lead to a systemic change in writing instruction in ELA and across all disciplines. The changes proposed can benefit all stakeholders. When I began my journey as a doctoral researcher, I held no preconceived ideas as to what the data would reveal. I knew that writing was continually being "placed on the back burner" to make room for math and reading interventions, but I did not know how other teachers were feeling as to writing instruction. After conducting research, holding interviews, and going through the analysis process, I determined that as a reflective practitioner, currently in an online classroom, I have gained new knowledge that can benefit other teachers, and my focus should be on influencing change in writing instruction, which would ultimately benefit the students. I realized that the work I was doing was vital not only for my

personal development but also for the growth of my colleagues, my students, and other future stakeholders. The development of this study forced me to exercise patience and grit. While I struggled with outside stumbling blocks threatening to derail my progress, I held firm to the belief that my study would make a difference in writing instruction.

The course work I completed early in the doctoral journey, completing assignments, and communicating with my chair and team, though sometimes seeming impossible, was necessary for my growth as a researcher and my success as a scholar. I believe my hard work, perseverance, and support system have been the driving forces in helping me achieve this doctoral degree. This degree has elevated my researching abilities and knowledge base, which will increase my ability to make informed choices as a leader within my field. The PD plan I designed from the emergent themes in the data is my first attempt to showcase the data and newly gained knowledge as I propose change in writing instruction. The doctoral process was exhilarating, exhausting, defeating, discouraging, yet wonderful and confidence boosting simultaneously. I persevered and relied on the support of my family and my chair and continued the process one day, one submission, and one revision at a time. This study is the culmination of years of hard work, and it is the dawning of my professional chapter as Dr. Harrison.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

The 3-day PD plan, "Writing for All," presented in this study offers the stakeholders a possible model for PD implementation. The purpose of this study was to examine teacher perspectives about the strategies and experiences of online writing instruction. The proposed PD in Appendix A is a utilization of the data collected during

the teacher participant interviews. The themes that emerged from the data analysis have indicated that providing PD to high school teachers and administrators can be a possible solution to the research problems being addressed by this study. The themes are as follows: (a) Teachers use "chunking," templates, and graphic organizers for assignments as strategies for teaching writing online; (b) teachers believe giving students a choice/agency over their writing assignments is a strategy for engagement with the writing process; (c) teachers provide substantive and immediate feedback to guide students through the writing process; (d) teachers have changed their lessons to be more interactive and visual than in a brick-and-mortar setting; (e) teachers perceived their initial assumptions on students' prior knowledge of writing were incorrect; and (f) teachers have changed their instructional focus to a more holistic view.

The goal of the PD project is to increase teachers' knowledge in writing instruction to improve students' writing proficiency and confidence, ultimately improving their performance on standardized testing. Appendix A includes research-based strategies to be implemented through a direct instruction approach during the PD. The strategies can then be taught in the classroom through whole-group instruction, small group instruction, and one-on-one instruction. One of the most effective ways to help students acquire the knowledge needed to set and meet discipline-specific writing goals is through explicit text structure instruction (Bouwer et al., 2018). Individuals require certain strategies in planning, designing, organizing, revising, and evaluating writing (Erkan, 2019). The research-based strategies included in the PD plan all have the implication to support the improvement in students' writing proficiency.

This study was conducted on a small scale; however, it has several implications for future research. Further research can be done with other online educational settings to determine the writing instruction needs as well as strategies for PD implementation and follow through. Another implication for future research that can be derived from this study is a system for recording the effectiveness of the PD through Guskey's Five Levels of PD Evaluation and the Google Form format, the sustainability of the new knowledge from the PD, and the efficacy of the writing instructional strategies teachers are employing in their classrooms. Another monitoring system could track the student proficiency levels after the writing instructional strategies have been faithfully used and assessed. Tracking the information about both implementation and proficiency assessment may be helpful to administrators, teachers, and stakeholders in making decisions for future trainings or PD.

Conclusion

The problem that I addressed in this study is the stagnant student writing proficiency levels. I gathered data from eight participants from two different online high schools, eliciting their perspectives of writing instruction strategies and their experiences teaching writing in an online educational setting. Through the collecting of data, I found that the English departments were incorporating writing into their classroom instruction as much as time allowed; however, the student writing scores were still low, and the teachers felt that more writing instruction needs to take place in all content area classrooms. The teachers expressed that increasing the time spent writing along with having the students write in all disciplines may increase student writing proficiency. However, Troia and Graham (2016) discovered through conducting a teacher survey that

“many surveyed felt the new writing and language standards for Common Core are too numerous to cover, omit key aspects of writing development, and may be inappropriate for struggling writers” (p. 1719). Furthermore, Carter and Harper (2013) stated, “Plenty of research shows that student writing skills have been poor for some time, at least since 1970. Moreover, there is evidence that student writing is getting worse” (p. 286). With the data from the interviews and the literature showing a continual decline in writing scores, I created a 3-day PD plan to implement with the goal of teaching teachers how to incorporate elements of writing into their subject-area courses and, therefore, increasing student writing proficiency.

The PD program is focused on writing research, writing strategies, and opportunities to collaborate with their peers. Teachers will exit the PD having gained new knowledge on the research behind writing instruction and a better understanding of where and what kind of writing lessons to include in their current curriculum and having contributed to a website to promote sustainability of the PD and the collaboration observed during the sessions. I created the PD depicted in Appendix A. This project helped me to become a more reflective practitioner and an agent for change in the classroom and in the learning community. This training encourages teachers to include more writing opportunities into their lessons, increase their knowledge of writing research, and inform the stakeholders about the ways they can make changes to support and benefit the teachers and the students.

This project marks the end of my doctoral journey, but the beginning of my professional journey as an agent for social change through teaching, PD presentations, and collaboration with stakeholders.

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Appendix A: The Project

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Project Goals

- Goal 1: Secondary English teachers and teachers in other high school disciplines will develop an understanding of writing instructional strategies to implement in their classrooms to promote students' writing achievement.
- Goal 2: Secondary English teachers and teachers in other high school disciplines will demonstrate an understanding of differentiated instructional strategies to promote writing in their disciplines for diverse learners.
- Goal 3: Secondary English teachers and teachers in other high school disciplines will create a teacher collaborative network to address sustained professional development after the PD sessions.



Day 1 Agenda

Time	Activities
9-9:15am	Sign in and Welcome Housekeeping items
9:15-9:45	Review agenda and learning outcomes of PD Ice breaker activity
9:45-10:45	Review study findings and current teacher perspectives about writing
10:30-10:45	Break
10:45-12	What is a successful PD for you? Padlet activity Vygotsky's Theory of Teacher Professional Development
12-1pm	Lunch break
1-2:30	Strategies to get kids writing in any classroom
2:30-3:30	Ways to write - using minimal direct instruction and maximizing student agency
3:30-4	Closing and Evaluation of the day
4pm	Dismissal and SCECH sign out

Day 1 Outcomes

- Review findings from the study
- Describe teachers' perspectives on a successful PD
- Understand Vygotsky's theory for teacher professional Development
- Understand strategies to get students writing in all subject areas
- Understand and describe using minimal direct instruction and maximizing student agency

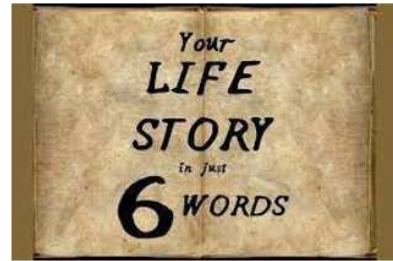
Ice breaker 1

- "A man lives on the 10th floor of an apartment building. Every morning he takes the elevator all the way down to the bottom and goes to work. In the evening, when he comes back from work, he gets into the elevator, and if there is someone else in it, he goes back to the 10th floor. On rainy days he also goes directly to his floor. On all other days, he goes to the 7th floor and walks up 3 flights of stairs to his apartment. Why?"



Ice breaker 2

- What is your life in 6 words?



Six Word
Memoir Project

Study findings (Teachers' Perceptions and Experiences with online writing instruction)

- Six themes emerged from the data:
 - **RQ1: Theme 1:** Teachers use "chunking", templates, and graphic organizers for assignments as strategies for teaching writing online.
 - **Theme 2:** Teachers believe giving students a choice/agency over their writing assignments is a strategy for engagement with the writing process.
 - **Theme 3:** Teachers provide substantive and immediate feedback to guide students through the writing process.
 - **RQ2: Theme 1:** Teachers have changed their lessons to be more interactive and visual than in a brick-and-mortar setting.
 - **Theme 2:** Teachers perceived their initial assumptions on students' prior knowledge of writing were incorrect.
 - **Theme 3:** Teachers have changed their instructional focus to a more holistic view.

Slido word cloud & poll

- <https://app.sli.do/event/48nJhvBWSLxBHdF7CF4VrF>

What are your perceptions of teaching writing in your classes? 0 👤

Participants can vote at [slido.com](https://app.sli.do/event/48nJhvBWSLxBHdF7CF4VrF) with #2289335

- <https://app.sli.do/event/48nJhvBWSLxBHdF7CF4VrF>

List reasons why you think teachers do not include writing instruction into their curriculum? 0 👤

Participants can vote at [slido.com](https://app.sli.do/event/48nJhvBWSLxBHdF7CF4VrF) with #2289335

TEACHER PERSPECTIVES ON WRITING

- Mezirow's Phases of Perspective Transformation Phases of Mezirow's Perspective Transformation
 - Phase 1 Experiencing a disorienting dilemma
 - Phase 2 Undergoing self-examination
 - Phase 3 Conducting a critical assessment of internalized assumptions and feeling a sense of alienation from traditional social expectations
 - Phase 4 Relating discontent to the similar experiences of others-recognizing that the problem is shared
 - Phase 5 Exploring options for new ways of acting
 - Phase 6 Building competence and self-confidence in new roles
 - Phase 7 Planning a course of action
 - Phase 8 Acquiring the knowledge and skills for implementing a new course of action
 - Phase 9 Trying out new roles and assessing them
 - Phase 10 Reintegrating into society with the new perspective

PERSPECTIVES CONT...

- Providing a sequential process for students helps them to manage each step in creating the desired end product (chunking, etc)
- effective writing instruction recognizes that writing purposes vary and writing styles depend on intended audiences
- Ideally, effective writing instruction stimulates critical thinking
- studies have demonstrated that little time in the K-12 curriculum is dedicated to writing instruction at all and little writing is assigned, even in secondary ELA classes
- research has indicated that teachers outside of secondary ELA do not feel confident in themselves as writers or in their ability to teach writing
 - nor do they teach or assign writing beyond asking students to answer simple questions or report without interpreting
- Many ELA teachers have literature, not writing, backgrounds
- Researchers have concluded that teacher preparation programs do not prepare preservice teachers to teach writing effectively
- standardized tests have resulted in a narrowing of the ELA curriculum
 - in some states writing instruction nearly disappeared during the NCLB years
- . . . Disciplinary literacy

PERSPECTIVES CONT...

- . Students are frequently engaging in writing to learn activities and not writing to persuade, inform or describe
- Historically, writing in content area classrooms has served for students to gain and develop a deeper understanding of subject matter learning
- What does writing have to do with mathematics?
- writing as a process [that] emphasizes brainstorming, clarifying, and revising ... can readily be applied to solving a mathematical problem
- writing in mathematics can also help students consolidate their thinking because it requires them to reflect on their work and clarify their thoughts about the ideas"

Figure 1 CCSS Writing Standards Across the Disciplines

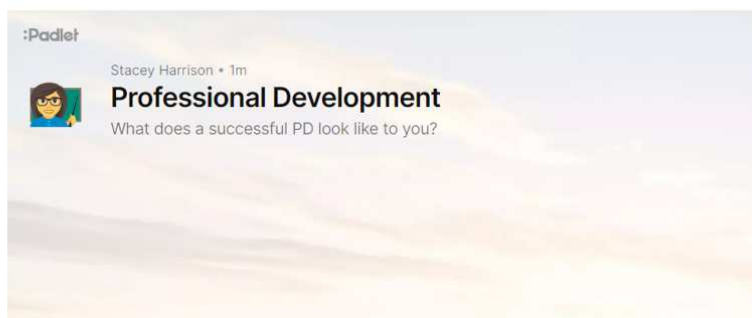
Writing Anchor Standards	Social Studies-focused	Science-focused
Opinion Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.	Political commentaries Editorials Speeches Advertisements Essays	Commentaries Editorials Speeches
Informative/Explanatory Texts Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.	Magazine feature articles Newspaper feature articles Museum publications (brochures) Autobiography Memor Book reviews Practical how-to writing Informative how-to writing Advice writing Photo essay Poetry	Lab reports Memos Recorded observations Field notes Magazine feature articles Newspaper feature articles Patents Museum publications (brochures) Practical how-to writing Informative how-to writing Advice writing Photo essay



WHAT IS A SUCCESSFUL PD FOR YOU?

*Please take 5 minutes to share what a successful PD looks like to you.

<https://padlet.com/staceyharrison21/xw4weg79oo37i2bw>

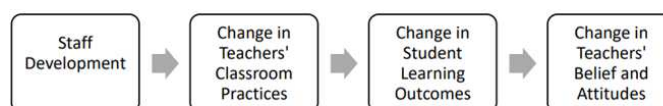


VYGOTSKY'S THEORY OF TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT- GUSKEY'S MODEL OF TEACHER CHANGE

- Vygotsky's sociocultural theories of development
- Vygotskian thinking indicates that the origin of knowledge construction should not be sought in the mind but in the social interaction co-constructed between a more and a less knowledgeable individual
- the construction of knowledge is a socioculturally mediated process affected by the physical and psychological tools and artifacts.
 - (1) Learning precedes development. (2) Language is the main vehicle (tool) of thought. (3) Mediation is central to learning. (4) Social interaction is the basis of learning and development. Learning is a process of apprenticeship and internalization in which skills and knowledge are transformed from the social into the cognitive plane. (5) The zone of proximal development (ZPD) is the primary activity space in which learning occurs.
- involvement in a development process suggests that trainees acquire different skills and knowledge through collaboration with peers.
 - e group members can provide collective scaffold for each other to remedy their instructional problems.
- concrete social interactions which are embedded in purposeful activities and directed at achieving specific goals result in higher social functions.
- Professional growth does not occur overnight; it is a prolonged and time-consuming process which gets realized after several trials and errors.
- Like learning, professional development is a continuous and never-ending process.
- the study of the development of psychological functions through social participation in socially-organized practices

CONT...

Guskey's Model of Teacher Change





STRATEGIES TO GET KIDS WRITING IN EVERY CLASSROOM

- Daily writing starters/prompts
- Visual story prompts
- Learning log
- Explain a process
- Write a letter
- Guided writing
- R.A.F.T.
- Vocabulary stories
- "Tweet" a message about a topic learned
- Completing a graphic organizer
- "How To" set of instructions
- List making

WAYS TO WRITE - USING MINIMAL DIRECT INSTRUCTION AND MAXIMIZING STUDENT AGENCY

- Free write (teacher provided topic or student choice)
- Journal writing
- Create a "Bingo" board with subject-area topics. Have students choose. Use the board for a period of time. Students can receive a prize after a "Bingo"
- Jigsaw Content Learning
- KWL chart
- Cloze Writing Frames

CREATE YOUR OWN BINGO BOARD

- Using the provided template, brainstorm subject-specific writing ideas your students could do regardless of the topic being taught

B	I	N	G	O
		FREE SPACE		



Professional Development Evaluation Form - Day 1

Using the Likert Scale, rate your perspective on the following statements. The scale is from 1 to 5, 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest.

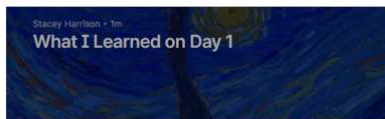
- Please fill out the Google form for the day 1 evaluation:
- <https://forms.gle/WDs3VGF3oGKJsb88>

DAY 2 AGENDA

Time	Activities
9-9:15am	Sign in and Welcome Back Review data
9:15-9:30	What I Learned on Day 1 - Padlet activity
9:30-10:30	Writing Practice: Using Exemplars in Writing Instruction
10:30-10:45	Break
10:45-1	Creating Subject-specific Writing Rubrics
1-2pm	Lunch
2-3	Deep Diving into Curriculum to Find Areas to Insert Writing
3-3:45	Creating Alternative Writing Assignments/options to Accommodate Learning Differences
3:45-4	Closing and Evaluation of the day
4	Dismissal and <u>Seech</u> sign out

DAY 2 OUTCOMES

- Writing Practice - using exemplars in writing instruction
- Creating subject-specific writing rubrics
- Deep diving into the curriculum to add writing
- Creating Alternative Writing Assignments/options to Accommodate Learning Differences



WHAT I LEARNED ON DAY 1

- <https://ed4.com/teachers/1/what-i-learned-on-day-1>

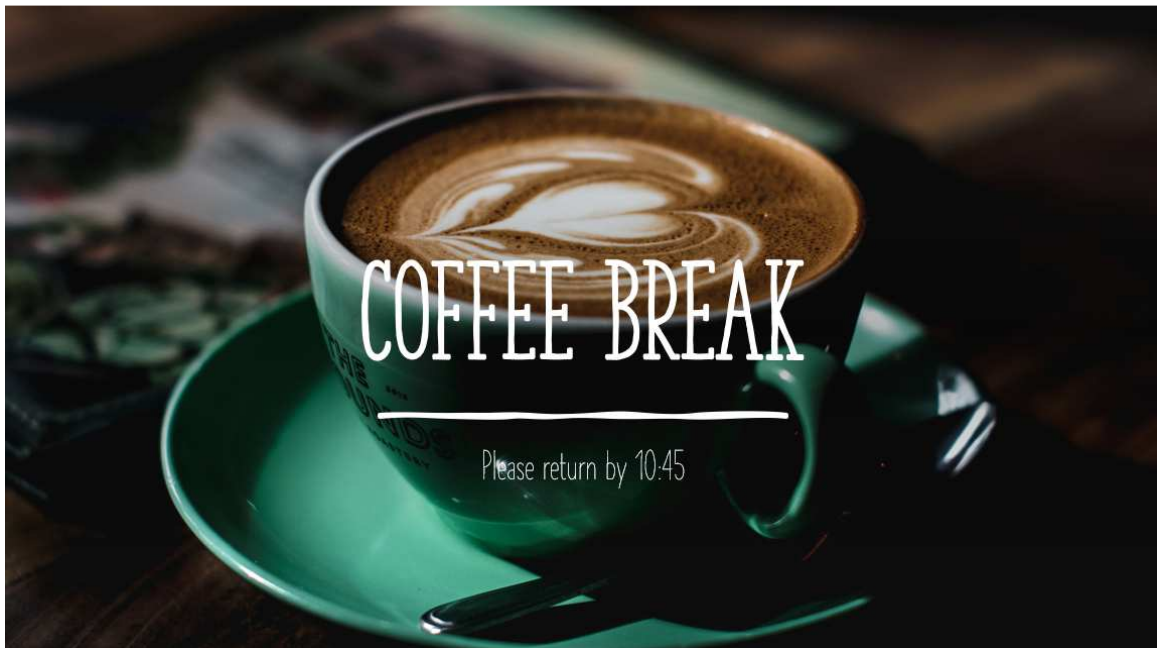
WRITING PRACTICE: USING EXEMPLARS IN WRITING INSTRUCTION

- Struggling writers often need the teacher's provision of modeling and extra examples as well as mini-lessons which focus on areas of students' need
- Seeing models of good writing in others' prose can then help children apply these practices in their own texts
- Studying mentor texts provides an opportunity to learn firsthand from other writers, to become aware of the multiple decisions writers make in crafting their texts.
- using mentor texts closely mirrors what writers do in the discipline; therefore, it offers real- world habits and implications.
- *Using the provided exemplar, read through the text and think, pair, share with a partner to answer the following questions:
 - What is the main idea?
 - What was the author's purpose for writing?
 - What evidence in the article shows you the purpose?
 - Summarize the "Big events" in the article.

CONT...

- Selecting Mentor Texts. After deciding on a specific genre in which to write, teachers should seek out strong examples of the very writing their students will soon be doing.
- 2. Engaging in Active Noticing. Initially, this part can be the most difficult and may feel the most awkward for teachers who have limited experience looking at writing in this way
 - There are two main things to notice with every text: structure and the author 's ways with words
- 3. Levels of Support. In the beginning, noticing writing in this way can feel unusual. Through demonstrations, teachers help understand how to notice writing in this way. One suggestion is to use a gradual release of responsibility model





CREATING SUBJECT-SPECIFIC WRITING RUBRICS

- Work with your subject-area team to create one general rubric and one assignment-specific rubric for your expectations of writing in your courses.
- Use the provided scoring rubric as a guide.
- chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.readingrockets.org/pdfs/Analytic%20Trait%20Scoring%20Rubric.pdf



DEEP DIVING INTO CURRICULUM TO INSERT WRITING OPPORTUNITIES

- Working with your subject-area team members, use your curriculum maps and your curriculum to find areas which writing assignments can be used for assessments, exit tickets, small writing projects, and larger writing pieces.
- Create one writing assignment per unit.
- Create a rubric to accompany each assignment.

CREATING ALTERNATIVE WRITING ASSIGNMENTS/OPTIONS TO ACCOMMODATE LEARNING DIFFERENCES

- Continue working with your teams and create a list of alternative accommodations or assignments for those students who are struggling writers/learners.
- Use the adaptations for Struggling Writers Guide to help with the accommodations
- chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.readingrockets.org/pdfs/Adaptations%20for%20Struggling%20Writers.pdf



Professional Development Evaluation Form - Day 2

Using the Likert Scale, rate your perspective on the following statements. The scale is from 1 to 5, 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest.

- Please fill out the Google form for the day 2 evaluation
- <https://forms.gle/Pkq1L5m7QktHhW8P8>

DAY 3 AGENDA

Time	Activities
9-9:15am	Sign in and Welcome Back Review Agenda
9:15-9:30	What I Learned on Day 2- Padlet activity
9:30-10:30	Creating Subject-Area Specific lesson plans (working with subject area teams)
10:30-10:45	Break
10:45-12	Continue lesson plan work with teams
12-1pm	Lunch
1-2:30	Collaboration - review/create webpage resources for subject areas
2:30-3	Review game (Blooket)
3-3:30	Closing and Evaluation of the day
3:30	Dismissal and SCECH sign out

DAY 3 OUTCOMES

- Create subject-specific lesson plans for writing
- Collaboration - review/create webpage resources for subject areas
- Blooket review game

WHAT I LEARNED DAY 2

- <https://addat.com/stacey-harrison/1/amc5wbdqf8k3yeh1>



WHAT IS EFFECTIVE WRITING?

Effective writing:

- Achieves the writer's goals. These goals can be set by the writer or teacher, or through collaboration between the writer, teacher, and/or peers.
- Is appropriate for the intended audience and context. For example, a persuasive text written for a school newspaper may look different than one written for an online forum.
- Presents ideas in a way that clearly communicates the writer's intended meaning and content. The writer's ideas are well-organized and clear to the reader and expressed effectively.
- Elicits the intended response from the reader. For example, a persuasive text compels the reader to take action, whereas a mystery novel elicits feelings of suspense or surprise from the reader.

CREATING SUBJECT-AREA SPECIFIC LESSON PLANS (WORKING WITH SUBJECT AREA TEAMS)

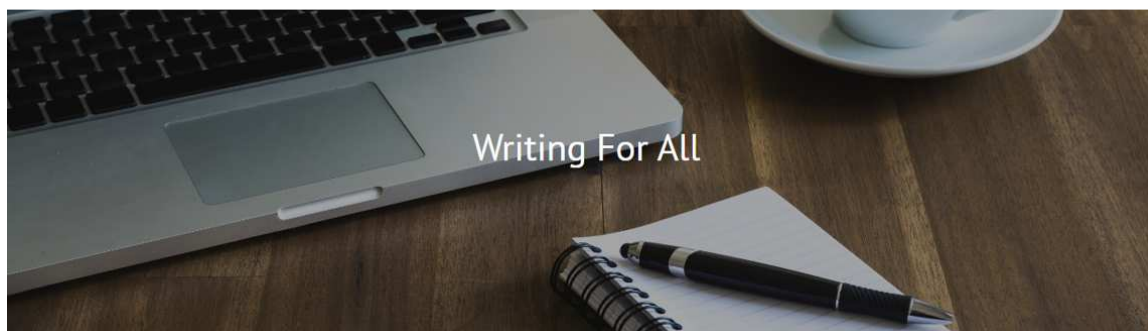
- Continue your work from yesterday and create the lesson steps students will need to take to complete the assignments you have created.
- Keep the writing process in mind as you are creating your steps.



CONTINUE LESSON PLAN WORK

- Any questions?
- Need help with writing activities to include?





Writing For All

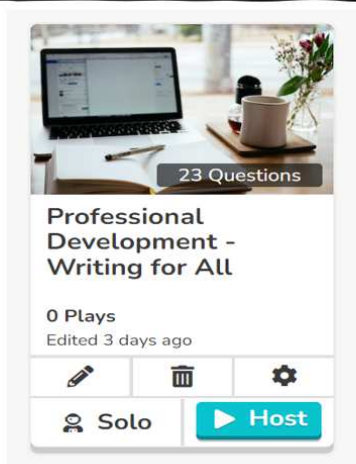
An extension of the writing PD for sustainable teacher learning


COLLABORATION - REVIEW/CREATE WEBPAGE RESOURCES

- Purpose - to sustain teacher learning and support after this PD
- Online shared platform through Google Sites
- In your group, work together to research and list shared writing resources for your subject areas
- <https://sites.google.com/view/writingforall/home>

REVIEW GAME - BLOCKET

- <https://play.blooket.com/play?id=>





DAY 3 - END OF DAY EVALUATION EXIT TICKET

Professional Development Evaluation Form - Day 3

Using the Likert Scale, rate your perspective on the following statements.

- Please fill out the Google form for the day 3 evaluation
- <https://forms.gle/FgQ2KodMMrM3c9UeA>

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- [Pytash, K. E., & Morgan, D. N. \(2014\).](#) Using mentor texts to teach writing in science and social studies. *The Reading Teacher, 68*(2), 93-102.
- [Shabani, K. \(2016\).](#) Applications of Vygotsky's sociocultural approach for teachers' professional development. *Cogent education, 3*(1), 1252177.
- www.Readingrockets.org
- www.Edutopia.com
- www.ain.org (the access center)

Appendix B: Administration Permission Communication

To Whom it May Concern,

I would like your permission to interview teachers at your school, with the promise of confidentiality, to gather data for my doctoral dissertation. Teachers were invited to take part in a research study of online teachers' instructional strategies for teaching writing in a virtual classroom. As the researcher, I, Stacey Harrison, a doctoral candidate at Walden University, plan to interview teachers who instruct high school students in virtual classrooms. You may already know me as a colleague/online educator, but this study is separate from that role. This email is part of a process called "informed consent" to ask for permission to interview teachers and for you to understand this study before making your decision.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to gather teachers' instructional strategies and methods for teaching writing in an online classroom.

Procedures:

If teachers agree to be in this study, they will be asked to participate in a 45-60 minute, audio-recorded interview session through Zoom online. There will only be one interview for each participant; however, I may wish to ask some follow-up questions if needed.

The findings of this study may provide information on improving the instructional designs of online writing programs and designing professional development opportunities for online educators and create positive social change by increasing the writing proficiency of students enrolled in these programs so they may become college and career ready.

Participant information will be kept anonymous, and interview answers will be coded prior to being analyzed for the final report.

Thank you,

Stacey Harrison

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

I truly appreciate your willingness to participate in my study. The purpose of today's interview is to discuss your strategies and experiences regarding teaching writing in an online ELA classroom. The interview will last between 45 minutes to an hour. I will be asking questions related to your experience with online writing instruction. The data gathered from this study may be used for future professional development opportunities for online instructors. The data collected were stored in a password secured folder on my computer and disposed of after the required 5-year storage period. With your permission, I will be recording only the audio of our interview today. Audio recording our discussion will help me to transcribe our interview and study the data for my final analysis. A recording can be studied much more thoroughly than data in the form of interviewer notes. Do I have your permission to audio record this interview? You have the right to decline to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. You may also end the interview at any time. The interview process should take between 45-60 minutes to complete. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Introduction Questions

How long have you been teaching?

How many years have you been teaching online?

Interview Questions

RQ1: What are the instructional strategies high school English teachers use to teach writing in an online setting?

1. Which strategy or strategies would you recommend to another online teacher when incorporating the writing approach to their curriculum?
2. In the online writing program, the strategies were provided. Did you use the strategy that was given in the program? Did you use the strategy as described or did you modify it? How did you modify the strategy? Please give me an example.
3. Next, I am going to ask you about specific styles of writing: persuasive, expository, narrative, and descriptive. For each, I would like you to tell me which strategy you use to teach it, and whether or not you modified the strategy, and did it work. (Each style was specified and probed, then the next style was probed, and so forth)
4. Other than the online writing program provided, did you supplement with any other programs? If so, how? If not, why did you choose not to?
5. Which scaffolding strategies or collaborative writing strategies have you used that have worked well, and which have been less successful?
6. What strategies do you employ from your current curriculum to address the writing process approach? Which of the strategies do you find to be successful in improving student writing?
7. What strategies do you use to motivate and engage the students in your writing instruction? What has seemed to work the most effectively?
8. What strategies do you use to accommodate for individual student learning differences influencing students' writing performance?

RQ2: What are the experiences of high school English teachers who teach writing in an online classroom?

9. In what ways has your style of writing instruction changed to adapt to the online learning environment?
10. Do you find using exemplars of your own writing a successful instructional strategy? Please provide an example when you did that. What was the outcome?
11. How has your writing instruction changed over the time you have taught writing in an online setting? What advice would you give to someone who is thinking about transitioning from in class writing instruction to online writing instruction?
12. How did you plan for the online learning environment? What specific challenges did you have when planning for the writing approach in the online classroom? How did you overcome those challenges?
13. Please describe a writing lesson that went as planned in the online classroom. Why do you think the lesson was successful?
14. How did you assess student writing in your online classroom?
15. Did you experience any difficulties with the technology software or hardware when teaching students the writing approach? If so, how did you overcome them?
16. Is there anything else you would like to add?